ST MICHAEL'S SCHOOL,
HIGH STREET,
FIGELDEAN,
WILTSHIRE.

NGR: SU 1535 4704

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

August 2023

Quality Assurance

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (ISO 9001: 2015)

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out details of the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks for, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 1535 4704) in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014), *Standards for Field Evaluation and Assessment in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995) and complies with the principles of NPPF.

1.2 Foundations Archaeology is certified to ISO 9001: 2015 for quality assurance in the provision of archaeological and heritage services. The company is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and subscribes to that organisations *Code of Conduct.* All relevant CIfA *Codes of Practice* will be adhered to throughout the course of the project.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Planning permission **(Application Number: PL/2022/08840)** has been granted for the demolition of the existing four modular classrooms and various sheds and the erection of single storey rear/side extensions to provide eight classrooms, kitchen, medical room, toilets, installation of recreation area and activity trail, together with provision of replacement secure fencing, car parking, drop-off/pick up point for minibus/taxi, landscaping and associated works at St Michael's School, Figeldean, Wiltshire.

2.2 The archaeological officer for Wiltshire Council, has advised that a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording is to be undertaken during all associated groundworks (Condition 3).

2.3 The site is located in the southern part of Figheldean village. It is bounded to the west by High Street, to the northwest by residential dwellings and associated gardens, to the northeast by Oak Lane, to the southeast by further residential dwellings and gardens, and to the southwest by Avon Banks. It comprises an irregularly shaped parcel of land, which incorporates an area of approximately 0.3ha. The site is situated on ground that slopes steeply downwards from northeast to southwest at approximately 80m aOD (above Ordnance Datum). The River Avon is located approximately 160m to the southwest of the site.

2.4 A Heritage Impact Assessment has been produced for this proposal by Foundations Heritage and should be read in conjunction with this WSI. However, the results of this document are presented below for ease.

2.4.1 There are numerous prehistoric entries within the study area on the HER. The earliest entry refers to a Palaeolithic findspot (MWI11395) located approximately 433m to the northeast of the site, while a single Neolithic pit (MWI11713) has been found approximately 943m to the southwest. Numerous barrows have been identified to the west, south, east and north of the study area. Iron Age activity has been identified to the west of the river and west/southwest of the site. This includes an extensive settlement (MWI11727) 300m to the west of the site at it's closest point and a late prehistoric boundary (MWI11842)

680m west northwest of the site. Fieldsystems of prehistoric/Roman date are also present to the southwest, southeast and east of the site.

2.4.2 There are six Roman period entries recorded on the HER within the study area; these are all to the west of the river and broadly located in the same area as the Iron Age settlement. The records comprise a villa (MWI17733) approximately 600m west-northwest, a settlement (MWI11732) located approximately 310m west of the site at its closest point; a building (MWI11404) that is probably associated with the settlement is located approximately 260m west of the site. The remaining three entries are findspots.

2.4.3 No Early medieval finds are recorded within the HER search radius, however, the settlements at Figeldean and Ablington may have originated in the latter part of this period. It should be noted, however, that prior to the nucleation of villages, much Saxon settlement comprised single family groups or small hamlets which can be difficult to identify or predict in the archaeological record.

2.4.4 There are seven Medieval records on the HER. These include the historic cores of settlements of Figheldean (MWI11413), approximately 190m north, Ablington (MWI11414) approximately 340m southeast, and Alton (MWI11415) approximately 250m south and west of the site. The remaining records comprise lynchets in Figheldean Field (MWI11586) approximately 770m northeast at their closest point. The remaining entries are for findspots, however MWI11412 does record the discovery of Medieval pottery sherds within the school grounds, but there is no record of the volume of material nor how the pottery was discovered.

2.4.5 Records on the HER relating to the Post-medieval period include extensive water meadows (MWI11424 and 11436) along either side of the river; at their closest point these features lie only 40m west of the site. The remaining entries are for listed buildings, predominately within the historic core of Figheldean in the High Street/Church Lane area to the north of the site.

2.4.6 The report concludes that the proposed works have the potential to affect buried archaeological deposits but that the potential for such deposits is considered negligible or low.

2.5 The geology within the site is *Seaford Chalk Formation – chalk*, which is overlain by *River Terrace Deposits 4 – sand and gravel, with Alluvium – clay, sand and gravel* to the southwest (BGS – on line viewer).

2.6 The site therefore contains the potential for archaeological features and deposits, predominately dating from the Medieval period onwards. This will not prejudice the works against evidence relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

3.1 The aims of the archaeological monitoring are to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any

surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary.

3.2 These aims will be achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) to record prior to their destruction any identified archaeological deposits within the monitored areas, and date these where possible;

ii) to attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present within the monitored areas;

iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;

iv) to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 All groundworks that have the potential to impact upon archaeological deposits will be undertaken whilst under the constant observation, of an archaeologist.

4.2 Where machine excavation is required this will be used only for the removal of overburden that has no archaeological significance. Plant will be suitable for the task and will be equipped with a **toothless grading bucket** as appropriate. Archaeological hand-excavation and recording will be required should significant archaeological deposits be encountered. In the event that unexpected archaeological remains of high significance are discovered, work will cease and the archaeological advisor to Wiltshire Council will be notified in order that an assessment of the remains and suitable provision for their recording or preservation may be made.

4.3 All archaeological deposits and features that would be destroyed by the groundworks will be subjected to appropriate levels of investigation. Spoil tips will be scanned for finds, which will be retained for study during the post-excavation phase.

4.4 Sections will be cut through all linear features at appropriate intervals and all intersections, overlaps and terminals will be investigated to provide a minimum 10% sample of each feature. Agricultural features of Medieval or later date, such as furrows or field boundaries may be subject to reduced sampling as appropriate.

4.5 A minimum 50% sample of all non-linear features (including all intrusive features such as pits and postholes) will be hand excavated. In some cases 100% excavation of features will be required.

4.6 Structural remains such as beamslots and ring-ditches will be excavated to a minimum 75-100% sample. Actual surviving strutural elements, such as walls, floors and rubble deposits will be cleaned, recorded and, if possible, preserved *in situ*. If preservation *in situ* is not possible then these remains will be excavated to a minimum sample of 75%.

4.7 All industrial remains, such as hearths and ovens, will be excavated to 100% sample levels. If these remains are large and/or structural, then these will be cleaned, recorded and, if possible, preserved *in situ*. If preservation in situ is not possible then these remains will be excavated to a minimum sample of 100%.

4.8 Each excavation context will be excavated, wherever possible, in such a way as to produce at least one representative cross-section of the deposit.

4.9 Decisions about the relative value of archaeological deposits and features will be made in consultation with the archaeological advisor to Wiltshire Council.

4.10 Any human remains which may be encountered will initially be left in situ and reported to the appropriate authorities. If removal is necessary, particularly in the event that potential cremation burials are identified as being vulnerable to illegal disturbance, this must comply with the relevant Ministry of Justice guidelines and current archaeological best-practice.

4.11 Suitable securely dated contexts will be subjected to environmental sampling at an appropriate scale in accordance with the Centre for Archaeology Guidelines *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recording to post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011). Decisions regarding which contexts are suitable for environmental sampling will be made on site in consultation with the archaeological advisor to Wiltshire Council and, where necessary, the Historic England Regional Scientific Advisor.

4.12 All artefactual and ecofactual remains, whether stratified or not, will be collected, bagged and labelled. Artefacts will be subject to preliminary study on site in order to help date archaeological features and contexts. All artefactual and ecofactual evidence will be treated in accordance with *First Aid For Finds*.

4.13 Normal conditions will apply with regard to finds ownership and the Treasure Act 1996. If any archaeologically significant finds are recovered the Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer for Wiltshire will be notified.

5 STAFF

5.1 The field team will consist of a minimum of 1 experienced operative, which may be supplemented by additional staff as required. The project will be directed by Mr R. King BA, MCIfA who has wide experience of performing, monitoring and managing field work projects of different periods throughout Britain. He is the Director of Foundations Archaeology and is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

6 SURVEY CONTROL

6.1 Horizontal survey control of the site will be by means of a coordinate grid, using metric measurements, relative to the National Grid. The geo-referenced site plan will be produced by use of a Topcon FC-5000 global positioning system (GPS). Complex/detailed site plans will be drawn by hand, as appropriate. These will be tied into the site grid by use of the GPS, where possible.

6.2 Vertical survey control will be tied to the Ordnance Survey datum. Details of the method employed will be recorded, including the assumed height of the reference point.

7 RECORDING

7.1 All site recording will be undertaken in accordance with Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3 (Excavation Manual).

7.2 Each archaeological feature or deposit will be recorded by means of a measured plan at an appropriate scale, usually 1:50. Spot heights will be taken on the deposit and their location recorded on the plan.

7.3 Cross sections will be recorded by means of a measured drawing at an appropriate scale, usually 1:20, with smaller features (e.g. post/stakeholes) drawn at 1:10. The height of a datum on the drawing will be calculated and recorded. The locations of cross sections will be recorded either on the site plans, or relative to the site grid. Cut features will be recorded in profile and plan at an appropriate scale and their location accurately identified.

7.4 All drawn records will be clearly marked with a unique site number, and will be individually identified. The scale of the plan will be recorded. All drawings will be drawn on dimensionally stable media. All plans will be drawn relative to the site grid and at least two grid references marked on each plan.

7.5 Each archaeological context will be recorded separately by means of a written description. The stratigraphic relationships of each context will be recorded. Foundations Archaeology *pro forma* record sheets will be used throughout. An index will be kept of all record types. All trenches will be recorded even if no archaeological deposits have been identified.

7.6 An adequate photographic record of the excavation will be compiled which will contain a suitable scale. Each excavation context will be recorded photographically prior to removal. Each excavation context will be recorded photographically prior to removal. All photographs will feature an appropriately sized scale. All images taken must be least 12 megapixels in size. Digital images for archiving purposes must be high quality non-proprietary raw files (DNG) or TIFF images only, JPG images will not be used for archiving purposes.

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8 POST-EXCAVATION

8.1 A typescript report will be prepared immediately site works are completed to fulfil the requirements set out in the WSI. This will include a full written description and interpretation of the results, including specialist reports. All recording, cleaning and conservation of finds will comply with CIfA Guidelines for Finds Work.

8.2 As a minimum, the report will include a full written description and interpretation of the results, including specialist reports. The report will contain a front sheet which will detail the following: Site name, NGR, Site activity, Date and duration, Site code, Area of site, Summary of results, Monuments identified (referenced to the Thesaurus of Monument Types) and Location of the archive. All recording, cleaning and conservation of finds will comply with CIfA Guidelines for Finds Work.

8.3 The report will be fully illustrated with drawings to an appropriate scale showing location, trench layout, recorded features and deposits, trench plans and section drawings. The report will be produced within six weeks of completion of fieldworks unless delayed by circumstances beyond the control of Foundations Archaeology. In some cases specialist reports (e.g. Radiocarbon dating) may take several months to be produced. In such circumstances an interim report will be provided.

8.4 An indexed and internally consistent archive will be prepared in accordance with MoRPHE (HE 2015) and Foundations Archaeology's internal quality control systems which are certified to ISO 9001: 2015. These standards comply with *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC 1990) and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (MGC 1994). Arrangements will be made for the deposition of the finds and the site archive with Wiltshire Museum prior to the commencement of fieldwork under Accession Number DZSWS:35-2023. Deposition will take place following the completion of final site works. Foundations Archaeology acknowledges that there will be a requirement to pay box fees to the museum for this.

8.5 Draft copies of the report will be made available to the archaeological advisor to Wiltshire Council for review and comment. Once the report is accepted one bound copy and one digital copy of the report will be deposited with the Wiltshire Archaeological Service and an additional copy will be deposited with the site archive. The report will become a public document after a period not exceeding six months.

8.6 The report will be published in an appropriate form in a relevant journal within 12 months from completion of fieldwork. An OASIS record will also be completed and submitted on completion of the project.

8.7 Copies of all photographs will be supplied to the HER as required.

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9 MONITORING

9.1 An appropriate level of monitoring will be undertaken by the archaeological advisor to Wiltshire Council, as required.

10 HEALTH AND SAFETY

10.1 The watching brief will be undertaken with regard to all relevant Health and Safety legislation, in accordance with the *Foundations Archaeology Health and Safety Manual* (2019) and the site-specific Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS).

11 INSURANCE

11.1 Foundations Archaeology carries appropriate levels of Public Liability, Employers Liability Insurance and Professional Indemnity Insurance. Copies of the certificates are available on request.

12 OUTREACH

12.1 Following the completion of the post excavation works and if the results warrant it, provision will be made to carry out a visit to the completed school describing the results and there will be an opportunity for the pupils to view the recovered finds.

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Site Code:
Accession Code:

N

Monitoring Location

0m 10m

FIGURE 1: Monitoring Location