

**131 FAIRMILE LANE,
COBHAM,
SURREY.**

NGR: TQ 1190 6108 (CENTRED)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

January 2021
Report No. 1398



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

1st Floor, Shaftesbury Centre, Percy Street, Swindon, Wilts. SN2 2AZ Tel: 01793 525993 Email: admin@foundations.co.uk

**131 FAIRMILE LANE,
COBHAM
SURREY**

NGR: TQ 1190 6108 (centred)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Trench 7 Looking Northeast

January 2021
Report No. 1398

Quality Assurance

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (ISO 9001: 2015)

Author: T. Michaels BSc MCIfA

Date: 4th January 2021

Approved: R. King BA MCIfA

QA Checked: D. King BA MCIfA

This report has been compiled with all reasonable skill care and attention to detail within the terms of the project as specified by the client and within the general terms and conditions of Archaeological Management Services Ltd trading as Foundations Archaeology but no explicit warranty is provided for information and opinions stated. AMS Ltd accepts no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report or any part thereof is made known. Any such party relies on this report at their own risk. Copyright of this document is retained by AMS Ltd, but unlimited licence to reproduce it in whole or part is granted to the client and/or their agents and/or assignees on payment of invoice.

CONTENTS

Summary

Glossary of Archaeological Terms and Abbreviations

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND
- 3 AIMS
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 5 RESULTS
- 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
- 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Stratigraphic Data

FIGURE LIST

- Figure 1: Site Location
Figure 2: Trench Locations
Figure 3: Selected Photographs

SUMMARY

Between the 7th and 8th December 2020 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation on the site of a proposed new development at 131 Fairmile Lane, Cobham, Surrey (NGR: TQ 1190 6108 - centred). The project was commissioned by Quartz Project Services Ltd and behalf of Audley Cobham Unit Trust.

The archaeological evaluation followed a Heritage Impact Assessment undertaken in May 2019 by Foundations Heritage. The Impact Assessment concluded that the potential for archaeological activity relating to non-agricultural activity is negligible for all periods. It also noted that the site contained no known heritage assets that may be affected by the proposed development and that no effect on the setting of any designated or undesignated heritage asset has been identified. However, it was acknowledged that the very low level of previous archaeological investigations within the area may have affected the results with regard to buried archaeology.

No 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.

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 Between the 7th and 8th December 2020 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation on the site of a proposed new development at 131 Fairmile Lane, Cobham, Surrey (NGR: TQ 1190 6108 - centred). The project was commissioned by Quartz Project Services Ltd and behalf of Audley Cobham Unit Trust.
- 1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2020) 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 There is currently a proposal for four detached two-storey buildings with rooms in the roof space to provide 74 units of residential care accommodation for the elderly (Class C2), including basement under Block M, with associated communal facilities, parking and landscaping, bin store, grounds maintenance store, temporary marketing cabin and alterations to existing access following the demolition of existing buildings (Application Ref. 2019/0329). In accordance with the principles of NPPF19 and under Local Plan policy (DM12e29), the Surrey County Council Historic Environment Planning Team, who are acting as the archaeological advisors to Elmbridge Borough Council, requested that an archaeological evaluation be carried out, in order to enable that suitable mitigation measures be developed. This document presents the results of the requested evaluation
- 2.2 The site consisted of a single large plot which formerly contained a large house and it's gardens. The house has since been demolished. The rectangular plot covers an area of approximately 1.4 hectares and comprises flat ground approximately 41m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.3 The site is located in the Fairmile character sub-area of Cobham (COS08). This area is described as a large sub-area which is "predominantly a number of private estates and includes a series of much older sections which have provided a framework for the development seen today. Like other parts of this settlement area, it was developed from a single estate and retains mature planting, specimen trees and other features relating to the earlier land uses and lanes and tracks which still retain much of their rural character. The character is reinforced by natural boundaries to properties and the lack of pavements or street lighting. The semi-rural character extends to most of the sub-area with mature soft boundaries often including mature trees with houses set well back in mature landscaped gardens. Given the survival of such large sections of historic landscapes, the area still retains a semi-wooded appearance in places, with houses set within this high-quality landscape"

- 2.4 The site is located close to the northern edge of the built-up area of Cobham on the west side of Fairmile Lane at the junction with Green Lane, which continues as a footpath (Hogshill Lane) along the southern site boundary. To the immediate north of the site lies a modern residential development at Queensgate, beyond which lies the Cobham Cricket Club while to the west, the site boundary abuts the rear gardens of residential housing fronting onto Burstead Close.
- 2.5 The underlying geology is recorded as *Bagshot Formation - Sand*, with superficial deposits of *Tapworth Gravel Member* recorded (BGS Online Viewer).
- 2.6 A Heritage Impact Assessment was prepared for the site by Foundations Heritage in May 2019. This document should be read in conjunction with this WSI, however, the results of the HIA are summarised below for ease.
- 2.6.1 Prehistoric: Prehistoric activity is present to the northwest and west of the site in the form of worked flint and to the southwest in the form of Bronze Age funerary evidence and an Iron Age to Roman period settlement, however, no finds or features are known from within 500m. Based on current evidence the potential for this period is considered negligible tending to low due to the known presence of worked flint to the west which provides some general evidence for potential general activity in the area, but this potential needs to be viewed in the context of a very limited number of intrusive archaeological interventions; only a single evaluation on an area that had already seen considerable modern disturbance has been undertaken within 500m of the site and this failed to reveal any relevant archaeological information. Caution therefore needs to be applied to any assessment of potential for all periods with regard to this site. The significance of prehistoric artefactual material is considered low tending to medium. The potential for the recovery of features relating to funerary activity, such as barrows, is negligible considering that such sites are usually located on high ground with a wide outlook and the site does not fit this description. Features of this type would be considered of medium-high significance. The potential for the recovery of features relating to settlement activity is negligible to low, although features of this type would normally be considered of medium significance.
- 2.6.2 Roman: Known Roman activity in the study area is very limited, although the Iron Age settlement at Leigh Court is known to have lasted into the early Roman period. Further possible Roman activity may be present in the hypothetical route of the Roman road from London to Winchester; with one of three possible routes passing roughly east-west roughly 120m to the north of the site. It should be noted, however, that the evidence for the presence of the road is currently not proven. Roman period sites tend to be artefact-rich with finds that can easily draw the eye and often have the highest likelihood of being noticed (and reported) during unmonitored construction works. No such reports have been made for any such activity within the vicinity of the site or the postulated road line despite considerable levels of development around the site. Although the potential for roadside settlement or other related activity cannot be entirely ruled out, on the basis of current evidence the potential for finds and features relating to this period remains negligible tending to low. The significance of artefactual material would be considered low-medium; although such material may represent nothing more than a background noise of activity, the relative absence of

known activity within the wider vicinity would increase the value of any such finds with regard to the overall knowledge base. The significance of features relating to roadside settlement activity would be normally considered medium.

- 2.6.3 Early Medieval: The only known Anglo-Saxon evidence from the study area comprises a spearhead found 857m to the south in an area identified as being of high archaeological potential. The earliest mention of Cobham (as Coveham) dates to 675 when the Manor of Cobham was granted to Chertsey Abbey by Frithwold, a sub-King of Mercia, and Bishop Erkenwald. No Saxon settlement is known from the immediate vicinity and the core of the later Saxon village is likely to have been located in or near the historic core of the village well to the south of the site. The site area may not have been in cultivation during this period. It is important to note, however, that Saxon occupation in Surrey saw the nucleation of villages probably mainly from the Middle Saxon period onwards, with earlier activity based on dispersed hamlets or family groups and such small-scale settlement cannot be entirely ruled out. Nonetheless, based on the available evidence, the potential for settlement features is considered negligible, but with medium significance if any such were present. The potential for features relating to agricultural activity is considered low with low-medium significance.
- 2.6.4 Medieval: No medieval activity is known from the 1km study area and the land is likely to have been common, rather than agricultural land during this period. Based on the available evidence, the potential for activity relating to settlement in this period is considered negligible, although the significance for features of this type would be considered medium. The presence of features relating to agricultural activity is considered negligible tending to low and any such features would be of relatively low significance.
- 2.6.5 Post-medieval/Modern: Post-medieval activity is evident in a number of surviving boundaries and buildings around the site area, which appears to have comprised an agricultural field from at least the later 18th century. No development within the site pre-dating the 1930s has been identified and on the basis of current evidence, however, the potential for earlier features to be present within the site is considered negligible, with the exception of features relating to the demolished house, which is considered high but of negligible significance. The significance of features relating to post-medieval agricultural activity is considered negligible tending to low.
- 2.6.6 The HIA concluded that the potential for archaeological activity relating to non-agricultural activity is negligible for all periods. The possible presence of a Roman road, to the north of the site may result in a higher potential for features of this date and a concomitant moderate potential for other roadside activity, with the recognition that if features were present, they would probably be of medium significance. It remains possible however that the road did not follow this postulated route, which is one of three likely courses. Nonetheless, the groundworks associated with the proposed development have the potential to adversely impact on any buried archaeological features that may be present. It also noted that the site contained no known heritage assets that may be affected by the proposed development and that no effect on the setting of any designated or undesignated heritage asset has been

identified. However, the very low level of previous archaeological investigations within the area may have affected the results with regard to buried archaeology.

- 2.7 The site therefore contained the potential for evidence of Roman activity. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

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 fourteen trenches (9 x 30m, 1 x 25m, 4 x 15m), were as shown in Figure 2. Due to on-site constraints, the location of some of the trenches was amended slightly.

- 4.2 The trenches were excavated by use of a 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, With a summary of the results given below.
- 5.2 The general stratigraphic sequence was comparatively uniform across the investigated area, with the exception of Trenches 9 and 10 which showed modern disturbance, most likely from the demolition of the previous dwelling.
 - 5.2.1 The natural deposits of light brown sand was present at between 0.45m to 0.6m below the Modern ground surface (between 38.25m to 39.78m AOD). The natural sands were sealed by a mid brown sandy silt subsoil, which was root disturbed in some of the trenches. This was in turn sealed by a dark brown silt topsoil, with the exception of Trenches 9 and 10 which were sealed by a mixture of rotted vegetation and demolition disturbance.
- 5.3 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within any of the evaluated trenches. The presence of intact and undisturbed subsoil within the majority of the trenches would suggest that the results indicate a true absence of archaeology.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1 No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within any of the evaluated areas, there was also evidence for some modern truncation identified within and close to the location of the former dwelling, however, intact soil deposits were present across the majority of the study area.
- 6.2 The evaluation, along with the previously undertaken Heritage Impact Assessment (2019), has demonstrated that archaeological activity is negligible for all periods within the study area.
- 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.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2014. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*. Reading.

Foundations Archaeology. 2020. *131 Fairmile Lane, Cobham, Surrey: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished.

Foundations Heritage. 2019. Land at 131 Fairmile Lane, Cobham, Surrey: Heritage Impact Assessment.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Nigel Randall and Roland Smith of Surrey County Council's Archaeology Service, Maggie Hoang and Babak Erfani at Quartz Project Services Ltd, Stephen Brunner at Gaunt Francis Architects and the staff at Audley and Graham Construction for their assistance during the course of the project.

Appendix 1 – Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				TRENCH 1: 25m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 38.25m AOD.		
101	n/a	n/a	0.4	Topsoil: Dark brown silt.	102	n/a
102	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt.	natural	101
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 2: 15m Long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 38.27m AOD.		
201	n/a	n/a	0.4	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt.	202	n/a
202	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt.	natural	201
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 3: 30m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 38.58m AOD.		
301	n/a	n/a	0.4	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt.	302	n/a
302	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt.	natural	301
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 4: 15m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 38.87m AOD.		
401	n/a	n/a	0.05	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt, heavily root disturbed.	402	n/a
402	n/a	n/a	0.4	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt, heavily root disturbed.	natural	401
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 5: 15m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 38.78m AOD.		
501	n/a	n/a	0.4	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt.	502	n/a
502	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt.	natural	501
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 6: 30m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 38.98m AOD.		
601	n/a	n/a	0.3	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt.	602	n/a
602	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt, heavily root disturbed.	natural	601
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 7: 30m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 39.18m AOD.		
701	n/a	n/a	0.3	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt.	702	n/a
702	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt.	natural	701
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		

131 Fairmile Lane, Cobham, Surrey: Archaeological Evaluation

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				TRENCH 8: 30m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 39.12m AOD.		
801	n/a	n/a	0.2	Topsoil: Dark brown silt.	802	n/a
802	n/a	n/a	0.3	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt. Occasional fragment of demolition rubble present at interface between subsoil and natural at northeastern end of trench.	natural	801
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 9: 30m Long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 38.83m AOD.		
901	n/a	n/a	0.1	Thin layer of vegetation and disturbance from previous works.	902	n/a
902	n/a	n/a	0.4	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt, evidence of disturbance from previous house foundations. Modern inclusions present throughout.	natural	901
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 10: 30m long ('L' shaped). Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 38.99m AOD.		
1001	n/a	n/a	0.2	Thin layer of vegetation and disturbance from previous works.	1002	n/a
1002	n/a	n/a	0.4	Subsoil/demolition material: Mid brown sandy silt, evidence of disturbance from previous house demolition. Modern inclusions present throughout.	natural	1001
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 11: 15m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 39.78m AOD.		
1101	n/a	n/a	0.3	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt, with occasional gravel inclusions.	1102	n/a
1102	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt, with occasional gravel inclusions, slightly root disturbed.	natural	1101
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 12: 30m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 39.71m AOD.		
1201	n/a	n/a	0.3	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt, with occasional gravel inclusions.	1202	n/a
1202	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt, with occasional gravel inclusions, slightly root disturbed.	natural	1201
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 13: 30m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 39.61m AOD.		
1301	n/a	n/a	0.3	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt, with occasional gravel inclusions.	1302	n/a
1302	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt, with occasional gravel inclusions, slightly root disturbed.	natural	1301
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		
				TRENCH 14: 30m long. Natural = Light brown sand. Present at average 39.46m AOD.		
1401	n/a	n/a	0.3	Topsoil: Dark brown clay silt, with occasional gravel inclusions.	1402	n/a
1402	n/a	n/a	0.2	Subsoil: Mid brown sandy silt, with occasional gravel inclusions, slightly root disturbed.	natural	1401
				No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.		

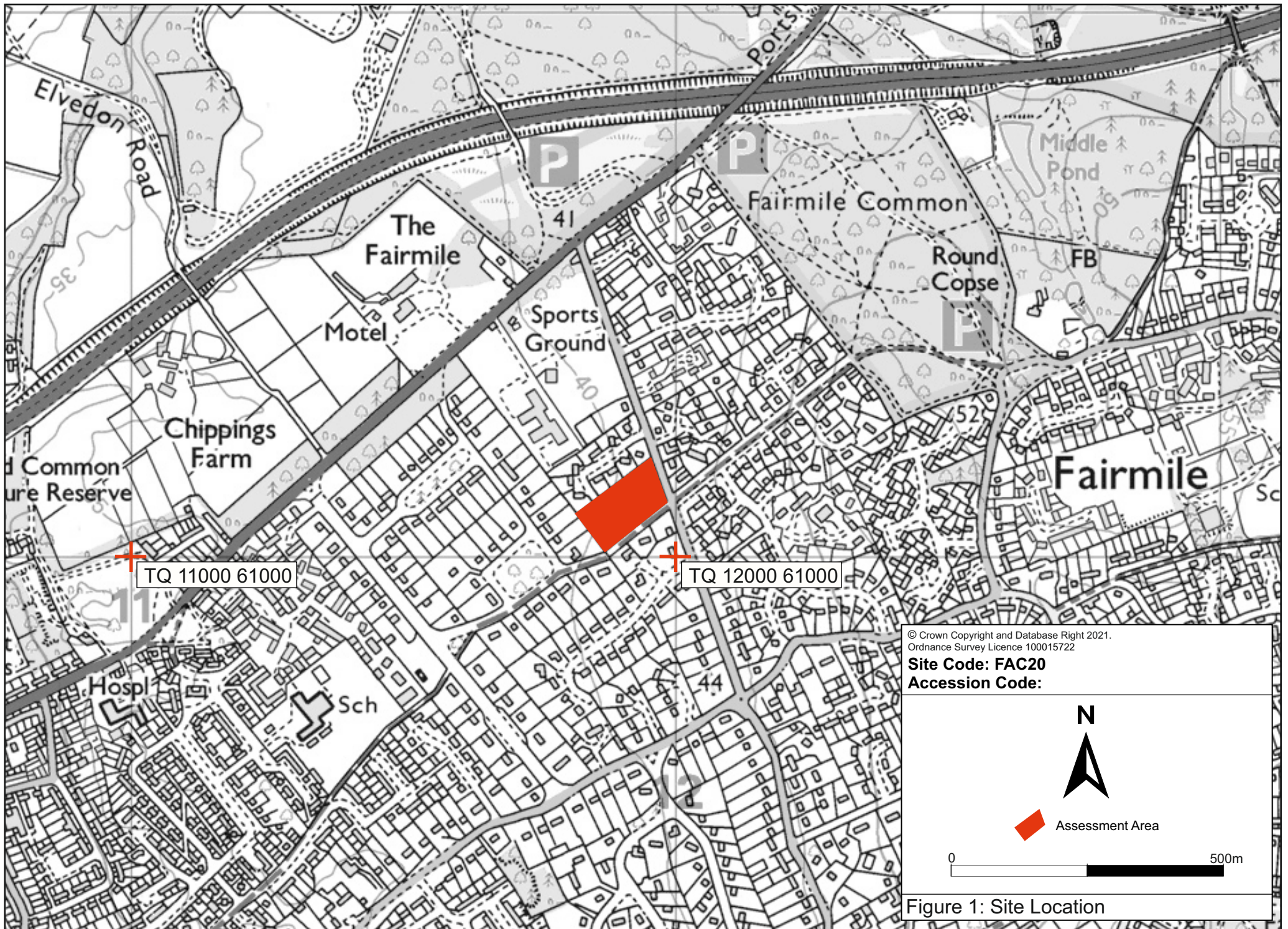


Figure 1: Site Location

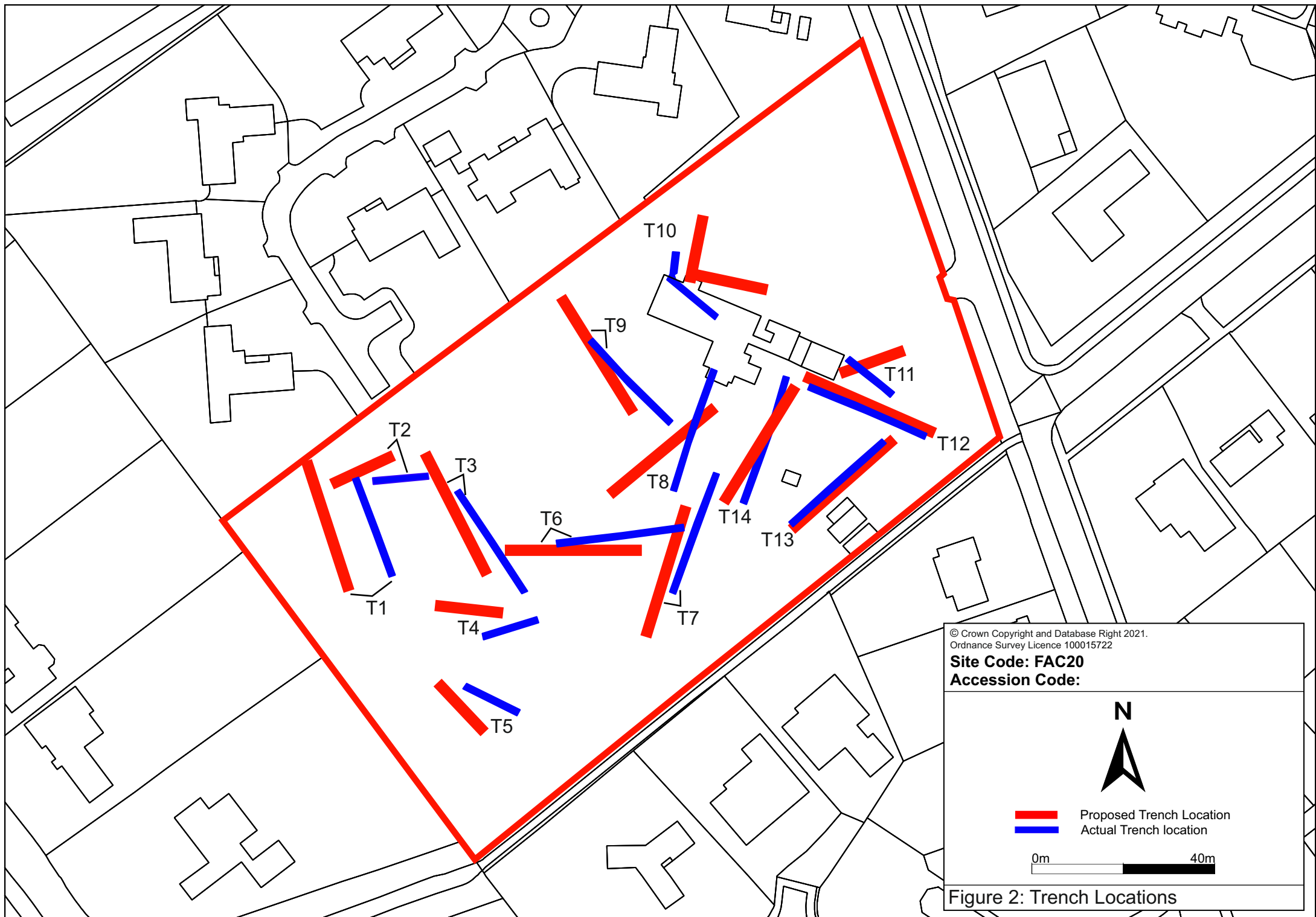


Figure 2: Trench Locations



Trench 1 Looking Southeast



Trench 4 Looking East



Trench 9 Looking Northwest



Trench 11 Looking Southeast

Site Code: FAC20 Accession Code:
FIGURE 3: Selected Photographs