

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at VCD Athletics Club, Old Road,
Crayford, London Borough of Bexley**

Site Code: VCD 06

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 5080 7520

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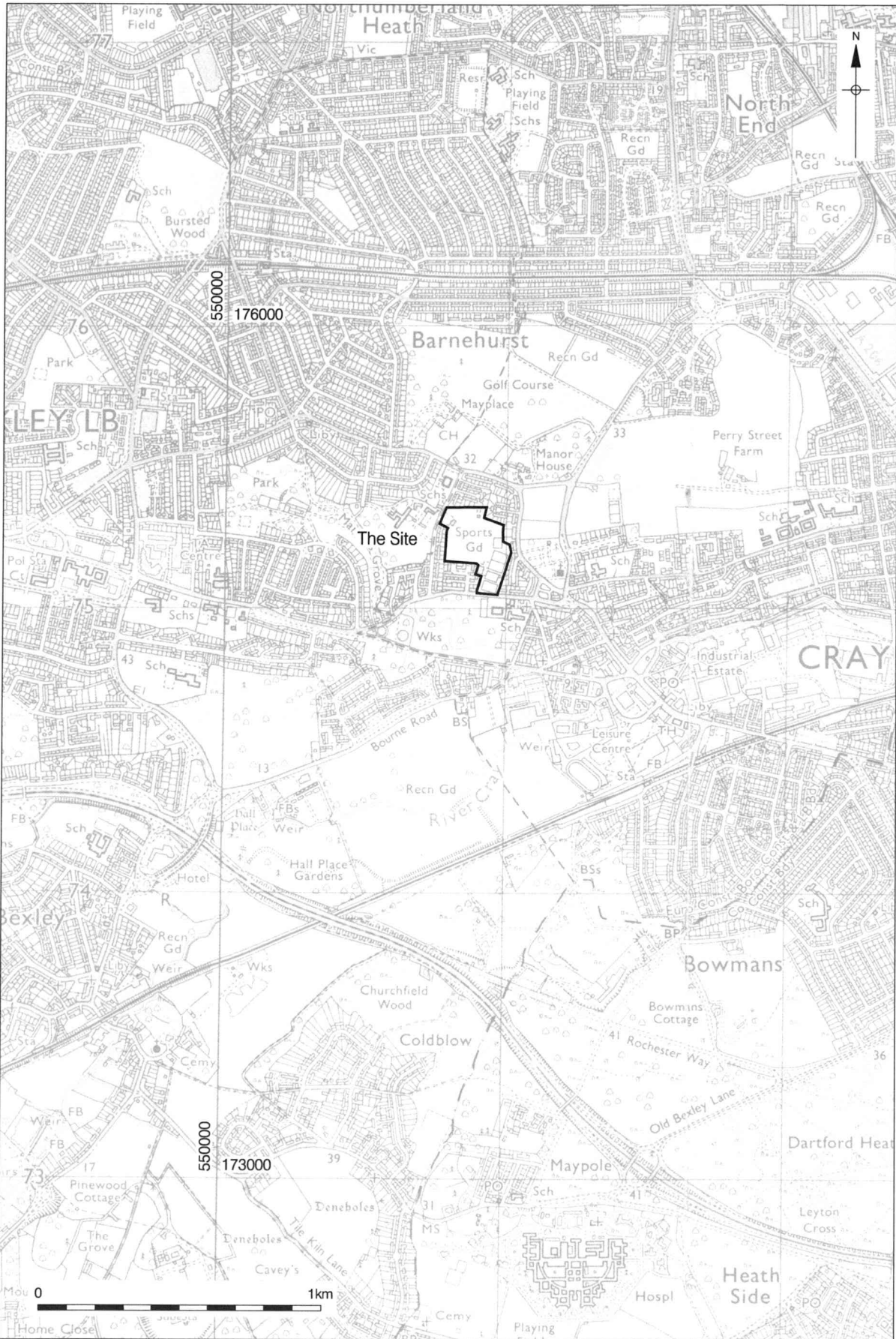
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ABSTRACT

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at VCD Athletics Club, Old Road, Crayford, London Borough of Bexley, between 13th February and 17th February 2006 and again on 14th March 2006. The watching brief consisted of the observation and recording of all archaeological deposits encountered during the ground reduction and preparation phase of a new sports pitch, service construction and floodlight insertion. The work was commissioned by Atkins Heritage on behalf of VCD Sports Club, Old Road, Crayford, Kent.
- 1.2 The watching brief area consisted of a 65m x 131m area situated in the southwest corner of the VCD Athletics Club, Old Road, Crayford.
- 1.3 Approximately 150mm of topsoil was stripped from the entire area. A further 1.65m of overburden was cut from the eastern end of the site in order to fill the western end to create a level surface. The service trenches were then excavated to a maximum depth of 600mm and the foundation trenches for the floodlights were excavated to a depth of 1.3m.
- 1.4 The watching brief revealed one cut feature, interpreted as a probable post-medieval pit or well. The feature was cut into natural gravel.

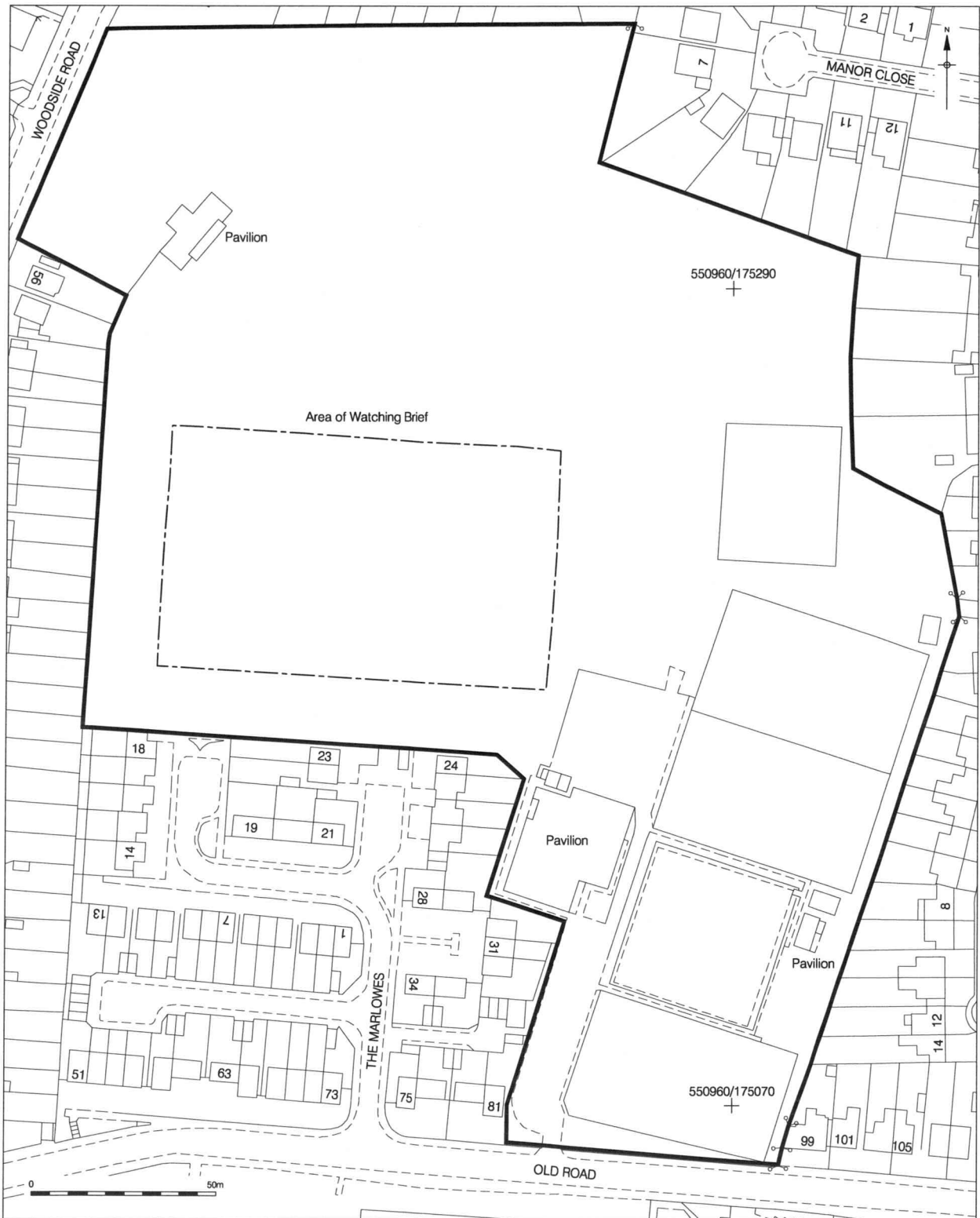
2 Introduction

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at VCD Athletics Club, Old Road, Crayford, from 13th February to 17th February 2006 and on 14th March 2006. The work was commissioned by Atkins Heritage on behalf of VCD Sports Club, project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology by Gary Brown and Chris Mayo and supervised by the author.
- 2.2 The site is bound to the east by residential properties fronting Kings Close and Manor Road, to the north by residential properties fronting Woodside Close and Manor Close, to the west by residential properties fronting The Marlowes and Woodside Road and to the south by Old Road. The watching brief area previously consisted of a football pitch orientated north-south.
- 2.3 The National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 5080 7520 .
- 2.4 The site was assigned the site code VCD 06.



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 1993.

Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000



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Figure 2
 Area of Watching Brief
 1:1,600

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning", providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.
- 3.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, by current Structure and Local Plan policy and by other material considerations.
- 3.3 The archaeological watching brief aims to satisfy the objectives of the London Borough of Bexley, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the London Borough of Bexley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in July 1996 and most recently updated in 2001. The Plan contains the following policy, which provides a framework for the consideration of development proposals affecting archaeological and heritage features.
- Archaeology:**
Policy ENV54
In Areas of Archaeological Search and other areas where finds are likely to occur, and in certain historic standing buildings, where development proposals may affect archaeological remains or historic evidence, the Council will expect applicants to have properly assessed and planned for the archaeological implications. The Council may require a preliminary archaeological site evaluation before proposals are considered.
- 3.4 The proposed development is located in an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined by the Borough's UDP.
- 3.5 Permission to develop the site was granted by Bexley Council, subject to conditions, 27th August 2004. This archaeological observation and recording aims to satisfy Condition 13.
- 3.6 No development shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that adequate archaeological records can be made in respect of the site and in the interests of the heritage of the area.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The underlying geology on site consists of Woolwich Beds, grey clays and pale sands¹.
- 4.2 The site is generally flat, although it rises towards the south-east corner of the area across which the new pitch is proposed².

¹ Poulter, A., 2006

² *ibid*

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

No records of archaeological activity exist for the site itself prior to the commencement of the watching brief. However, archaeology has been recorded in the area immediately surrounding the site³. This is set out below and includes SMR data from a 1km search area around the site.

5.2 PREHISTORIC

5.2.1 Evidence of Palaeolithic flint working and artefacts have been recorded within a kilometre of the site⁴.

5.2.2 Mesolithic and Neolithic flints, including a Mesolithic axe, have been found within a 250m radius of the site⁵.

5.2.3 A Bronze Age jar was found at Perry Street, to the east of the site⁶.

5.2.4 An archaeological excavation undertaken on Old Road, opposite St. Paulinus' Church, revealed evidence of Iron Age occupation. Further Iron Age remains have been found within a kilometre radius of the site. These include a number of archaeological features (a pit, posthole and ditch) recorded during excavations in Iron Mill Lane and Perry Street to the east and an Iron Age potsherd recovered from Barnehurst golf course to the north⁷.

5.3 ROMAN

5.3.1 Roman remains were also found during the excavation at Perry Street. Further Roman remains have also been found in Iron Mill Lane to the east and Manor Road to the south. A possible Roman cremation was recovered during excavations at Mayplace Estate to the north west⁸.

³ Poulter, A., 2006.

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *ibid*

5.3.2 The Roman Road of Watling Street is recorded as running along the present day line of London Road, just south of the site⁹.

5.4 SAXON AND MEDIEVAL

5.4.1 Historical records suggest that a battle between the Saxons and Britons occurred in the Crayford area in AD457, the Saxons being the victors. However, no Anglo-Saxon remains have been recorded within the surrounding area as yet¹⁰.

5.4.2 A number of medieval and post-medieval sites and monuments are recorded in the vicinity of the site. The Norman church of St. Paulinus (a Grade II Listed Building) is located 350m to the east of the site. The earliest sections of the Church date to c. AD 1100, the west tower having been added in 1406. Crayford Manor (also a Grade II Listed Building) is situated 500m to the north of the site. The current building dates to the post-medieval period, but is assumed to be situated on the site of an earlier manor building, thought to have been constructed in the 14th century. A medieval field system was also recorded during excavations at Perry Street. A post-medieval coach house and stables are also located at Mayplace Road to the east and a post-medieval soakaway and tank were recorded at Shenstone School to the south¹¹.

⁹ Poulter, A., 2006

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *ibid*

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 In accordance with the specification¹², excavation of the topsoil and subsoil was carried out with a 360 type mechanical excavator fitted with a ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Initially, topsoil was removed from the watching brief area, reducing the ground level by approximately 150mm. The eastern end of the area was then machine excavated through the subsoil to natural, reducing the area by a further 1.65m in the southeast corner and by 0.7m in the northeast corner. The resulting spoil was then pushed down slope to the west in order to produce a level surface.
- 6.2 A 100mm wide service trench was then excavated around the perimeter of the watching brief area to a maximum depth of 600mm and nine north-south drainage trenches, 100mm wide and 500mm deep, were excavated across it. Six 1m x 1m foundation trenches for floodlights were then excavated to a maximum depth of 1.4m (Figs 2 & 3).
- 6.3 The attendant archaeologist monitored all ground-reduction so that any archaeological deposits could be excavated and recorded stratigraphically.
- 6.4 The watching brief area was located in the position shown on a plan prepared by VCD Sports Club. No levels were available for the site. All recording was undertaken in line with the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual, now published by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS 1994). Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and exposed were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets. All plans and sections of archaeological deposits were recorded on polyester based drawing film, the plans being drawn at a scale of 1:20 and the sections at 1:10 or 1:20 (Fig 4).

¹² Poulter, A., 2006.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASE DISCUSSION

7.1 WATCHINGBRIEF AREA

The dimensions of the watching brief area were 65m north-south and 131m east-west.

7.1.1 PHASE 1- NATURAL

Context [5], a layer of firm, mid brownish-red to mid reddish-yellow, silty sandy gravel, was observed in the eastern end of the watching brief area after the subsoil was stripped. The dimensions of the deposit were 65m north-south, 57m east-west and over 1.6m thick, the base of the deposit being beyond the vertical limit of excavation. The top of the layer was found to be approximately 550mm below ground level. It is thought that the deposit continues across the entire site, but was not observed in the western end as the subsoil was not removed. It was interpreted as a layer of natural gravel, probably forming part of the Woolwich Beds.

7.1.2 PHASE 2- POST-MEDIEVAL

A circular feature, cut [4], was observed in the eastern end of the site. The cut was half-sectioned by machine. It was found to have steeply sloped, near vertical sides that were concave and slightly undercut at the top. The feature was 4.3m north-south, 4.1m east-west and over 3.7m deep. The base of the feature could not be reached as the sides were extremely unstable. It was interpreted as being a post-medieval well or pit. The pit/well cut was found to contain two fills. The primary fill, context [10], was interpreted as the construction cut backfill, which would have sat between the pit/well lining (that appears to have either degraded or been robbed), and the construction cut. It consisted of mid greyish brown, sandy clayey silt and was over 3.7m thick and 450mm wide. The secondary fill, context [3], was thought to have been deposited within the feature after it fell out of use. It consists of loose, mid-greyish brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of mortar, post-medieval roof tile and occasional animal bone. The fill was 3.85m north-south, 3.65m east-west and over 3.7m thick.

7.1.3 PHASE 3- TOPSOIL AND SUBSOIL

The entire watching brief area was sealed by layer [2], a 400mm thick deposit of mid greyish brown, humic-rich silty sandy gravel, found to be 150mm below ground level. The layer was interpreted as a subsoil or interface between the topsoil and the natural gravel.

Sealing context [2] was a layer of modern topsoil, context [1]. The layer covered the entire watching brief area and was found to be 150mm thick. It consisted of loose, dark brown, humic-rich sandy clayey silt with frequent rootlets.

7.2 FLOODLIGHT FOUNDATION TRENCH 1

The dimensions of Floodlight Foundation Trench 1 were 1m x 1m and 1.3m deep.

7.2.1 PHASE 1- NATURAL

The trench was excavated through natural gravel layer [5], previously exposed in the eastern end of the overall watching brief area during the stripping of the topsoil and subsoil. The layer was found to be over 1.3m thick, the base of the deposit being beyond the vertical limit of excavation. The deposit had been horizontally truncated during the initial landscaping phase of the project.

7.3 FLOODLIGHT FOUNDATION TRENCH 2

The dimensions of Floodlight Foundation Trench 2 were 1m x 1m and 1.3m deep.

7.3.1 PHASE 1- NATURAL

The trench was excavated through natural gravel, layer [5], previously exposed in the eastern end of the watching brief area during the stripping of the topsoil and subsoil. The layer was found to be over 1.1m thick, the base of the deposit being beyond the vertical limit of excavation. The deposit had been horizontally truncated during the initial landscaping phase of the project.

200mm of modern spoil sealed layer [5]. The modern material had been cut from the eastern end of the watching brief area and pushed downslope during the landscaping phase.

7.4 FLOODLIGHT FOUNDATION TRENCH 3

The dimensions of Floodlight Foundation Trench 3 were 1m x 1m and 1.36m deep.

7.4.1 PHASE 1- NATURAL

Layer [8], a deposit of firm, mid brownish-red to mid reddish-yellow, silty sandy gravel, was observed in the base of Floodlight Foundation Trench 3. The dimensions of the deposit were 1m north-south, 1m east-west and over 220mm thick. It was interpreted as a natural deposit of gravel, probably forming part of the Woolwich Beds, and is assumed to be the same deposit as [5].

7.4.2 PHASE 3- TOPSOIL AND SUBSOIL

Layer [8] was sealed by subsoil layer [2], previously exposed in plan during the stripping of the watching brief area. The deposit was observed in section in Floodlight Foundation Trench 3 and was found to be 480mm thick. The layer had been horizontally truncated during the initial landscaping phase of the project

Layer [2] was sealed by 600mm of modern material pushed downslope during the landscaping.

7.5 FLOODLIGHT FOUNDATION TRENCH 4

The dimensions of Floodlight Foundation Trench 4 were 1m x 1m and 1.40m deep.

7.5.1 PHASE 1- NATURAL

Layer [9], a deposit of firm, mid brownish-reddish-yellow sandy clayey silt, was observed in the base of Floodlight Foundation Trench 4. The dimensions of the deposit were 1m north-south, 1m east-west and over 500mm thick. It was interpreted as a natural brickearth deposit.

7.5.2 PHASE 3- TOPSOIL AND SUBSOIL

Layer [9] was sealed by subsoil layer [2], previously exposed in plan during the stripping of the watching brief area. The deposit was observed in section in Floodlight Foundation Trench 4 and was found to be 600mm thick.

Layer [2] was sealed by 300mm of modern material pushed downslope during the landscaping phase of the project.

7.6 FLOODLIGHT FOUNDATION TRENCH 5

The dimensions of Floodlight Foundation Trench 5 were 1m x 1m and 1.3m deep.

7.6.1 PHASE 1- NATURAL

Layer [7], a deposit of firm, mid brownish-red to mid reddish-yellow, silty sandy gravel, was observed in the base of Floodlight Foundation Trench 5. The dimensions of the deposit were 1m north-south, 1m east-west and over 150mm thick. It was interpreted as a natural layer of gravel, probably forming part of the Woolwich Beds and is assumed to be the same deposit as [5] and [8].

Sealing context [7] was layer [6], a deposit of firm, mid brownish-reddish-yellow, sandy clayey silt, observed in section in Floodlight Foundation Trench 5. The dimensions of the deposit were 1m north-south, 1m east-west and 300mm thick. It was interpreted as a natural deposit of brickearth and is assumed to be the same deposit as [9].

7.6.2 PHASE 3- TOPSOIL AND SUBSOIL

Layer [6] was sealed by subsoil layer [2], previously exposed in plan during the stripping of the watching brief area. The deposit was observed in section in Floodlight Foundation Trench 4 and was found to be 220mm thick. The layer had been horizontally truncated during the landscaping phase of the project.

Layer [2] was sealed by 630mm of modern material pushed downslope during landscaping.

7.7 FLOODLIGHT FOUNDATION TRENCH 6

Floodlight Foundation Trench 6 was 1m x 1m and 1.3m deep.

7.7.1 PHASE 1- NATURAL

The trench was excavated through natural gravel layer [5], previously exposed in the eastern section of the watching brief area during the stripping of the topsoil and subsoil. The layer was found to be over 1.3m thick, the base of the deposit being

beyond the vertical limit of excavation. The layer had horizontally truncated during the initial landscaping phase of the project.

7.8 DRAINAGE TRENCHES

One 100mm wide service trench was excavated around the perimeter of the watching brief area to a maximum depth of 600mm. Nine north-south drainage trenches, 100mm wide and 500mm deep, were then excavated at regular intervals across the watching brief area.

7.8.1 PHASE 1- NATURAL

The five eastern-most north-south drainage trenches and the eastern half of the perimeter drainage trench were excavated through natural gravel layer [5], previously exposed in the eastern section of the watching brief area during the stripping of the topsoil and subsoil. The layer was found to be over 600mm thick, the base of the deposit being beyond the vertical limit of excavation. The layer had been partially truncated horizontally during the initial landscaping phase of the project.

7.8.2 PHASE 3- TOPSOIL AND SUBSOIL

A small amount of subsoil, layer [2], was observed in the north-central and south-central portions of the perimeter drainage trench. The layer partially sealed gravel layer [5] towards the east. The deposit was found to extend 4m east-west and 100mm north-south. It was found to be 240mm thick, but is assumed to have been horizontally truncated during the initial landscaping phase. The deposit dips to the west, eventually running below the vertical limit of excavation.

Modern overburden, deposited during landscaping, sealed layer [2] to the west. It was observed in the base of the western half of the perimeter drainage trench and the base of the four western-most north-south drainage trenches.

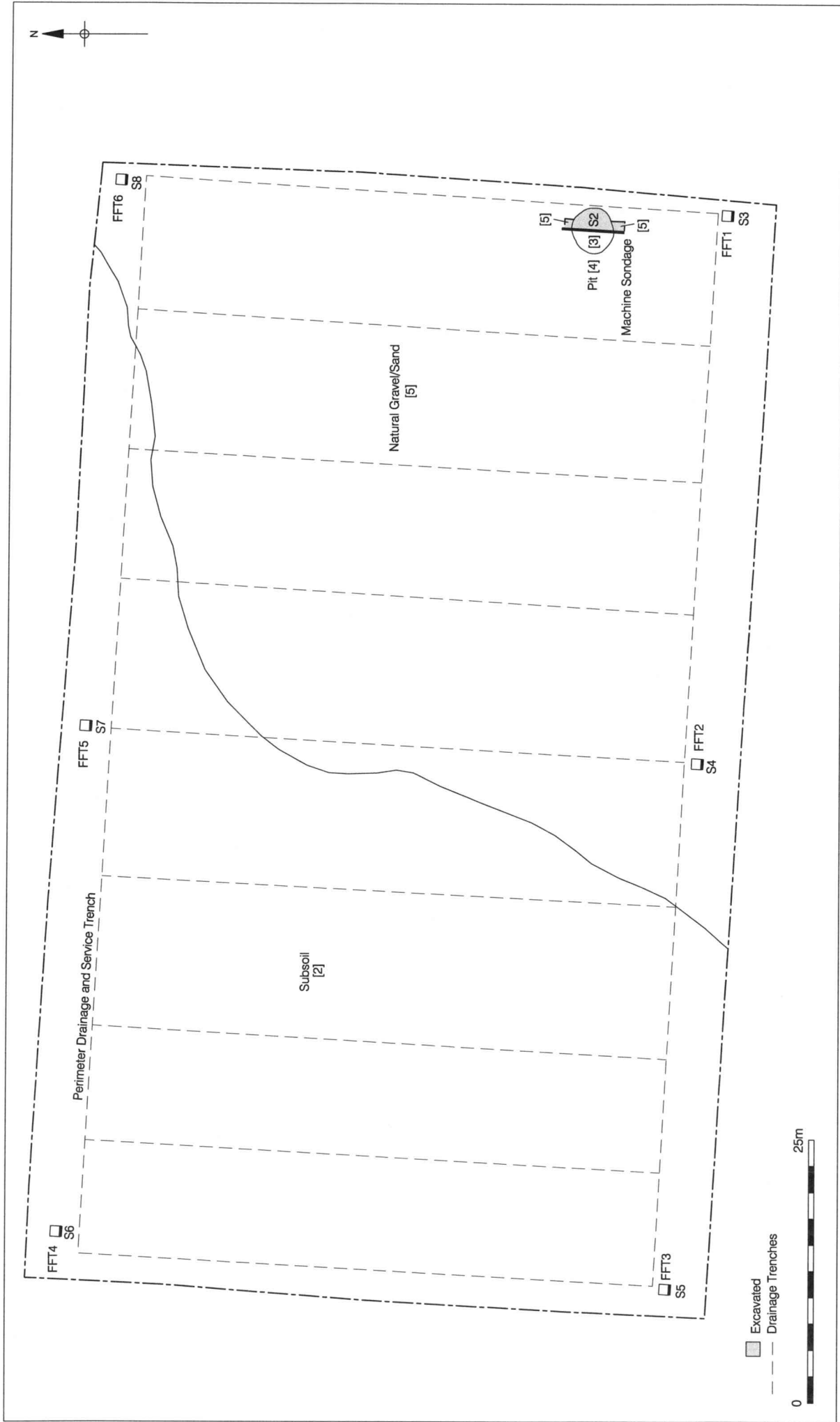
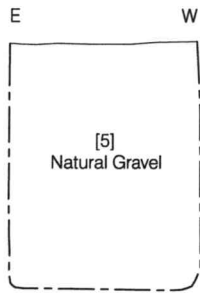
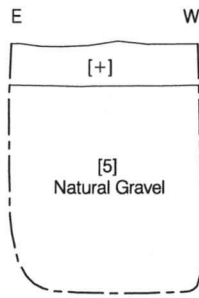


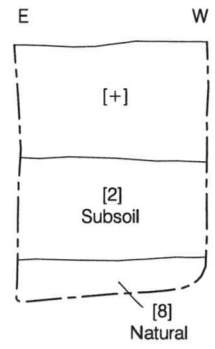
Figure 3
 Area of Watching Brief
 and Floodlight Foundation Trenches 1-6
 1:500



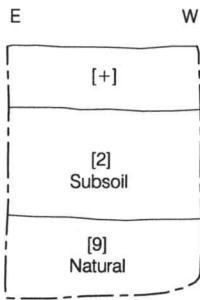
Section 3
FFT1
North Facing



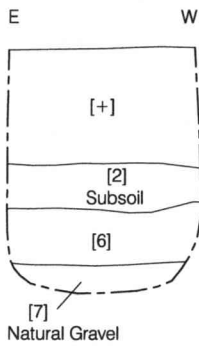
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FFT2
North Facing



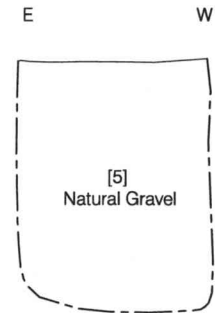
Section 5
FFT3
North Facing



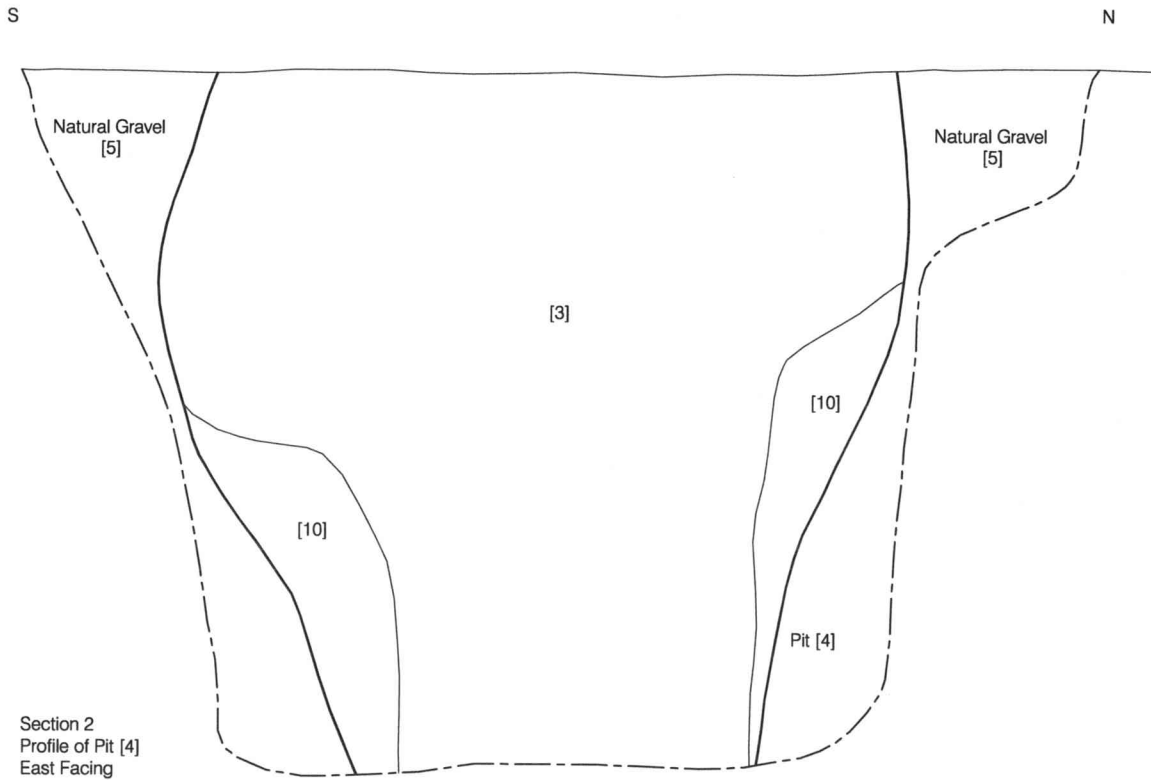
Section 6
FFT4
North Facing



Section 7
FFT5
North Facing



Section 8
FFT6
North Facing



Section 2
Profile of Pit [4]
East Facing



Figure 4
Sections 2-8
1:40

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The principal objective of the archaeological watching brief was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological activity of any period. The earliest evidence of human activity at the site dates to the post-medieval period and consists of a probable well cut into the natural gravel.
- 8.2 The watching brief has confirmed that there are no archaeological deposits or features predating the post-medieval period on the site.
- 8.3 Natural gravel, interpreted as being part of the Woolwich Beds, was found in the east of the site and within Floodlight Foundation Trenches 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. A deposit of natural brickearth was also observed in Floodlight Foundation Trenches 4 and 5. The brickearth was found to seal the natural gravel in Floodlight Foundation Trench 5.
- 8.4 No archaeology was observed in the drainage and service trenches. The trenches were not deep enough to impinge on the archaeology in the east of the site, truncating made ground (created during the earlier landscaping phase of the watching brief) and sub-soil. In the west of the site, the area had already been excavated into natural gravel during the earlier landscaping phase and as a result no archaeology was encountered.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Angela Poulter of Atkins Heritage for commissioning the project on behalf of the VCD Sports Club. PCA are grateful for the assistance provided by VCD Sports Club
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Hayley Baxter for the illustrations and Gary Brown and Chris Mayo for their project management and editing.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

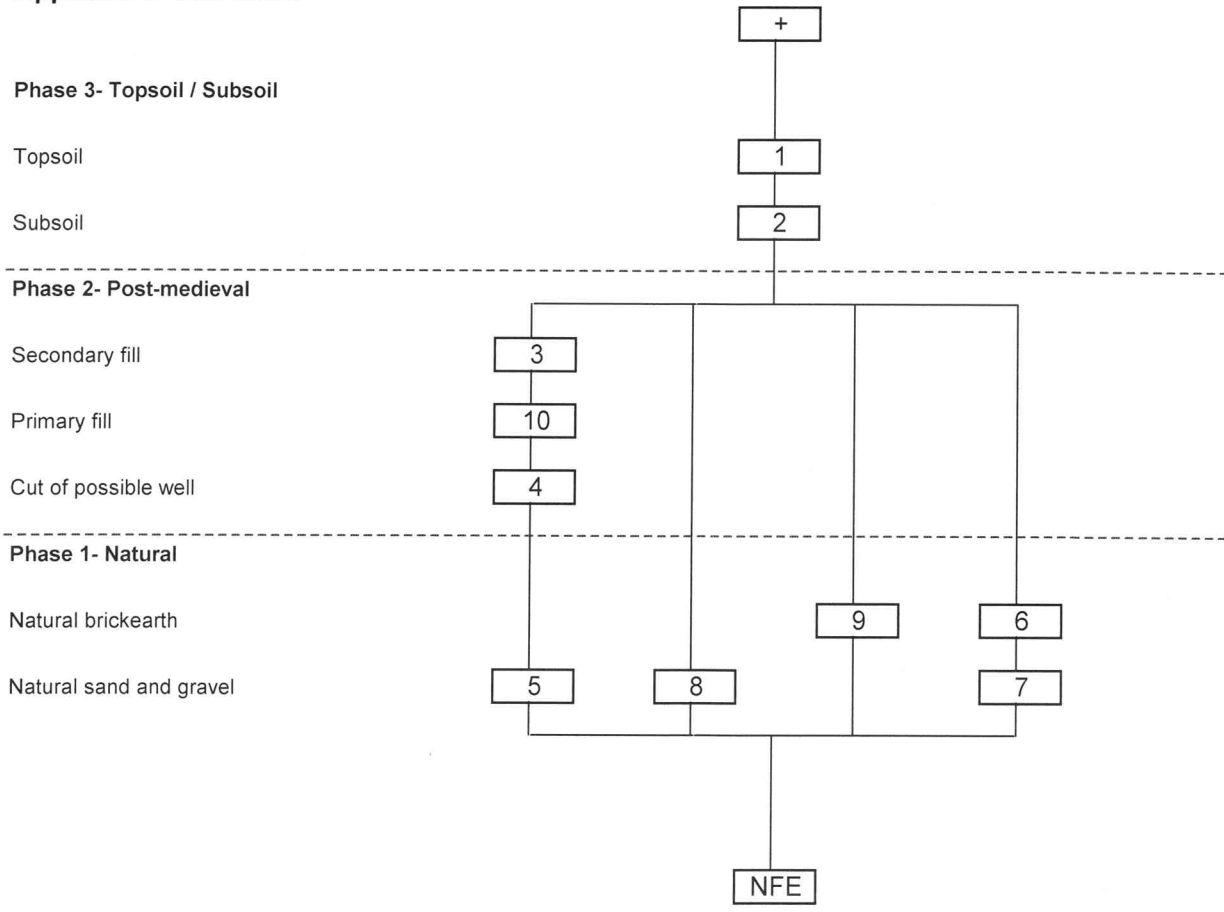
Poulter, A., 2006. *Method Statement for an Archaeological Observation and Recording During Groundworks at VCD Athletics Club, Old Road, Crayford, Kent.* Atkins Heritage, unpublished report.

Poulter, A., 2006. *VCD Athletics Club, Old Road, Crayford, Dartford. Brief for Archaeological Observation and Recording.* Atkins Heritage, unpublished report.

Appendix 1- Context Index

Context	Plan No.	Section No.	Sample No.	Photo	Phase	Trench No.	Type	Description	Find
1	*	1	*	*	3	1	Layer	Topsoil	*
2	1	1	*	*	3	1	Layer	Subsoil	*
3	1	2	*	*	2	1	Fill	Secondary fill of [4]	Post-Med Tile
4	1,4	2	*	*	2	1	Cut	Cut of well	*
5	1,4	1,2,3,4,8	*	*	1	1	Layer	Natural sand and gravel	*
6	*	7	*	*	1	1	Layer	Natural clay and silt	*
7	*	7	*	*	1	1	Layer	Natural sand and gravel	*
8	*	5	*	*	1	1	Layer	Natural sand and gravel	*
9	*	6	*	*	1	1	Layer	Natural sand and gravel	*
10	1,4	2	*	*	2	1	Fill	Natural clay and silt Primary fill of [4]	*

Appendix 2- Site Matrix



APPENDIX 3- OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

[List of Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Log out](#)

5.2.2 Printable version

1.1 OASIS ID: preconst1-13538

Project details

Project name An Archaeological Watching Brief at VCD Athletics Club

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at VCD Athletics Club, Old Road, Crayford. The watching brief consisted of the observation and recording of all archaeological deposits encountered during the ground reduction and preparation phase of a new sports pitch, service construction and floodlight insertion.

Project dates Start: 13-02-2006 End: 14-03-2006

Previous/future work No / No

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON BEXLEY CRAYFORD VCD Athletics Club, Crayford

Postcode DA1 4XX

Study area 8515.00 Square metres

National grid reference TQ 5080 7520 Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator Atkins Heritage

Project design originator Atkins Heritage

Project Gary Brown / Chris Mayo

director/manager

Project supervisor Rebecca Lythe

Sponsor or funding body Grassforms

**Project
bibliography 1**

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

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