

**THREE SWANS HOTEL,  
117 HIGH STREET, HUNGERFORD,  
BERKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**NGR: SU 3386 6852**

Report No. 724  
February 2011

**Quality Assurance**

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with  
AMS's Quality Procedures (BS EN ISO 9001: 2000)

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## SUMMARY

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at the Three Swans Hotel, 117 High Street, Hungerford, Berkshire (NGR: SU 3386 6852). Two applications (ref. 10/02565/FULMAJ and 10/02569/LBC) to construct new dwellings to the rear of the Three Swans Hotel have been submitted to West Berkshire Council. Archaeological work in advance of development was required by West Berkshire Council in accordance with the principles of PPS 5 and the archaeological policies of West Berkshire Council. The work was commissioned by The Historic Environment Consultancy on behalf of the landowner.

A total of three trenches were excavated within the area of proposed development.

No significant archaeological finds or features were found during the evaluation, although evidence of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century garden activity was identified in the form of rooting and possible planting beds.

A limited finds assemblage of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century artefacts was recovered from the site and will not be retained.

The work revealed that the evaluation area has low potential for the preservation of archaeological finds or deposits pre-dating the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century, however the possibility of features and deposits of archaeological significance in the vicinity of the site cannot be ruled out.

## GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### *Archaeology*

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### *Medieval*

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c.* AD 1500.

### *Modern*

The period 1900 onwards.

### *Natural*

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### *OD*

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey

### *Post-medieval*

The period from *c.* AD 1500 to 1900

### *Romano-British*

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *c.* AD 410.

### *SMR*

Sites and Monuments Record

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at the Three Swans Hotel, 117 High Street, Hungerford, Berkshire (NGR: SU 3386 6852). Two applications (ref. 10/02565/FULMAJ and 10/02569/LBC) to construct new dwellings to the rear of the Three Swans Hotel have been submitted to West Berkshire Council. Archaeological work in advance of development was required by West Berkshire Council in accordance with the principles of PPS 5 and the archaeological policies of West Berkshire Council. The work was commissioned by The Historic Environment Consultancy on behalf of the land owner.
- 1.2 The archaeological evaluation work was undertaken in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by The Historic Environment Consultancy and following discussions with and agreed by Duncan Coe, the archaeological officer acting as advisor to West Berkshire Council.
- 1.3 The project was undertaken in accordance with IfA Codes of Practice, in accordance with the general requirements set out by the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (rev. 2008) and in line with the archaeological policies of West Berkshire Council. Foundations Archaeology is a registered archaeological organisation with the IfA and is certified to BS EN ISO 9001: 2008 for quality assurance in the provision of archaeological services.

## **2 SITE LOCATION**

- 2.1 The site lies in the centre of Hungerford. The Three Swans Hotel faces onto the High Street to its west. The area of proposed development lies partly within the car park to the rear of the hotel and partly on a grass bank to the east of the car park and is bounded by public car park to the north, the hotel buildings to the west and built land to the east and south (See Figures 1 and 2).
- 2.2 The site lies at approximately 103.6m OD within the car park area and at approximately 106.0m OD on the grass bank. The base geology of the area comprises Chalk, overlain by clay river gravels.

## **3 PROJECT AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Two applications (ref. 10/02565/FULMAJ and 10/02569/LBC) to construct new dwellings to the rear of the Three Swans Hotel have been submitted to West Berkshire Council. Archaeological work in advance of development was required by West Berkshire Council in accordance with the principles of PPS 5 and the archaeological policies of West Berkshire Council.

- 3.2 The site lies within the historic core of Hungerford and a number of excavations in the vicinity of the site have identified significant archaeological deposits.
- 3.3 Evidence for prehistoric activity comes from a number of locations in and around Hungerford. Palaeolithic stones tools have been found around the village and Mesolithic stones tools from the flood plains at Eddington, a northern suburb of Hungerford. Bronze Age dwellings are present at Charnham Park, (an area to the north of Hungerford, west of Eddington) and a large number of contemporary barrows are present across the area. Cropmarks at Eddington suggest the presence of an Iron Age village. Work on a site c.130m northeast of the Three Swans at a Somerfield supermarket recorded a prehistoric gully. A prehistoric or Roman field system has been identified on Hungerford Common, to the east of the village, through aerial photographic research.
- 3.4 A Roman road runs to the north of Hungerford. The Iron Age settlement at Eddington continued in use throughout the Roman period. A number Roman finds have also been found within Hungerford.
- 3.5 Excavations at the Somerfield supermarket, c.130m northeast of the site, revealed evidence of 19<sup>th</sup> century brewery buildings. The Kennet and Avon Canal was fortified as a defensive stop-line during WWII. An archaeological watching brief at 109-110 High Street, c. 75m south of the site, recorded possible cess-pits of post-medieval date.
- 3.6 An archaeological watching brief at 24 High Street revealed an undated pit.
- 3.7 The site itself lies upon two burgage plots with the addition of some land from neighbouring plots.
- 3.8 The site therefore contained the potential for the preservation of archaeological deposits predominantly associated with the prehistoric and post-medieval periods with the possibility of finds from the Roman period. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of evidence dating to other periods.

#### **4 AIMS**

- 4.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken

regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.

4.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
- ii) to attempt to characterize the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
- iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 Three trenches were excavated in a random sample across the proposed development area. Trench 1 measured 4m long by 1.8m wide and was situated in the car park; Trench 2 measured 20m long by 1.8m wide and was situated on the grass bank; Trench 3 measured 10m long by 1.8m wide and was also situated on the grass bank.
- 5.2 Topsoil and non-significant overburden was removed to the top of archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved with the use of an 8 ton 360° excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket, working under the constant supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Thereafter, all excavation was undertaken by hand. All site work and recording was undertaken in accordance with Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3 (Excavation Manual).
- 5.3 All spoil tips were scanned by eye for artefactual and ecofactual evidence.
- 5.4 Upon completion of the works, the trenches were backfilled.

## 6 RESULTS

- 6.1 **Trench 1** was aligned approximately east-west. The trench was excavated onto natural deposits, encountered at an average depth of 0.68m (103.01m OD) from the existing ground surface. Natural deposits comprised light orange compact sand clay with occasional patches flint nodules.
- 6.2 The natural substrates were sealed by subsoil layer (107), up to 0.22m thick, which comprised mid brown firm, friable sand clay with occasional chalk flecks

and patches of small and medium flint gravels. The subsoil was overlain by a late post-medieval/modern make-up layer (105), up to 0.17m thick, which comprised dark brown firm, friable sand clay with frequent coal/clinker flecks and occasional small flint nodules. This layer contained occasional, small CBM fragments, a sherd of 20<sup>th</sup> century chinaware and metal objects. Abutting this layer was a north-south aligned short length of modern, mortared brick walling or pavement, (106). It measured at least 1.20m in length, 0.40m in width and 0.15m in depth and was present in the northeast corner of the trench. Contexts (105) and (106) were sealed by modern make-up layer (104), 0.14m to 0.28m thick, which consisted of loose, friable mid grey brown clay sand. Finds from this context included brick and concrete rubble, fragments of modern glass and fragments of slate. A layer of orange gravel hardcore, (103), 0.07m thick, overlay (104). Hardcore (103) was in turn overlain by a thin layer of light yellow gravel hardcore, 0.05m thick, which formed a base to the Tarmac surface of the car park, (101), 0.04m thick. A single feature was present in this trench in addition to a small patch of root disturbance.

- 6.3 Linear feature [108] was west northwest-east northeast aligned and measured at least 1.3m in length, up to 0.50m in width and 0.08m in depth. It was irregular in plan, slightly curvilinear, and had diffuse, sloping edges and a wide, flat base and terminated within the trench. The terminus was wide and sub-rounded. It was filled with (109), a mid grey brown firm, friable sand clay with occasional chalk flecks, small flint nodules and a few charcoal flecks. Artefactual evidence from the feature consisted of a small fragment of CBM and a sherd of 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This feature cut the natural substrate and was overlain by (107).
- 6.4 **Trench 2** was aligned approximately east-west. It was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of brown orange clay with flint with some patches of sandy clay, encountered at a depth of 0.90m (105.16m OD) from the modern ground surface at the eastern end of the trench and 1.18m (104.45m OD) from the modern ground surface at the western end of the trench.
- 6.5 The natural substrate was sealed by subsoil (205), a 0.20m thick interface between the natural and the topsoil. Layer (205) was overlain by a thick layer of topsoil, up to 0.40m, which consisted of dark brown clay silt. The topsoil was a garden or plough soil and contained a few fragments of CBM and a sherd of transfer print pottery of 19<sup>th</sup> century date. The topsoil was cut away by a modern layer (206), up to 0.40m thick, which represented the recent construction of a compound area. Layer (206) consisted of a layer of Terram overlain by brick hardcore mixed with gravels. Layer (203) was a thin layer of made ground almost entirely cut away by (206). This layer was only present at the extreme east end of the trench, measured 0.40m in length and 0.10m thick, and consisted of gritty clay loam with frequent CBM fragments and flint nodules. Layers (203) and (206) were sealed by (202), 0.15m (east end) to



0.30m (west end) thick, a layer of made ground comprising black humic soil. Layer (201) was a layer of modern turf, 0.08m thick) which sealed (202).

- 6.6 No archaeological features were present within this trench although there was evidence of rooting or burrowing in the natural at the west end of the trench.
- 6.7 **Trench 3** was aligned approximately east-west. It was excavated onto natural deposits which consisted of chalk with flint within the eastern half of the trench and predominantly mid orange clay with flint in the western half of the trench. The natural was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m (105.44m OD) from the modern ground surface.
- 6.8 The natural was overlain by a layer of modern topsoil with turf cover, (301), 0.24m thick, which comprised soft, plastic grey black silt clay with a few chalk flecks. Finds from this layer comprised CBM fragments, modern china and plastic.
- 6.9 Modern disturbance [308] cut away the natural at the west end of the trench. This feature contained a large block of concrete with an associated metal pipe within a mixture of re-deposited chalk and clay natural and dark clay silt. It cut into the natural by at least 0.30m and was sealed by (301). A patch of root disturbance was also present in the western half of the trench. A total of three features were recorded all of which were sealed by (301).
- 6.10 Linear feature [302] was north-south aligned, measured 0.80m wide and 0.13m deep and had steeply sloping sides and a wide, flat base. It was filled with (303), a dark grey brown plastic silt clay with frequent chalk and charcoal flecks, small flint nodules and patches of re-deposited chalk natural. Finds from this feature included an iron object, a few CBM fragments and a sherd of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery.
- 6.11 Linear feature [306] was very similar to feature [302]. It was north-south aligned, measured 0.55m wide and 0.08m deep and had steeply sloping sides and a wide, flat base. It was filled with (307), a fill visually identical to (303). Artefactual evidence from this feature comprised CBM fragments and a sherd of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery.
- 6.12 Feature [304] was a sub-square pit/post-hole between ditches [302] and [306]. It measured 0.53m by 0.48m by 0.09m deep and had steeply sloping sides and a flat base. It was filled with (305), a fill visually identical to (303), but with a lower charcoal content. No finds were present within the excavated section.

## 7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1 No significant archaeological finds or features were found during the evaluation, although evidence of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century activity was identified in Trenches 1 and 3. This activity probably represented gardening and planting within the site. The ephemeral curvilinear feature in Trench 1 could have been a root hole and there was certainly evidence of rooting or burrowing from Trench 2. The features in Trench 3 were probably the remains of planting beds and a planting hole.
- 7.2 There were intact subsoils in Trenches 1 and 2, but these had been truncated within Trench 3. Significant late post-medieval and modern build-up was present in Trenches 1 and 2, particularly within the latter. The made ground in Trench 1 was predominantly associated with the construction of the car park. In Trench 2, however, it represented a levelling-up of the area. The natural ground sloped steeply from Trench 3, at 105.4m OD, down to Trench 2, at 104.8m OD and again down to Trench 1, at 103.5m OD. The natural ground in Trench 3 may represent an outcrop of chalk.
- 7.3 No suitable contexts were present for palaeoenvironmental sampling. The very limited finds assemblage consisted entirely of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century finds and will not be retained.
- 7.4 The archive, comprising context records, photographs, index lists and background information, is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology and will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum Service under accession code NEBYM:2011.4, within 12 months. An OASIS form will be completed and submitted and a short note will be submitted for publication in the appropriate journal.
- 7.5 The work revealed that the evaluation area has low potential for the preservation of archaeological finds or deposits predating the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The presence of archaeological deposits in the immediate vicinity, however, cannot be ruled out.

## 8 REFERENCES

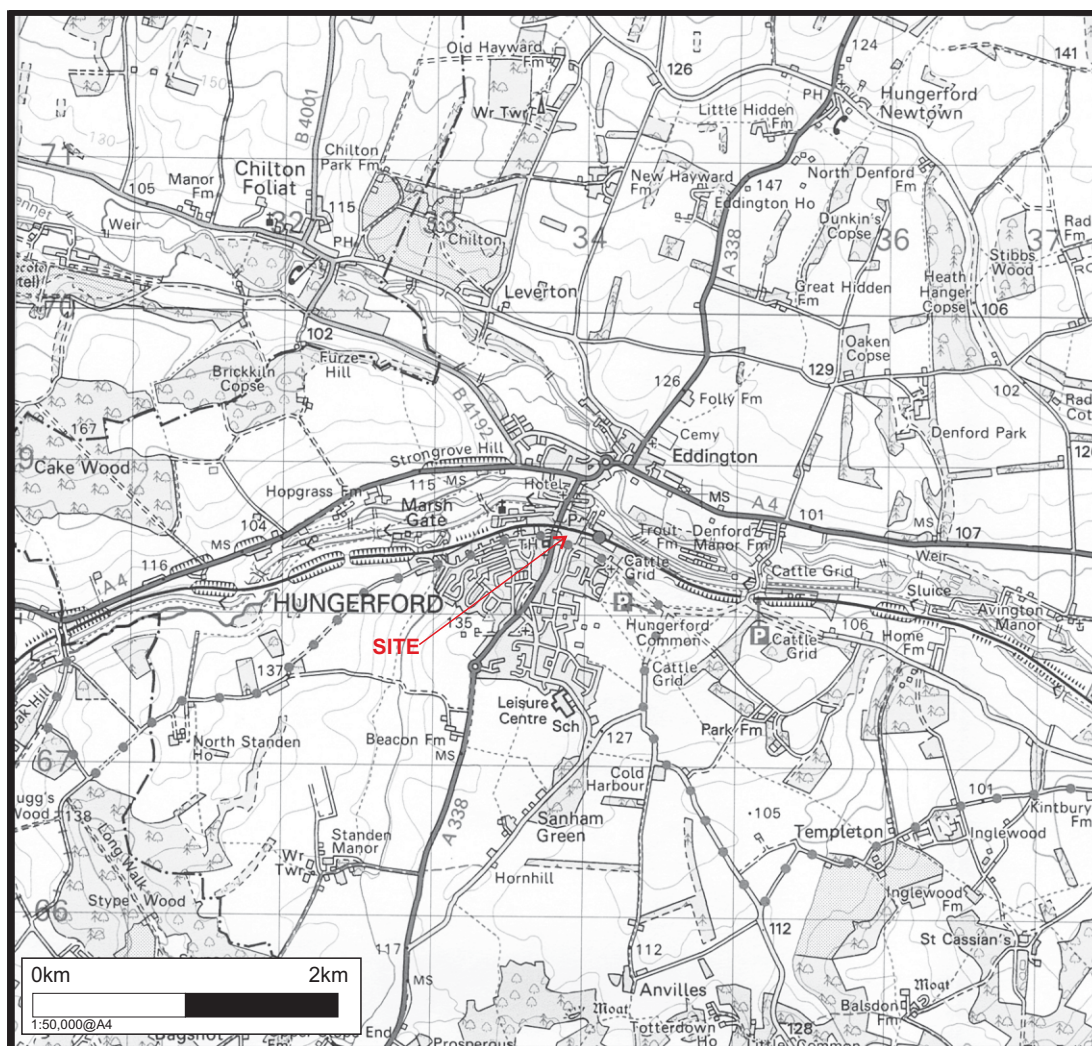
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## **9        ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank the landowners, John Hodges Consultancy, Peter Wardle of The Historic Environment Consultancy, Sarah Orr and Duncan Coe of West Berkshire Archaeology and the staff of the Three Swans Hotel for their assistance with the project.



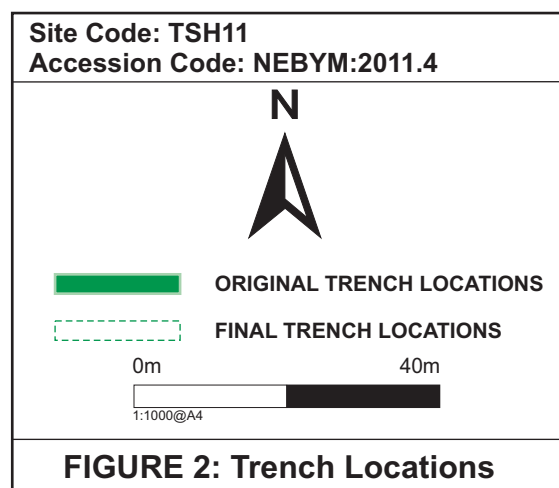
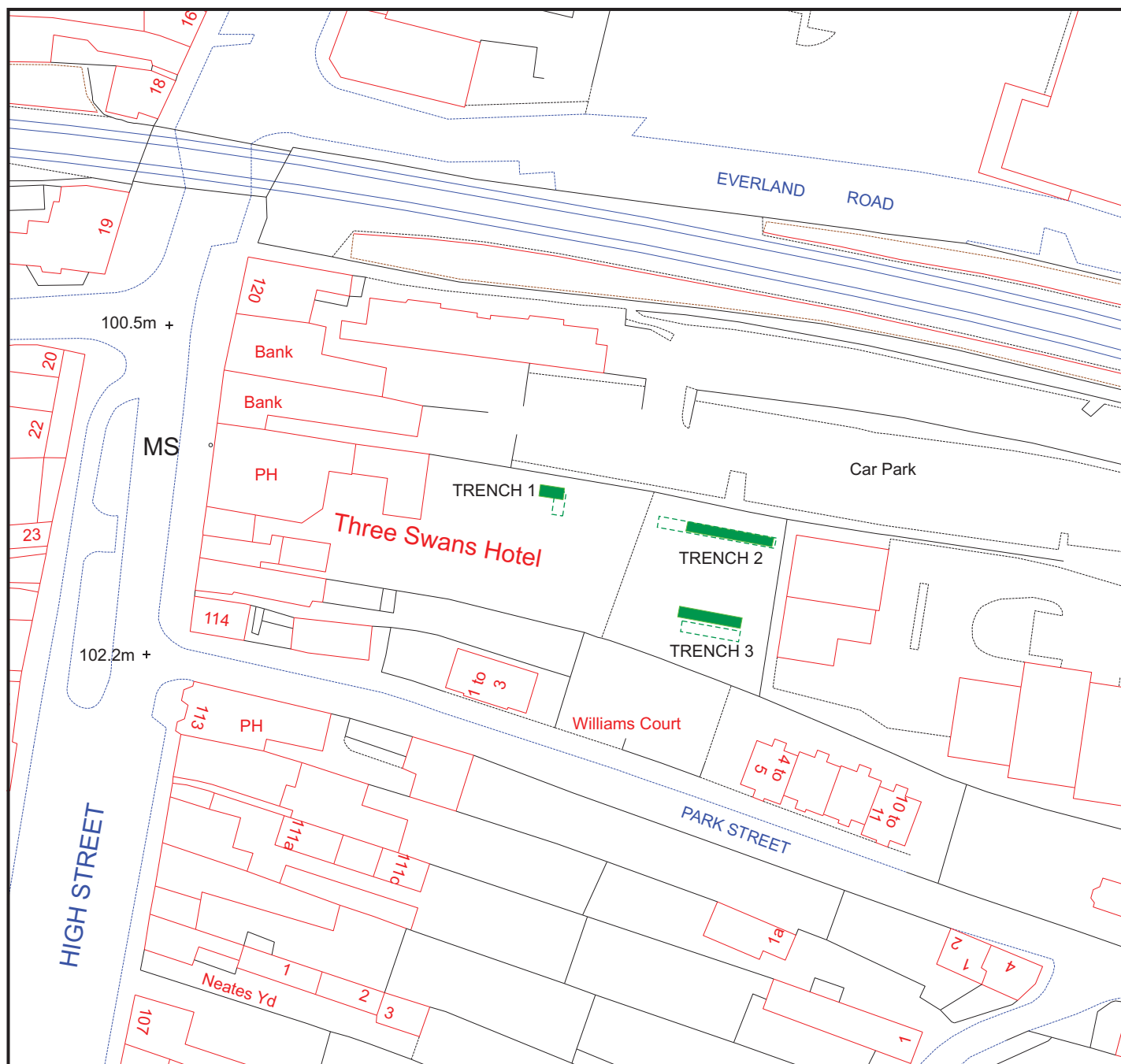
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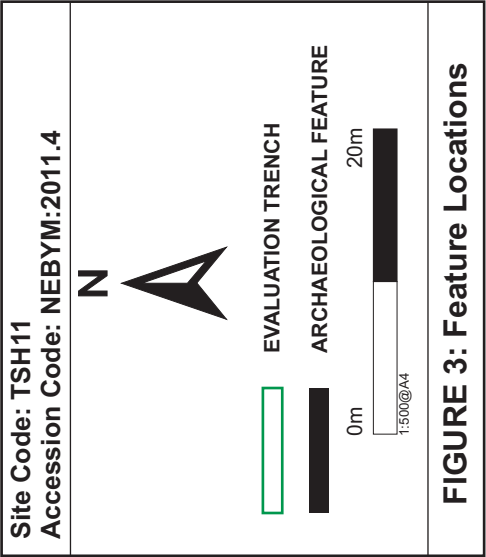
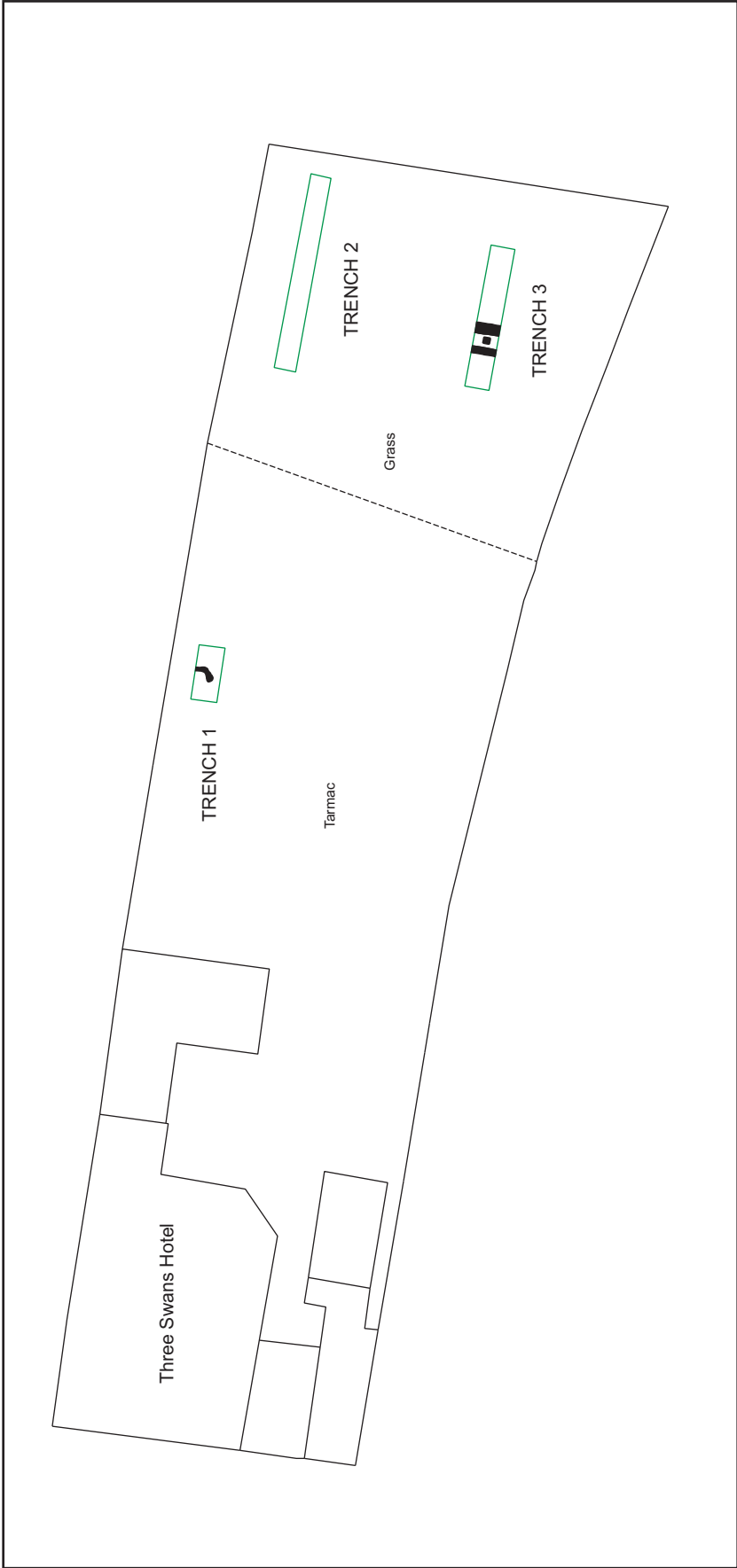
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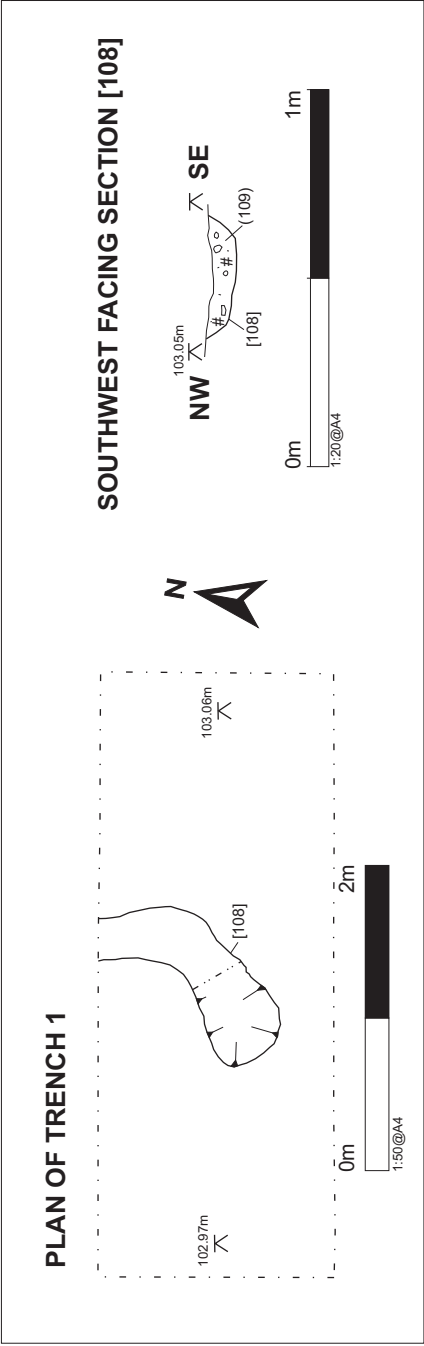
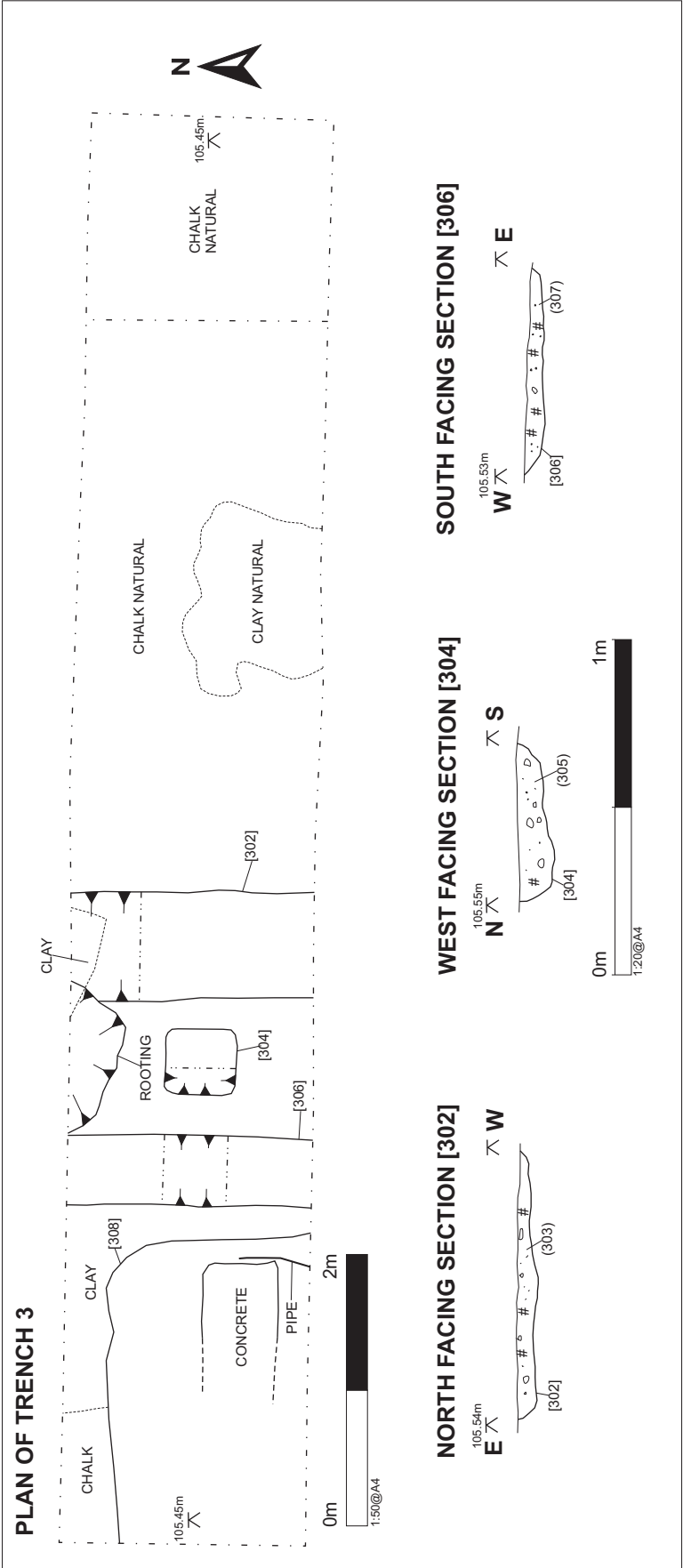
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**FIGURE 1: Site Location**







Site Code: TSH11  
Accession Code: NEBYM:2011.4

FLINT NODULES  
CHARCOAL FLECKS  
CHALK FLECKS

**FIGURE 4: Trench Plans and Sections**