

**THE WHITWORTH CENTRE
HAROLD HILL
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING
PHASE I
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

FEBRUARY 2012

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THE WHITWORTH CENTRE
HAROLD HILL
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING
PHASE I
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Client: CgMs Consulting

NGR: TL 53140 92490

Site Code: WTW 12

Oasis No: essexcou1- 118721

Dates of Fieldwork: 6th to 10th February 2012

SUMMARY

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation at the Whitworth Centre, Harold Hill, in advance of the redevelopment of the site and the construction of residential units. The 5.24 hectare site, which comprises a former school that has recently been used as offices, associated playing fields and an electricity sub-station, has been subdivided into two plots – plot 1 and plot 2, measuring 3.09ha and 2.15ha respectively. This first phase of work was carried out on plot 1 and the evaluation of plot 2 will occur at a later date. All nine trenches, each measuring 30m long by 1.6m wide, were located in the 1.08ha playing field area within plot 1.

An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2011) indicated that part of the site had been severely disturbed, presumably as a result of quarrying in the 18th/19th century; however, the subsequent archaeological monitoring of geotechnical test pits (FAU 2011) suggested that this may not be as extensive as previously suspected. The aim of the evaluation was therefore to determine the extent of the ground disturbance as well as the presence or absence of any archaeological remains.

The north part of the site, covered by trenches 1-4, was the most disturbed with a 0.8m-1m+ thick layer of redeposited clay backfill, containing tile fragments, found underlying the topsoil. Trenches 5 and 6, located in the middle of the site, revealed a similar deposit but it contained no finds and it is not clear whether this layer represented backfill or a natural deposit disturbed by other factors. The ground in south part of the site, exposed by trenches 7-9,

appeared to have been significantly reduced during the construction of the playing field, as it lies in a levelled depression and the exposed geology consisted of a layer of topsoil overlying natural clay.

No archaeological remains discovered in any of the trenches and it is apparent that the proposed Phase I development will have no impact upon the archaeological record.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out at The Whitworth Centre, Harold Hill in advance of the construction of residential houses and associated infrastructure. The archaeological work was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of CgMs Consulting for Persimmon Homes.

As the site is located in an area of some archaeological potential, following discussions between CgMs Consulting and the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) a programme of archaeological evaluation works was agreed in order to determine the presence or absence of any remains within the site. This advice is based upon guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and the Condition states:

“No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological work shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority”.

The investigation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2011).

Copies of this report will be supplied to CgMs Consulting, GLAAS and the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC). A digital version of this report will be submitted, along with a project summary, to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at the LAARC.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and Geology (Fig. 1)

The site is located on the eastern side of the junction between Straight Road and Noak Hill Road, Harold Hill at NGR TL 53140 92490. The 5.24 hectare site, which comprises a former school that has recently been used as offices, associated playing fields and an electricity sub-station, has been subdivided into two plots – plot 1 and plot 2, measuring 3.09ha and 2.15ha respectively. The archaeological evaluation was carried out on plot 1 and the evaluation of plot 2 will occur at a later date. All nine trenches, each measuring 30m long by 1.6m wide, were located in the 1.08ha playing field area within plot 1.

The playing fields gradually slope down from approximately 56m AOD in the south-west corner, where trench 9 was located, to approximately 52m AOD in the area around trench 1 (Plate 5).

The British Geological Survey (England and Wales Sheet 256 North London 1994) shows the study site to lie on an area of London Clay with a channel of Head Deposits, formerly the route of the Ingrebourne brook/stream, immediately to the east of the site boundary (CgMs 2011). Part of the site is shown as landfill; however, geotechnical works suggest that the area of landfill is not as extensive as previously thought (ECC FAU 2011).

2.2 Archaeology and History (Fig. 1)

The following archaeological background makes use of a desk-based assessment previously prepared for the site by CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2011).

The archaeological record suggests very little archaeological investigation within the wider vicinity of the site to date. Cartographic evidence appears to indicate that the site has been partially developed since the 1950's but evidence for earlier post-medieval structures may well be present.

There is very little evidence for Prehistoric activity within 1km of the site, which is likely to have been situated within a densely wooded landscape during this period. The enclosure of Romford Common in 1814 led to the discovery of large amounts of Roman roof tile, recorded as spread over an area of '300 paces'. The fragments are recorded from higher ground near Wrexham Road, some 750m to the east of the site. Fragments of tile along with remains of stone buildings are also said to have been found to the east of Ingrebourne School, 500m east of the site (MLO26050).

There are no records of any Anglo-Saxon remains within 1km of the site, while Medieval activity is also limited and appears to take the form of fairly isolated dwellings and farms in a still heavily-wooded landscape. Woodland clearance increased throughout the later medieval period as Harold Wood was cleared to form Romford Common. By the early 17th century only a small part of Harold's Wood remained at the northern end of Romford Common although Havering Wood survived at Noak Hill where there were also several smaller woods.

The GLHER records that in 1775 John Heaton of Bedfords unlawfully built a brick kiln on land enclosed from Romford common. The suggested location of the kiln is that it lay to the south of Noak Hill Road junction with Straight Road, later becoming Tile Kiln Farm.

The land remained largely open and undeveloped throughout the 19th and early 20th century, until the construction of the Harold Hill Grammar school.

The British Geological Survey (England and Wales Sheet 256 North London 1994) shows a former landfill in the playing field area, straddling the Phase 1 and 2 sites; however, archaeological monitoring of geotechnical works undertaken in April 2011 suggests that the extent of the landfill is potentially smaller than previously anticipated, with only three test-pits conclusively demonstrating that these locations had been quarried to depth. Only one of these test-pits is in the Phase 1 area, TP 108, where made ground was demonstrated to a depth in excess of 2.2m below existing ground level (Fig. 2). Where quarrying has taken place it is potentially related to the extraction of clay for brick-making and may therefore in turn be linked to the history of brick and tile making in the area referred to above.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The specific aim of the evaluation was to determine the presence or absence, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits that may be present and the likely impact of development upon them. This information would have been used to determine the necessity for any further archaeological work to mitigate the impact of development, based on recommendations from the GLAAS monitoring officer.

3.2 Objectives

In the event that significant archaeological remains were encountered this report would have aimed to place the results in context with the research objectives laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). As no features of any significance were identified the project has no potential to contribute to any of the research agendas.

4.0 METHOD

Nine 30m long by 1.6m wide evaluation trenches, laid out by GPS, were excavated under archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. Trench 1 was aligned north-east/south-west; trenches 2, 7 and 9 were aligned east-west; trenches 3, 4, 5 and 8 were aligned north-south.

Standard ECC FAU excavation and recording methodologies were employed throughout. ECC FAU is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and all work was carried out in accordance with IfA by-laws and guidelines (IfA 2010; 2008) and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS (Plate 1-6)

The topsoil was consistent across the site and comprised 0.2m-0.35m of mid/dark greyish brown friable silty clay. In **trenches 1-4** the ground below the topsoil was disturbed and the stratigraphy consisted of 0.8m-1m of re-deposited brown-grey compact silty clay with occasional fragments of tiles (Plates 1 & 2). Despite the fact each of four trenches was at least 1m deep and a 1.65m deep sondage was dug in the south-east part of trench one, the natural geology was exposed only in the north-east part of trench 1 and the central part of trench 4. It comprised orange-brown compact silty clay and mid yellowish brown compact silty clay respectively. In **trenches 5-6** the topsoil was underlaid by a 0.8m thick layer of subsoil or re-deposited mid bluish-brown compact clay which overlaid mid grey/brown compact natural silty clay. **Trenches 7-9** revealed dark brown natural compact silty clay lying immediately under the topsoil (Plate 4). A 1.2m deep sondage dug in the east end of trench 7 showed no change in the underlying deposits (Plate 3).

No archaeological features were identified in any of the trenches and the discovered finds comprised a few unstratified post-medieval tile fragments, none of which was retained.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

The Desk Based Assessment previously undertaken for the site had suggested that it was situated in an area of low to moderate archaeological potential. The potential of the site was further reduced by the fact that the area had been severely disturbed by quarrying, which is likely to have severely damaged or destroyed any remains that may have been present in the areas affected (CgMs 2011). Although the subsequent monitoring of geotechnical test-pits suggested that quarrying may not have been as extensive as previously thought, the thick layer of re-deposited clay noted in the area covered by trenches 1-4 confirms that this part of the site had been subject to clay or brick-earth extraction to depths in excess of 1m below the existing ground level.

In addition to the impact of quarrying, as a result of ground levelling, presumably ahead of the construction of the Whitworth Centre and associated infrastructure, the south-west corner of the playing field lies approximately 2m lower than the nearby Whitworth Centre buildings and adjacent Appleby Drive (Plate 6). The extent of the landscaping works during the construction of the playing fields is not known, but the presence of a consistently thick topsoil layer across the whole site and the lack of subsoil suggest, that they were extensive and would have impacted upon the archaeological horizon should any remains have been present. Accordingly, given the high degree of ground disturbance that has taken place across plot 1, the results of the evaluation confirm that there are no archaeological features surviving that would be affected by the proposed development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ECC FAU would like to thank CgMs Consulting and Persimmon Homes for commissioning the work. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Trevor Ennis, Andrew Lewsey and Lukasz Miciak of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. The report was prepared by Lukasz Miciak with illustrations by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Adam Single of English Heritage GLAAS.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------|--|
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| CgMs Consulting | 2011 | <i>Archaeological Desk-based Assessment: The Whitworth Centre & Broxhill Centre, Noak Hill Road, Harold Hill, Essex</i> |
| ECC FAU | 2011 | <i>Archaeological Monitoring of Geotechnical Test-pits at The Whitworth & Broxhill Centres, Harold Hill, London Borough of Havering. ECC FAU report 2413</i> |
| ECC FAU | 2011 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Trail Trenching at Whitworth Centre, Harold Hill, London Borough of Havering. ECC FAU 2389</i> |
| Gurney, D. | 2003 | <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England, East Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper 14</i> |
| Museum of London | 2002 | <i>A Research Framework for London Archaeology</i> |

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Trench	Measurements	Co-ordinates (end, centre)
1	30m x 1.6m x 1.1m, orientated NE/SW	NE X = 553201.6 Y = 192590.0 SW X = 553180.0 Y = 192569.1
2	30m x 1.6m x 1.2m, orientated W/E	W X = 553110.3 Y = 192552.0 E X = 553140.3 Y = 192552.0
3	30m x 1.6m x 1.3m, orientated N/S	N X = 553111.2 Y = 192551.1 S X = 553111.2 Y = 192521.1
4	30m x 1.6m x 1m, orientated N/S	N X = 553160.3 Y = 192552.9 S X = 553160.3 Y = 192522.9
5	30m x 1.6m x 1m, orientated N/S	N X = 553150.8 Y = 192511.8 S X = 553150.8 Y = 192481.8
6	30m x 1.6m x 1m, orientated W/E	W X = 553135.8 Y = 192480.9 E X = 553165.8 Y = 192480.9
7	30m x 1.6m x 0.4m, orientated W/E	W X = 553160.3 Y = 192470.1 E X = 553190.3 Y = 192470.1
8	30m x 1.6m x 0.4m, orientated N/S	N X = 553168.1 Y = 192465.7 S X = 553168.1 Y = 192435.7
9	30m x 1.6m x 0.4m, orientated W/E	W X = 553156.5 Y = 192426.2 E X = 553186.5 Y = 192426.2

APPENDIX 2: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

Site Name: The Whitworth Centre, Harold Hill

Site Code:

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Desk Based Assessment
- 1.2 Written Scheme of Investigation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Client Report

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Trench location plan
- 3.2 Photographic Register
- 3.3 Site Photographic Record (1 set of B/W and colour prints + 1 set of digital images on disk)
- 3.4 Miscellaneous notes/plans

APPENDIX 3

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: The Whitworth Centre, Noak Hill Rd, Harold Hill		
County: Greater London	District: Havering	
Village/Town: Harold Hill	Parish: Harold Hill	
Planning application reference: P1558.11		
HER Enquiry reference: N/A		
Funding source: Developer – CGMS (Persimmon Homes)		
Nature of application: Residential development		
Present land use: Playing field		
Size of application area: 1.08ha	Size of area investigated: 432 sqm	
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 35570 29640		
Site code (if applicable): WTW 12		
Site director/Organization: L Miciak, ECC Field Archaeology Unit		
Type of work: Archaeological Evaluation		
Date of work:	Start: 6th February 2012	Finish: 10th February 2012
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: LAARC		
Related HER Nos: N/A	Periods represented: None	
Relevant previous summaries/reports:		
CgMs. 2011. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment for The Whitworth Centre & Broxhill Centre, Noak Hill Road, Harold Hill, Essex;		
ECC FAU. Archaeological Monitoring of Geotechnical Test-pits at The Whitworth & Broxhill Centres, Harold Hill, London Borough of Havering. ECC FAU report 2413		
Summary of fieldwork results:		
Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit carried out an archaeological evaluation at the Whitworth Centre, Harold Hill, in advance of the redevelopment of the site and the construction of residential units. The 5.24 hectare site, which comprises a former school that has recently been used as offices, associated playing fields and an electricity sub-station, has been subdivided into two plots – plot 1 and plot 2, measuring 3.09ha and 2.15ha respectively. This first phase of work was carried out on plot 1 and the evaluation of plot 2 will occur at a later date. All nine trenches, each measuring 30m long by 1.6m wide, were located in the 1.08ha playing field area within plot 1.		
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Author of summary: L Miciak

Date of summary: February 2012

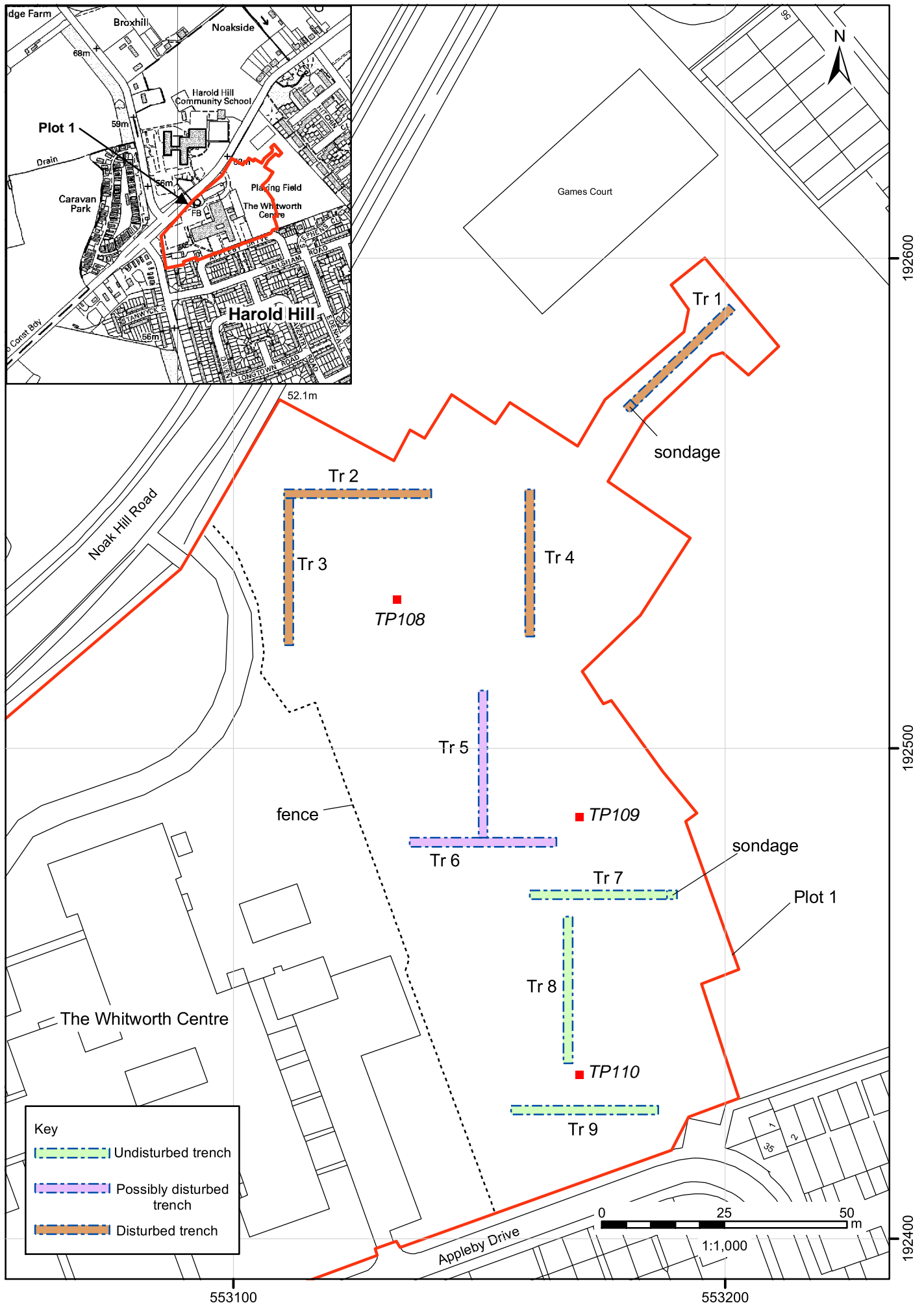


Fig.1. Location of archaeological evaluation trenches

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Plate 1. Trench 1



Plate 2. Trench 4



Plate 3. Trench 7



Plate 4. Trench 9



Plate 5. General site view



Plate 6. General site view