



White Oak Leisure Centre

Archaeological Evaluation



Planning Ref: 19/02951/HYB
Ref: 233230.3
June 2020



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Document subtitle Archaeological Evaluation
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Client name ISG
Address Woodland House
Woodland Park
Bradford Road
BD19 6BW

Site location White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley
County Kent
National grid reference (NGR) 551040 169136 (TQ 51040 69136)
Planning authority Sevenoaks District Council
Planning reference 19/02951/HYB
Museum name To be confirmed
Museum accession code To be confirmed
OASIS Id 397385

WA project code 233230
Date of fieldwork 01/06/2020 to 02/06/2020
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Graphics by Nancy Dixon
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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by ISG, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a parcel of land located at White Oak Leisure Centre, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley BR8 7BT, centred on NGR 551040 169136.

The evaluation was undertaken as part of a proposed redevelopment of the White Oaks Leisure Centre. The proposed redevelopment comprises two parts, the redevelopment of the leisure centre itself and the replacement of part of the former leisure centre with residential units.

The evaluation comprised the excavation of four trial trenches. A single large ditch or hedgerow was identified within Trench 4, which was modern in date. No other archaeological features, remains or deposits were identified; however, Trenches 1 and 2 identified multiple made ground layers which may be related to the landscaping and levelling of the site in the 20th century for the original White Oak Leisure Centre development.

The evaluation was undertaken on the 1st and 2nd June 2020.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank ISG, for commissioning the archaeological evaluation, in particular Daniel Leigh. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Wendy Rogers the County Archaeologist for Kent County Council, who monitored the project on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council.



White Oak Leisure Centre Swanley, Kent

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by ISG, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a 0.9 hectare parcel of land located at White Oak Leisure Centre, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley BR8 7BT, centred on NGR 551040 169136 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 A hybrid application for planning permission has been made to Sevenoaks District Council for the redevelopment of the White Oak Leisure Centre (Planning Reference 19/02951/HYB). The application consists of two parts, the redevelopment of the leisure centre and the replacement of part of the former leisure centre with residential units. The County Archaeologist for Kent County Council (KCC) has recommended that if permission is granted the following condition should be attached:

1.1.3 *“Prior to the commencement of development, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure and implement:*

- i. Archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
- ii. Further archaeological investigation, recording and reporting, determined by the results of the evaluation, in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.”*

1.1.4 All works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed in order to undertake the evaluation (LOCUS Consulting 2020). The County Archaeologist for KCC approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing.

1.1.5 The evaluation comprising 4 trial trenches was undertaken 01/06/2020 to 02/06/2020.

1.2 Scope of the report

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

1.2.2 The presented results will provide further information on the archaeological resource that may be impacted by the proposed development and facilitate an informed decision with regard to the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation.

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The site encompasses part of the existing leisure centre, car parking, open green space, and access off Hilda May Way to the east, and is bounded to the northeast and southeast



by residential development, to the southwest by undeveloped land and to the northwest by the rest of the existing leisure centre and car park.

1.3.2 Existing ground levels are at 69m OD.

1.3.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Thanet Formation Sand, with no superficial deposits (British Geological Survey online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Archaeological and historical context

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site was assessed within the WSI (LOCUS Consulting 2020), and briefly described below.

2.1.2 Prior to the arrival of the railway in 1862, Swanley was just a small hamlet of three houses. However archaeological evidence suggests human activity, and possibly occupation in the area from as early as the Mesolithic period. Mesolithic flint implements, including tranchet axes, picks and blades have been recovered to the south and southwest of the site. To the north of the site, two ring ditches are visible as cropmarks on the 2006 and 2007 Google Earth images, these along with a possible Denehole (an early chalk extraction site) to the northeast, while undated may be further evidence of Prehistoric activity in the Swanley area.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (LOCUS Consulting 2020) and in compliance with the ClfA *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), were to:

- provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and
- inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

3.2 General objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation were to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;
- establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.



4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (LOCUS Consulting 2020) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The trench locations were set out using a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), in the approximate positions proposed in the WSI, although Trench 1 had to be shortened due to an identified borehole (**Figure 1**).

4.2.2 Four trial trenches, three measuring 20m in length, one 15m in length and all 1.8m in width, were excavated in level spits using a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.

4.2.3 Where necessary, the base of the trench/surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand. A sample of archaeological features and deposits was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the evaluation.

4.2.4 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Artefacts were collected and bagged by context.

4.2.5 Trenches completed to the satisfaction of the client and the County Archaeologist were backfilled using excavated materials in the order in which they were excavated, and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

Recording

4.2.6 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.

4.2.7 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.

4.2.8 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 16 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (LOCUS Consulting 2020). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the*

collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 The County Archaeologist monitored the evaluation on behalf of the LPA. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the client and the County Archaeologist.

5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Of the four excavated trial trenches, only one contained an archaeological feature, which comprised a large ditch or hedgerow containing modern artefacts (**Figure 1**).
- 5.1.2 Detailed descriptions of individual contexts are provided in the trench summary tables (**Appendix 1**). **Figure 1** shows the site location, trench layout and the archaeological results. The following section presents the results of the evaluation with archaeological features and deposits discussed by period.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

- 5.2.1 The archaeological evaluation identified differing soil sequences across the site, with a notable contrast between Trenches 1 and 2, and Trenches 3 and 4.
- 5.2.2 Trenches 1 and 2 identified a topsoil layer comprised of mid greyish brown sandy silt measuring 0.2m in thickness, which overlay multiple made ground layers measuring between 0.75m and 1.1m in thickness. The made ground layers overlaid a probable surviving subsoil layer comprised of a light yellowish-brown sandy silt, measuring between 0.2m and 0.25m in thickness, that overlaid the natural geology (**Plates 1 and 2**).
- 5.2.3 Trenches 3 and 4 identified a topsoil layer comprised of a mid-greyish brown sandy silt measuring between 0.14m and 0.2m in thickness. The topsoil overlaid a subsoil comprised of a light yellowish-brown sandy silt, measuring 0.1m and 0.15m in thickness, which overlaid the natural geology (**Plates 3 and 4**).
- 5.2.4 The natural geology encountered comprised of the Thanet Sands, and was established at a depth of 1.3m to 1.5m bgl in Trenches 1 and 2, and a depth of 0.25m to 0.35m bgl in Trenches 3 and 4.

5.3 Modern

- 5.3.1 Ditch **404** was orientated east-south-east to west-north-west with moderate concave sides and a flat base, measuring 4.74m in width and 0.7m in depth (**Plate 5**). The feature contained four secondary fills, the first being a mid-yellowish brown sandy silt containing a rare amount of charcoal and modern artefacts throughout, measuring 0.22m in thickness. The second fill was a dark greyish brown sandy silt with a common amount of charcoal flecks and modern artefacts, measuring 0.1m in thickness. The third fill was a mid-greyish brown sandy silt with a rare amount of charcoal flecks and modern artefacts measuring 0.24m in thickness, and the fourth fill was a light yellowish-brown sandy silt measuring 0.14m in thickness.



6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary and Discussion

- 6.1.1 The archaeological evaluation was successful in testing the site for the presence of archaeological features, deposits or remains, and fulfilling the aims and specifications as stated in the WSI.
- 6.1.2 The evaluation identified a series of made ground layers within Trenches 1 and 2, in proximity to the current White Oak Leisure Centre buildings located to the north of the site. These layers may be associated with landscaping and levelling of the site in the 20th century as part of the development of the leisure centre.
- 6.1.3 A large ditch serving as a boundary feature was identified within Trench 4 which contained modern artefacts. The feature cannot be seen on Ordnance Survey mapping of the site, but the area served as agricultural land until it was developed in the late 19th century, as seen on 1897 to 1898 OS mapping.

7 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

- 7.1.1 In the absence of any museum in the area actively collecting archaeological archives, no final repository for the project archive has yet been identified. The archive will continue to be stored at the offices of Wessex Archaeology until such time as the situation is resolved. However, ongoing storage charges may be levied after a set time after project completion.

7.2 Preparation of the archive

- 7.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 7.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the **site code 233230**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
- 1 file/document case of paper records and A3/A4 graphics;

7.3 Selection policy

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

7.4 Security copy

- 7.4.1 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.



7.5 OASIS

- 7.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 2). A .pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the County Archaeologist on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

8 COPYRIGHT

8.1 Archive and report copyright

- 8.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

8.2 Third party data copyright

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



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LOCUS Consulting 2020 *Written Scheme of Investigation. Archaeological Evaluation at Land at a White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley*.

SMA 1993 *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections*. Society of Museum Archaeologists

SMA 1995 *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive*. Society of Museum Archaeologists



APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench summaries

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

Trench No 1		Length 15 m	Width 1.80 m	Depth 1 m
Easting 551057.35		Northing 169141.64		m OD 63.13
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
101		Topsoil	Mid brownish grey silty sand	0.00-0.20
102		Made ground	Mid greenish brown silty clay	0.20-0.50
103		Made ground	Light yellowish-brown silty sand	0.50-0.80
104		Made ground	Dark brownish black silty sand. Abundant modern metal scrap, wood, ceramic pipes	0.80-1.30
105		Subsoil?	Light yellowish-brown silty sand. Moderate chalk flecks	1.30-1.50
106		Natural	Thanet sand	1.50+

Trench No 2		Length 20 m	Width 1.80 m	Depth 1.30 m
Easting		Northing		m OD
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
201		Topsoil	Dark greyish silty clay	0.00-0.30
202		Made ground	Light white yellowish silty clay	0.30-0.45
203		Made ground	Mid orangey brown silty clay. Moderate sub-rounded flints	0.45-0.75
204		Made ground	Dark brownish grey sandy clay. Occasional small sub-rounded flints and chalk flecks	0.75-1.05
205		Subsoil?	Light greyish brown silty sand. Moderate chalk flecks and sub- rounded flints	1.05-1.30
206		Natural	Thanet sand	1.30+

Trench No 3		Length 20 m	Width 1.80 m	Depth 0.40 m
Easting		Northing		m OD
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
301		Topsoil	Mid brownish grey silty sand	0.0-0.20
302		Subsoil	Mid orangey brown silty sand. Moderate chalk flecks	0.20-0.35
303		Natural	Thanet sand	0.35-0.40



Trench No 4		Length 20 m	Width 1.50 m	Depth 0.45 m
Easting		Northing		m OD
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
401		Topsoil	Mid greyish brown. Sandy Silt. Heavy vegetation and rooting from surface.	0-0.14
402		Subsoil	Mid yellowish brown. Sandy silt. Rare pebble flint.	0.14-0.24
403		Natural	Lighter mid yellowish brown. Sandy silt. Frequent manganese, rare pebble flint and rare chalk flecks.	0.24-0.45
404	405, 406, 407, 408	Field Boundary/Hedgerow	Linear field boundary / hedgerow with moderate, concave sides and a flat base. Length: >1.50 m. Width: 4.74 m. Depth: 0.70 m.	0.45-1.15
405	404	Secondary fill	Mid yellowish-brown sandy silt with 1% pebble flint inclusions. Archaeological components: Rare charcoal + modern finds	0.93-1.15
406	404	Secondary fill	Dark greyish brown sandy silt with 3% pebble flint inclusions. Archaeological components: Common charcoal & modern finds	0.83-0.93
407	404	Secondary fill	Mid greyish brown sandy silt with 1% pebble flint & 1% manganese inclusions. Archaeological components: Rare charcoal & modern finds	0.59-0.83
408	404	Secondary fill	Light yellowish-brown sandy silt with 1% manganese inclusions	0.45-0.59



Appendix 2

Site Name: White Oaks Leisure Centre, Swanley	
Site Address: White Oaks Leisure Centre, Swanley, Kent	
Summary of discoveries: A single modern linear ditch	
District/Unitary: Sevenoaks	Parish: Swanley
Period(s): Modern	
NGR (centre of site to nearest 1m): 551040 169136 (TQ 51040 69136) (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)	
Type of archaeological work (delete) Archaeological Evaluation	
Date of fieldwork (dd/mm/yy) From: 01/06/2020 To: 02/06/2020	
Unit/contractor undertaking recording: Wessex Archaeology	
Geology: The underlying geology is mapped as Thanet Formation Sand, with no superficial deposits.	
Title and author of accompanying report: Title: White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley, Kent: Archaeological Evaluation Authors: Jon Sanigar	
Summary of fieldwork results The evaluation was undertaken as part of a proposed redevelopment of the White Oaks Leisure Centre. The proposed redevelopment comprises two parts, the redevelopment of the leisure centre and the replacement of part of the former leisure centre with residential units. The evaluation comprised the excavation of four trial trenches. A single large ditch or hedgerow was identified within Trench 4, which was modern in date. No other archaeological features, remains or deposits were identified; however trenches 1 and 2 identified multiple made ground layers which may be related to the landscaping and levelling of the site in the 20th century for the White Oak Leisure Centre. The evaluation was undertaken on the 1 st and 2 nd June 2020.	
Location of archive/finds: Wessex Archaeology Maidstone	
Contact at Unit: Rob De'Athe	Date: 29/06/2020



Appendix 3 OASIS record

OASIS ID: wessexar1-397385

Project details

Project name	White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley, Kent
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by ISG, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a parcel of land located at White Oak Leisure Centre, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley BR8 7BT, centred on NGR 551040 169136. The evaluation comprised the excavation of four trial trenches and was undertaken on 01/06/2020 to 02/06/2020. The archaeological evaluation identified a single large ditch or hedgerow within Trench 4, which is 20th century in date. No other archaeological features, remains or deposits were identified. Trenches 1 and 2 identified multiple made ground layers which can be attributed to the landscaping and levelling of the site in the 20th century for the White Oak Leisure Centre.
Project dates	Start: 01-06-2020 End: 02-06-2020
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	19/02951/HYB - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	233230 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	DITCH Modern
Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Housing estate
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT SEVENOAKS SWANLEY White Oak Leisure Centre
Postcode	BR8 7BT
Study area	0.9 Hectares
Site coordinates	551040 169136 551040 00 00 N 169136 00 00 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 69m Max: 69m

Project creators



Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	LOCUS Consulting
Project design originator	ISG
Project director/manager	Rob De'Athe
Project supervisor	Guillermo Santamaria

Project archives

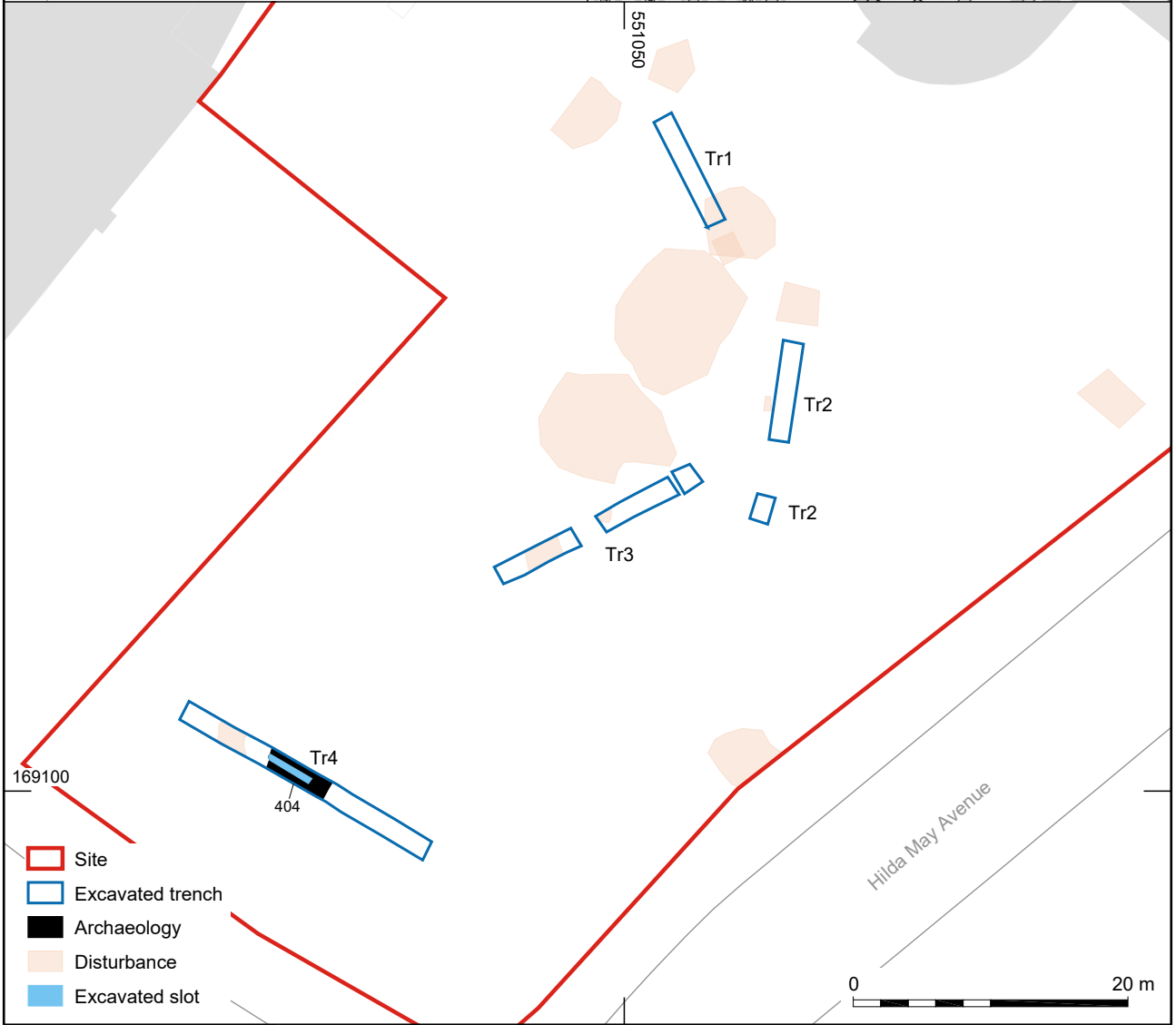
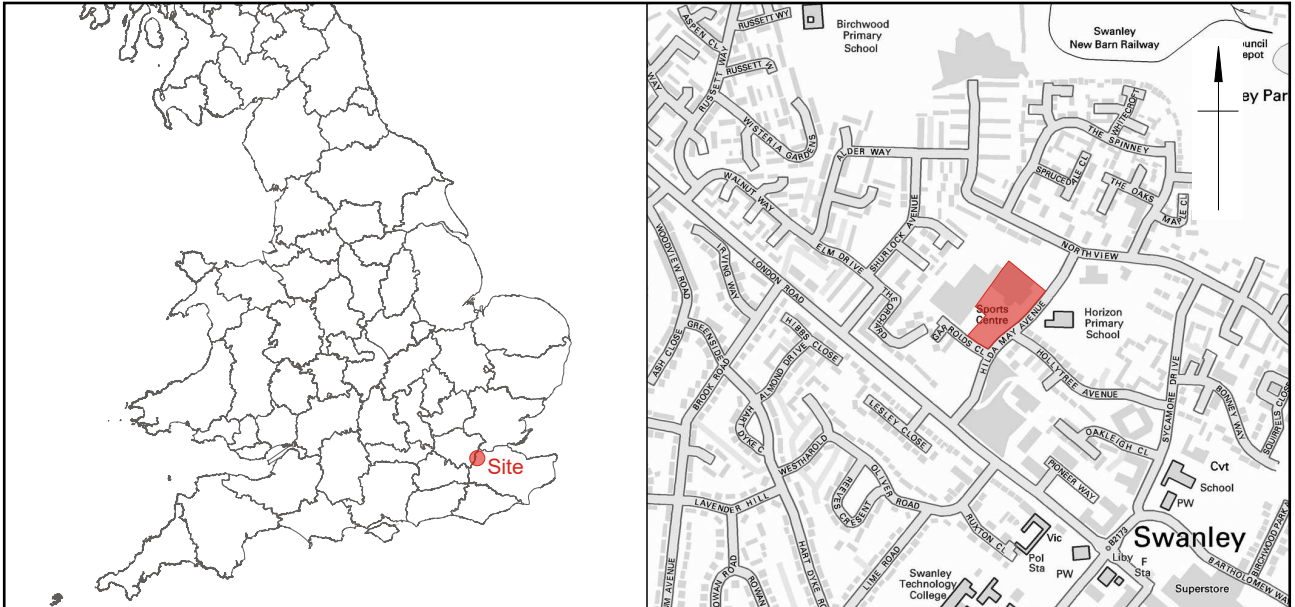
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	no museum deposit
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	no museum deposit
Paper Contents	"Ceramics","Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Miscellaneous Material","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Report","Survey "

Project bibliography

1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	White Oak Leisure Centre, Swanley, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Sanigar, J.
Date	2020
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Maidstone
Description	A4 unpublished client report

Entered by	Jon Sanigar (j.sanigar@wessexarch.co.uk)
Entered on	24 June 2020



- Site
- Excavated trench
- Archaeology
- Disturbance
- Excavated slot

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Site location and archaeological results

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1, viewed from the northwest

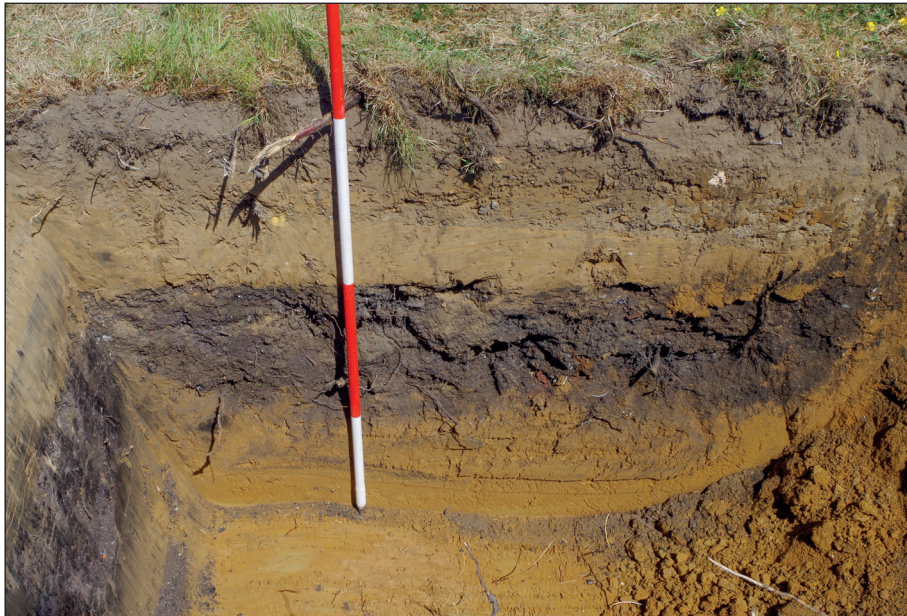


Plate 2: Sondage of Trench 1, viewed from the southwest


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Plate 3: Trench 4, viewed from the east-south-east



Plate 4: Trench 3 representative section viewed from the southeast



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Plate 5: North-northeast facing section of ditch 404

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	Scale:	Not to scale	Illustrator:	JD
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