

**SUNNINGDALE PARK
NORTHERN AREA,
ASCOT
BERKSHIRE.**

**NGR: SU 9473 6803 (centred)
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

June 2020
Report No. 1374



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

Between the 22nd and 24th of June 2020 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation within the northern area of Sunningdale Park, Ascot, Berkshire (NGR: SU 9473 6803 centred), prior to proposed redevelopment. The project was commissioned by Audley (Sunningdale Park) Ltd.

The archaeological evaluation followed a desk-based assessment undertaken in 2017 by Foundations Heritage. The results of the assessment show that the main potential of the site is for the recovery of archaeological finds and features relating to later periods with generally low or low-moderate significance. Prehistoric and Roman activity is possible and may be of moderate significance. Medieval activity is possible but is likely to relate only to the utilisation of the heathland and would have a low-moderate significance. Based upon the results of the desk-based assessment a pre-determination field evaluation was thus requested by the archaeological adviser to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to further inform the planning process.

The archaeological evaluation has indicated that areas of the site adjacent to modern buildings have seen significant disturbance during the later 20th century. A possibly recut Post-medieval ditch was identified in Trench 26 though no other archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified during the evaluation.

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.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Iron Age

The period between c. 800 BC and AD 43.

Medieval

The period between AD 1066 and AD 1500.

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. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43, traditionally sub divided into; *Palaeolithic* – c. 500,000 BC to c. 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – c. 12,000 BC to c. 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – c. 2,000 BC to c. 800 BC; *Iron Age* – c. 800 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology between the 22nd and 24th June 2020 within the northern area of Sunningdale Park, Ascot, Berkshire (SU 9473 6803 – centred – See Figure 1). prior to proposed redevelopment of the area. The project was commissioned by Audley (Sunningdale Park) Ltd.
- 1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2019) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA) *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2014).
- 1.3 The code of conduct of the CifA was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The study area includes the Sunningdale Park Registered Park and Garden which is located just to the southeast of Sunninghill and just to the northwest of Sunningdale. Its central grid reference is SU 94800 67720. The site occupies a roughly diamond shaped parcel of land of approximately 32ha in area. Its western edge is bounded by the houses on the eastern side of Larch Avenue. Its north-eastern boundary is Silwood Road (B383), which then turns south to form the eastern site boundary. The southern boundary is formed by the rear of the houses in the Park Drive area of a housing estate. The topography rises to a ridge in the west, with an east-west valley containing the lake. The ground rises to the north, to a small plateau on which sits Northcote House. The site formerly lay within Windsor Forest and would probably have comprised heathland rather than woodland.
- 2.2 A desk based assessment has been prepared by Foundations Heritage (2017) for this proposal and this document should be read in conjunction with this report. However, the results of this work are summarised below for ease.
- 2.3 The results of the assessment show that the main potential of the site is for the recovery of archaeological finds and features relating to later periods with generally low or low-moderate significance. Prehistoric and Roman activity is possible and may be of moderate significance. Early Medieval stray finds would have higher significance, but they are not considered likely; nor are features of this period are anticipated. Medieval activity is possible but is likely to relate only to the utilisation of the heathland and would have a low-moderate significance. Based on the level of existing knowledge, the site is assessed as having a limited capacity to yield material of significance and, as such, the overall value of the buried archaeological resource is considered low-moderate because any deposits present within the site are only likely to contribute to local or regional research objectives.
- 2.4 The report concluded that the proposed development would have no effect on the setting of any Scheduled Monument or Registered Battlefield or relevant non-designated asset within a 3.5km radius of the site.

- 2.5 The view of this report is that the impact of the proposals on all known and potential heritage within and around the site amounts to less than substantial harm, as defined by the provisions of NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework, 2012) and Local Planning Policy.
- 2.6 In light of the archaeological potential of this area, the archaeological adviser to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead requires a programme of archaeological trial trenching within the proposed development area. This work represents the first phase of archaeological investigation and further works or measures may need to be agreed and implemented. This is expected to be in the form of a watching brief during groundworks associated with the development of Northcote House, however, the full scope will be confirmed once the evaluation is complete.
- 2.7 The main archaeological potential of the site is for the presence of finds and features from the Prehistoric, Roman, Medieval and Post-medieval periods. This will not prejudice the evaluation against features and finds associated with other periods.
- 2.8 The underlying geology varies across the site and from east to west it is recorded as *Bagshot Formation – Sand, Swinley Clay Member - Clay* and *Windlesham Formation - Sand, Silt and Clay* with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS online viewer).

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation are 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 will allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.
- 3.2 This was 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 characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site;
 - iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;
 - iv) to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present;

v) to define any research questions that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 A total of six trenches (two 10m, two 20m and two 30m in length) were located within the assessment area, as shown in Figure 2. The trenches were located specifically to avoid protected tree specimens and the locations of known services.
- 4.2 The trenches were excavated by use of a 5 ton mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless bucket, whilst under constant archaeological supervision. Archaeologically non-significant overburden was mechanically removed down to the top of the archaeologically significant horizon or the natural, whichever was encountered first.
- 4.3 All subsequent excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 A full stratigraphic description of the evaluation trenches is presented in Appendix 1. A summary of the results from each trench is given below.
- 5.2 The general stratigraphic sequence was comparatively simple across the investigated area and varied only where made-ground deposits were encountered. The natural deposits, which comprised the mixed-brown/orange Bagshot and Windlesham formations, was present at between 0.3m to 1.2m below the Modern ground surface (between 53.05m and 74.45m AOD). The natural within the majority of the trenches was sealed by friable, sandy, subsoil deposits, with the exception of Trenches 21 and 22 where made-ground deposits were evident. All subsoil or made-ground deposits were then sealed by grey, friable, sandy topsoil deposits.
- 5.3 Preservation conditions across the site varied with poor to no-preservation in Trenches 21 and 22 and moderate to good preservation in Trench 26. Whilst attempts were made to avoid mapped services and all trenches being subject to CAT scanning, unmapped services were still encountered in Trenches 21, 24 and 26. Visibility was good and conditions remained very dry throughout.
- 5.4 **Trench 21** (Figure 2, Plate 1) was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 10m in length. Natural deposits comprising mixed-brown/orange Bagshot and Windlesham formations were exposed at a depth of 0.8m (71.09m AOD) below the Modern ground level. These were cut by a gas service running the length of the trench and were sealed by made-ground deposit (2102). This made-ground deposit consisted of moderately compact sand, gravel, CBM, plastic and occasional wooden fragments. It was sealed by dark greyish-brown friable sandy topsoil (2101). No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified in Trench 21.
- 5.5 **Trench 22** (Figure 2, Plate 2) was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 10m in length. Natural deposits comprising mixed-brown/orange Bagshot and Windlesham

formations were exposed at a depth of 1.1m (71.21m AOD) below the Modern ground level. Natural deposits were sealed by made-ground deposit (2202). This consisted of moderately compact sand, gravel and CBM. It was sealed by dark greyish-brown friable sandy topsoil (2201). No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified in Trench 22.

- 5.6 **Trench 23** (Figure 2, Plate 3) was aligned north-west to south-east and measured 30m in length. Natural deposits were exposed at a depth of 0.35m (73.45m AOD) below the Modern ground level. These were overlain by mid-brownish grey, friable, sandy subsoil deposit (2302). Subsoil (2302) was sealed by topsoil (2301), a mid to dark grey, friable, sandy topsoil. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified in Trench 23.
- 5.7 **Trench 24** (Figure 2, Plate 4) was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 20m in length. Two Modern services were cut into the natural and were orientated north-west to south-east and north to south. Natural deposits were exposed at a depth of 0.4m (74.45m AOD) below the Modern ground level. The natural was sealed by subsoil (2402). This consisted of a mid-brownish grey, friable, sandy deposit with occasional CBM fragments. Subsoil (2402) was overlain by topsoil (2401) which consisted of a mid to dark grey, friable, sandy topsoil. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified in Trench 24.
- 5.8 **Trench 25** (Figure 2, Plate 5) was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 20m in length. Natural deposits were exposed at a depth of 0.45m (73.95m AOD). The natural was sealed by subsoil (2502). This consisted of a mid-brownish grey, friable, sandy deposit with rare CBM fragments. Subsoil (2502) was overlain by topsoil (2501) which consisted of a mid to dark grey, friable, sandy topsoil. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified in Trench 25.
- 5.9 **Trench 26** (Figures 2-3, Plates 6-7) was aligned east to west and measured 30m in length. Natural deposits were exposed at a depth of 0.5m (53.05m AOD). This was cut by a north-east to south-west aligned live electrical service at its western end and by a north to south aligned ditch feature [2606] within the centre of the trench. Ditch [2606] had 45° sloping edges and a flattish base. It contained a single dark silty clay fill (2605) with rare coke and coal inclusions. Ditch [2606] appeared to truncate an earlier linear feature, [2603], also cut into the natural and on the same alignment. The western edge of earlier feature [2603] was convexly sloped into a rounded base. It contained a single yellow/brown clay silt fill (2604). Ditch [2606] may represent a recut of earlier ditch [2603]. Ditches [2606] and [2603], as well as the natural deposits, were sealed by subsoil (2602). This consisted of a mid-brownish grey, friable, sandy deposit. Subsoil (2602) was overlain by topsoil (2601) which consisted of a mid to dark grey, friable, sandy topsoil. No further archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified in Trench 26.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The evaluation trenching undertaken within the northern area of Sunningdale Park has shown that, in areas adjacent to Modern buildings, no archaeological finds, features or deposits were present. The area has clearly seen significant levels of disturbance in the recent past, likely owing to the construction of the Modern buildings, which most likely consisted of levelling and making-up of ground levels as well as the installation of below ground services.
- 6.2 Trench 26, situated away from the Modern buildings to the north-east of the walled garden, showed intact archaeology and largely undisturbed subsoil deposits. Intercutting ditches [2603] & [2606] represent the only archaeological features contained within the evaluation trenching. Coke and coal within the fill of later ditch [2606] would appear to indicate a secure Post-medieval date, coke first being patented in England in 1589.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology and will be deposited in due course with an appropriate repository. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

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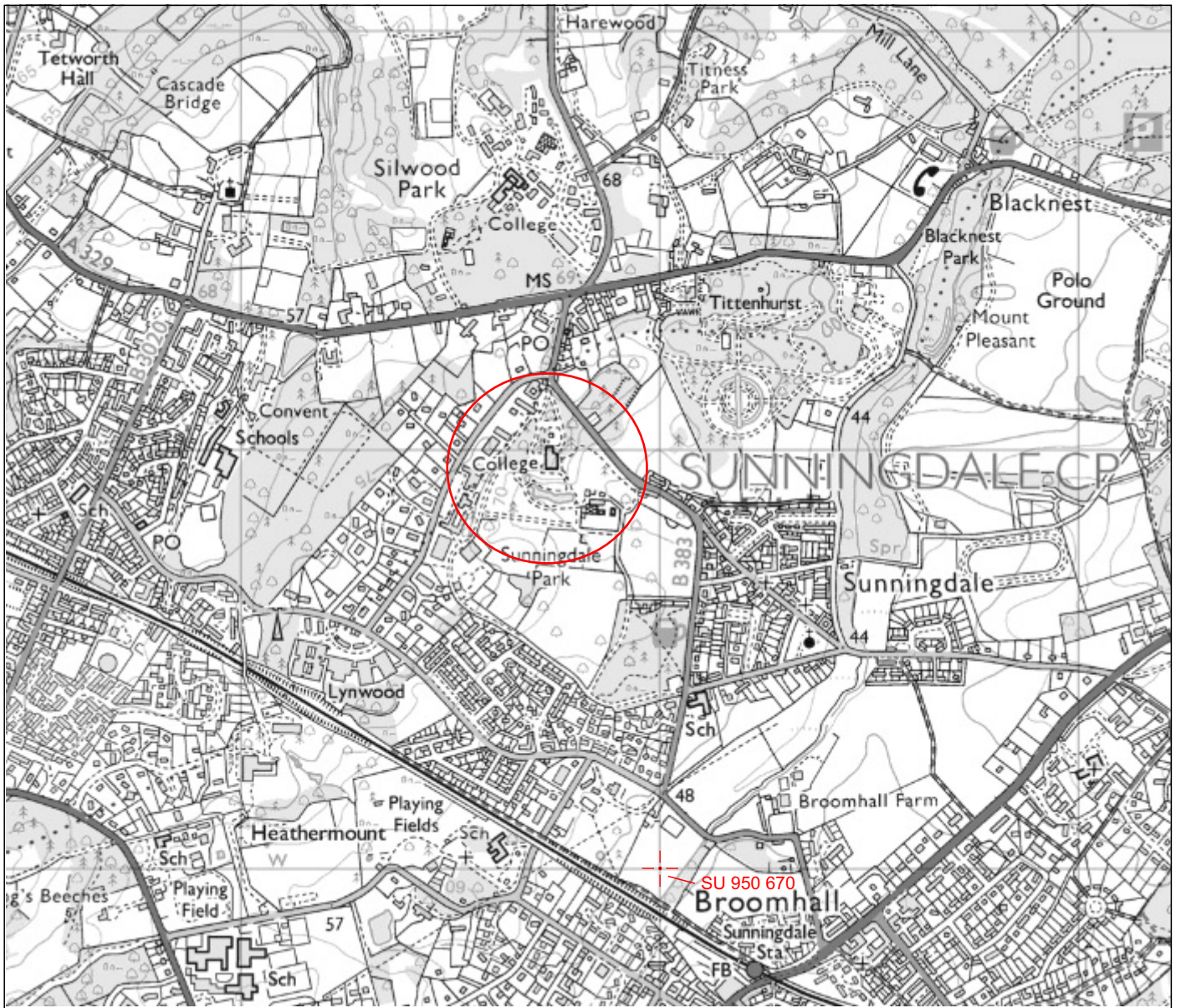
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Foundations Archaeology would like to thank James Shannon of Quartz Project Services, Chris Wright of TMA Consultants, Jimmy Brown of Balfour Beatty and Matthew Saywood of Berkshire County Council for their valuable assistance during the course of the project.

Sunningdale Park, Northern Area, Ascot, Berkshire: Archaeological Evaluation

Appendix 1 – Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Description	Later Than	Earlier Than
				Trench Twenty One: 10m long by 1.8m. Natural deposits = <i>Bagshot Formation – Sand, Swinley Clay Member - Clay</i> and <i>Windlesham Formation - Sand, Silt and Clay</i> , at average depth of 71.09m AOD. Trench excavated to 70.95m AOD.		
2101	10m+	1.8m+	0.13m	Topsoil. Dark-greyish brown friable sandy silt	2102	n/a
2102	10m+	1.8m+	0.67m	Mixed made ground consisting of sand, gravel, cbm, friable silt with wood and plastic inclusions	Natural	2101
				Trench Twenty Two: 10m long by 1.8m. Natural deposits = <i>Bagshot Formation – Sand, Swinley Clay Member - Clay</i> and <i>Windlesham Formation - Sand, Silt and Clay</i> , at average depth of 71.21m AOD. Trench excavated to 71.10m AOD.		
2201	10m+	1.8m+	0.2m	Topsoil. Dark-greyish brown friable sandy silt	2202	n/a
2202	10m+	1.8m+	0.87m	Mixed made ground consisting of sand, gravel, cbm and friable silt	Natural	2201
				Trench Twenty Three: 30m long by 1.8m. Natural deposits = <i>Bagshot Formation – Sand, Swinley Clay Member - Clay</i> and <i>Windlesham Formation - Sand, Silt and Clay</i> , at average depth of 73.45m AOD. Trench excavated to 73.40m AOD.		
2301	30m+	1.8m+	0.13m	Tarmac overburden forming surface of carpark	2302	n/a
2302	3.4m+	1.8m+	0.25m	Subsoil. Mid-greyish brown friable sandy silt	Natural	2301
				Trench Twenty Four: 20m long by 1.8m. Natural deposits = <i>Bagshot Formation – Sand, Swinley Clay Member - Clay</i> and <i>Windlesham Formation - Sand, Silt and Clay</i> , at average depth of 74.45m AOD. Trench excavated to 74.40m AOD.		
2401	20m+	1.8m+	0.13m	Topsoil. Dark-greyish brown friable sandy silt	2402	n/a
2502	20m+	1.8m+	0.3m	Subsoil. Mid-greyish brown friable sandy silt	Natural	2401
				Trench Twenty Five: 20m long by 1.8m. Natural deposits = <i>Bagshot Formation – Sand, Swinley Clay Member - Clay</i> and <i>Windlesham Formation - Sand, Silt and Clay</i> , at average depth of 73.95m AOD. Trench excavated to 73.85m AOD.		
2501	20m+	1.8m+	0.18m	Topsoil. Dark-greyish brown friable sandy silt	2502	n/a
2502	20m+	1.8m+	0.3m	Subsoil. Mid-greyish brown friable sandy silt	Natural	2501
				Trench Twenty Six: 30m long by 1.8m. Natural deposits = <i>Bagshot Formation – Sand, Swinley Clay Member - Clay</i> and <i>Windlesham Formation - Sand, Silt and Clay</i> , at average depth of 53.05m AOD. Trench excavated to 53.00m AOD.		
2601	30m+	1.8m+	0.13m	Topsoil. Dark-greyish brown friable sandy silt	2602	n/a
2602	30m+	1.8m+	0.36m	Subsoil. Mid-greyish brown friable sandy silt	Natural	2601
[2603]	1.8m+	1m	0.35m	Cut of N-S aligned linear ditch. Cuts Natural, Truncated by [2606]. Contains fill (2604)	Natural	2604
2604	1.8m+	1m	0.35m	Mid yellow/brown clay silt fill of [2603].	[2603]	[2606]
2605	1.8m+	1.7m	0.35m	Dark grey silty clay fill of [2606].	[2606]	2602
[2606]	1.8m+	1.7m	0.35m	Cut of N-S aligned linear ditch. Possible recut of [2603]. Cuts natural and (2604). Contains fill (2605)	2604	2605



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Site Code: SPA18AY

Accession Code:

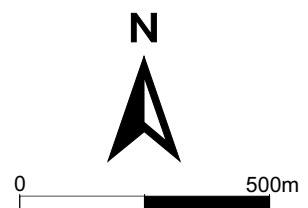


FIGURE 1: Site Location

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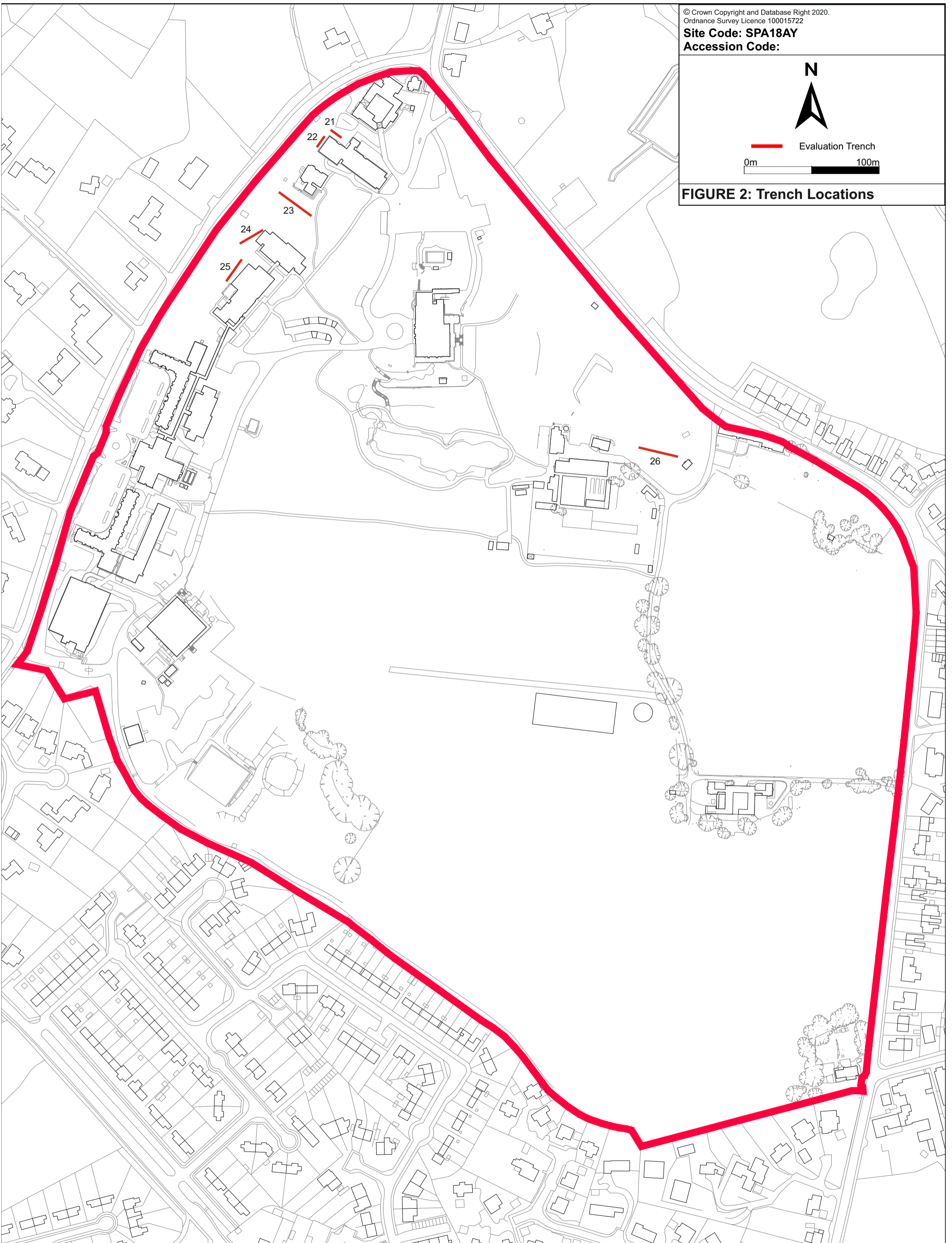
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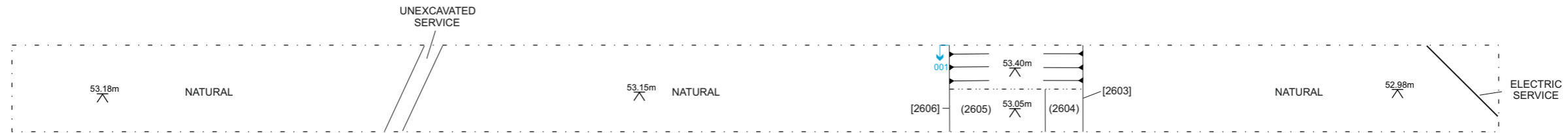
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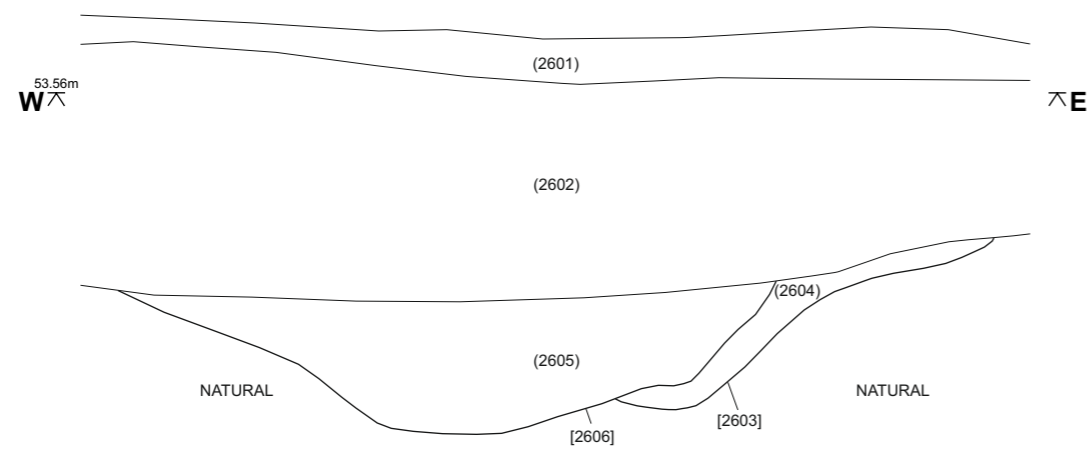
— Evaluation Trench
0m 100m

FIGURE 2: Trench Locations





SEC 001: SOUTH FACING SECTION [2603] & [2606]



Site Code: SPA18AY
 Accession Code:

N

0m 4m
 Plan

0m 1m
 Section

FIGURE 3: Trench 26 Plan and Section



Plate 1: View north-west along Trench 21. Scale 1x2m



Plate 2: View north-east along Trench 22. Scale 1x2m

Site Code: SPA18AY
Accession Code:

Plates 1 & 2



Plate 3: View east along Trench 23. Scale 1x2m



Plate 4: View south-west along Trench 24
Scale 1x1m

Site Code: SPA18AY
Accession Code:

Plates 3 & 4



Plate 5: View north-east along Trench 25. Scale 1x2m



Plate 6: View west along Trench 22. Scale 1x2m

Site Code: SPA18AY
Accession Code:

Plates 5 & 6



Plate 7: South facing section of ditches [2603] & [2606]. Scale 1x2m

Site Code: SPA18AY
Accession Code:

Plate 7