

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
On Land at Banstead Downs Golf Club Reservoir**

**NGR 524714 160507 (Centred)**

**Project no. 2999**

**By**

**Alice Thorne**



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**Archaeology South-East  
Units 1 and 2  
2 Chapel Place  
Portslade  
East Sussex  
BN41 1DR**

**Tel: 01273 426830  
Fax: 01273 420866  
email : [fau-ucl@btconnect.com](mailto:fau-ucl@btconnect.com)  
website: [www.archaeologyse.co.uk](http://www.archaeologyse.co.uk)**

*Abstract*

*An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at Banstead Downs Golf Club, Banstead, South London in advance of the construction of a golf club reservoir. Four trial trenches were excavated to a cumulative length of 80m. No archaeological finds or features were identified.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of The Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by 2ic Consultants Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the construction of a reservoir at Banstead Downs Golf Club. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 524714 160507 and its location is shown in Fig. 1.
- 1.2** A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by ASE and submitted to Tony Howe at Surrey County Council for approval prior to commencement of the work.
- 1.3** The site is located to the west of the A217 in Banstead, to the north of the railway line, and at the southern extent of the Banstead golf course (Fig. 1). The site is located on a north-west facing hill slope, in an overgrown patch of woodland with a thick shrub under storey. Several large trees have recently been cleared from the site, to facilitate access. The wood floor contained many hollows and ridges, resulting from this process, and which are also likely in part to derive from biological action.
- 1.4** The British Geological Survey Map Sheets 270 and 286 Solid and Drift Edition (1:50,000 scale) indicates that the site lies on the Cretaceous Upper Chalk, which is described as white with flints, with nodular chalk at its base.
- 1.5** The fieldwork was undertaken by Alice Thorne (Archaeologist) and Paul Derwent (Site Assistant) during October 2007. The project was managed by Diccon Hart (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-Excavation Manager).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Little is known about activity in and around Banstead prior to the emergence of the town of *Benestede* during the later Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. Chance finds of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic date in the area attest to limited activity in the vicinity during these periods (Griffin 2003). Interestingly, mention is made of a destroyed barrow of possible Neolithic date in close proximity to the site (Griffin 2000), which *may* suggest increased activity of this date in the vicinity of the site. A Bronze Age bowl barrow recorded at Tumble Beacon (SMR No. 2523) to the south of the site and a founder's hoard to the east, as well as a general scatter of find spots provides somewhat more concrete evidence of activity during this period. A general dearth of Iron Age finds in the Banstead area suggests that activity of this period is limited as does the isolated finds of Roman date, though a potential building recorded to the

south of the site (SMR No. 942) is worth noting.

**2.2** *Benstede* was first mentioned in a royal charter dated AD967 and a group of Anglo-Saxon barrows are recorded to the north of the site (SAM No's 23010 and 23034). By the Domesday Survey, a small settlement, recorded as *Benestede* was established and this continued to develop, albeit slowly throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods. The advent of the railways served to accelerate the expansion of the town to its present size.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

**3.1** The aims of the archaeological investigation were to ascertain:

- Whether archaeological remains were present on the site and if so assess their date, survival and condition.
- To ascertain the character, date and quality of ancient remains and deposits.
- To assess how they might be affected by the development of the site
- To consider what options should be considered for mitigation

**3.2** The fieldwork aimed to investigate the site, establish the distribution of archaeological remains and to place these within our current understanding of landscape development.

**3.3** The groundwork comprised the excavation of four 20m long, 1.8m wide trenches by mechanical excavator, utilising a flat blade ditching bucket. These trenches were positioned within the footprint of the proposed reservoir, and were laid out prior to commencement of the fieldwork by the client (2ic Consultants Ltd). Due to on site constraints, Trench 2 was shifted slightly in order to facilitate machine movement.

**3.4** All trenches were scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool prior to excavation.

**3.5** All encountered archaeological deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the Specification using standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets. Deposit colours were verified by visual inspection and not by reference to a Munsell Colour chart.

**3.6** A full photographic record of the work was kept (*black and white prints, colour slides and digital images*) and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East

offices at Portslade and will be offered to a suitable local museum.

**3.7** The site was levelled with respect to OD, using a Bench Mark located on a bridge to the east of the site (value 131.11mOD) and located on to the 1:1250 map of the area.

**3.8** The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest, and was scanned with a metal detector.

#### **4.0 RESULTS**

<b>Trench no</b>	<b>Top of trench (mOD)</b>	<b>Base of trench (mOD)</b>
1. SE end:	125.00	124.46
1. NW end:	123.01	122.67
2. SW end:	123.86	122.98
2. NE end:	123.04	122.77
3. E end:	123.51	123.14
3. W end:	122.62	122.34
4. E end:	122.27	122.03
4. W end:	123.00	122.47

**Table 1. Levels Information**

#### **4.1 Trench 1 (Plate 1)**

**4.2** This trench was orientated NW-SE, and was located upon the hill slope. The stratigraphic sequence observed was as follows:

- Context **1/001** was a mulch and organically rich topsoil deposit, resulting from organic decay and biological movement on the wood floor. This deposit was very variable in depth, ranging from between approximately 150mm- 300mm, and consisted of a dark greyish-brown clayey silt, containing frequent rooting, chalk fragments, leaf mulch and occasional modern inclusions such as glass bottles, metal cans and modern ceramic.
- Below this a light orangish brown clayey silt was encountered (Context **1/002**). This contained frequent rooting, frequent chalk nodules and fragments and had a friable consistence. This deposit represented a rooting deposit, which was present across the site, but was very variable in depth and character. Towards the north of the trench it measured approximately 90mm in depth, whilst at the southern end of the trench the deposit measured up to 400mm thick. In areas this rooting had penetrated and broken up the eroded surface of the underlying upper chalk and constituted pockets of infilled silting.
- Below this the surface of the upper chalk was encountered (**1/003**). This constitutes a creamy off white weathered, fragmented and

blocky chalk surface, which was compact in places with pockets of a softer, more friable creamy chalk marl and light orangish brown silts on the surface. A sondage was excavated at the northernmost extent of the trench to investigate the underlying chalk geology, and demonstrated that a purer, less eroded deposit of chalk bedrock was present at a depth of approximately 800 - 900mm below ground surface (Plate 6).

**4.3** No archaeological finds or features were observed.

**4.4 Trench 2** (Plate 2)

**4.5** This trench was orientated NE- SW. Due to the presence of several trees, and to allow the machine room to manoeuvre, the trench layout was shifted slightly, resulting in a 'kinked' layout in plan (Fig. 2). The stratigraphic sequence observed was as follows:

- Context **2/001** was a mulch and organically rich topsoil deposit, as in Trench 1. This varied in depth between approximately 190mm – 270mm.
- Below this the light orangish brown clayey silt was encountered as in Trench 1 (Context **2/002**). This varied substantially, varying between 160mm to 400mm in depth.
- Below this the surface of the upper chalk was encountered (**2/003**). This constitutes a creamy off white weathered, fragmented and blocky chalk surface, as in Trench 1.

**4.6** No archaeological finds or features were observed.

**4.7 Trench 3** (Plate 3)

**4.8** This trench was orientated E-W. The stratigraphic sequence observed was as follows:

- Topsoil **3/001** was the same as Context 1/001, and varied in depth between 100mm – 230mm.
- Below this the light orangish brown clayey silt was encountered (as in Trench 1) (Context **3/002**). This has a slightly more consistent depth, varying between 100mm – 170mm.
- Below this the surface of the upper chalk was encountered (**2/003**).

**4.9** No archaeological finds or features were observed. Several patches of silting were investigated to double check the nature of the soils here. These investigations confirmed that these were 'natural' biological hollows and seams in the surface of the chalk, and that the

silts were totally sterile of archaeological artefacts.

**4.10 Trench 4 (Plate 4)**

**4.11** This trench was orientated E-W. The stratigraphic sequence observed was as follows, and was very similar in depth to trench 3:

- Topsoil **4/001** varied in depth between 100mm – 150mm.
- Below this the light orangish brown clayey silt had a more consistent depth, varying between 100mm – 200mm (**4/002**).
- Below this the surface of the upper chalk was encountered (**4/003**).

**4.12** No archaeological finds or features were observed. A modern test pit was identified towards the centre of the trench, and on-site inquiries confirmed that it had been excavated in the past year. A sondage was excavated in the centre of the trench, and demonstrated that the chalk became 'cleaner' and less eroded at a depth of only 200mm below its surface (Plate 5).

**5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

**5.1** No archaeological finds or features were observed during the evaluation. Some areas of rooting and erosion at the surface of the upper chalk were investigated to confirm their 'natural' character, and were found to have no evidence at all of human action or modification. They are therefore thought to derive from biological action such as rooting, burrowing and tree throws eroding and causing intrusion of the surface of the chalk, a process probably exacerbated by chemical weathering. The total absence of any residual finds (other than 20<sup>th</sup> century material) identified from the spoil heaps indicates an area of little archaeological activity.

**References**

Griffin 2000: *An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of a Site at Castle House, Park Road, Banstead. Surrey.* Unpub. ASE Report.

Griffin 2003: *An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of a Site at 120, Hillside, Banstead. Surrey.* Unpub. ASE Report.



**SMR Summary Form**

Site Code	BDG07					
Identification Name and Address	Banstead Downs Golf Club Reservoir, Banstead					
County, District &/or Borough	Banstead, South London					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 524714 160507 (Centred)					
Geology	Upper Chalk					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2999					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. ✓	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 10-11 <sup>th</sup> /10/2007	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	2iC Consultants Ltd					
Project Manager	Diccon Hart					
Project Supervisor	Alice Thorne					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at Banstead Downs Golf Club, Banstead, South London in advance of the construction of a golf club reservoir. Four trial trenches were excavated to a cumulative length of 80m. No archaeological finds or features were identified.</i></p>						

**OASIS ID: archaeo16-33209**

**Project details**

Project name	An Archaeological Evaluation
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at Banstead Downs Golf Club, Banstead, South London in advance of the construction of a golf club reservoir. Four trial trenches were excavated to a cumulative length of 80m. No archaeological finds or features were identified.
Project dates	Start: 10-10-2007 End: 11-10-2007
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	BDG07 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	2999 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE Uncertain
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Golf course
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

Position in the planning process Not known / Not recorded

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**Project location**

Country England  
Site location SURREY REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BANSTEAD Banstead Golf Course  
Postcode XXXXXX  
Study area 100.00 Square metres  
Site coordinates TQ 24714 60507 51.3294517924 -0.209734893329 51 19 46 N  
000 12 35 W Point  
Height OD Min: 122.00m Max: 124.00m

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**Project creators**

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East  
Project brief originator Surrey County Council  
Project design originator Archaeology South-East  
Project director/manager Diccon Hart  
Project supervisor Alice Thorne  
Type of sponsor/funding body Client  
Name of sponsor/funding body International Irrigation Consultants LTD

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**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Contents	'other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Correspondence', 'Diary', 'Map', 'Notebook - Excavation', 'Research', 'General Notes', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report'

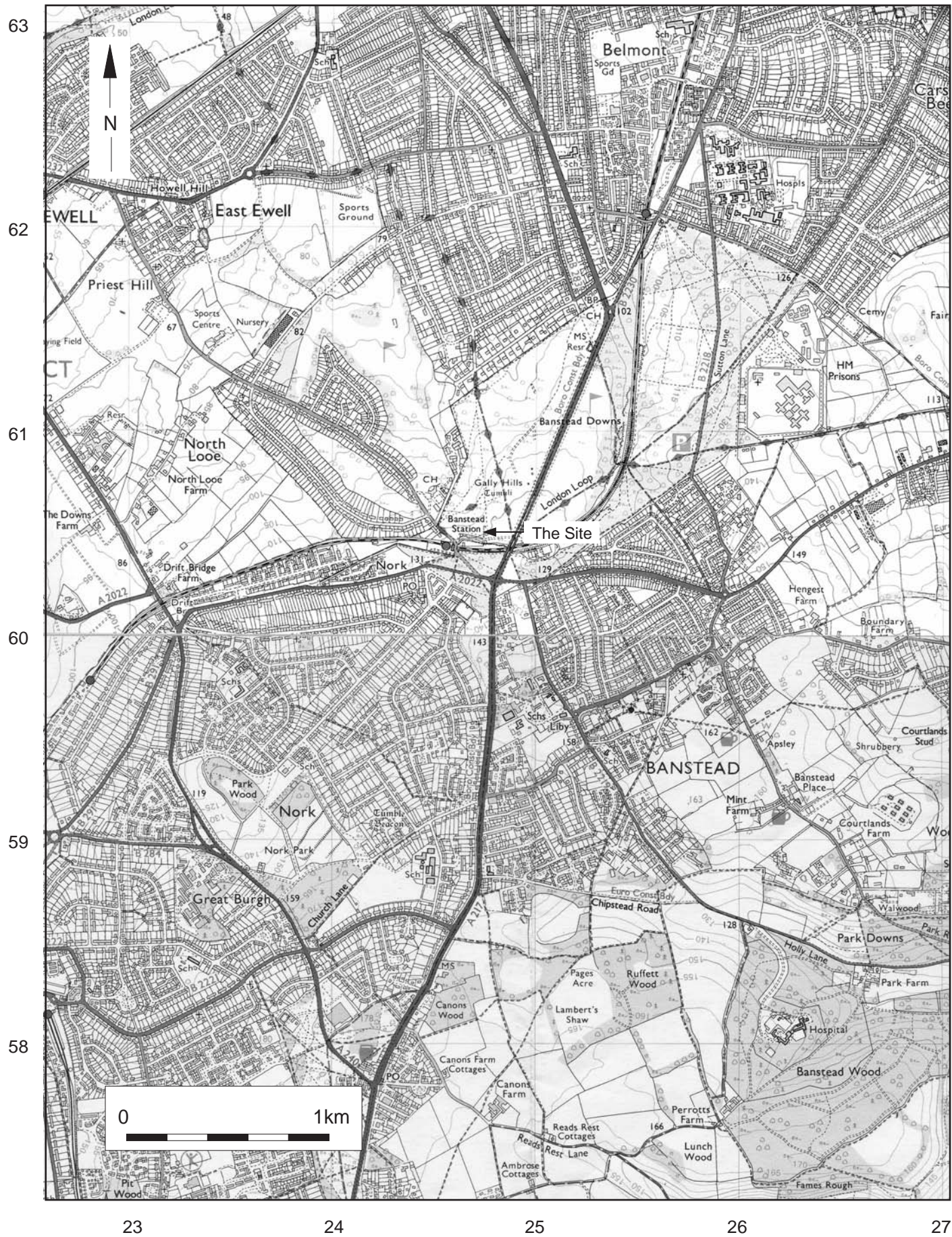
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**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Thorne, A
Other bibliographic details	2999
Date	2007
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South - East
Place of issue or publication	Archaeology South- East
Description	Grey Literature report with trench photos

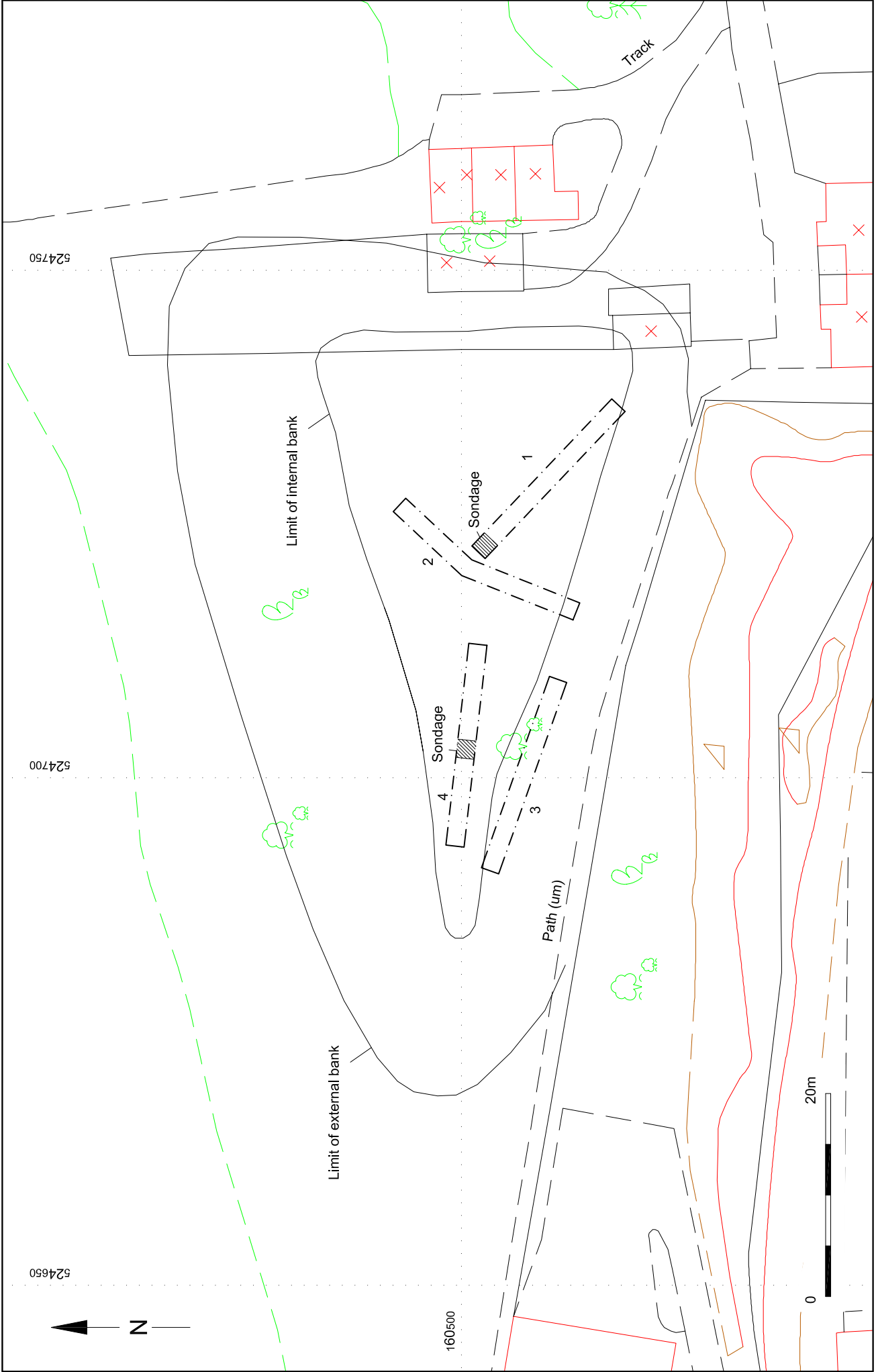
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Entered by Alice Thorne (tcrnath@ucl.ac.uk)  
Entered on 29 October 2007



© Archaeology South-East			Banstead Downs Golf Club Reservoir	Fig. 1
Ref: 2999	Oct 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location	

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© Archaeology South-East		Banstead Downs Golf Club Reservoir		Fig. 2
Ref: 2999	Oct 2007	Drawn by: JLR	Trench Location	



Plate 1: Trench 1 facing NW



Plate 2: Trench 2 facing N





Plate 3: Trench 3 facing E



Plate 4: Trench 4 facing E



Plate 5: Sondage within Trench 4. E facing section



Plate 6: Sondage within Trench 1. E facing section