



making sense of heritage

Cedar School, Redbridge Lane, Nursling, Southampton

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Planning Ref: SOU 1638
Ref: 101350.03
October 2013



**Cedar School
Redbridge Lane, Nursling
Southampton**

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation Report

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October 2013

**SOU 1638
WA Reference:101350.03**



Quality Assurance

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I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

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Cedar School Redbridge Lane, Nursling Southampton

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Cedar School Redbridge Lane, Nursling Southampton

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Kier Construction to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at the Cedar School, Redbridge Lane, Nursling, Southampton prior to the phased redevelopment of the existing Cedar School with a replacement school building, associated access, parking and landscaping.

Five trial trenches measuring c.10m by 1.6m were excavated within the footprint of the proposed new school building. A very shallow gully was recorded in Trenches 4 and 5, but it remains undated and no archaeological finds were recovered during the work. No further archaeological features and/or deposits were present within the remaining trenches. The evaluation established that there is a low potential for the presence of archaeological features being present at the site.

The fieldwork was carried out between 23rd and 24th September 2013.



Cedar School Redbridge Lane, Nursling Southampton

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Acknowledgments

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Andrew McKenzie of Kier Construction for commissioning the work. Thanks are also extended to Julian Smith of Kier Construction. The help, advice and prompt site visit of Kevin White the Historic Environment Group Leader at Southampton City Council is also gratefully acknowledged.

The evaluation was carried out by Piotr Orczewski and Peter Wilson. This report was written and compiled by Piotr Orczewski. The illustrations were prepared by Liz James. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Damian De Rosa.

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Cedar School Redbridge Lane, Nursling Southampton

Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Kier Construction (The Client) to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at the Cedar School, Redbridge Lane, Nursling, Southampton centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 438015,115955 (hereafter referred to as the Site; see **Figure 1**).

1.1.2 A planning application (13/01140/FUL) has been submitted for the phased redevelopment of the existing Cedar School with a replacement school building, associated access, parking and landscaping. As part of the planning process the Historic Environment Group Leader (HEGL) at Southampton City Council was consulted in regard of archaeology. It advised that a planning condition relating to archaeology should be attached to approval of the planning application as follows:

(i) No development shall take place within the site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

(ii) The developer will secure the completion of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

1.1.3 In accordance with this the HEGL was consulted and advised that a programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation should be undertaken within the footprint of the proposed new school building. The results of the evaluation will help to determine whether any further archaeological mitigation is required as part of the proposed development.

1.1.4 A written scheme of investigation (WA 2013) setting out the strategy and methodology by which Wessex Archaeology would implement the archaeological trial trench evaluation was submitted to and approved by the HEGL prior to the commencement of the fieldwork.

1.1.5 The evaluation was carried out between 23rd and 24th September 2013.

1.2 Scope of Document

1.2.1 This report and the fieldwork have been undertaken in compliance with the written scheme of investigation (WA 2013). In format and content it conforms with current best practice and to the guidance outlined in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (English Heritage 2006) and the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (Revised 2008).



2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location, topography and geology.

- 2.1.1 The Site is located within Nursling at the junction of Romsey Road and Redbridge Lane (**Figure 1**).
- 2.1.2 The entire development area of the Site comprises of a sub-rectangular parcel of land c.1.9ha in size and is occupied by the Cedar School building at its centre with tarmac parking areas on the western side and a running track and play areas to the east. To the south is an area of grassland where a Swale is located. The proposed new school building comprising of an area of c.2,000m² is to be constructed at the southern end of the Site (**Figure 1**)
- 2.1.3 The land within the area of the new school building is generally level at a height of 26.50 to 27m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with the base of the Swale lying at a height of 26m aOD
- 2.1.4 The underlying geology for the Site is mapped as clay, silt and sand of the Palaeogene London Clay Formation (British Geological Survey).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 A heritage statement is currently being prepared by Wessex Archaeology (WA 2013b forthcoming), for a Site immediately to the West of the Site in Adanac Park, which sets out the known archaeological and historical background within a 1km study area. A brief summary of the heritage statement, which is relevant to the Site is presented below.

3.2 Archaeological and historical background

Palaeolithic

- 3.2.1 The evidence relating to the Palaeolithic activity comprises stone tools, predominantly hand-axes found as residual material within river gravels. A poorly provenanced findspot of 34 hand-axes is located in Nursling c. 300m to the west of the Site.

Neolithic

- 3.2.2 Evidence for Neolithic activity within the vicinity of the Site comprises predominantly residual worked flints founds in later features. An assemblage of unstratified late Neolithic flints was recovered during the Adanac Park excavations to south of the Site. In addition, worked flint of Neolithic date was also retrieved from sites in the Horns Drove area to the north of the Site.
- 3.2.3 Evidence for the fragmentary survival of features related to the Neolithic activity was uncovered during investigations in Nursling Industrial Estate to the west of the Site where a series of ditches, gullies and post-holes has been dated to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age period.

Bronze Age

- 3.2.4 There is extensive evidence for Bronze Age activity within the vicinity of the Site and this is related to regionally significant settlement sites in the Test valley.



3.2.5 A settlement site of Middle to Late Bronze Age date, considered to be at least of regional significance, was uncovered on a gravel ridge to the south west of the Site within Adanac Park at the location of the Ordnance Survey Offices. The investigations revealed a number of settlement features and included parts of six probable roundhouses defined by post-holes, with a number of internal features, such as pits and post-holes, four-post structures, fencing and a number of external pits, some of which were used for the disposal of domestic refuse. These remains were accompanied by a significant assemblage of predominantly Late Bronze Age pottery. The excavation failed to reveal the full extent of this settlement or any agricultural features (such as field system ditches) associated with it. This suggests that further remains may be located in the vicinity.

Iron Age

3.2.6 Evidence for Iron Age activity in the close proximity to the Site was revealed during the Adanac Park investigations. The lack of earlier Iron Age remains within the area indicates that the former Bronze Age settlement had been abandoned and the area was not a focus of human activity until at least the Middle Iron Age. The remains revealed consisted of seven barrows, some of which were excavated. The barrows occupied the highest gravel ridge within the excavation area, located on north-south axis. Each of the barrows, defined by a circular, sub-circular, penannular or square ditch, contained a grave. Although only one of the graves contained grave goods allowing precise dating of the feature, it is considered that the cemetery is of Late Iron Age date. Barrow 3, the only feature to contain grave goods, comprised of a substantial east to west aligned grave, containing a sword, a shield handle and boss and a spearhead. Pottery dated to Bronze Age, Iron Age and the Romano-British period was retrieved from fills of the barrow ditches. The barrow cemetery was enclosed to the east by a north to south aligned ditch. In addition to the barrow cemetery, several unenclosed graves were also revealed, together with a roundhouse and a number of pits.

3.2.7 Archaeological investigation (Whitehead 2011) undertaken to the east of the Site in Five Acres Field identified prehistoric gulleys and pits from which worked and burnt flint and Iron Age pottery were recovered.

3.2.8 Within the wider Nursling area Iron Age settlement activity has been identified. For example within the Nursling Industrial Estate to the west where a group of features including pits, a trackway and an enclosure were recorded. To the north west of the Site a number of features identified on aerial photographs are considered to be of Iron Age or Romano-British origin and these include a settlement site.

Roman

3.2.9 In the Romano-British period, a settlement at Bitterne Manor (*Clausentum*) in the Southampton area became soon after the Roman Conquest in AD 43, the principal centre within the region and functioned as a trading port, serving the cantonal capital of *Venta Bulgarum* (Winchester).

3.2.10 A second major Roman settlement in the Southampton environs was located in the vicinity of Nursling Industrial Estate, to the west of the Site. Discoveries indicating the presence of a settlement were made in the 19th century in relation to gravel quarrying and the construction of the railway line and included numerous features such as wells, pits and a possible granary. A number of investigations carried out prior to the development of the industrial estate revealed extensive evidence for the Romano-British settlement. The remains included a field system, settlement enclosures and pottery dating to AD 60-130 and were interpreted as part of a small rural community predominantly involved in pastoral



farming, which subsequently expanded and developed to the south-west in the Late Romano-British period.

- 3.2.11 The settlement was located nearby a crossing over the River Test, alongside a road leading from *Venta Bulgarum* via Nursling to the New Forest. The course of the road is thought to have traversed the area to the north west of the Site.

Saxon and medieval

- 3.2.12 Following the abandonment of the Roman settlement at Nursling Industrial Estate in the late 4th or early 5th century AD, a new settlement had been established in the vicinity of the Site towards the end of the 8th century AD. Nursling is first mentioned as *Nhutselle* in a document dated to AD 800.

- 3.2.13 There is limited evidence for Saxon activity within the vicinity of the Site. However, a trial trench evaluation undertaken in 2010 within Five Acres Fields immediately to the east of the Site for the Oasis Academy (Whitehead 2010) revealed a hearth, which has been dated by C14 to AD660—770. Further investigation undertaken following the evaluation (Whitehead 2011) identified further archaeological features that are considered to date to the Saxon and medieval periods. Further samples taken from charcoal rich contexts along with that previously taken in the evaluation gave date ranges of AD660-770 to AD1150-1240.

- 3.2.14 The medieval village of Nursling has two areas of historic settlement, one centred on Nursling Street, and the other on St Boniface's Church to the north-west of the Site.

- 3.2.15 During the medieval period the Site is likely to have been occupied by fields within the rural surroundings of known scattered settlements. The archaeological evidence for medieval activity in the vicinity of the Site includes remains found in advance of gravel extraction immediately to the south west of the Site in Adanac Park. These remains included two corn dryers, a hearth and field ditches, which indicates agricultural activity in the area and the potential for the presence of a settlement in close proximity. In addition, two medieval ditches were revealed during the evaluation at Adanac Park as well as an assemblage of medieval pottery confirming the presence of medieval agricultural features in this area.

Post-medieval and modern

- 3.2.16 The Site remained within a rural landscape throughout the post medieval and into the modern period. The Site is depicted on the Tithe Map for the area and up until the 1960s Ordnance Survey map as lying within a field at the junction of Romsey Road and Redbridge Lane.

- 3.2.17 Evaluation undertaken to the east of the Site (Whitehead 2010) recorded a number of boundary ditches, which are known from historic mapping. The only finds recovered from the work comprised modern pottery and roof tile, a clay pipe stem and one fragment of animal bone, all from Post-mediaeval field boundary ditches.

- 3.2.18 The Cedar School, which is for children with special educational needs and physical difficulties was constructed in the 1970s. The current proposed development will result in the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new purpose built school better suited to and designed specifically for the needs of the children.



4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Archaeological Field Evaluation

4.1.1 The aims of the archaeological field evaluation were to determine, as far as it was reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by proposed development.

5 METHOD STATEMENT

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The full detailed methodology of the archaeological works was set out in the written scheme of investigation (WA 2013a), this is summarised below.

5.2 Fieldwork

5.2.1 Five trenches in total were excavated (**Figure 1**). The length of Trench 1 had to be reduced to 8.0m due to the proximity of trees. Trenches 2, 3, 4, and 5 measured approximately 10.0m by 1.6m.

5.2.2 Prior to machine excavation, trench locations were scanned by Wessex Archaeology using a cable tracing device (CAT). The trenches were not excavated in areas where services were located by the cable scan. As a result of identified services and ground conditions the locations of the trenches was slightly altered from that shown in the WSI.

5.2.3 All overburden (topsoil and subsoil) was carefully removed in spits by a wheeled mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or natural geology, whichever was encountered first.

5.2.4 Stripped material was visually examined for archaeological material and a metal detector was used to enhance artefact recovery.

5.2.5 Trenches were reinstated using the excavated material.

5.3 Recording

5.3.1 All features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's standard methods and pro forma recording system, with all features and deposits being assigned an unique number. Soil descriptions were based on the Soil Science Handbook.

5.3.2 A complete drawn record of excavated and archaeological features and deposits was compiled. This includes both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections). The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels will be calculated and plans/sections will be annotated with OD heights.

5.3.3 Trench locations and all recorded archaeological features revealed were surveyed using a Total Station/GPS and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.

5.3.4 A full photographic record was maintained using digital cameras. The photographic record illustrates both the detail and the general context of features and trenches.



6 RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Details of individual contexts are retained in the project archive. Summaries of the excavated sequences can be found in the **Appendix 1**.

6.2 Results

6.2.1 Five trenches in total were excavated (**Figure 1**). Trenches 2, 3, 4, and 5 measured approximately 10.0m by 1.6m (**Plates 2, 4, 5 and 6**). The length of Trench 1 (**Plate 1**) had to be reduced to 8.0m due to the proximity of trees. All trenches were moved slightly for best representation of the area and to avoid services (Trenches 4 and 5).

6.2.2 The natural geology varied within the trenches and was revealed at a depth of 0.30m to 0.50m below ground level. Within Trenches 1 (**Plate 1**) and 2 (**Plates 2 and 3**) the natural was shown to be a medium greyish yellow clay. In Trench 3 (**Plate 4**) the natural changed to a mottled grey and orange clay with abundant small to medium gravel. Within Trenches 4 and 5 (**Plates 5 to 7**) the natural was revealed to be a light grey clay with abundant fine gravel.

6.2.3 Overlying the natural in Trenches 1 and 3 were modern made ground deposits up to 0.30m in depth. Made ground in Trench 1 is related to the construction of the now existing car park. There was considerable variation between and within the deposits recorded in Trench 3. This suggested that they were the result of deliberately and mechanically dumped loads possibly associated with the construction of the swale. The deposits contained significant amounts of modern demolition material and remains of concrete fence posts.

6.2.4 In Trench 2 the topsoil was seen to directly overlie the natural geology to a depth of 0.30m (**Plate 3**). In Trenches 4 and 5 (**Plate 7**) a subsoil c.0.25m in depth was seen to overlie the natural geology and this in turn was overlain by 0.20m of topsoil.

6.2.5 A narrow and shallow gully cutting the natural geology was recorded on a SW-NE alignment across Trenches 4 and 5 (**Figure 1** and **Plates 5 and 6**). The gully was seen to terminate in Trench 5 possibly as a result of truncation from modern services. The gully remains undated, however the sudden change in the colour of the fill from dark to very pale grey suggests it may also be modern in origin.

6.2.6 No archaeological finds were recovered during the fieldwork.

6.2.7 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 The made ground deposits observed in Trenches 1 and 3 are of clearly modern origin. They are related to the construction of the car park within the last two years and the swale, which was excavated at an unknown date post-dating the construction of the school in the 1970s.

7.1.2 The recorded shallow and narrow gully within Trenches 4 and 5 contained no archaeological artefacts and remains undated. Together with a complete lack of artefacts from across the Site this suggests a low archaeological potential for the Site. No evidence



of any archaeological features and/or deposits relating to the Later Prehistoric, Saxon or medieval findings from the neighbouring Oasis Academy to the east were present. This indicates that if the evidence from the Oasis Academy is indicative of some form of settlement relating to those periods then it does not extend westwards into the footprint of the proposed new development.

8 THE ARCHIVE

8.1 Preparation of Archive

- 8.1.1 The complete Site archive, which includes paper records, photographic records, graphics, and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the appropriate Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013)
- 8.1.2 The complete Site archive will be marked with the **SOU 1638** accession code and is currently held at the Wessex Archaeology offices in Salisbury under the WA project code 101350.
- 8.1.3 It is intended that the archive will be deposited with Southampton City Council.

8.2 Security copy

- 8.2.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. 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 REFERENCES

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- Whitehead 2010, Summary report on an archaeological evaluation at Five Acre Field, Lordshill, Southampton. SOU 1545. Southern Archaeological Services Ltd
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APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

bgl = below ground level

TRENCH 1			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 8.0x1.50m		Max. depth: 0.85m	Ground level: 26.80m aOD	
Context	Description		Depth bgl (m)	
101	Topsoil	Mid pale grey silty loam with occasional stone inclusions. Modern topsoil overlying mostly made ground.	0.00-0.20m	
102	Made Ground	Mid greyish yellow compact clay made ground. The build up for the car park area.	0.20-0.50m	
103	Natural	Med to light greyish yellow compact silty clay natural.	0.50m +	

TRENCH 2			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 11.40x1.50m		Max. depth: 0.41m	Ground level: 26.30m aOD	
Context	Description		Depth bgl (m)	
201	Topsoil	Mid brown silt loam. Sparse sub angular small to medium flint gravel inclusions.	0.00-0.31m	
202	Natural	Mid greyish yellow clay mottled with dark brown and pale grey patches. Common patches of small to medium sub angular flint gravel.	0.31m+	

TRENCH 3			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 11.50x1.60m		Max. depth: 0.54m	Ground level: 26.56m aOD	
Context	Description		Depth bgl (m)	
301	Topsoil	Mid brown silt loam with sparse sub angular small to medium flint gravel.	0.00-0.27m	
302	Natural	Mottled grey and orange clay with abundant small to medium sub angular flint gravel.	0.27m+	
303	Made Ground	Various made ground including brick deposits, mortar and general demolition derived landfill.	0.27m+	

TRENCH 4			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 10.40x1.60m		Max. depth: 0.55m	Ground level: 26.50m aOD	
Context	Description		Depth bgl (m)	
401	Topsoil	Mid brown silt loam with sparse sub angular small to medium flint gravel.	0.00-0.18m	
402	Subsoil	Light brown silt loam with greyish hue. Common fine to medium flint gravel. Rare modern brick inclusions.	0.18-0.46m	
403	Natural	Light grey clay with abundant fine flint gravel.	0.46m +	
404	Cut	Shallow gully.	0.46m	
405	Fill	Secondary fill.	0.46 – 0.55m	

TRENCH 5			Type:	Machine excavated
Dimensions: 10.00x1.60m		Max. depth: 0.50m	Ground level: 26.95m aOD	
Context	Description		Depth bgl (m)	
501	Topsoil	Mid brown silt loam with sparse sub angular small to medium flint gravel.	0.00-0.20m	
502	Subsoil	Light brown silt loam with greyish hue. Common fine to medium flint gravel.	0.20-0.45m	
503	Natural	Light grey clay with abundant fine to medium sub angular flint gravel.	0.45 +m	
504	Cut	Shallow gully terminus.	0.45m	
505	Fill	Secondary fill.	0.45 – 0.55m	



APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM:

England

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Printable version

OASIS ID: wessexar1-160196

Project details

Project name	Cedar School Redbridge Lane, Nursling Southampton
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Kier Construction to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at the Cedar School, Redbridge Lane, Nursling, Southampton prior to the phased redevelopment of the existing Cedar School with a replacement school building, associated access, parking and landscaping. Five trial trenches measuring c.10m by 1.6m were excavated within the footprint of the proposed new school building. A very shallow gully was recorded in Trenches 4 and 5, but it remains undated and no archaeological finds were recovered during the work. No further archaeological features and/or deposits were present within the remaining trenches. The evaluation established that there is a low potential for the presence of archaeological features being present at the site. The fieldwork was carried out between 23rd and 24th September 2013
Project dates	Start: 23-09-2013 End: 24-09-2013
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	SOU 1638 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	101350 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	GULLY Uncertain
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country	England
Site location	HAMPSHIRE SOUTHAMPTON SOUTHAMPTON Cedar School Redbridge Lane, Nursling Southampton
Postcode	SO16 0XN
Study area	2000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	0 0 438015 00 00 N 115955 00 00 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 26.00m Max: 26.50m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Damian de Rosa
Project supervisor	Piotr Orczewski
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Kier Construction

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Southampton Museum
Digital Media available	"Database", "GIS", "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Southampton Museum
Paper Media available	"Drawing", "Miscellaneous Material", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

Project bibliography 1

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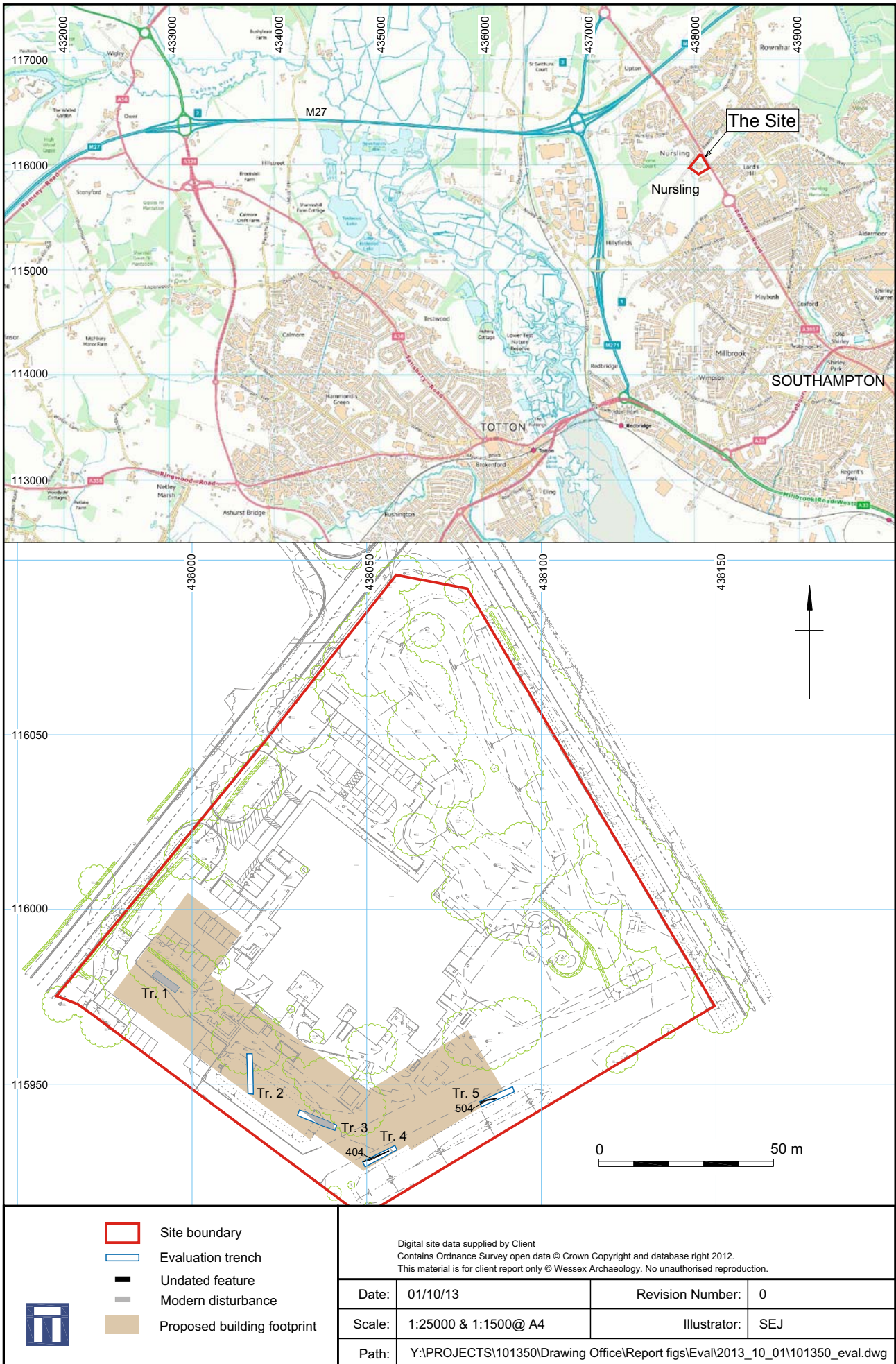
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Site and trench location

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1



Plate 2: Trench 2



Plate 4: Trench 3



Plate 3: Trench 2, north-east facing representative section



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Plate 5: Trench 4



Plate 6: Trench 5



Plate 7: Trench 5, north-east facing representative section



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