

Fallow Park, Hednesford,  
Staffordshire

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION 2010**

**Project No. 2108**

**08/2010**

**Fallow Park**

Hednesford, Staffordshire

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2010**

**By**

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**for  
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## **Fallow Park, Hednesford, Staffordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation, 08/2010

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## **Fallow Park, Hednesford, Staffordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation, 08/2010

### **SUMMARY**

*Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned in August 2010 by Jessup Brothers Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of a proposed redevelopment of land at Fallow Park, Hednesford, Staffordshire (NGR SK 0089 1366).*

*A total of ten trial-trenches were excavated. Trenching revealed that the area had been subjected to significant downcutting of the ground-surface, to expose the natural subsoil. As a result of this operation no archaeological features or deposits could be identified. In some parts of the site large amounts of contamination from petrol/diesel derivatives relating to a former fuelling station on the site were also discovered. The archaeological potential of the site is considered to be low.*

## **Fallow Park, Hednesford, Staffordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation, 08/2010

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1.1. Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by Jessup Brothers Limited to undertake a programme of trial trenching ahead of a residential development at Fallow Park, Rugeley Road, Hednesford, Staffordshire (hereinafter referred to as the site).
- 1.1.2. This report outlines the results of a field evaluation carried out during August 2010, and has been prepared in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists 'Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations' (IfA 1999).
- 1.1.3. The evaluation conformed to a brief produced by Staffordshire County Council, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2010; reproduced as Appendix 1) which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

### **2. LOCATION AND GEOLOGY**

- 2.1.1. The site is located to the south of Rugeley Road, Hednesford, Staffordshire and is centred on NGR SK 0089 1366 (Fig. 1). The site lies to the southeast of the A460 with fields forming the boundaries to the east, south and west.
- 2.1.2. At the time of the trial-trenching the site included the footprints of demolished buildings, and areas of tarmac car parking.

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1.1. The proposed development area adjoins a large pond adjoining the Rising Brook. There are documentary references to iron smelting on the banks of the Rising Brook from the 14th century onwards.
- 3.1.2. A forge is believed to have been in operation within the area from the 14th century, and there are documentary references to forges within the area including 'Upper Furnace' and 'New Furnace'.
- 3.1.3. Lord Paget built the first blast furnace in 1561, which was located nearby, and a listing of Paget's leases includes the aforementioned 'Upper Furnace' and 'Upper Forge', as well as a lease dating to 1614 referring to 'Over Furnace' and 'Over Forge'.
- 3.1.4. Whilst it has been suggested that these furnaces were located to the north of Hednesford, the general area is likely to have been a focus of early ironworking, although this activity is likely to have ceased in the early 18th century.

## **4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 4.1.1. The principal aim of the evaluation was to determine the character, state of preservation and the potential significance of any buried remains.
- 4.1.2. More specific aims were to:
- Locate and characterise any evidence of ironworking or other industrial activity within the site.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

- 5.1.1. As a preliminary to trial-trenching an archaeological watching brief was maintained on 4, 5 and 9 August 2010 during the machine removal of concrete floor surfaces. The purpose of the watching brief was to ensure that buried archaeological remains were not disturbed during the final stage of demolition operations.
- 5.1.2. The proposed development area covers approximately 10000m<sup>2</sup>. A total of ten trenches were excavated across the site totalling 400m<sup>2</sup> (1.6m x 25m) which provided a 4% sample of the total area (Fig. 2).
- 5.1.3. Trenches were located in regular spacing over the site in order to test areas likely to be affected by the development groundworks. Areas where the foundations of the modern building remained were avoided. The trial-trenches were surveyed-in using an EDM total station and located on the Ordnance Survey National Grid.
- 5.1.4. All topsoil and modern overburden was removed using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under direct archaeological supervision, down to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon or the subsoil. Subsequent cleaning and excavation was by hand. A representative sample of archaeological features and deposits were manually sample excavated. This was done to sufficiently define their character and to obtain suitable dating evidence using the following strategy;
- 50% of pits under 1.5m or postholes
  - 25% of pits over 1.5m including a complete section
  - 20% sample of linear/ curvilinear features under 5m in length
  - 10% sample of linear/ curvilinear features over 5m in length
- 5.1.5. All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features were planned at a scale of 1:20, and sections drawn of all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 1:20. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* cards. Written records and scale plans were supplemented by photographs using black and white monochrome, colour slide and digital photography.
- 5.1.6. Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within the Birmingham Archaeology Fieldwork Manual and *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 1998).
- 5.1.7. The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site. The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage 1991), the Guidelines for

the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992).

- 5.1.8. The paper archive will be deposited with Stoke on Trent Museum and Art Gallery, subject to permission from the landowner.

## **6. RESULTS**

### **6.1. Introduction**

- 6.1.1. The following section is arranged in trench order and both feature (cut) and context numbers are highlighted in bold. A representative selection of trench plans and sections are illustrated.

### **6.2. Trench 1 (Plate 1)**

- 6.2.1. The natural subsoil in Trench 1 was reached at a depth of 151.44m AOD at the southwestern end of the trench, and consisted of red-brown gravel, **1001**.
- 6.2.2. Overlying **1001** was a layer of grey-blue concrete hardcore, **1002**, measuring 0.15m in thickness, which was sealed by a layer of red-brown silty clay, **1003**, measuring 0.5m in thickness.
- 6.2.3. Overlying **1003** was a layer of brown silty clay, **1004**, that measured 0.5m in thickness and was the likely result of levelling-up during demolition.

### **6.3. Trench 2**

- 6.3.1. The natural subsoil in Trench 2 was reached at a depth of 151.19m AOD at the northwestern end of the trench and consisted of red-brown gravel, **2001**.
- 6.3.2. Overlying **2001** was a layer of grey-blue stone hardcore material, **2002**, measuring 0.12m thickness, and which was overlain by a layer of grey concrete, **2003**. Sealing **2003** was a 0.24m thick layer of brown silty clay, **2004**.
- 6.3.3. Cutting **2004** in the centre of the trench was a service trench, **2005**, 0.78m in width by 0.58m in depth and which was filled by red-brown sandy silt, **2006**.

### **6.4. Trench 3 (Fig. 3)**

- 6.4.1. The natural subsoil in Trench 3 was reached at a depth of 150.36m AOD at the southwestern end of the trench and consisted of red-brown gravel, **3001**.
- 6.4.2. Cutting **3001** at the eastern end of the trench was a north-south aligned ditch, **3002**, (Fig. 3) measuring 2m in width by 0.6m in depth, and which was filled by grey-blue stone fragments, **3003**, which were contaminated with diesel/petrol.
- 6.4.3. Sealing **3003** was a layer of brown-red silty clay, **3008**, 0.18m in thickness and which contained stones throughout, and which was overlain by a grey-blue stone hardcore, **3009**, measuring 0.06m in thickness. Overlying **3009** was a layer of brown-yellow sandy clay, **3010**, 0.3m in thickness.



- 6.4.4. Cutting **3009** to the western end of the trench was a large pit, **3004**, (Plate 2) measuring 2.3m in width (excavated) by 2.3m in depth (to limit of excavation). Filling **3004** was a layer of dark brown sandy silt, **3005**, that contained petrol/diesel contamination, and which was overlain by a light brown-grey sandy silt, **3006**.
- 6.4.5. To the west of **3004** was a northeast-southwest aligned modern service ditch, **3012**, 0.7m in width by 0.56m in depth, and which was filled by a red-brown sandy clay **3011**.
- 6.4.6. Overlying **3011** and the remainder of the trench was a layer of brown-red silty clay, **3007**, 0.35m in thickness.

### **6.5. Trench 4 (Plate 3)**

- 6.5.1. The natural subsoil in Trench 4 was reached at a depth of 151.54m AOD at the southeastern end of the trench and consisted of red-brown gravel, **4004**.
- 6.5.2. Overlying **4004** was a layer of black contaminated (petrol/diesel) sandy clay, **4003**, 0.2m in thickness, which was overlain by a red-brown clay, **4002**, 0.5m in thickness.
- 6.5.3. **4002** was sealed by a dark red-brown sandy clay, **4001**, 0.25m in thickness, which was overlain by a thin layer of yellow-brown tarmac, **4000**.

### **6.6. Trench 5**

- 6.6.1. This trench was not excavated due to Tree Preservation Orders and underground power cables.

### **6.7. Trench 6 (Plate 4)**

- 6.7.1. The natural subsoil in Trench 6 was reached at a depth of 151.40m AOD at the northeastern end of the trench and consisted of red-brown sandy gravel, **6005**.
- 6.7.2. Overlying **6005** was a black-grey contaminated sand, **6004**, 0.2m in thickness, which was sealed by a grey stone hardcore, **6003**, 0.1m in thickness.
- 6.7.3. **6003** was overlain by an orange-brown sandy gravel, **6002**, 0.2m in thickness, which was overlain by a layer of light yellow-brown sandy gravel, **6001**.
- 6.7.4. Sealing **6001** was a 0.12m thick layer of black tarmac, **6000**.

### **6.8. Trench 7 (Plate 5)**

- 6.8.1. The natural subsoil in Trench 7 was reached at a depth of 151.05m AOD to the western end of the trench and consisted of red-brown sandy gravel, **7004**.
- 6.8.2. Overlying **7004** was a layer of mid brown sand, **7003**, 0.48m in thickness, which was overlain by a mid red-brown compacted sand and gravel, **7002**.
- 6.8.3. Sealing **7002** was a light brown levelling layer of grey stone, **7001**, 0.12m in thickness, which was overlain by a layer of modern tarmac, **7000**.

## **6.9. Trench 8 (Plate 6)**

- 6.9.1. The natural subsoil in Trench 8 was reached at a depth of 151.57m AOD to the southwestern end of the trench and consisted of orange-brown sandy gravel, **8006**.
- 6.9.2. Overlying **8006** was a grey stone hardcore, **8005**, which was overlain by a layer of orange sand and crushed brick, **8004**, 0.28m in thickness.
- 6.9.3. Sealing **8004** was a thin layer of burnt charcoal, **8003**, which was overlain by a layer of brown sand with pebbles throughout, **8002**.
- 6.9.4. Overlying **8002** was a layer of light brown silty clay, **8001**, 0.10m in thickness, which was sealed by a modern tarmac, **8000**, 0.06m in thickness.

## **6.10. Trench 9 (Fig. 3)**

- 6.10.1. The natural subsoil in Trench 9 was reached at a depth of 151.32m AOD to the northeastern end of the trench and consisted of red-brown sand, **9001**.
- 6.10.2. Cutting **9001** to the southern end of the trench was a modern wall foundation, **9002**, while to the centre of the trench was a modern ditch, **9003**, (Fig. 3) filled with demolition brick/rubble. To the northern end of the trench was a similar ditch filled with demolition material, **9004**.
- 6.10.3. Overlying these features was a layer of disturbed natural sand, **9005**, 0.38m in thickness.

## **6.11. Trench 10 (Fig. 3, Plate 7)**

- 6.11.1. The natural subsoil in Trench 10 was reached at a depth of 151.93m AOD to the southeastern end of the trench and consisted of orange-brown sand **10002**.
- 6.11.2. Cutting **10002** at the southern end of the trench was a modern brick wall foundation (Fig. 3) **10003** constructed of blue engineering bricks bonded by a concrete mortar.
- 6.11.3. Overlying **10003** and the remainder of the trench was a layer of mid brown sandy gravel **10001** 0.22m in thickness, which was sealed by a layer of modern silty brick/rubble demolition material, **10000**, 0.10m in thickness.

## **6.12 Summary**

- 6.12.1 No features of archaeological, or possible archaeological interest were identified, and no finds of archaeological significance were recovered.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

- 7.1.1. The area of land adjacent to the currently present pond, in the area evaluated by Trenches 1-3, appears to have been reduced in level at some point in the recent past, most probably at the time of the construction of the recently demolished building here.
- 7.1.2. The feature in Trench 3 and evidence of petrol/diesel contamination in that trench evidence the use of the adjoining former garage/fuel depot.

- 7.1.3. Also showing signs of recent downcutting is the eastern edge of the site, with the natural slope of the ground here cut away to form a plateau onto which the modern building was constructed. This explains the lack of any buried soils in this area, with building stone/levelling materials immediately overlying natural subsoil.
- 7.1.4. The archaeological potential of the site is therefore considered to be low.

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The project was commissioned by Jessup Brothers Limited. Thanks are due to Nigel Higgs for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks also go to Steve Dean, who monitored the project on behalf of Staffordshire County Council. Work on site was undertaken by Paul Breeze, Phil Mann and Pete Spencer. Phil Mann produced the written report which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds and edited by Alex Jones who also managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

## **9. REFERENCES**

- Department of the Environment 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*. HMSO: London.
- English Heritage 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*. English Heritage: London.
- Institute for Archaeologists 1999 *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation, IfA*.
- Museums and Galleries Commission. 1992 *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections*. London: Museums and Galleries Commission
- Staffordshire CC 2010 *Brief for an archaeological evaluation, Fallow Park, Rugeley Road, Hednesford, Cannock, Staffordshire CC*.
- UKIC (Walker, K.) 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage*, Archaeology Section of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation.
- Watkinson, D, and Neal, V, 1998 *First Aid for Finds* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), RESCUE and the Archaeology Section of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation.

## **Appendix 1**

### **WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AND TRIAL-TRENCHING**

**FALLOW PARK, HEDNESFORD, STAFFORDSHIRE  
(NGR SK 0089/1366)**



#### **INTRODUCTION**

This document describes the programme of work required to undertake archaeological trial trenching at the above site. It forms a written scheme of investigation for the work.

A brief for archaeological observation and recording was prepared by Staffordshire County Council (Staffordshire CC 2010).

Any further variation in the scope of work would be agreed with the client and Staffordshire CC, before implementation.

A planning application has been submitted to Staffordshire CC for a proposed residential development. As the proposed development contains significant archaeological remains an archaeological watching brief during the removal of surface deposits followed by trial-trenching was recommended by Staffordshire CC. This is in accordance with government advice contained with PPS5.

The brief specified requirement for geophysical survey and trial-trenching. It has been agreed by Staffordshire CC that geophysical survey is not appropriate in the case of this site, because of the site conditions. Accordingly, this document is solely concerned with trial-trenching.

In correspondence with Staffordshire CC it has been agreed that trial-trenching may be undertaken after mechanical removal of floor surfaces and external hardstandings subject to the maintenance of an archaeological watching brief during the mechanical excavation of floor surfaces and hardstandings.

Should further archaeological work (mitigation) be required a separate written scheme of investigation would be prepared to scope this, later stage of work (if required).

#### **SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION**

The site is centred on SK 0089/1366. The site is located to the south of Rugeley Road, Hednesford, Staffordshire.

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The proposed development adjoins a large pond adjoining the Rising Brook. There are documentary references to iron smelting on the banks of the Rising Brook from the 14<sup>th</sup>

century onwards. Lord Paget built the first blast furnace in 1561, which was located nearby.

A forge is believed to have been in operation within the area from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

There are a number of documentary references to forges within the area, including 'Upper Furnace', 'New Furnace'.

A listing of Paget's leases includes 'Upper Furnace' and 'Upper Forge', and a lease dated 1614 refers to 'Over Furnace' and 'Over Forge'.

Whilst it has been suggested that these furnaces were located to the north of Hednesford, the general area is likely to have been a focus of early ironworking.

It is likely that ironworking in the area ceased in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The principle aim of the project is to identify any archaeological remains in advance of development, and provide details of the extent, quality, location and extent and their significance. In particular it is intended to locate and characterise any evidence of ironworking or other industrial activity within the site. Trial-trenching will permit identification of any impacts upon archaeological remains by the development, and enable proposals to be formulated for any further stage of archaeological work (if necessary).

### **METHODOLOGY**

Health and safety of the archaeological staff and the general public is the uppermost consideration throughout all stages of this project. Service plans will be obtained from all utilities before works start on site, and the area for excavation will be scanned with a Catscan or similar device. All services will be assumed live unless proven otherwise.

The first stage of archaeological input will be the maintenance of an archaeological watching brief (one archaeologist) to monitor the mechanical removal of internal floor and external hardstandings. The purpose of the watching brief will be to ensure that mechanical clearance of surface deposits does not disturb or destroy below-ground archaeological deposits.

A total of 10 trenches will be excavated, each measuring 1.6m by 25m (amounting to 4% of the area of the site proposed for development). The specific location of the trenches will be agreed with the Planning Archaeologist prior to commencement. A contingency for the excavation of a further 50m of trenching is itemised in the costings.

The first stage of trial-trenching would comprise the mechanical excavation of surface deposits within each trench, working under continuous archaeological control. The machine to be used will be a using a JCB equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. Sufficient hand-cleaning will be undertaken to enable base-planning of the surfaces, features and deposits exposed by machining.

Hand-excavation will comprise the following:

- 50% pits/post-holes.
- Ditches, 25% by length.

Complex features such as kilns or burials may not be fully excavated (investigation limited to cleaning and recording).

Throughout the excavation features and deposits will be recorded by means of pre-printed proformas. Sections will be drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate, and plans will be

drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, as required. The site grid will be related to the national grid. The drawn and written record will be supplemented by black and white (35mm) and digital photography.

Datable features will be sampled objectively for the recovery of plant and other environmental remains.

Datable features will be bulk sampled for industrial residues.

All finds which may constitute 'treasure' under the Treasure Act, 1997 will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner.

All written and drawn records will cross-checked before the excavation area is backfilled.

An on site monitoring meeting will be held during the trenching.

All finds will be cleaned, marked and bagged and remedial conservation work will be undertaken

### **STAFFING**

The project will be managed and directed for Birmingham Archaeology by Alex Jones. The fieldwork team will comprise a Project Officer assisted by three site assistants.

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:

<b>Post-Roman pottery</b>	Stephanie Rátkai	Freelance
<b>Vessel glass</b>	Cecily Cropper	Freelance
<b>Clay tobacco pipe</b>	Dr David Higgins	Freelance
<b>Small finds</b>	Dr Roger White	Senior Lecturer and Assistant Director (Development), Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham
<b>Iron, leather</b>	Quita Mould	Freelance
<b>Animal bone</b>	Matilda Holmes	Freelance
<b>Animal bone</b>	Dr Ian Baxter	Freelance
<b>Human bone</b>	Malin Holst	York Osteoarchaeology
<b>Geoarchaeology</b>	Dr Andrew Howard	Lecturer in Archaeo-Geomorphology and Remote Sensing, University of Birmingham
<b>Palynology</b>	Dr Ben Gearey	Birmingham Archaeo-Environmental
<b>Archaeobotany</b>	Rosalind McKenna	Freelance

### **REPORT**

After completion of the fieldwork the finds would be washed and marked, and the archive would be collated and checked for internal consistency. A project database would also be prepared.

An illustrated archive report will be prepared for inclusion within Staffordshire SMR. The report will comprise:

- 1) Summary
- 2) Archaeological background
- 3) Methodology
- 4) A narrative description of the results and discussion of the evidence, set in their local, regional and national research context, supported by appropriate plans, sections and photographs
- 5) Specialist assessments of the finds, industrial and environmental evidence

Following completion of the report it will be edited internally for consistency etc. Copies will then be circulated to the developer and Staffordshire CC for comment.

Summary reports will be prepared for West Midlands Archaeology and an appropriate period journal (eg Post-Medieval Archaeology). An OASIS form will be submitted on project completion.

## **ARCHIVING**

The full site archive will include all artefactual and/or ecofactual remains recovered from the site. Finds and the paper archive will be deposited with Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, subject to permission from the landowner.

Preparation and deposition of the site archive, from the excavation will be undertaken with reference to the guidelines provided by the receiving museum and to *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage* (Walker 1990) and *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2007).

## **TIMETABLE**

- Archaeological watching brief (duration not known).
- Machine excavation of trenches (2 days).
- Hand-excavation and recording (Project Officer + assistants, 5 days)
- Contingency (if applicable) 3 days to include machining.
- Final report, delivery within 1 month of fieldwork completion.

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

All project staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The project will follow the requirements set down in the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (IFA 1999, as amended).

As part of the University of Birmingham, Birmingham Archaeology follows the financial rules and procedures laid down by the university, with monitoring by the Finance Office of the University.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

A detailed risk assessment will be prepared prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

All current health and safety legislation, regulations and guidance will be complied with. The excavation will conform to the *Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations*

1992, *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*, and *Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007* and any other health and safety legislation were appropriate.

Work will be carried out in accordance with guidelines laid out in the *Birmingham Archaeology Health and Safety Manual (revised 2008)* and *Health & Safety in Field Archaeology Manual (SCAUM 2007)*.

Birmingham Archaeology operates under the guidance of the Health and Safety Unit of the University of Birmingham.

## **INSURANCE**

Birmingham Archaeology is covered by the University of Birmingham insurance policies, as follows:

12.1 Employer's liability insurance. Policy no. ELY108951496/034. QBE Insurance (Europe) Operations, minimum cover £5m.

12.2 Contractor's 'all risks'. Policy no. UM034/95 UM Association Ltd, limit £1m any one contract.

12.3 Employer's liability. Policy no. ELY108951496/034, UM Association Ltd, £50m in any one event in the aggregate.

12.4 Public and products liability. Policy no. UM034/95, UM Association Ltd, £50m in any one event and in the aggregate.

12.5 Professional indemnity. Policy no. UM034/95, UM Association Ltd, £10m any one claim, except pollution (£1m limit).

## **REFERENCES**

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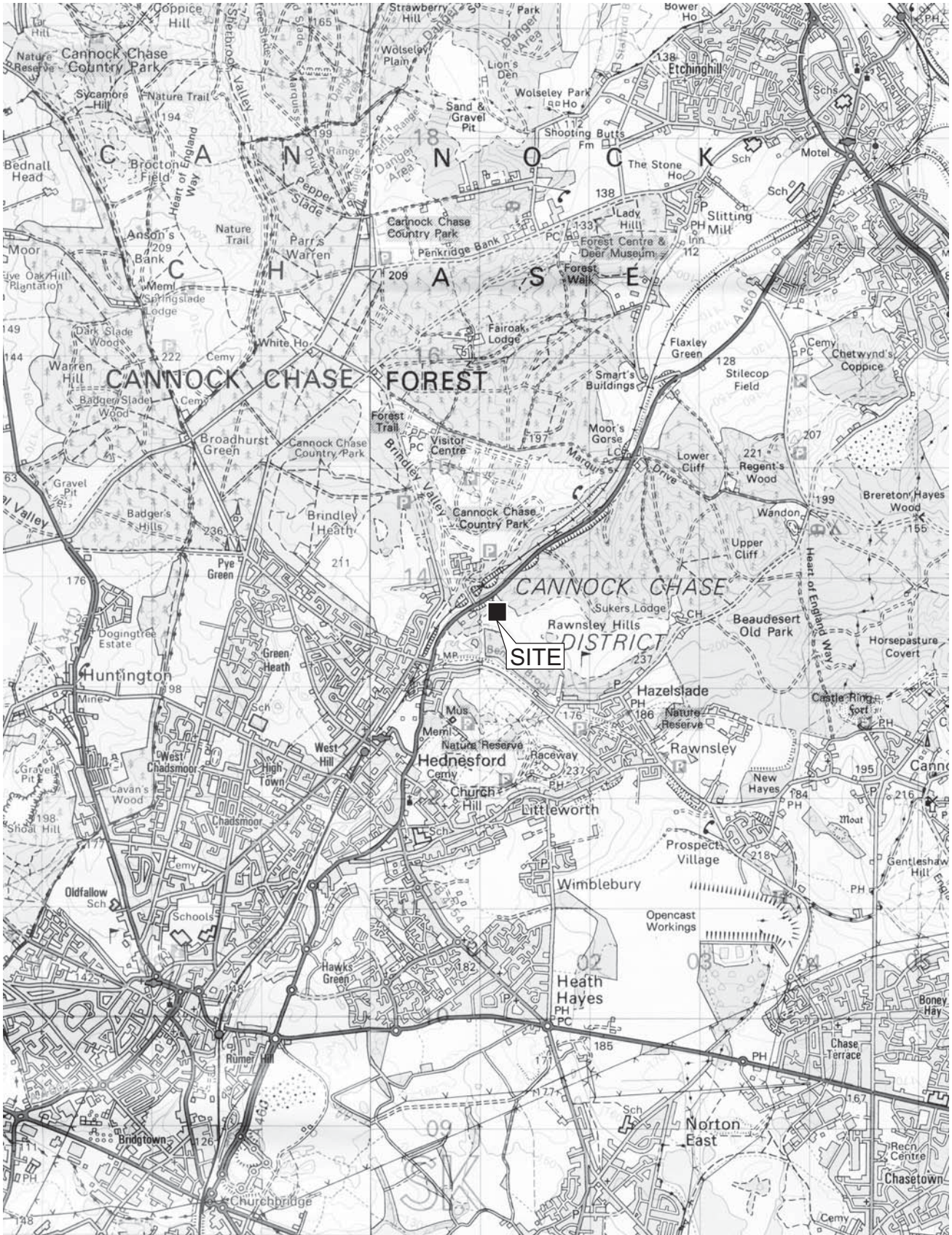
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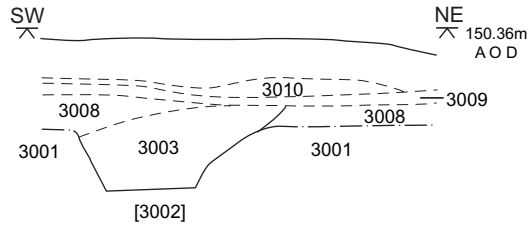




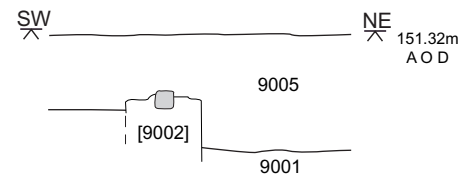
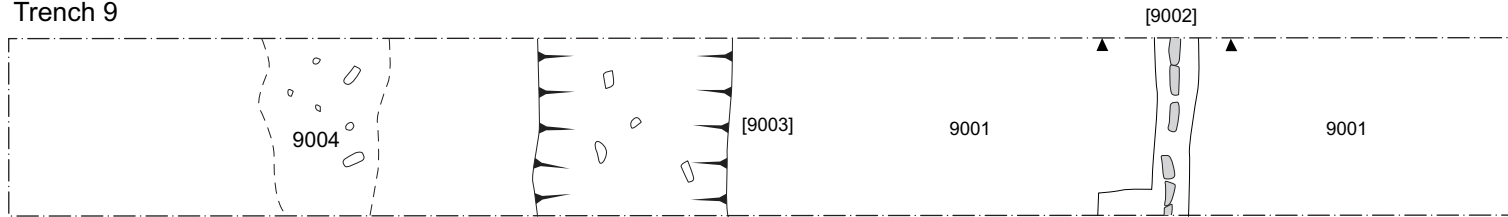




Trench 3



Trench 9



Trench 10

