

**Bilton Industrial Estate, Lovelace Road, Bracknell
An Archaeological Evaluation Report (BLL 06)**

(SU 8529 6814)

By

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Archaeology South-East

Archaeology South-East is a division of the University College London Field Archaeology Unit one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.

The Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, the Field Archaeology Unit retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Based in the local community, the Field Archaeology Unit sees an important part of its work as explaining the results to the broader public. Public lectures, open days, training courses and liaison with local archaeological societies are aspects of its community-based approach.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England the Unit can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.

Archaeology South-East, as part of the Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.

Abstract

Archaeology South East was commissioned by WSP Environmental UK on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Bilton Industrial Estate, Lovelace Road, Bracknell. The work was carried out in advance of the proposed erection of nine industrial units on the 5th and 6th June 2006.

Four trenches were excavated. Two parallel undated ditches were observed in Trench 2. No other archaeological deposits or finds were recorded on the site, apart from a small assemblage of Bronze Age pottery from the topsoil in Trench 1.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit, was commissioned by WSP Environmental UK, on behalf of their client, Slough Estates, to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Bilton Industrial Estate, Lovelace Road, Bracknell (formerly Berkshire, now Bracknell Forest UA), hereafter referred to as 'the site' (Fig. 1). The work was carried out in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site for commercial use (Planning Application Ref. 06/00178/FUL) on the 5th and 6th June 2006.

The site covers 0.41ha and is bounded to the north and west by industrial units, to the east by Lovelace Road and to the south by an unnamed estate road. The site is covered with grass with localised areas of hardstanding and bisected longitudinally by a brick wall (Fig. 2).

The modern ground surface across the site was at a level of approximately 71m aOD.

A Specification was prepared by WSP Environmental UK, and submitted to Berkshire Archaeology (BA) for approval. BA act as the archaeology monitoring body on behalf of Bracknell Forest Borough Council (BFBC).

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jon Sygrave and Justin Russell on 5th and 6th June 2006. The project was managed by Darryl Palmer (Senior Project Manager).

1.1 Planning Background

The site is considered to have archaeological potential (see below). As a result, Berkshire Archaeology recommended that an archaeological condition be attached to planning consent. The condition states:

No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological work (in this instance commencing with an evaluation by trial trenching), accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.

This report outlines the results of a Stage 1 Archaeological Evaluation, carried out on the site as part of the aforementioned planning condition.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the evaluation were laid out in the specification (Randell 2006) and are reproduced below with due acknowledgement.

- To fully determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered, as dictated by current best practice.

General aims are to:

- Characterise the nature of the main stratigraphic units encountered in terms of their physical composition (stone, sand, gravel, organic materials etc) and their archaeological formation (primary deposits, secondary deposits etc).
- Assess the overall presence and survival of structural remains relating to the main periods of occupation revealed and the potential for the recovery of additional structural information given the nature of the deposits encountered (e.g. extent of later disturbance etc).
- Assess the overall presence and survival of the main kinds of artefactual evidence (including pottery, brick, tile, stone, glass, metal, bone, small finds, industrial residues etc), its condition and potential, given the nature of the deposits encountered.
- Assess the overall presence and survival of the main kinds of ecofactual and environmental evidence (including animal bone, human bone, plant remains, pollen, charcoal, mollusca, soils etc.), its condition and potential, given the nature of the deposits encountered.
- Appraise the relative value of the main stratigraphic units revealed.

Specific aims are to:

- Assess whether any remains of prehistoric field systems survive within the site.
- Assess whether remains of Iron Age/Romano-British field systems or settlement identified from the nearby Peacock Farm investigations extend into the site.
- Assess whether any Medieval/Post-Medieval remains associated with Easthampstead Park survive within the site.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The following information is extracted from the specification (Randell 2006), with due acknowledgement.

The underlying geology on the site consists of Bagshot Beds.

There are no known archaeological sites or finds recorded from within the site. However, there is evidence of prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity. A Mesolithic flint scatter was discovered at Easthampstead Park close to the western boundary of the site during fieldwalking in 1985. Further Mesolithic flint scatters were discovered in 1987 during an excavation at Easthampstead Park.

There are also two scheduled Bronze Age barrows less than 2km from the site. One barrow lies on top of Bill Hill, a steep sided hill with extensive views in all directions (SAM 12077). The mound survives to a height of 1.5m and has a maximum diameter of 25m. It is surrounded by a ditch, from which mound material was quarried. This has been largely infilled over the years but survives to a width of 5m and a depth of 0.2m.

The other large ditched bowl barrow is situated at the top of a gentle north facing slope at Wooden Hill (SAM 19016). The mound has an overall diameter of 26.6m and stands to a maximum height of 2m. The perimeter of the mound has been reduced by cultivation around its northern quarter so that today the barrow is ovoid in shape. Surrounding the mound is a ditch 5m wide, from which material was quarried during the construction of the mound. This has become partly infilled over the years but survives as a low earthwork 0.7m deep around the north-east and south-east sectors of the barrow and as a buried feature elsewhere.

A recent evaluation at the former RAF Staff College, Bracknell approximately 2km from the site identified a series of linear features running across the site including post-medieval boundary ditches and undated shallow gullies. A spread of burnt flint and several undated pits were also revealed.

A number of archaeological investigations have also been carried out to the west of the site at Peacock Farm. The evaluation recorded Iron Age/Romano-British archaeological remains.

Earthworks suggested the site of a Medieval moated manor house on Mill Lane to the east of the site. However a watching brief during development of this site found no evidence of the building.

Easthampstead Park is the site of a 14th century manor house, hunting lodge and Royal Park which was in use until 1628.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

The trench layout was agreed prior to the evaluation between WSP Environmental UK and Berkshire Archaeology and was designed to provide a representative sample (comprising 4%) of the redevelopment area (Fig. 2). The evaluation consisted of four trenches: Trench 1 measuring 30m by 1.8m and Trenches 2-4 measuring 20m by 1.8m.

The trenches were excavated using a 3CX JCB fitted with a smooth grading bucket and the trenches were excavated through undifferentiated topsoil and modern made ground in spits of no more than 0.25m until archaeological deposits or the top of the underlying natural sediments was reached. Care was taken so that archaeological deposits were not damaged due to over machining. Trenches were to be excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m due to health and safety requirements, with any greater depths requiring stepping or shoring as appropriate.

All recording was undertaken in accordance with accepted professional standards according to the UCLFAU Fieldwork Manual (draft) and the specification (Randell 2006).

The spoil from the excavations was inspected by the archaeologist in order to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest.

A photographic record of the trenches was kept.

The trenches were levelled in relation to a nearby temporary bench mark (TBM). Due to the absence of any Ordnance datum-related levels within a reasonable distance of the site, the TBM was given an arbitrary nominal value of 50.00m. It is intended that an OD value will be ascribed to this TBM at a later phase of works.

The trenches were measured to known points and reproduced on a site plan in relation to the Ordnance Survey (see Fig. 2).

Trench record sheets were filled out for each trench and measured sketch sections produced.

An online OASIS form was filled out for the site, a copy of which is reproduced as an appendix to this document.

The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South East office in Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable museum in due course. All finds are the property of the landowner, but will be donated to a suitable museum (Reading Museum).

4 RESULTS

The results are presented for each excavated trench.

4.1 Stratigraphy

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the north west of the site. The trench measured 30m x 1.8m, and was dug to a maximum depth of 1.18m. The modern ground surface adjacent to Trench 1 was recorded in the range 48.95m (N) to 49.63m (S). The sequence of deposits in the trench was as follows:

Depth from surface	Description
0 - 0.51/0.59m	Grey-brown sand with large quantities of brick and rubble (Topsoil) – containing pottery at depth of 0.45m.
0.51/0.59m - 1/1.18m	Mottled yellowish-grey/yellowish-brown medium sand with occasional subangular flint gravel <50mm (Colluvium)
1.18m>	Orange with yellow clay and sand, with patches of mixed fine sand and clay. Moderate subangular chert <50mm with occasional charcoal flecks <10mm (Natural)

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was located in the south west of the site. The trench measured 20m x 1.8m and was dug to a depth of 0.8m. The modern ground surface was recorded in the range of 48.27m (S) to 48.46m (N). The sequence of deposits in the trench was as follows:

Depth from surface	Description
0 - 0.3m	Made ground
0.3m - 0.58m	Grey-brown sand with large quantities of brick and rubble (Topsoil)
0.58-0.8m	Mottled yellowish-grey/yellowish-brown medium sand with occasional subangular flint gravel <50mm (Colluvium)
0.8m>	Orange with yellow clay and sand, with patches of mixed fine sand and clay. Moderate subangular chert <50mm with occasional charcoal flecks <10mm (Natural) Context 1

Two features were recorded in the south western end of the trench, cut into Context 1 and sealed by the Colluvium. They comprised parallel linear features running diagonally across the trench, 1.4m apart. **Context 2** comprised a V-shaped feature 2.6m wide and 0.74m deep (up to interface with the Colluvium) filled with a compact light grey silty sand with patches of orange clay (**Context 3**). One fragment of 16th-17th century roofing tile was

recovered. The feature was cut by a later field drain of 19th-20th century date. An environmental sample was taken from Context 3.

The second feature comprised a U-shaped cut, 1.34m wide and 0.34m deep (**Context 4**) filled with a loose mid grey/reddish-brown silty sand containing occasional pieces of chert (<50mm) and charcoal (<10mm) (**Context 5**).

The trench also produced two unstratified fragments of 13th-14th century roofing tile.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located in the north east of the site. The trench measured 20m x 1.8m and was dug to a depth of 0.67m. The adjacent ground surface was recorded at 48.70m (S) to 48.82m (N). The sequence of deposits in the trench was as follows:

Depth from surface	Description
0 - 0.16m	Grey-brown sand with large quantities of brick and rubble (Topsoil)
0.16m-0.32m	Compact grey-brown sand with patches of yellow sand
0.32m-0.67m	Compact mid grey silty sand containing occasional pieces of flint and tile
0.67m>	Mottled yellow/orange/ grey sand with frequent gravel inclusions

This trench contained a number of modern features, including land drains and timber sleepers.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was located in the south east of the site. The trench measured 20m x 18m, and was dug to a depth of 0.58-0.73m. The adjacent ground surface was recorded at 47.95m-48.30m. The sequence of deposits in the trench was as follows:

Depth from surface	Description
0 - 0.23m	Grey-brown sand with large quantities of brick and rubble (Topsoil)
0.23m-0.41m	Grey-brown silty sand with large quantities of brick and rubble
0.4m-0.58/0.73m	Compact mid grey silty sand containing occasional pieces of tile and charcoal
0.73m>	Mottled yellow-orange sand with occasional flints and iron staining.

This trench contained one modern land drain.

4.2 The Finds

Some flint-tempered sherds from one vessel were recovered from the topsoil in Trench 1, at a depth of 0.45m. The sherds are likely to be from the base of a vessel. They are very fragmentary, partly due to the moderate to common quantities of coarse to very coarse calcined flint used as temper. There is some carbonised material on one side, indicating that the vessel has been used. Two small pieces were recovered from the topsoil of Trench 2: these are also tempered with calcined flint, although it is ill-sorted and sparse, but this may be a reflection of the size of the sherds. These are likely to be later Bronze Age in date but residual in the topsoil from which they were recovered.

Three pieces of ceramic building material were recovered from Trench 2:

2 x fragments of medium-fired, medium sand-tempered ?peg tile of c.13th-14th century date (Unstratified)

1 x fragment of medium-fired, fine sand-tempered ?peg tile of probable c.16th-17th century date (Context [3]).

4.3 Environmental Samples

One bulk sample was taken from context [3], ditch fill, to establish the presence of archaeobotanical remains such as charred seeds and charcoal.

The sample was processed using tank flotation and the residue (heavy fraction) and flot (light fraction) were retained on 500µm and 250µm meshes respectively. The flot and residue were passed through graded sieves and further sorted into the categories documented (Table 1).

	FLOT	RESIDUE
Charcoal >4mm	0	0
Charcoal <4mm (grams)	*/<2	0
Uncharred Vegetation	80% incl. <i>Rubus</i> sp. seeds	1 wood fragment/<2g

Table 1: Flot Quantification (* = 1-25 fragments)

The flot and residue from this sample produced a few small fragments of charcoal. No other environmental remains were recovered. A large proportion of the flot was uncharred vegetation including *Rubus* sp. seeds (brambles, such as blackberry) and fragment of uncharred wood. These indicate modern contamination of the ditch fill.

This limited and contaminated sample has not provided any material for further study.

5 DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation showed that the site contained no significant archaeological deposits. The two parallel ditches are undated, and could possibly be related to the prehistoric and Romano-British settlements known to exist in the area, but are probably of later date. They do not correspond with the field pattern shown on an enclosure map of 1827¹, which is irregular in nature and suggests either medieval assarting from the woodland, or the later informal enclosure of waste or parkland. However, it is difficult to relate the map to the present landscape, and on balance it is likely that the ditches are of medieval or post-medieval date. The fragments of possible roofing tile from Trench 2 might suggest the presence of medieval and post-medieval structures in the vicinity, perhaps associated with the nearby Easthampstead Park.

There is little evidence of any medieval or earlier activity on the site, other than a few sherds of later Bronze Age pottery which in themselves are not significant, but are indicative of prehistoric settlement in the vicinity of the site. On this basis, the evaluation was unable to answer any of the specific project aims laid out in Section 1.2, but it did suggest the possibility of further archaeological deposits surviving elsewhere on site.

¹ www.berkshireenclosure.org

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology South-East would like to thank WSP Environmental UK (Sally Randell) for commissioning the work and the staff of BPH for their on site assistance.

7 REFERENCES

Randell, S., 2006. *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation at Bilton Industrial Estate, Lovelace Road, Bracknell*. Unpub. WSP Environmental UK document 12260259/001.

8 APPENDIX

8.1 OASIS Form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

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OASIS ID: archaeol6-15578

Project details

Project name	Lovelace Road, Bracknell
Short description of the project	Four evaluation trenches were excavated in advance of a commercial development. Two parallel undated ditches were observed in Trench 2. No other archaeological deposits or finds were recorded on the site, apart from a small unstratified assemblage of Bronze Age pottery in Trench 1.
Project dates	Start: 05-06-2006 End: 06-06-2006
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	2504 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	archaeol6-15579 - OASIS form ID
Any associated project reference codes	06/00178/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	BLL 06 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Monument type	BOUNDARY DITCH Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Bronze Age
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	BERKSHIRE BRACKNELL FOREST BRACKNELL Lovelace Road, Bracknell
Postcode	RG12 8XX
Study area	0.41 Hectares

National grid reference SU 8529 6814 Point
 Height OD Min: 71.00m Max: 71.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East
 Project brief originator Consultant
 Project design originator consultant
 Project director/manager Darryl Palmer
 Project supervisor Jon Sygrave
 Sponsor or funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Reading Museum
 Physical Archive ID BLL 06
 Physical Contents 'Ceramics','Environmental'
 Digital Archive recipient Reading Museum
 Digital Archive ID BLL 06
 Digital Contents 'Stratigraphic'
 Digital Media available 'Images raster','Images vector'
 Paper Archive recipient Reading Museum
 Paper Archive ID BLL 06
 Paper Contents 'Environmental','Stratigraphic','Survey'
 Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Correspondence','Drawing','Manuscript','Map','Miscellaneous Material','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Plan','Report','Section','Survey ','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

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Description Grey literature - evaluation report. Descriptive and interpretative text and
illustrations.

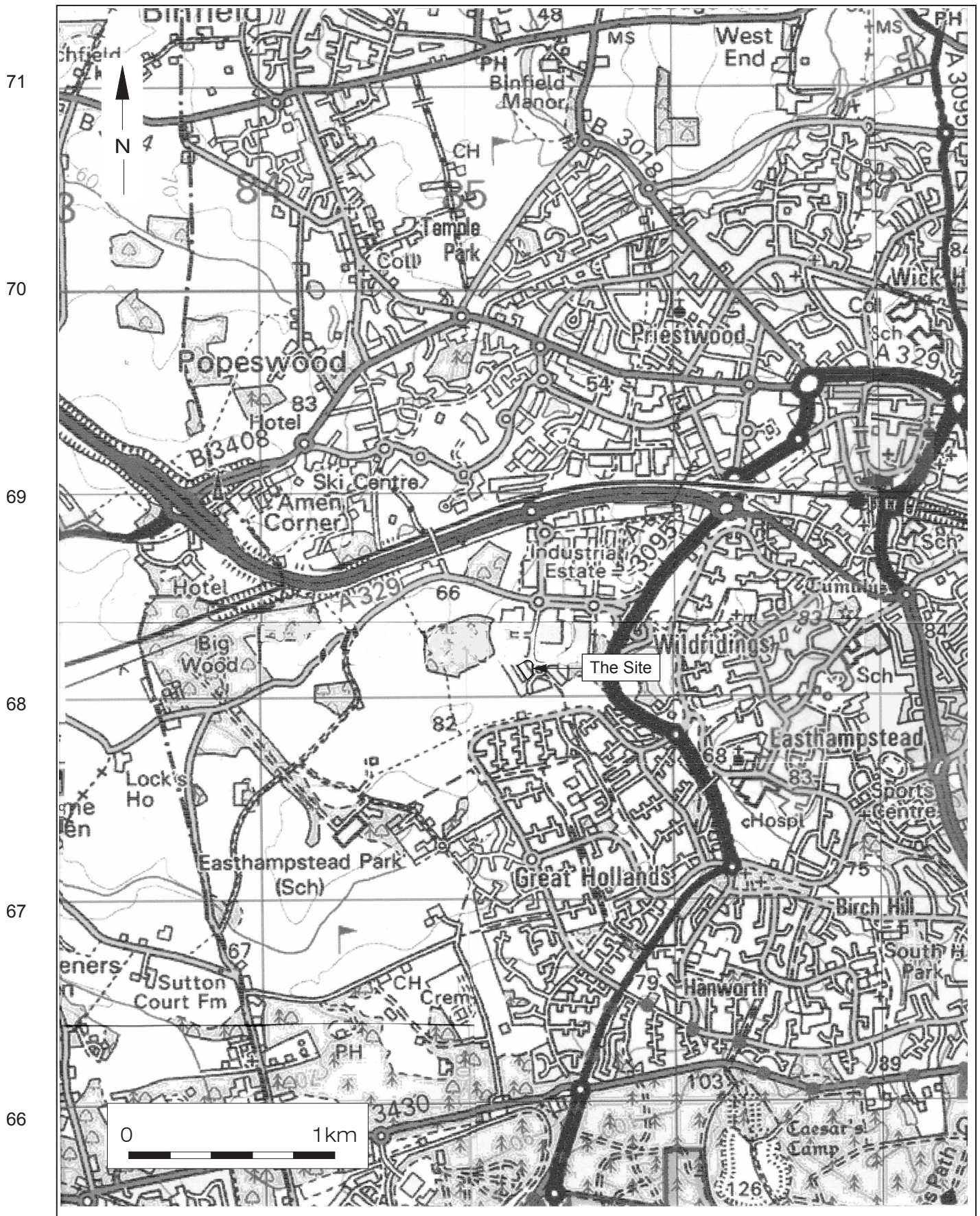
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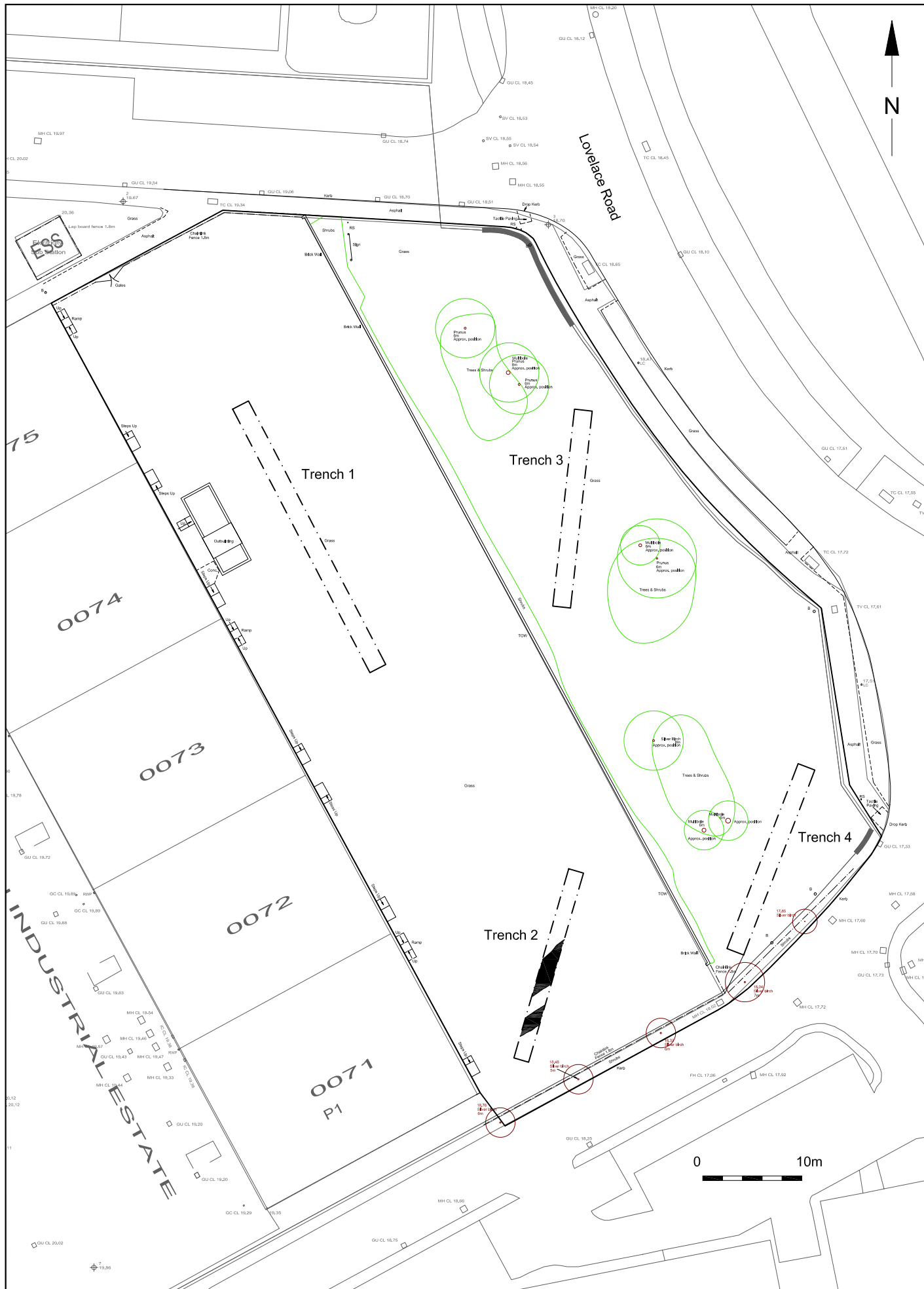
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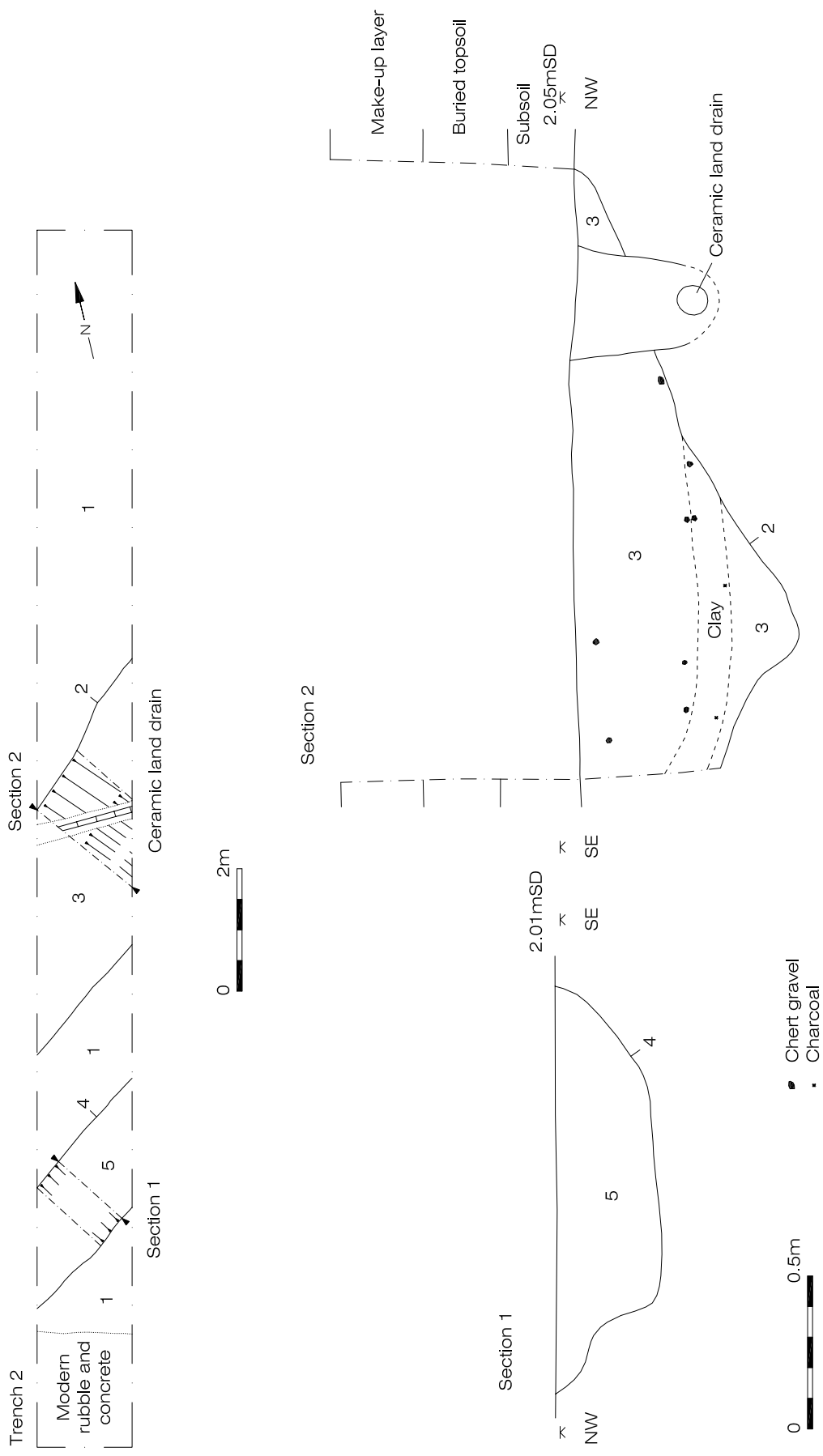
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© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST			Lovelace Road, Bracknell		Fig. 1
Ref: 2504	June 2006	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan		

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Ref: 2504	June 2006	Drawn by: JLR	Trench Location Plan		



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Ref: 2504 June 2006 Drawn by: JLR

Trench 2: Plans and sections

Fig. 3