Aspire School, Staplehurst Road Sittingbourne, Kent

Archaeological Evaluation, Strip, Map & Sample and Watching Brief Report

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by RPS, to undertake an archaeological investigation of a 1.75ha parcel of land located at Aspire School, Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne, Kent, centred on NGR 589166 164636.

The archaeological mitigation was carried out to fulfil a planning condition placed on an application submitted to Swale Borough Council for the construction of a new school with associated infrastructure and landscaping works. The excavation was required to determine the nature and extent of any activity associated with Bronze Age barrows and/or the Neolithic pit revealed during the evaluation stage of investigation.

This course of archaeological intervention comprised the excavation and recording of 6 evaluation trenches varying in length and 1.8m wide requested by the County Archaeologist in order to assess the extent of the quarrying truncation within the southern portion of the site.

The evaluation was undertaken prior Strip, Map & Sample excavation which originally measured 5,640m^2 and was based on the external footprint of the proposed new school building and attenuation tank. The excavation area has been reduced to the south though after the consultation with the client and the County Archaeologist.

The archaeological watching brief consisted of monitoring a topsoil reduction of 0.20-0.25m around the Bronze Age barrows which were intended to be preserved *in-situ.*

The archaeological investigations revealed a concentration of archaeological features in the central section of the site, with all artefactual evidence pointing to a prehistoric date. The main area of activity, dated to the prehistoric period, was focused to the west of known Bronze Age barrows.

The excavation revealed 9 distinct archaeological features, comprising a fence line consisted of 11 post holes, two field boundary ditches and six discreet features. The fence line is most likely of Early Neolithic date, while three of the discreet features are prehistoric in origin.

The archaeological mitigation also clarified that the southern half of the site had been severely truncated by historic quarrying activity and it is unlikely that any archaeological features or deposits survived.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank RPS, for commissioning the archaeological evaluation, in particular Duncan Hawkins and Lorraine Mayo. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Wendy Rogers County Archaeologist for Kent County Council, who monitored the project for Swale Borough Council, and to BAM Construction and O'Keefe for their cooperation and help on site.

The evaluation was directed by William Santamaria, with the assistance of Albert Smith and the excavation was directed by Emilia Seredynska, with the assistance of Ashley Davis and Matthew Flaming. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Charlotte Porter. This report was written by Emilia Seredynska and edited by Andrew Souter. The project was managed by Rob De'Athe on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.

Aspire School, Staplehurst Road Sittingbourne, Kent

Archaeological Evaluation; Strip, Map & Sample excavation and Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by RPS, to undertake an archaeological investigation comprising 6 trial trenches, and mitigation comprising strip, map and sample excavation and watching brief of a 1.75ha parcel of land located at Aspire School, Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne, Kent, centred on NGR 589166 164636 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The proposed development comprises the construction of a new special educational needs primary school with associated car parking, drop-off area, pedestrian access, drainage, areas for formal and informal outdoor play and landscaping works.

1.1.3 A planning application (18/501863/FULL) was submitted to Swale Borough Council on 4th April 2018 and is awaiting decision. After consultation with the Kent County Council (KCC) Heritage the following conditions relating to archaeology were recommended:

1. No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of

i. archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and

ii. following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded, and that due regard is had to the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains.

2. No development shall take place until fencing has been erected, in a manner to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, about the Bronze Age barrows identified as cropmarks, and no works shall take place within the area inside that fencing without the consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that important archaeological remains are not adversely affected by construction works.

1.1.4 All works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed in order to undertake the evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2019). Wendy Rogers – Senior Archaeological Officer at KCC - approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing.

1.1.5 The archaeological mitigation was the final stage in a programme of archaeological works, which had included a previous desk-based assessment (MOLA 2017) and archaeological evaluation (WA 2018).

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the results of the archaeological mitigation, to interpret the results within a local, regional or wider archaeological context and assess whether the aims of the evaluation, excavation and watching brief have been met.

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The site is within an open field in the eastern part of Milton Regis, Sittingbourne (NGR 589166 164636). The site is bounded by the B2006 Staplehurst Road to the north and Vellum Drive to the west. To the east and southeast of the site boundary is open land. The site falls within the historic parish of Bobbing, under the administration of Swale Borough Council in the county of Kent.

1.3.2 The site is 2km west of Milton Creek, a shallow tidal inlet running northeast from Sittingbourne to join the Swale at Elmley Reach (4km to the northeast). The site is located 3.8km southwest of the Swale, a strip of sea separating north Kent from the Isle of Sheppey. To the northeast, the landscape is characterised by tidal marshland, where ground level is lower due to the presence of Milton Creek.

1.3.3 BGS mapping shows the study area as lying in the North Kent region which contains a variety of landscape types overlain by a mix of silty clay formations such as the Thanet, Oldhaven and Blackheath deposits, in contrast to the chalk of the South Kent region. The BGS shows the site as consisting of Head deposits (commonly found on valley floors, comprising sands, gravels and other material moved glacially or by wind or water action from higher areas) of Clay and Silt overlying the Thanet formation (described as a dense dark blue grey slightly clayey silty sand, with occasional cream-coloured shells and shell fragments).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background was provided in the Historic Environment Assessment produced by MOLA (MOLA 2017) and is not reproduced here. Suffice to say that the site has high potential for remains of Prehistoric and Saxon date due to the presence of extensive remains of both periods to the immediate north of the site and the remains of 2 possible ring ditches, indicating barrows, within the site itself.

2.2 Previous investigations related to the development

Aspire School Evaluation (2018)

2.2.1 A 16 trench evaluation was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in June/July 2018. A total of 4 trenches contained archaeological features. Two of the trenches were targeted over the extrapolated positions of potential ring ditches thought to represent the remains of Bronze Age Barrows. Ditches possibly relating to Bronze Age Barrows were recorded within three of the trenches, and it is likely that the difference between their locations and the extrapolated positions is due to the oblique nature of the aerial photography and the difficulty in accurately geolocating them.

2.2.2 A Neolithic rubbish pit was recorded in Trench 4, within the SMS area.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and in compliance with the CIfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a), were:

- To examine the archaeological resource within a given area or site within a framework of defined research objectives;
- To seek a better understanding of the resource;
- To compile a lasting record of the resource; and
- To analyse and interpret the results of the excavation and disseminate them.

3.2 Site-specific objectives

3.2.1 Following consideration of the archaeological potential of the site, the research objectives defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) were to:

- Determine if any additional archaeological evidence is present in the area surrounding the Neolithic pit recorded during the evaluation in Trench 4;
- Ensure that any archaeological remains within the car parking and landscaping areas are preserved *in-situ*.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in CIfA guidance (CIfA 2014a) and agreed in writing with the County Archaeologist at KCC and the client prior to being implemented. The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The evaluation trench locations were set out using GPS, in the approximate positions targeted over proposed locations of drainage construction, though trenches 16 and 19 had to be reduced slightly in length due to on-site obstructions.

4.2.2 The Strip, Map & Sample excavation area which was based on the external footprint of the proposed new school building and the attenuation tank and measured c. 5,640m^2 has been reduced to the south following consultation and approval of the County Archaeologist.

4.2.3 Both the trial trenches and Strip, Map & Sample area were excavated in level spits using a 360º excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.

4.2.4 Where necessary, the base of the trench/surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand. A sample of archaeological features and deposits identified was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the evaluation. A sample of natural features such as treethrow holes or geological variations were also investigated in order to assess their nature.

4.2.5 Spoil derived from both machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Where found, artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained.

4.2.6 Trenches and excavation area completed to the satisfaction of the client and the County Archaeologist for KCC were left opened. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

Service location and other constraints

4.2.7 The client provided information regarding the presence of any below/above-ground services. There were known buried services with a low pressure gas main located to the south and east. An 11kV overhead cable to the south, an 11kV below ground cable to the north and low voltage cables to the north and west.

4.2.8 Although none of these were located within the excavation areas, prior excavation, the areas were walked over and visually inspected to identify, where possible, the location of any below/ above-ground services. The areas were scanned before and during excavation with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) by trained personnel in order to verify the absence of any live underground services.

Recording

4.2.9 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated features and deposits was made including both plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections), and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD: Newlyn) heights of all principal features were calculated, and levels added to plans and section drawings.

4.2.10 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

Survey

4.2.11 The real time kinematic (RTK) survey of all excavated areas and features was carried out using a Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service. All survey data was recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSGM15 and OSTN15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

4.3.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the*

Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation (English Heritage 2011).

4.3.2 All artefacts were retained from excavated contexts, except features or deposits undoubtedly of modern date. In these circumstances sufficient artefacts were only retained to elucidate the date and function of the feature or deposit. All artefacts from the archaeological investigation were washed, marked, counted, weighed and identified.

4.4 Monitoring

4.4.1 Wendy Rogers – Senior Archaeological Officer at KCC, on behalf of Swale Borough Council, monitored the archaeological. Any variations to the WSI were agreed in advance with both the client and the County Archaeologist.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following section provides a summary description of the results of the archaeological mitigation. Details of individually excavated contexts and features are retained in the site archive and a detailed tabulated version of these is provided in **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2** of this report.

5.1.2 **Figure 1** presents the overall location of the site and **Figure 2** shows the phased archaeological results within the excavated areas. Selected photographs are provided in **Plates 1 - 14**.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

5.2.1 A common stratigraphic sequence was encountered within the site (**Plate 1**) and consisted of medium brownish grey heavily rooted silty clay ploughsoil measured approximately 0.20m in thickness overlying partially presented subsoil comprising a medium greyish brown silty clay. The overburden sealed the natural geology consisting light reddish brown silty clay with common flints inclusions. Natural geology was recorded at an average depth of 0.33m below ground level (BGL).

5.2.2 A layer of 0.86m thick made ground consisting common chalk, charcoal and modern demolition debris was recorded within Trench 14 (**Plate 4**).

5.3 Evaluation result

5.3.1 A total of six evaluation trenches were requested by the County Archaeologist prior the SMS excavation in order to assess the extent of the quarrying truncation and were positioned over proposed locations of drainage construction. 1 of the 6 excavated evaluation trenches contained archaeological features and deposits. No archaeological finds or features were observed within Trenches 14-16 (**Plate 2**), 18 and 19 (**Plate 3**) and therefore these trenches have not been discussed further.

5.3.2 Trench 17 was positioned within the south eastern portion of the site on west to east orientation. The trench produced two intercutting northwest to southeast aligned linear features, one of which (**2063**) was confirmed during Strip, Map & Sample excavation.

5.3.3 Ditch 1703, measuring 3.60m in length, 0.72 in width and 0.38m, had a concave base and moderately sloping concave sides. The linear feature contained single secondary fill which not delivered any finds.

5.3.4 The ditch 1703 was cut by a parallel feature 1705 characterised by a concave base and a steep concave profile. Ditch 1705 measured 0.57m wide and 0.38m deep. Continuation of this feature (**2063**) was identified within an excavation area.

5.4 Strip, Map & Sample excavation result

5.4.1 The excavation area, which was based on the external footprint of the proposed new school building and the attenuation tank, was targeted over evaluation Trench 4 in order to determine if any other archaeological evidence had survived within the area surrounding the Neolithic pit recorded in Trench 4.

5.4.2 The Strip, Map & Sample excavation produced two of ditches, several pits and a fence line consisted of 11 post holes.

Prehistoric

5.4.3 An approximately 12m+ long ditch 2062 (**Plate 5**), 1.20m wide and 0.03m deep running on broadly west to east alignment with a slight alteration to northwest to southeast was located to the east of excavated area. The ditch terminated towards the west and went beyond excavation area to the east. The linear feature 2062 was characterised by a U-shaped base and straight steep sloping sides. Its single homogenous fill produced pottery dating to the mid-late Bronze Age.

5.4.4 A post hole structure, interpreted as a fence line 2061, was identified broadly within the central part of the excavation area. The structure 2061 consisted of 11 oval and sub-oval post holes of various size and depth stretching for approximately 25m and formed the west to east aligned fence line leading towards the western Bronze Age barrow. The structure comprises features 2030, 2033, 2036, 2038, 2041, 2043, 2045, 2047, 2049, 2051 and 2053.

5.4.5 An average dimensions of a single post hole were 0.45m x 0.32m with an average depth of 0.17m. Most of the features constructing the fence line was characterised by a flat base and straight vertical or steep sides (**Plate 7** and **8**). Detailed description of these is provided in Appendix 2 of this report.

5.4.6 Eight of 11 post holes produced artefacts primarily dating the structure 2061 to the prehistoric period. The majority of the sherds of pottery recovered were tentatively dated to the Early Neolithic based on their fabric type, however they were also very small and abraded fragments and so could be residual intrusions. These post holes appear to be related to the nearby Bronze Age Barrow and Neolithic pit located in Trench 4.

5.4.7 A cluster of four pits was discovered approximately 25m south west of the late prehistoric mortuary activity, three of which produced material dating to the prehistoric.

5.4.8 A sub-circular pit 2015 (**Plate 9**) was revealed to the south of the excavated area. The pit, measuring 0.68m long, 0.56m wide and 0.15m deep, had a concave base and moderately sloping concave profile. The feature had been deliberately backfilled with likely to be domestic waste material contained prehistoric pottery and worked flint, including a flint arrowhead.

5.4.9 Feature 2020 (**Plate 10**) was identified about 3m east of the pit 2015. The pit was sub-circular in shape and characterised by a concave base and steep, concave sides and measured 1.14m in length, 0.90m in width and 0.19m in depth. A single deposit of fire and domestic waste comprising a large amount of pottery and worked flints, including an end scrapper, solidly dated to the Early Neolithic.

5.4.10 Almost 5m north of the pit 2015, a truncated sub-circular pit 2022 (**Plate 11**) measured 0.42m x 0.44m with a depth of 0.05m was located. The feature had concave base and sides and has been backfilled in a single event with debris containing highly abraded prehistoric pottery sherds.

Undated

5.4.11 Undated circular pit 2018 was situated between features 2015 and 2022. The pit had a flat base and a shallow concave profile and measured 0.43m in diameter with a depth of 0.06. A fire waste deposit deliberately dumped into the pit 2018 did not produced any artefacts.

5.4.12 A shallow sub-oval pit 2008 (**Plate 12**) having a flat base and concave sides was identified within the north eastern portion of the Strip, Map & Sample area. The feature measuring 0.66m long, 0.33m wide and 0.08m deep contained two fills none of which produced dating evidence.

5.4.13 A feature 2011 (**Plate 13**), interpreted as a heavily disturbed pit or a tree throw, was located directly adjacent to the southern site boundary. Exposed part of the pit 2011 measuring 0.70m x 0.08m and was 0.14m deep was characterised by a concave base and moderately sloping concave sides. No finds were recovered from its homogenous secondary fill.

5.4.14 Linear feature 2063 (**Plate 6**) was recorded within the southeastern portion of the site. The ditch, measuring 37m+ in length, 0.95m in width and with an average depth of 0.27m, had a concave base and moderately to shallow sloping concave sides. No dating evidence were recovered.

Natural features

5.4.15 A sample of natural features such shallow natural depressions were also investigated. Ditch like features 2004, 2006 and 2013 were identified to the north of the site and characterised by an irregular profile and base with an average depth of 0.23m. Those features were silted up gradually with surrounding material. A single piece of pottery recovered from the feature 2013 is considered to be residual.

5.4.16 A number of small tree throws and rooting disturbances dispersed across the site were also recorded.

5.5 Watching brief result

5.5.1 The watching brief comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the development outside the investigated areas. The watching brief monitored greenery removal and reduction of ground level carrying out in 0.05m spits up to 0.20-0.25m BGL (**Plate 14**) within the western Bronze Age barrow and 5m buffer zone to ensure that any archaeological remains were preserved *in-situ*.

5.5.2 The barrier fencing was erected, under the supervision of the monitoring archaeologist, around the area marked on plan as ‘Preservation *in-situ*’ (**Figure 1**) and remained fenced off throughout the development to ensure that significant archaeological remnants are not affected by construction works.

6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 A total of 3.1 kg of finds was recovered ranging in date from the Early Neolithic through to modern. The focus, however, is primarily on the Early Neolithic period. The finds from the

evaluation and excavation have been quantified by material type and context and have been scanned to assess their nature, condition and potential date range. This report refers to the material from both stages of work collectively. Totals are presented in **Table 1**.

6.2 Pottery

6.2.1 The assemblage consists of 276 sherds, weighing 1466 g. The majority of this material dates to the Early Neolithic period (81% by sherd count, 95% by weight) with small numbers of Middle or Late Bronze Age, Romano-British and post-medieval / modern sherds making up the remainder of the collection (**Table 1**). The prehistoric material forms the focus of this report, but a summary of the Romano-British and post-medieval / modern pottery is also included. In general, the condition of the assemblage is poor, with an overall mean sherd weight of 5.3 g.

6.2.2 The collection has been recorded in accordance with the current guidelines (Barclay *et al.* 2016). Detailed fabric and form analysis were undertaken on the prehistoric material with sherds examined using a x20 power binocular microscope and assigned to fabric groups based on the most prevalent inclusion type. Where possible, featured sherds were assigned a form type and other variables (e.g. firing, surface treatment and evidence of use) were also recorded. Detailed fabric descriptions and a breakdown of the fabric totals by period are presented in **Table 2**.

Early Neolithic

6.2.3 A total of 224 sherds (1387 g) of Early Neolithic pottery was found. The condition of this material is poor and characterised by a high degree of brokenness (mean sherd weight 6.2 g).

Fabric and form

6.2.4 Six fabrics were identified, four flint-tempered (F1–F3 and F5) and two sand and flint-tempered wares (QF1 and QF2). All of these are likely to have been of local manufacture.

6.2.5 The assemblage includes 16 rim fragments from at least six vessels. One vessel has a simple, plain upright rim (form R1; pit 2020), two have beaded rims (form R2; pit 2020 and posthole 2036), two have heavy, expanded rims (form R3; pit 2020 and posthole 2034) and one has a semi-rolled rim (form R4; pit 2020). Most rims are too small to ascertain the vessel profile but the simple, upright rim (form R1) from pit 2020 is likely to derive from a bowl of closed form similar to a vessel from Wingham, East Kent (Greenfield 1960, 64 and fig. 3, no.s 2 and 3) whilst other comparables can be found further afield amongst the S-profiled bowls from Staines causewayed enclosure (Robertson-Mackay 1987, 73–74 and fig. 42, P72 and 75) for example. The semi-rolled rim, also from pit 2020, is from a bowl with either an open or neutral profile and not too dissimilar to a bowl from the K2 causewayed enclosure at Kingsborough, Isle of Sheppey (Gibson and Leivers 2008, fig. 9, 11).

Surface treatment and decoration

6.2.6 Surface treatments are limited to burnishing (seven records) which occurs on the interior and / or exterior surfaces of sherds predominantly in sand and flint-tempered fabrics QF1 and QF2, whilst smoothing (one record) occurs on the outer surface of a plain body sherd from pit 403 in coarse flint-tempered fabric F1.

6.2.7 Decoration in the form of fingernail/tip impressions along the top of a heavy, expanded rim from pit 2020 occurs just once. This type of decoration is unusual amongst Early Neolithic ceramics, being more typical of the Middle Bronze Age period. However, the form and surface treatment (burnished exterior) of the vessel sit more comfortably within the Early

Neolithic traditions. The closest parallel to decoration of this sort on an Early Neolithic vessel currently found is a bowl with circular indentations on a flattened rim from Staines (Robertson-Mackay 1987, fig. 49, P149), although single vessels from the causewayed enclosures of Kingsborough K2, Sheppey (Gibson and Leivers 2008, 252 and fig. 9, 3) and Etton, Cambridgeshire (Kinnes 1998, fig. 183, M117) have finger-tip impressions immediately below their rims.

Distribution

6.2.8 The largest groups of Early Neolithic pottery came from pits 403 (42 sherds, 214 g) and 2020 (143 sherds, 984 g). All the sherds from pit 403 are featureless body fragments, the majority of which are likely to derive from a single vessel in coarse flint-tempered fabric F1. Pit 2020 contained fragments from at least four vessels, including that with the decorated rim (see above), one with a simple, upright rim, one beaded rimmed vessel and a bowl with a semi-rolled rim.

6.2.9 Of the remainder of the Early Neolithic assemblage a total of 35 sherds (136 g) came from nine postholes (2030, 2033, 2036, 2038, 2041, 2045, 2047, 2049, 2051) forming part of posthole group 2061. Much of this material, particularly the pieces found in postholes 2030, 2033, 2038, 2047 and 2051 is far more abraded than the material from pits 403 or 2020 and it is uncertain whether these sherds are not residual. A single featureless body sherd (4 g) of Early Neolithic was found residually within ditch group 2062.

Discussion

6.2.10 Although a small collection, the Early Neolithic assemblage from Aspire School provides a valuable addition to the ceramics from this period in the region. It is likely to date from the middle into the second half of the 4th millennium BC. Other Early Neolithic assemblages with similar characteristics in Kent have been found at Beechbrook Wood, Hothfield (Barclay *et al*. 2006, 25) and Wingham, East Kent (Greenfield 1960, 64 and fig. 3, nos 2 and 3). The Aspire School assemblage also shares affinities with elements of the material from the causewayed enclosures K1 and K2 at Kingsborough, Sheppey (Gibson and Leivers 2008, 245–253) and Chalk Hill, Ramsgate (Gibson 2019, 108 and fig. 51).

Middle or Late Bronze Age

6.2.11 Eleven sherds of pottery in a fine, flint-tempered fabric are of probable Middle or Late Bronze Age date. Six (14 g) of these were found in ditch 604 and five (19 g) came from ditch group 2062. One of the pieces from ditch group 2062 has short, stabbed impressions on the outer surface and, although the sherd is too small to determine a particular design/motif, this decorative technique is known to have been used on Middle Bronze Age globular jars across southern Britain with examples from Kent including a jar from Sandway Road, Lenham (Jones 2006, 4–5, fig. 1, 1) and King Edward Avenue, Broadstairs (McNee 2012, 107–8 and 274).

Prehistoric unspecified

6.2.12 Thirty-seven sherds could only be assigned a broader prehistoric date (**Table 1**). Of these, one grog-tempered piece (3 g; fabric G1), decorated with incised lines, was recovered from a colluvial layer in trench 10. It is abraded but of probable early prehistoric, potentially Early Bronze Age, date. The other fragments are all abraded, featureless body sherds in a range of fabrics containing varying quantities and proportions of flint, grog and quartz sand inclusions that are comparable with those from all the chronological periods discussed so far.

Romano-British and later pottery

6.2.13 An abraded body sherd of Romano-British sandy greyware came from gully 706. Sherds of post-medieval/modern date include a fragment of stoneware (4 g) found intrusively within Early Neolithic pit 2020, whilst a small fragment of refined whiteware (1 g) was found in posthole 2030 along with other sherds of prehistoric date.

6.3 Worked flint

6.3.1 The worked flint assemblage from the evaluation has been amalgamated with additional material from the excavation (**Table 1**). The revised total comprises 1029 pieces, including 616 chips (microdebitage), which accounted for 60% of the total. No chips were recovered from ditch sections, a factor that may relate to deposition or reduced sampling. Chips account for 57% of the assemblage totals from pits and 70% from postholes. This component is produced in large quantities when care and attention is given to detailed core control, a feature that is more frequent in Neolithic collections. When the microdebitage is excluded from calculations, the remaining material emphasizes the degree to which the most significant collections were recovered from pits 403 and 2020, with supplementary material from pit 2015. Retouched tools were also only recovered from the pits. Relatively small assemblages were collected from postholes with insignificant totals from the ditch sections.

Pits

6.3.2 The most significant collections were made from these three features. The assemblages are dominated by flakes and blade/lets, which account for 93% and 92% respectively from pits 403 and 2020 when microdebitage is excluded. Blades and bladelets are also well represented in both pits, accounting for 10% and 14% respectively and well within anticipated quotas from Early Neolithic assemblages. Assemblage totals from pit 2015 are insufficient to produce meaningful results. These industries were all derived from blank production. There are no cores or clear indicators of core preparation. All pieces are in mint condition, which together with the presence of chips, indicate that these assemblages are derived from a single source and are contemporary. Flaking was undertaken using hard stone hammers.

6.3.3 Nodules of raw material were derived from a gravel source, which may have been available from local surface outcrops. The flint, which is unpatinated, varied in quality from good, with an even texture to slightly coarser grained material. Two small chips of Bullhead flint were also noted.

6.3.4 Retouched material also includes a selection of anticipated Early Neolithic tools, which are dominated by microdenticulates, with distinctive edge gloss, which were found in all three pits. These implements are supplemented by large, thick, well-made end scrapers from pits 403 and 2020 and a delicately-made leaf arrowhead from pit 2015.

Postholes

6.3.5 These features produced variable totals of material, which are dominated by chips. Some of these pieces may have been produced by natural gravel abrasion; however, the majority appear to have resulted from flint working. These collections are also dominated by flakes with reduced quantities of blade/lets. It is unclear, from the nature of the collection, whether these collections represent material that is contemporary with the construction of the postholes or represents residual material that was incorporated at a later date.

Ditches

6.3.6 Only small collections were made from these ditch sections; however, it is notable that section 2028, which contained enhanced quantities of material, including a core and broken core, was dug within the area of the principal area of Early Neolithic activity.

Conclusions

6.3.7 The evaluation trenches established the potential presence of Early Neolithic activity as represented by pits containing pottery and worked flint. The subsequent excavation has confirmed this and helped to define the extent of the area in which Early Neolithic activity is represented. Currently no work has been attempted to place the worked flints in their wider context, in the county or other parts of Southern England.

6.4 Burnt flint

6.4.1 Burnt unworked flint (**Table 1**) was recovered from 19 contexts within 17 features including pits, postholes, ditches and natural features. This material type is intrinsically undatable but is often taken as an indicator of prehistoric activity. Although a small amount came from Early Neolithic pits 403 (120 g) and 2020 (87 g), the majority (519 g) came from 11 postholes within posthole group 2061. The largest quantity by weight came from posthole 2051 (125 g).

6.5 Fired clay

6.5.1 A total of 30 fragments (340 g) of fired clay was recovered from possible Early Neolithic pit 2015. These pieces are in a predominantly oxidised, slightly micaceous sandy fabric containing sparse, sub-rounded iron oxides. All the fragments are from a single object with a curved exterior and a thickness of approximately 70 mm. However not enough survives to determine either its full form or function.

6.6 Animal bone

6.6.1 Fragments of animal bones came from two deposits located in Trenches 4 and 10. Twenty-three unidentifiable fragments of calcined animal bone were retrieved from the sieved residues of sample 1 taken from fill 405 of Early Neolithic pit 403 and a further seven unidentifiable fragments (1 g) came from the sieved residue of sample 5 taken from fill 2021 of Early Neolithic pit 2020. A large piece of cattle pelvis came from colluvial deposit 1002. The bone is relatively large and might be from an improved (i.e. post-medieval or modern) breed of cattle.

6.7 Other finds

6.7.1 A single piece of ceramic building material (CBM) came from colluvial layer 1002; it is part of the flange of a Roman *tegula* roof tile.

6.7.2 Seven pieces of iron were recovered from topsoil contexts in Trenches 5, 7, 11 and 12. They comprise a boot heel, a small nail, and bar, rod and sheet fragments, all of probable post-medieval or modern date.

6.7.3 A single oyster shell came from the topsoil of Trench 12.

6.8 Conservation

No immediate conservation requirements were noted in the field. As potentially unstable material types, the iron objects are all stored with supportive packaging and a desiccant

(silica gel) to ensure a dry environment below 35% relative humidity. No further conservation treatment is considered necessary.

6.9 Recommendations

6.9.1 The pottery has been recorded in accordance with the nationally recognised guidelines (Barclay *et al*. 2016) and this report should be incorporated into any future publication text. However, it is recommended that at least three of the Early Neolithic rim sherds are illustrated. No further work is recommended for the other material types (worked flint, burnt flint, fired clay, ceramic building material, iron, shell or animal bone) although the comments presented in this report should be incorporated into the publication text, with some modification.

Table 1 Summary of finds by material type, number and weight (g)

Material type	**Evaluation T24226**		**Excavation 214840**		**Total**	
	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)
Pottery						
Early Neolithic	*42*	*214*	*182*	*1173*	*224*	*1387*
Middle or Late Bronze Age	*6*	*14*	*5*	*19*	*11*	*33*
Prehistoric unspecified	*22*	*19*	*15*	*20*	*37*	*39*
Romano-British	*1*	*2*	-	-	*1*	*2*
Post-medieval / modern	-	-	*3*	*5*	*3*	*5*
Sub-total	71	249	205	1217	276	1466
Flint	283	n/a	746	n/a	1029	n/a
Burnt flint	189	120	853	737	1042	857
Fired clay	-	-	30	340	30	340
Ceramic building material	1	174	-	-	1	174
Iron	7	222	-	-	7	222
Shell	1	5	-	-	1	5
Animal bone	23	83	7	1	30	84
Total	**575**	**853**	**1841**	**2295**	**2416**	**3148**

Table 2 Description and quantification of prehistoric pottery fabrics by period

Fabric code	**Fabric description**	**Evaluation**		**Excavation**		**Total**	
		No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)
Early Neolithic							
F1	A soft fabric containing common (25%), well-sorted, sub-rounded, quartz sand (<1 mm) and moderate (15%) poorly sorted, angular calcined flint (≤5mm)	37	170	61	539	98	709
F2	A soft, slightly rough fabric containing common (20%), poorly sorted, angular flint (≤10mm) and sparse (5%), sub-rounded iron oxides (≤2mm) in a very fine sandy matrix	3	29	9	33	12	62
F3	A soft, soapy fabric with sparse (7%), poorly sorted, angular flint (<2mm), sparse (5%), sub-angular voids (<3 mm) and sparse (3%) sub-rounded iron oxides (<1 mm) in a fine sandy matrix	2	15	1	1	3	16
F5	A soft fabric containing sparse (5%), poorly sorted, angular flint (1–7 mm), sparse (5%), linear black streaks (<2mm) and sparse (3%) sub-rounded iron oxides (<1 mm)	-	-	2	18	2	18

QF1	Soft fabric with common (25%), moderately sorted, sub-rounded quartz sand (<0.5 mm) and moderate (10%) poorly sorted angular flint (1–4 mm)	-	-	91	510	91	510
QF2	Soft fabric containing common (25%), moderately sorted, sub-rounded quartz sand (<0.5 mm), rare (3%) moderately sorted angular flint (<2 mm) and rare (1%) sub-rounded iron oxides (<1 mm)	-	-	18	72	18	72
Early Neolithic sub-total		*42*	*214*	*182*	*1173*	*224*	*1387*
Middle or Late Bronze Age							
F4	A soft, rough fabric with very common (30%), moderately sorted, angular flint (≤3mm but mostly ≤1mm)	6	14	5	19	11	33
Prehistoric unspecified							
F99	Flint-tempered, unspecified	18	11	3	5	21	16
G1	A slightly soapy and sandy-textured fabric with sparse (7%), sub-angular grog (≤3mm), rare (1%), rounded iron oxides (<1mm) in a very fine sandy matrix	1	3	-	-	1	3
GF99	Grog and flint-tempered, unspecified	2	4	1	1	3	5
Q99	Sandy ware, unspecified	-	-	1	1	1	1
QF99	Sand and flint-tempered, unspecified	1	1	10	13	11	14
Prehistoric unspecified sub-total		*22*	*19*	*15*	*20*	*37*	*39*
TOTAL		**70**	**247**	**202**	**1212**	**272**	**1459**

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Fourteen bulk sediment samples were taken from pits and postholes of Prehistoric and uncertain chronology and were processed for the recovery and assessment of the environmental evidence. Two samples had been taken during the evaluation stage.

7.2 Aims and Methods

7.2.1 The purpose of this assessment is to determine the potential of the environmental remains preserved at the site to address project aims and to provide data valuable for wider research frameworks. The nature of this assessment follows recommendations set up by Historic England (Campbell et al. 2011).

7.2.2 The size of the bulk sediment samples varied between 1.2 and 57 litres, and on average was around 15 litres. The majority of the samples were processed by standard flotation methods on a Siraf-type flotation tank, with the smaller samples being processed by bucket flotation; the flot retained on a 0.25 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 4 mm and 1 mm fractions. The coarse fractions (>4 mm) were sorted by eye and discarded. The environmental material extracted from the residues was added to the flots. The fine residue fractions and the flots were scanned using a stereo incident light microscopy (Leica MS5 microscope) at magnifications of up to x40 for the identification of environmental remains. Different bioturbation indicators were considered, including the percentage of roots, the abundance of modern seeds and the presence of mycorrhizal fungi sclerotia (e.g. *Cenococcum geophilum*) and animal remains, such as burrowing snails (*Cecilioides acicula*), or earthworm eggs and insects, which would not be preserved unless anoxic conditions prevailed on site. The preservation and nature of the charred plant and wood

charcoal remains, as well as the presence of other environmental remains such as terrestrial and aquatic molluscs and animal bone was recorded. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary and Hopf (2000), for cereals. Abundance of remains is qualitatively quantified (A*** = exceptional, A** = 100+, A* = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = <5) as an estimation of the minimum number of individuals and not the number of remains per taxa. Mollusc nomenclature follows Anderson (2005).

7.3 Results

7.3.1 The flots from the bulk sediment samples were of variable volumes (Table 3). There were generally moderate to high numbers of roots, low numbers of modern seeds and one sample contained high numbers of the burrowing snail *Cecilioides acicula*, all of these factors may be indicative of some stratigraphic movement and the possibility of contamination by later intrusive elements.

7.3.2 Charred material comprised varying degrees of preservation. Wood charcoal was noted in generally low to moderate quantities. Remains of terrestrial molluscs and small animal coprolites were also present. No other environmental evidence was preserved in the bulk sediment samples.

7.3.3 The bulk sediment samples from pits 2015 (deposit 2017), 2020 (deposit 2021), postholes 2030 (deposit 2032), 2041 (deposit 2042), 2045 (deposit 2046), 2049 (deposit 2050) and 2051 (deposit 2052) all produced charred assemblages containing cereal remains (some from pit 2020, deposit 2021 were possibly intrusive). These included *Triticum* sp. (wheat, including *T.* cf. *dicoccum* (tentatively identified emmer)), *Hordeum vulgare* (barley) and unidentified Triticeae (cereal) grain fragments. Also present were *Corylus avellana* (hazel) nut shell fragments, *Prunus spinosa* (blackthorn), Vicieae (vetches) and pieces of Maleae (apple/pear) mesocarp. The flots from postholes 2036 (deposit 2037) and 2047 (deposit 2048) produced only hazel nut shell fragments, and no charred plant remains were recovered from posthole 2053, deposit 2055, posthole 2043, deposit 2044, posthole 2038, deposit 2040 and pit 2008, deposit 2010.

7.4 Discussion

7.4.1 The results on the samples taken during the excavation are similar to those obtained during the evaluation. Although the charred assemblages were fairly small, the presence of non-intrusive cereal remains suggests that crop processing activities were taking place in the area. The chronology of this activities may be early prehistoric, as indicated by the potential presence of emmer wheat. The exploitation of wild plants was also likely to be occurring as indicated by the presence of hazel nut, apple/pear and blackthorn which are common in prehistoric pit deposits. Moderate amounts of wood charcoal recovered alongside these assemblages suggests the remains of domestic fires. Moderate amounts of wood charcoal but no plant remains were recovered from posthole 2053, deposit 2055 and posthole 2033, deposit 2034, and could indicate in-situ burning of posts.

7.5 Further potential

7.5.1 The analysis of the charred plant assemblages could have some potential to provide information on the nature of the settlement and plant exploitation activities in prehistory. This evidence should be directly radiocarbon dated to provide a firm chronological framework. Should the assemblage prove to be Neolithic or Bronze Age, full analysis of the plant remains is recommended. The samples proposed for analysis are indicated with a “P” in the analysis column in Table 3. All identifiable charred plant macrofossils will be extracted from the <5.6/4 residues and the flot, which may be subsampled with the aid of a riffle box

in the case of very rich assemblages. The analysis will involve the full quantification (Antolín *et al*. 2016) and taphonomic assessment of the charred plant assemblages.

7.5.2 The analysis of the wood charcoal would provide little information on the taxonomic composition, management and exploitation of the local woodland due to the low numbers of fragments. Therefore, no further work is proposed on the wood charcoal.

7.5.3 A total of three radiocarbon samples from short-lived plant remains (cereal grains) are proposed to be submitted to the 14CHRONO Centre, Queen's University, Belfast. The calibrated age ranges will be calculated with OxCal 4.2.3 (Bronk-Ramsey and Lee 2013) using the IntCal13 curve (Reimer et al. 2013). All radiocarbon dates will be quoted as uncalibrated years before present (BP), followed by the lab code and the calibrated date-range (cal. BC) at the 2σ (95.4%) confidence, with the end points rounded out to the nearest 10 years.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Summary

8.1.1 The evaluation established that the southern half of the site was affected by historic quarrying activity and it is unlikely that any archaeological features or deposits, if present here, survived within that portion.

8.1.2 The Strip, Map & Sample excavation revealed a total of 9 distinct archaeological features, comprising a fence line consisted of 11 post holes, two field boundary ditches and six discreet features. A number of tree throws and natural depressions spread out across the site were also identified.

8.2 Conclusion

8.2.1 The archaeological investigation has been successful in achieving the aims and objectives as set out in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) recording a concentration of archaeology in the central section of the site. The main area of activity, dates to the prehistoric period, and was focused to the west of known Middle/Late Bronze Age barrows.

8.2.2 9 of the postholes that form structure 2061 (10 if eval 'pit' 403 is included) contained prehistoric pottery fragments, primarily dated to the early Neolithic period. As the pottery fragments were all small and fairly abraded it is possible that they represent residual deposition, however due to the consistency of early Neolithic fragments in the majority of postholes this is considered to be unlikely.

8.2.3 Neolithic activity is confirmed by the cluster of pits to the south of structure 2061, indicating that the site was at least sporadically occupied between the Early Neolithic and Late Bronze Ages. The lack of dating evidence from the Iron Age to the modern period, with the exception of four very small sherds residual pottery sherds, suggests that the site was not intensively occupied during this period and is likely to have been undeveloped or agricultural land throughout.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

9.1.1 The archive resulting from the excavation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Maidstone. In the absence of any museum in the area actively collecting archaeological archives, no final repository for the project archive has yet been identified.

The archive will continue to be stored at the offices of Wessex Archaeology until such time as the situation is resolved. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

9.2 Preparation of the archive

9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the accepting museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; CIfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the **214840**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 01 cardboard boxes or airtight plastic boxes of artefacts and ecofacts, ordered by material type;
- 01 files/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics.

9.3 Selection policy

9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the museum, a process of selection and retention will be followed so that only those artefacts or ecofacts that are considered to have potential for future study will be retained. The selection policy will be agreed with the museum, and is fully documented in the project archive.

9.4 Security copy

9.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

9.5 OASIS

9.5.1 An OASIS online record (http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations* 2003. In some instances, certain regional museums may

require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench summaries

NGR coordinates and OD heights taken at centre of each trench; depth bgl = below ground level

Trench No 14	**Length 30 m**	**Width 1.80 m**	**Depth 1.12 m**
Easting 589117.92	**Northing 164603.83**	**m OD 20.61**	

Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
1401		Topsoil	Mid brownish grey. Silty clay. Abundant rooting.	0.00 - 0.18
1402		Made ground	Mid reddish brown. Silty clay. Common chalk, charcoal and modern bricks.	0.18 - 1.04
1403		Natural	Light reddish brown. Silty clay. Abundant small to large sub-rounded and sub-angular flint stones.	1.04 - 1.12+

Trench No 15	**Length 30 m**	**Width 1.80 m**	**Depth 0.33 m**
Easting 589147.91	**Northing 164597.80**	**m OD 19.49**	

Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
1501		Topsoil	Mid brownish grey. Silty clay. Loose compaction. Abundant rooting. Rare charcoal and fired clay flecks as well as blue and white and modern glass.	0.00 - 0.15
1502		Natural	Light reddish brown. Silty clay. Common small to large sub-rounded and sub-angular flint stones.	0.15 - 0.33

Trench No 16	**Length 26 m**	**Width 1.80 m**	**Depth 0.60 m**
Easting 589185.05	**Northing 164661.89**	**m OD 19.63**	

Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
1601		Topsoil	Mid brownish grey. Silty clay. Abundant rooting	0.00 - 0.30
1602		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown. Silty clay. Sparse chalk flecks and sparse small sub-angular flint stones.	0.30 - 0.44
1603		Natural	Light reddish brown. Silty clay. Abundant small to large sub-rounded and sub-angular flint stones.	0.44 - 0.60

Trench No 17	**Length 30 m**	**Width 1.80 m**	**Depth 0.38 m**
Easting 589172.20	**Northing 164617.51**	**m OD 19.23**	

Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
1701		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown. Silty clay. Common chalk flecks. Abundant rooting. Rare small sub-angular flint stones.	0.00 - 0.24
1702		Natural	Light reddish brown. Silty clay. Abundant small to large flint stones.	0.24 - 0.38
1703	1704	Ditch	Linear ditch with moderate, concave sides and a concave base. Length: >3.60 m. Width: >0.72 m. Depth: 0.38 m.	
1704	1703	Secondary fill	Light brownish yellow silty clay with common small to medium sized sub-angular and sub-rounded flint stones, sparse rooting, sparse chalk flecks inclusions.	
1705	1706	Ditch	Linear ditch with steep, concave sides and a concave base. Length: >3.60 m. Width: 0.57 m. Depth: 0.38 m.	

1706	1705	Secondary fill	Dark reddish brown clayey silt with common small to medium sized flint stones inclusions. Archaeological components: Burnt flints, possible worked flint, rare charcoal flecks.	

Trench No 18	**Length 50 m**	**Width 1.80 m**	**Depth 0.26 m**
Easting 589209.84	**Northing 164631.50**	**m OD 19.20**	

Context Number	**Fill Of/Filled With**	**Interpretative Category**	**Description**	**Depth BGL**
1801		Topsoil	Dark brownish grey silty clay. Occasional small sub-rounded flints and charcoal. Clear boundary with subsoil.	0.00-0.17
1802		Subsoil	Mid orangey brown silty clay. Moderate small to medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints. Clear boundary with natural. Rooted.	0.17-0.26
1803		Natural	Mid yellowish brown silty clay. Abundant small to medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints. Patches of brickearth throughout.	0.26+

Trench No 19	**Length 15 m**	**Width 1.80 m**	**Depth 0.23 m**
Easting 589139.94	**Northing 164701.80**	**m OD 19.31**	

Context Number	**Fill Of/Filled With**	**Interpretative Category**	**Description**	**Depth BGL**
1901		Topsoil/ made ground	Mid greyish brown. Clayey silt. Loose compaction. Common charcoal and fired clay flecks. Abundant rooting and common small sub-angular flint stones.	0.00 - 0.19
1902		Natural	Light reddish brown. Silty clay. Abundant small to large sub-angular and sub-rounded flint stones.	0.19 - 0.23

Appendix 2 Context index

Context Number	Type	Category	Fill of/Filled With
2004	**Cut**	**Natural feature**	**2005**
Linear natural feature with moderate, concave sides and an irregular/undulating base. Length: >18.00 m. Width: 1.51 m. Depth: 0.18 m.			
2005	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2004**
Mid reddish brown silty clay with small to medium subangular and sub-rounded flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Fired clay (1%).			
2006	**Cut**	**Natural feature**	**2007**
Linear natural feature with moderate, stepped sides and an irregular/undulating base. Length: >18.00 m. Width: 1.02 m. Depth: 0.20 m.			
2007	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2006**
Light yellowish brown silty clay with small and medium moderate subangular flints, rare chalk inclusions. Archaeological components: Fired clay (1%).			
2008	**Cut**	**Pit**	**2009, 2010**
Sub-oval pit with shallow, concave sides and a flat base. Length: 0.66 m. Width: 0.33 m. Depth: 0.08 m.			
2009	**Fill**	**Primary fill**	**2008**
Light yellowish grey silty clay with occasional small rounded pebbles and subangular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Rare charcoal flecks.			
2010	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2008**
Dark brownish grey silty clay with rare small subangular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Very common charcoal flecks.			
2011	**Cut**	**Pit / Tree Throw**	**2012**
Sub-oval pit or tree throw with moderate, concave sides and a concave base. Length: >0.70 m. Width: 0.80 m. Depth: 0.14 m.			
2012	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2011**
Mid greyish brown silty clay with sparse small subangular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Occasional charcoal flecks.			
2013	**Cut**	**Natural feature**	**2014**
Linear natural feature with moderate, concave sides and an irregular/undulating base. Length: 4.30 m. Width: 0.92 m. Depth: 0.32 m.			
2014	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2013**
Light yellowish brown silty clay with moderate small and medium subangular flints, rare chalk inclusions. Archaeological components: Pottery.			
2015	**Cut**	**Pit**	**2016, 2017**
Sub-circular pit with moderate, concave sides and a concave base. Length: 0.68 m. Width: 0.56 m. Depth: 0.15 m.			
2016	**Fill**	**Primary fill**	**2015**
Light greyish yellow silty clay.			
2017	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2015**
Dark brownish grey almost black silty clay with rare small subangular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Charcoal flecks and chunks, pottery, worked flints (including arrowhead), burnt flint.			
2018	**Cut**	**Pit**	**2019**
Circular pit with shallow, concave sides and a flat base. Diameter: 0.43 m. Depth: 0.06 m.			
2019	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2018**
Mid blackish brown silty clay with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Sparse charcoal.			
2020	**Cut**	**Pit**	**2021**
Sub-circular pit with steep, concave sides and a concave base. Length: 1.14 m. Width: >0.90 m. Depth: 0.19 m.			
2021	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2020**
Dark brown with a reddish-yellow hue silty sand with sparse sub-angular flint inclusions. Archaeological components: Pottery, flint (including scrapper), burnt flint, charcoal.			
2022	**Cut**	**Pit**	**2023**
Sub-circular pit with shallow, concave sides and a concave base. Length: 0.42 m. Width: 0.44 m. Depth: 0.05 m.			
2023	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2022**
Dark brownish grey silty clay with common small sub-angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Pottery, worked flints.			
2024	VOIDED		
2025	VOIDED		
2026	**Cut**	**Ditch**	**2027**
Linear ditch with steep, straight sides and a v-shaped base. Length: >12.00 m. Width: 1.02 m. Depth: 0.30 m.			
2027	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2026**
Dark greyish brown silty clay with common small to medium sized subangular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Pottery, worked flints.			
2028	**Cut**	**Ditch**	**2029**

Context Number	Type	Category	Fill of/Filled With
Linear ditch with steep, straight sides and a U-shaped base. Length: >12.00 m. Width: 1.14 m. Depth: 0.29 m.			
2029	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2028**
Dark greyish brown silty clay with common medium sized subangular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Pottery, burnt flint.			
2030	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2031, 2032**
Oval posthole with steep, concave sides and a concave base. Length: 0.52 m. Width: 0.37 m. Depth: 0.17 m.			
2031	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2030**
Light reddish yellow silty clay with rare small sub-angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Sparse charcoal flecks.			
2032	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2030**
Dark brownish grey silty clay with rare small sub-angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Worked flint, charcoal flecks.			
2033	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2034, 2035**
Sub-oval posthole with vertical, straight sides and a flat base. Length: 0.52 m. Width: 0.35 m. Depth: 0.20 m.			
2034	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2033**
Dark brownish grey almost black silty clay with rare small sub-angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Abundant charcoal flecks, worked flint.			
2035	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2033**
Light reddish yellow silty clay with rare small sub-angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Rare charcoal flecks.			
2036	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2037**
Oval posthole with vertical, straight sides and a flat base. Length: 0.36 m. Width: 0.26 m. Depth: 0.14 m.			
2037	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2036**
Dark brownish grey silty clay with sparse small to medium sized sub-angular flints, rare small rounded pebbles inclusions. Archaeological components: Abundant charcoal, worked flints, pottery.			
2038	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2039, 2040**
Sub-oval posthole with steep, straight sides and a flat base. Length: 0.52 m. Width: 0.30 m. Depth: 0.16 m.			
2039	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2038**
Mid yellowish grey silty clay with rare small sub-angular flint inclusions. Archaeological components: Common charcoal flecks.			
2040	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2038**
Dark brownish grey almost black silty clay with moderate very small angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Abundant charcoal.			
2041	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2042**
Sub-oval posthole with vertical, straight sides and a concave base. Length: 0.52 m. Width: 0.28 m. Depth: 0.23 m.			
2042	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2041**
Mid brownish grey silty clay with rare medium to large sized sub-angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Common charcoal flecks, pottery.			
2043	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2044**
Oval posthole with moderate, concave sides and a concave base. Length: 0.36 m. Width: 0.18 m. Depth: 0.07 m.			
2044	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2043**
Light brownish grey silty clay. Archaeological components: Rare charcoal flecks.			
2045	**Cut**	**Post hole / stake hole**	**2046**
Oval post hole / stake hole with steep, stepped sides and a U-shaped base. Length: 0.38 m. Width: 0.24 m. Depth: 0.17 m.			
2046	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2045**
Light orangey grey silty clay with rare small sub-angular flints and small rounded pebbles inclusions. Archaeological components: Sparse charcoal flecks.			
2047	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2048**
Circular posthole with shallow, concave sides and a flat base. Length: 0.38 m. Width: 0.34 m. Depth: 0.04 m.			
2048	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2047**
Light yellowish grey silty clay. Archaeological components: Pottery, worked flints, rare charcoal flecks.			
2049	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2050**
Oval posthole with vertical, straight sides and a sloping base. Length: 0.50 m. Width: 0.40 m. Depth: 0.35 m.			
2050	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2049**
Dark brownish grey almost black silty clay with common medium to large sized sub-angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Abundant charcoal flecks, pottery, worked flints.			
2051	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2052**
Oval posthole with vertical, straight sides and a flat base. Length: 0.49 m. Width: 0.34 m. Depth: 0.20 m.			
2052	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2051**
Mid brownish grey silty clay with sparse small sub-angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Charcoal chunks, worked flint, pottery.			
2053	**Cut**	**Posthole**	**2054, 2055**
Circular posthole with steep, straight sides and a flat base. Length: 0.43 m. Width: 0.42 m. Depth: 0.15 m.			
2054	**Fill**	**Primary fill**	**2053**
Light yellowish grey silty clay with moderate medium to large sized sub-angular flints, rare small rounded pebbles inclusions.			

Context Number	Type	Category	Fill of/Filled With
2055	**Fill**	**Deliberate backfill**	**2053**
Dark brownish grey silty clay with rare medium sized angular flints inclusions. Archaeological components: Common charcoal flecks, worked flint.			
2056	**Cut**	**Ditch terminus**	**2057**
Linear ditch terminal with shallow, concave sides and a concave base. Length: >37.00 m. Width: 0.96 m. Depth: 0.18 m.			
2057	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2056**
Light greyish yellow silty clay loam with common small to medium sized flint gravel inclusions.			
2058	**Cut**	**Ditch**	**2059, 2060**
Linear ditch with moderate, concave sides and a concave base. Length: >37.00 m. Width: 0.94 m. Depth: 0.35 m.			
2059	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2058**
Light brownish grey silty sandy loam with abundant medium / large sub-angular flints inclusions.			
2060	**Fill**	**Secondary fill**	**2058**
Mid yellowish grey silty sandy loam with very common medium sized and large gravel inclusions.			
2061	**Group**	**Fence line**	**n/a**
11 (12 including [403] recorded during evaluation phase) post holes identified broadly in the central portion of the area. Forming likely to be a fence line on west-east alignment leading towards western Bronze Age barrow. Approx. 25m long. Group components: 2030, 2033, 2036, 2038, 2041, 2043, 2045, 2047, 2049, 2051, 2053			
2062	**Group**	**Ditch**	**n/a**
Approximately 12m long, linear shaped feature running on broadly W-E alignment, slightly NW-SE. Going beyond excavation area towards SE and terminates to the NW. Approximately 1.10m wide and 0.30m deep containing single homogeneous fill with dating evidence placed it into prehistoric period. The ditch had a U/V shaped base and straight steep sloping sides. The feature is likely to be a boundary ditch of prehistoric origin probably related to Bronze Age barrow as located approximately 30m SW of the barrows. Group components: 2026, 2028			
2063	**Group**	**Ditch**	**n/a**
Linear shaped feature running on NW-SE alignment, beyond excavation area towards SE, terminates to NW. Identified within evaluation trench 17 - [1703] where was cut by a drainage ditch [1705]. The ditch had a concave base and moderately sloping concave sides, shallower at terminus. Feature is likely to be a boundary ditch associated with Bronze Age barrow however, due to the lack of artefacts its origin remains unclear. Group components: 1703, 2056, 2058			

Appendix 3 Environmental Data

Table 3 Assessment of the environmental evidence

Feature	Context	Sample	Vol (l)	Flot (ml)	Bioturbation proxies	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal > 2mm (ml)	Charcoal	Other	Analysis	Comments (Preservation)
403	405	1	28	300	90%	A	-	*Triticum* sp. (inc. *spelta* and *dicoccum*), *Hordeum vulgare*, Triticeae	A	*Corylus avellana*	50 ml	Mature	Crem. Bone	P, C14	Poor
403	404	2	12	60	90%	C	-	*Triticum* sp., Triticeae	C	*Corylus avellana*	1 ml	Mature	-	P	Poor (very small fragments)
2008	2010	3	1.3	4	40%, C, I	-	-	-	-	-	Trace	Mature	-		-
2015	2017	4	17	125	40%, A, E, I	B	-	*Triticum* sp. (inc. cf. *dicoccum*), Triticeae	C	*Corylus avellana*	20	Mature	Moll-t	P, C14	Poor
2020	2021	5	57	400	50%, A, I, *Cecilioides acicula* (A*)	A		*Triticum* sp., *Hordeum vulgare,* Triticeae	C	*Corylus avellana* shell and Maleae mesocarp	80	Mature	Moll-t	P	Heterogenous (some grain looks med or later)
2030	2032	6	1.2	60	70%, A, E, I	C	-	*Triticum* sp. (inc. cf. *dicoccum*), Triticeae	C	*Corylus avellana*	4	Mature	Sac (C)	P, C14	Heterogenous
2033	2034	7	24	160	20%, A	-	-	-	-	-	30	Mature	-		-
2038	2040	8	10	50	20%, C, I	-	-	-	-	-	5	Mature	-		-
2036	2037	9	8	40	15%, C, I	-	-	-	C	*Corylus avellana*	10	Mature	Sac (C)		Poor
2041	2042	10	14	40	60%, B, E, I	C	-	*Triticum* sp., Triticeae	-	-	5	Mature	-	P	Poor
2043	2044	11	3.5	15	70%, C, I	-	-	-	-	-	1	Mature	-		-
2045	2046	12	3.5	50	10%, C	C	-	Triticeae	-	-	13	Mature	-	P	Poor
2047	2048	13	4	20	50%, C, E, I	-	-	-	C	*Corylus avellana*	2	Mature	-		Fair

Feature	Context	Sample	Vol (l)	Flot (ml)	Bioturbation proxies	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal > 2mm (ml)	Charcoal	Other	Analysis	Comments (Preservation)
2049	2050	14	36	250	5%, A, I	C	-	*Triticum* sp., Triticeae	C	*Corylus avellana,* Vicieae	50	Mature	Moll-t	P	Heterogenous
2051	2052	15	19	60	30%, B, I	C	-	*Triticum* sp., Triticeae	C	*Corylus avellana, Prunus spinosa*	15	Mature	-	P	Heterogenous
2053	2055	16	9	125	20%, C, E, I	-	-	-	-	-	40	Mature	-		-

Key: Scale of abundance: A*** = exceptional, A** = 100+, A* = 30-99, A = 30-10, B = 9-5, C = <5; Bioturbation proxies: Roots (%), Uncharred seeds (scale of abundance), E = earthworm eggs, I = insects; Sac = small animal charred faecal pellets,; Analysis: P = plant, C14 = radiocarbon

Appendix 4 KCC HER Summary Form

Site Name: Aspire School	
Site Address: Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne, Kent	
Summary of discoveries: The evaluation established that the southern half of the site was affected by historic quarrying activity and it is unlikely that any archaeological features or deposits, if present here, survived within that portion. The Strip, Map & Sample excavation revealed a total of 9 distinct archaeological features, comprising a fence line (consisted of 11 individual post holes), two field boundary ditches and six discreet features. A number of tree throws and natural depressions spread out across the site were also identified.	
District/Unitary: Swale Borough	**Parish:** Bobbing
Period(s): prehistoric	
NGR (centre of site to nearest 1m): 589166 164636 (TQ 89166 64636) **(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)**	
Type of archaeological work (delete) Archaeological Evaluation, Strip, Map & Sample excavation and Watching Brief	
Date of fieldwork (dd/mm/yy) From: 29/07/2019 **To:** 19/08/2019	
Unit/contractor undertaking recording: Wessex Archaeology	
Geology: Head deposits of Clay and Silt overlying the Thanet formation (described as a dense dark blue grey slightly clayey silty sand, with occasional cream-coloured shells and shell fragments).	
Title and author of accompanying report: Title: Aspire School, Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne, Kent; Archaeological Evaluation, Strip, Map & Sample Excavation and Watching Brief Report Authors: Emilia Seredynska	
Summary of fieldwork results The archaeological investigation revealed a concentration of archaeology in the central section of the site. The main area of activity dated to prehistoric period was focused to the west of known Bronze Age barrows. The archaeological mitigation also clarified that the southern half of the site was severely truncated by historic quarrying activity and it is unlikely that any archaeological features or deposits survived within that part. The archaeological watching brief consisted of monitoring a topsoil reduction of 0.20-0.25m around the Bronze Age barrows which were intended to be preserved *in-situ.*	
Location of archive/finds: Wessex Archaeology Maidstone Office	
Contact at Unit: Rob De'Athe	**Date:** 28/01/2020

Appendix 5 Oasis Form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-382650

Project details

Project name	Aspire School
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by RPS, to undertake an archaeological mitigation on land at Aspire School, Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne, Kent. Secondary evaluation, SMS excavation and watching brief on the proposed Aspire School development, after a previous phase of archaeological evaluation. The mitigation revealed 9 distinct archaeological features, comprising a fence line consisted of 11 post holes, two field boundary ditches and six discreet features. The fence line is most likely of Early Neolithic date, while three of the discreet features are prehistoric in origin.
Project dates	Start: 29-07-2019 End: 19-08-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	214840 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	18/501863/FULL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	FENCE LINE Late Prehistoric
Monument type	PIT Neolithic
Significant Finds	POTTERY Late Prehistoric
Significant Finds	FLINT SCRAPER Neolithic
Significant Finds	FLINT ARROWHEAD Neolithic
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Neolithic
Investigation type	"Part Excavation","Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT SWALE BOBBING Aspire Special School, Sittingbourne
Postcode	ME10 5AD
Study area	1.76 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 89166 64636 51.348705231201 0.716739769879 51 20 55 N 000 43 00 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	RPS
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Rob De'Athe
Project supervisor	Emilia Seredynska
Type of sponsor/funding body	Consultancy
Name of sponsor/funding body	RPS

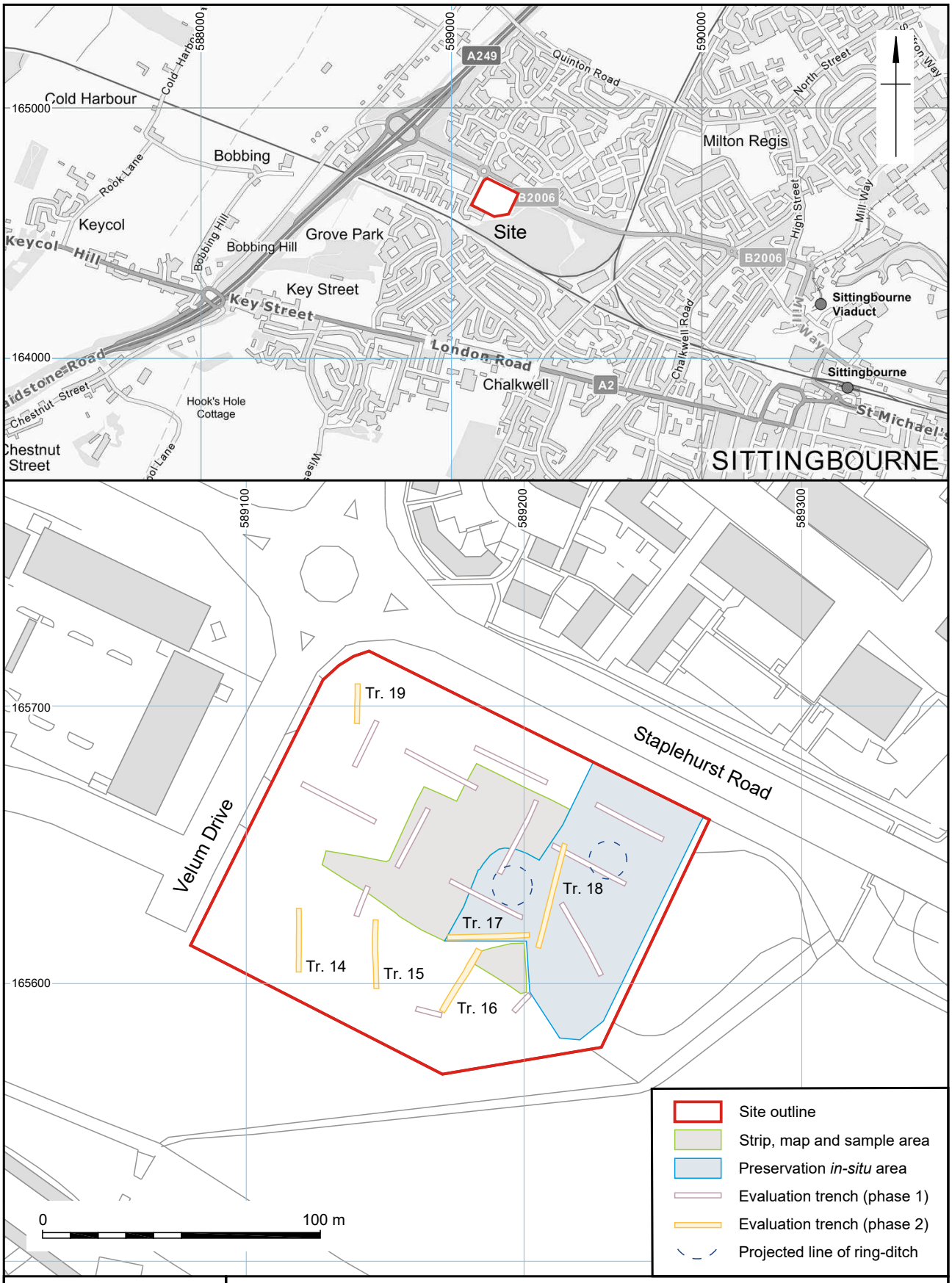
Project archives

Physical Archive ID	214840
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Metal","Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive ID	214840
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive ID	24840
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Aspire School, Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne, Kent: Archaeological Evaluation; Strip, Map and Sample excavation and Watching Brief Interim Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Seredynska, E
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Souter, A
Other bibliographic details	214840.6
Date	2020
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Maidstone
Description	A4/A3, Comb bound, clear covers

Entered by	Andrew Souter (a.souter@wessexarch.co.uk)
Entered on	28 January 2020



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Coordinate system: OSGB36 (OSTN15/OSGM15)

Site location plan

Figure 1

589100

589200

164600

Tr. 1

Tr. 2

Tr. 3

Tr. 4

Tr. 5

Tr. 6

Tr. 7

Tr. 9

Tr. 10

Tr. 11

Tr. 12

Tr. 13

Tr. 14

Tr. 15

Tr. 16

Tr. 17

Tr. 18

2004

2008

2013

403

2030

2033

2038

2036

Group 2061

2041

2043

2045

2047

2049

2051

2053

608

Group 612

Group 2062

2011

2022

2018

2015

2020

708

Group 2063

Group 710

Group 2063

0 10 20 m

Site outline

Strip, map and sample area

Preservation *in-situ* area

Evaluation trench (phase 1)

Evaluation trench (phase 2)

Projected line of ring-ditch

Prehistoric feature

Probably Prehistoric feature

Undated feature

Geological feature

Disturbance

Coordinate system:
OSGB36 (OSTN15/OSGM15)

Date:	28/01/2020
Revision Number:	0
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Illustrator:	RG/ND
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Rep figs\Strip_map_sample\2020_01_28\214840.dwg	

Phased archaeological plan within excavated areas and 'preservation *in-situ* area'

Figure 2

Plate 1: Representative section of Trench 18, viewed from the west northwest

Plate 2: Trench 16, viewed from the north

Date:	10/09/2019	Revision Number:	0
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Plate 3 Trench 19, viewed from the north

Plate 4: Representative section of Trench14, viewed from the west

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Plate 5: Ditch - group 2062, viewed from the east

Plate 6: Ditch - group 2063, viewed from the northwest

Date:	10/09/2019	Revision Number:	0
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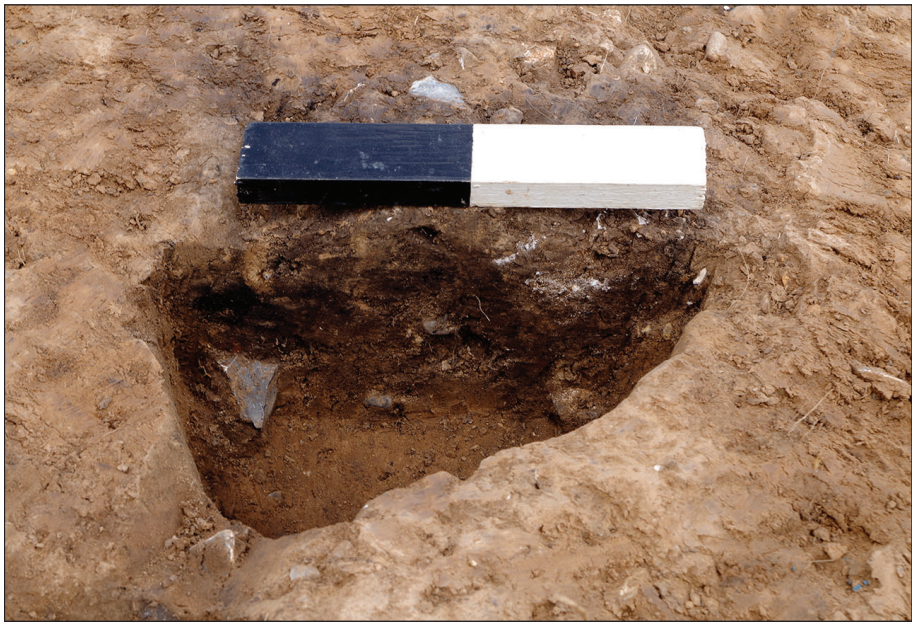

Plate 7: Posthole 2036 - part of structure 2061, viewed from the southwest

Plate 8: Posthole 2049 - part of structure 2061, viewed from the southwest

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Plate 9: Pit 2015, viewed from the north northwest

Plate 10: Pit 2020, viewed from the north northeast

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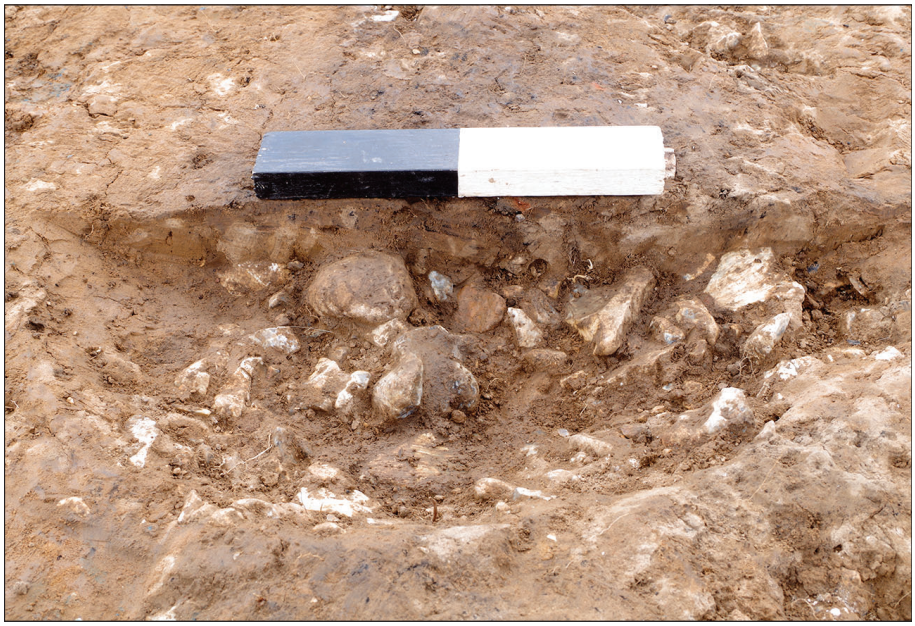

Plate 11: Pit 2022, viewed from the northeast

Plate 12: Pit 2008, viewed from the north

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Plate 13: Pit 2011, viewed from the northwest

Plate 14: Ground reduction during the watching brief, from the southwest

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