

**A Topographical Survey of  
Woking Palace, Old Woking, Surrey**

**NGR: TQ 0294 5706 (centred)  
Project No: P83**

**ASE Report No. : 2009102**

**OASIS id: archaeol6-61534**



**By  
Lesley Davidson**

**July 2009**

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***Abstract***

Archaeology South East, a division of the Centre of Applied Archaeology, University College London was commissioned by Surrey County Council Archaeological Unit to undertake a topographic survey of the grounds at Woking Palace, Old Woking, Surrey, as part of a community archaeology project and as part of the ongoing management scheme for the site. The survey area covered 19359.1220m squared and took place between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2009. The topographic survey recorded the profile of the mound in the location of the proposed trenches, and marked the location of other possible remains of archaeology, including the in-filled moat and evidence of structures.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

**1.1** Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by Surrey County Archaeological Unit to conduct a topographical survey over 19359.1220m squared at Woking Palace, Old Woking, Surrey (NGR TQ 0294 5706; Figure 1). Woking Palace is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No 12752).

## **1.2 Geology and Topography**

1.2.1 According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on Alluvium (BGS Sheet Aldershot (S & D) 285).

1.2.2 The site is relatively flat gently sloping from north to south. It is bounded by the River Wey to the south and by a seasonally water filled moat to the north, east and west. The vegetation consists of grassland interspersed with patches of nettles and some Hawthorn trees. Lowland woodland lies in the north-eastern quadrant of the site and is referred to as the Oldhall Copse.

## **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

1.3.1 The detailed topographic survey is part of a larger management project, the purpose of which is to improve public interpretation of the palace, aid in the development of the Palace as a focal point for public appreciation of heritage and put it in a wider historical context (English Heritage 2007). The survey was one of many tools used to investigate Woking Palace. The results will report on the form and condition of the land surrounding the monument and it will aid in the interpretation of the sites history and development. In addition to this, it will add to the framework of further research. The aims of the entire project have been laid out in the 'The Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation for a Community Archaeology Project' (Poulton 2009) and are as follows

(i) *To develop a rounded understanding of the development and character of Woking Palace, and to place it in its regional and national context.*

(ii) *To promote community involvement in and appreciation of the site and of the ways in which historical and archaeological enquiry can promote an understanding of the past.*

(iii) *To provide information that will help inform, refine, and develop a Conservation Management plan for the site.*

(iv) *To provide a flagship project, around which a wealth of positive publicity can be generated for the value of archaeology and heritage to Surrey's cultural life (Poulton et al 2009).*

1.3.2 The Objective is to complete a detailed topographic survey of the area shown in Figure. 2.

#### **1.4 Scope of Report**

- 1.4.1 This report provides a coherent written description of the topographic survey. It details the remains and catalogues the features in order to contribute to the overall understanding and ongoing management of the archaeology of Woking Palace.
- 1.4.2 The survey was conducted by Lesley Davidson, between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009 and was managed by Giles Dawkes. The post-fieldwork was managed by Dan Swift.

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 An archaeological background of the site has been previously compiled in 'A Written Scheme of Investigation for a Community Archaeology Project' (Poulton et al 2009) and is reproduced below with due acknowledgment.
- 2.2 'The exceptionally large (8 acre) moated site at Woking Palace (Scheduled Ancient Monument No 12752) was the manor house of the Royal manor of Woking from at least 1272. During the following two hundred years it was granted to and often occupied by those close to the throne, including the Despencers (it was moated by the time of their execution in 1326), the Earls of Kent and Somerset, and Lady Margaret Beaufort (the mother of Henry VII) who lived there with her third husband. In 1503 its status was further enhanced when Henry VII decided to develop the property as a Palace, and it continued to be favoured and developed under the Tudors. Its remains include well-preserved moats, ruined and standing structures, and fishponds, all set within a 590 acre deerpark started in the thirteenth century and enlarged repeatedly up to the time of Henry VIII. Some limited archaeology has taken place (a wall-chasing excavation in 1911 from which only a plan has survived, and a resistivity survey and a few test-pits in the 1990s (Dyer 1999)) but it is as yet impossible to tell a coherent story of the development of this royal complex.
- 2.3 The quality of the site has been very well expressed in the Scheduled Ancient Monument entry:
- Woking Palace is of particular importance because of its excellent survival, high diversity, enormous archaeological potential both on the island itself and in the waterlogged moats and particularly because of its historical association with royalty and the amenity value which is afforded by this association.*
- 2.4 The site is owned by Woking Borough Council and is currently accessible to the public on a restricted basis. It forms a heritage resource of immense potential for the local community but one that is presently under-used and under-appreciated.' (Poulton et al 2009)

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Summary of Methodology**

- 3.1.1 The topographical survey was carried out to RCHME Level 2 standards using a combination of survey grade equipment. The control was based on coordinates derived from GNSS base station and Positional Data Link (PDL) rover thus ensuring that all work was carried out in a highly accurate projection based on the Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR).
- 3.1.2 An initial GNSS position was established approximately 5 metres east of the south-east corner of the barn by GNSS base. Four additional stations were then obtained by the PDL rover. Two were located to the far north of the field and another two in the Oldhall Copse. These stations were established to provide control for the total station as GNSS is not suited for these areas due to their dense tree cover. The third and final station located in the Oldhall Copse was needed as a direct line of site between the base station and the prism was sometimes inhibited by the trees. This was done using the total station.
- 3.1.3 In the open field topographic points were collected using a PDL rover. The equipment was configured to automatically record eastings, northings and height values every metre along two metre transects on an NW-SE alignment.
- 3.1.4 It was not possible to conduct the survey in the same manor in the Oldhall copse or in the area to the north of the open field due to the foliage/vegetation. Values were therefore manually recorded wherever possible with the intention that no value was further than one metre apart.

#### **3.2 Instrumentation and Coordinate system**

- 3.2.1 The site was mapped using survey grade equipment; Topcon GR3 Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) and the Leica system 1200 Total station Precision Survey (TCRA1205). The Topcon GR3 produces post processed GNSS results to an accuracy of typically +/- 3.0mm + 0.5ppm horizontally and +/- 5.0mm +0.5ppm vertically and real time RTK to an accuracy of +/- 10mm + 1ppm horizontally and +/- 15mm +1ppm vertically. The Leica TCRA1205 has a 2mm + 2ppm error when measuring to a prism (standard speed measurement) and a 5" Hz and V angle measurement error.
- 3.2.2 The co-ordinate system used was the OSGB36 (02) which can be transformed into NGR.

#### **3.3 Post Processing**

- 3.3.1 The raw data collected by the base station was processed in Topcon Tools Version 7.2 using the Receiver Independent Exchange Format Version (RINEX) data for the day of the survey from the four nearest Ordnance Survey Active Base Stations to establish an accurate Easting, Northing, and Orthometric height for the control point. Calculations were then made to the topographic points in Topcon Link Version 7.2 using the accurate Easting, Northing, and Orthometric height of the base station. This information was



also used to correct the positions of the total station in Leica Geooffice. All data was then exported to Liscad version 8.0 where survey data and feature coding were checked. A Triangular Irregular Network (TIN) model was created and a contour model was then interpolated by the software. This data was then exported into AutoCAD 2008 for final draughting and presentation.

## **4.0 RESULTS (Fig. 3)**

- 4.1 The area surveyed in the Oldhall Copse marks the location of a mound, Feature A (Fig. 3,4). The portion surveyed measures approximately 9m in length by 15m wide. However the length of the mound is much greater than the extent surveyed. It was surveyed to a maximum and minimum height of 22.427m OD and 20.695 m OD respectively. The break of slope on both sides at the base is sharp. The sides are moderately steep and the top is convex with no real decipherable break of slope.
- 4.1.2 Two small areas, Feature B (Fig. 3,5) were surveyed in the far north of the field where the proposed trenches are hoped to be located. They reveal a slight rise in elevation from south to north with a gradual break of slope which is almost indecipherable as the top is convex. This is where the survey ends for the area to the west. The area to the east now shows a downwards slope from south to north which is moderately steep before reaching a flat base. The area to the west measures approximately 4m by 7m and was surveyed to a maximum and minimum height of 22.293m OD and 21.988m OD respectively. The area to the east measures approximately 4m by 8.5m and was surveyed to a maximum height of 22.059m OD and a minimum height of 20.988m OD.
- 4.1.3 Immediately north of the standing remains of the Palace is a depression, Feature C (Fig. 3,6), approximately 18m by 18m. It is lined by a row of a few small trees on the northern and western edges. It was surveyed to a maximum height 21.858m OD of and a maximum depth of 21.077m OD. Its base is fairly smooth and slightly concave.
- 4.1.4 Feature D (Fig. 3,6), a second depression, is approximately 32m by 18m. It was surveyed to a maximum height of 21.802m OD and a maximum depth of 21.003m OD. The north and west sides have a moderately sharp slope, while the east and south sides slopes more gradually. The base is slightly concave.
- 4.1.5 A third depression, Feature E (Fig. 3,6), was recorded south of Feature D. It is approximately 30m by 20m. Its northern, eastern and western sides are moderately steep sloping with a gradual break of slope at the base. The base is slightly undulating and concave. It was surveyed to a maximum height and depth of 21.675m OD and 20.972m OD respectively.
- 4.1.6 The northwest corner of Feature E appears to be defined by the remains of a flint wall or footings (Feature F) (Fig. 3,6,7). It is possible that Features E and F are associated and that Feature F continues to the south and east beneath the earthworks.
- 4.1.7 Feature G (Fig. 3) depicts a very gentle downward slope from East to West. It measures 18m by 7.7m and was surveyed to a maximum height of 21.869m OD by 21.438m OD.
- 4.1.8 A shallow linear depression (Feature H) (Fig.3) was surveyed immediately south of the Oldhall Copse. It is aligned North-East, South-West and measures 92m by 1m. It was surveyed to a maximum height of 21.534m OD and a maximum depth of 20.984m OD.

## **5.0 Discussion**

- 5.1.1 Feature C, D, and E could be evidence of the remains of walls or external features associated with the palace (the depression being the space between the walls). The partially visible remains of a stone wall, Feature F, in the north western corner of Feature E could indicate that this is the case. Moated sites often contained complex groups of buildings, and a royal site such as this could potentially be quite extensive. Another possibility is that some of the depressions result from the excavation that took place in 1911 from which only a plan survives (Poulton et al 2009).
- 5.1.2 Feature A is probably associated with the seasonally water-filled moat as it runs along the edge of the moat. This mound likely continues and can be seen in the areas surveyed along the northern edge of the field, but to a lesser extent. They also run along the edge of the moat.
- 5.1.3 Originally an arm of the moat extended south toward the River Wey creating a divide down the middle of the field. After sometime this area was backed-filled making one large irregularly shaped field. Feature G may be evidence of the location of this in-filled moat as it is in the approximate location and same alignment of the original moat.
- 5.1.4 Feature H respects the fence-line. It appears that the fence sits within the depression of Feature H. It is likely that it is therefore associated with the fence and could mark its cut. It is probable that this is a more recent feature of the site.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

**6.1** The survey successfully recorded the topography of the majority of the site with the exception of a few areas which are listed below. It clearly marks the location of the archaeology showing where possible remains of structures and pathways may lay, as well as evidence of previous work. It also recorded the nature of the mound in the area of the proposed trenches. This work will help inform the management plan of the site.

### **6.2 Limitations**

- 6.2.1 The Oldhall Copse was not part of the topographic survey, with the exception of the location of the proposed trench, as the vegetation was tall and dense. This meant that only a fraction of the mound, moat and Oldhall Copse were recorded.
- 6.2.2 Tall reeds inhibited the surveyor from getting close to the edge of the River Wey.
- 6.2.3 Readings were not taken where tree canopies affected the equipment.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## Appendix

### OASIS ID: archaeol6-61534

Project details	
Project name	P83 Woking Palace
Short description of the project	A topographic survey was conducted on the ground of Woking palace to aid and inform the management plan for the site.
Project dates	Start: 26-05-2009 End: 29-05-2009
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	P83 - Sitecode
Type of project	Research project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 8 - Land dedicated to the display of a monument
Monument type	MOATED ENCLOSURE Medieval
Monument type	MOATED ENCLOSURE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Part Survey'
Prompt	Research
Prompt	topographic survey
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	SURREY WOKING WOKING Woking Palace, Old Woking, Surrey
Postcode	GU22 8JG
Study area	19359.12 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 0294 5706 51.3028300774 -0.523172163969 51 18 10 N 000 31 23 W Point

Lat/Long Datum            Unknown

Height OD / Depth        Min: 21.17m Max: 21.95m

Project creators  
Name of Organisation     Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator   Private Client

Project design originator Surrey County Archaeology Unit

Project director/manager Giles Dawkes

Project director/manager Dan Swift/Jim Stevenson

Project supervisor        Lesley Davidson

Project supervisor        Lesley Davidson

Type of sponsor/funding  
body                        Client

Project archives  
Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Surrey Archaeological Society

Digital Archive ID        P83

Digital Contents          'Survey'

Digital Media available   'Survey'

Paper Archive recipient Surrey Archaeological Society

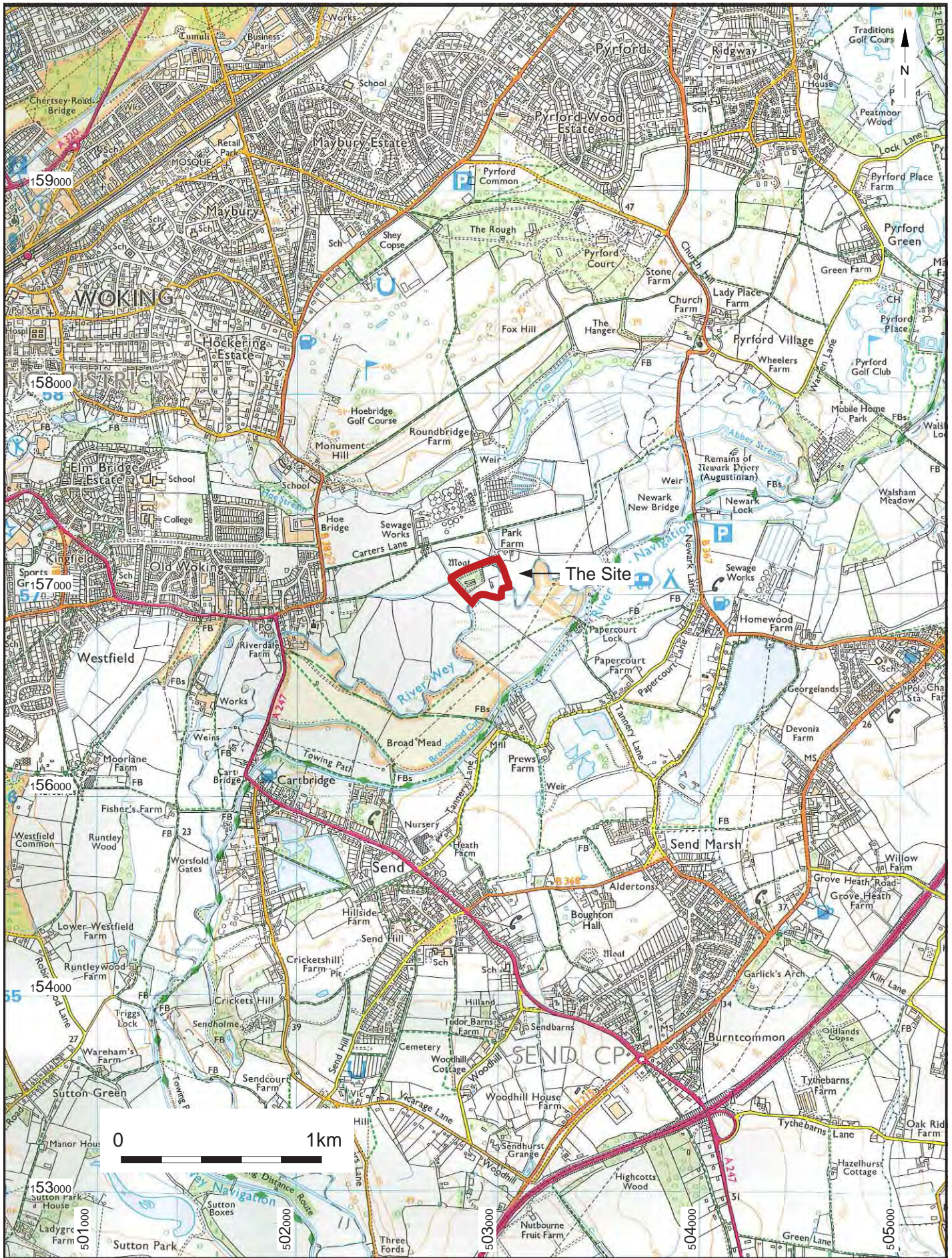
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Paper Contents            'Survey'

Paper Media available    'Report','Survey '

Project bibliography 1  
Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

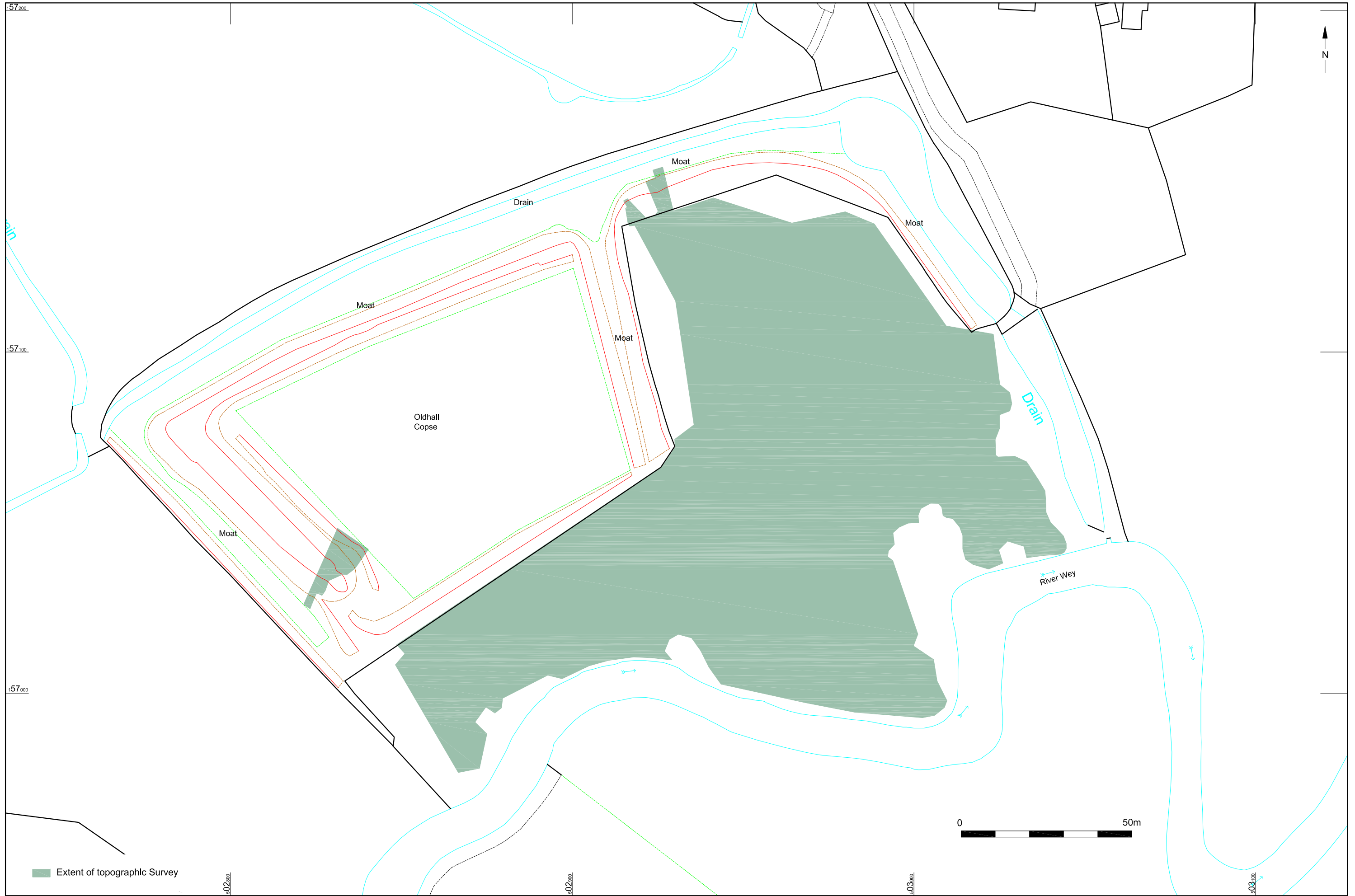
Publication type	
Title	A Topographic Survey of Woking Palace, Old Woking, Surrey
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© Archaeology South-East		Woking Palace	Fig. 1
Project Ref: P83	July 2009	Site location plan	
Report Ref: 2009102	Drawn by: LD		

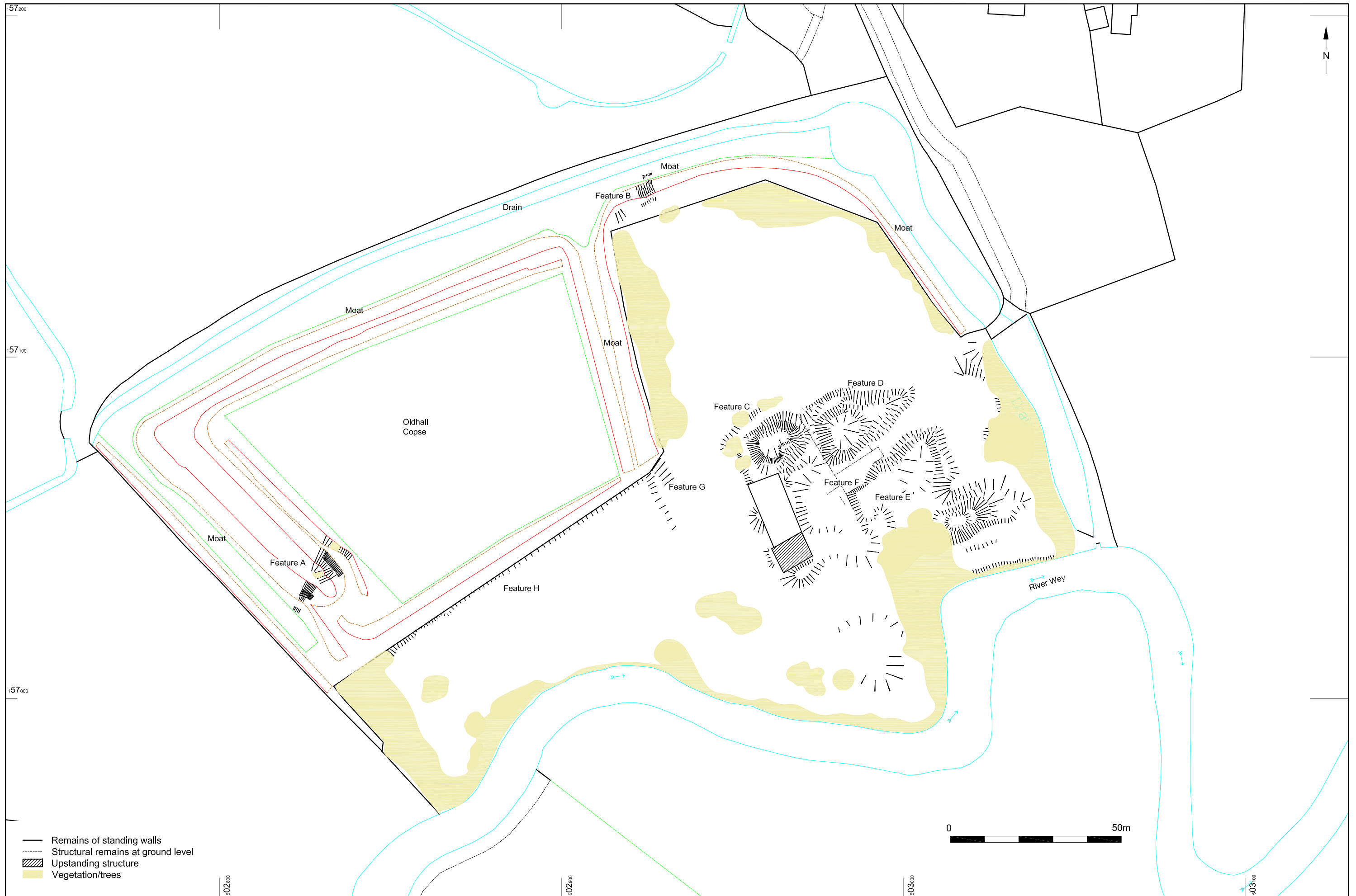
Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey's 1:25000 map of 1997 with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Crown Copyright. Licence No. AL 503 10 A





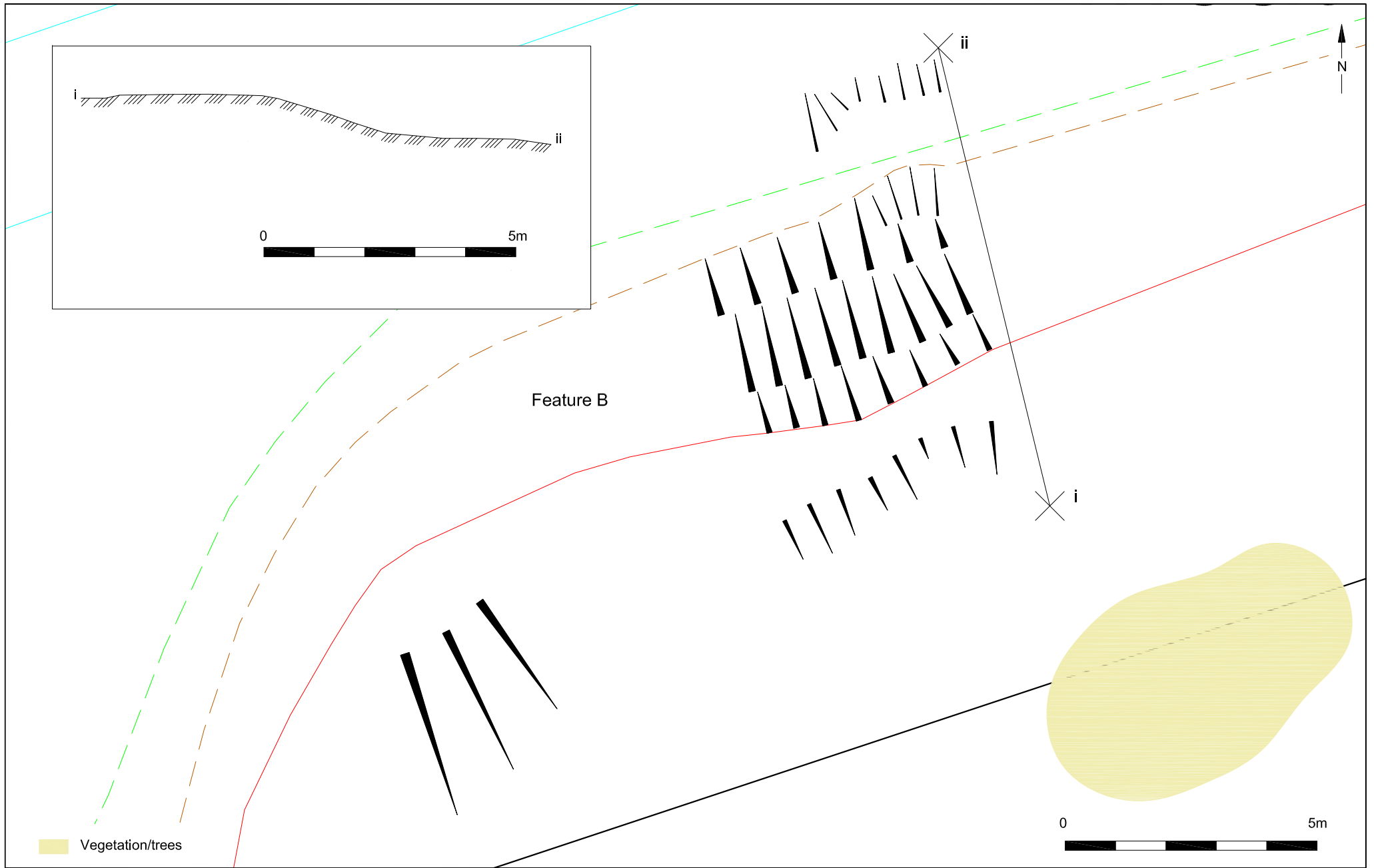
Extent of topographic Survey

© Archaeology South-East		Woking Palace		Fig. 2
Project Ref: P83	July 2009	Plan showing the Extent of the Topographic Survey		
Report Ref: 2009102	Drawn by: LD			

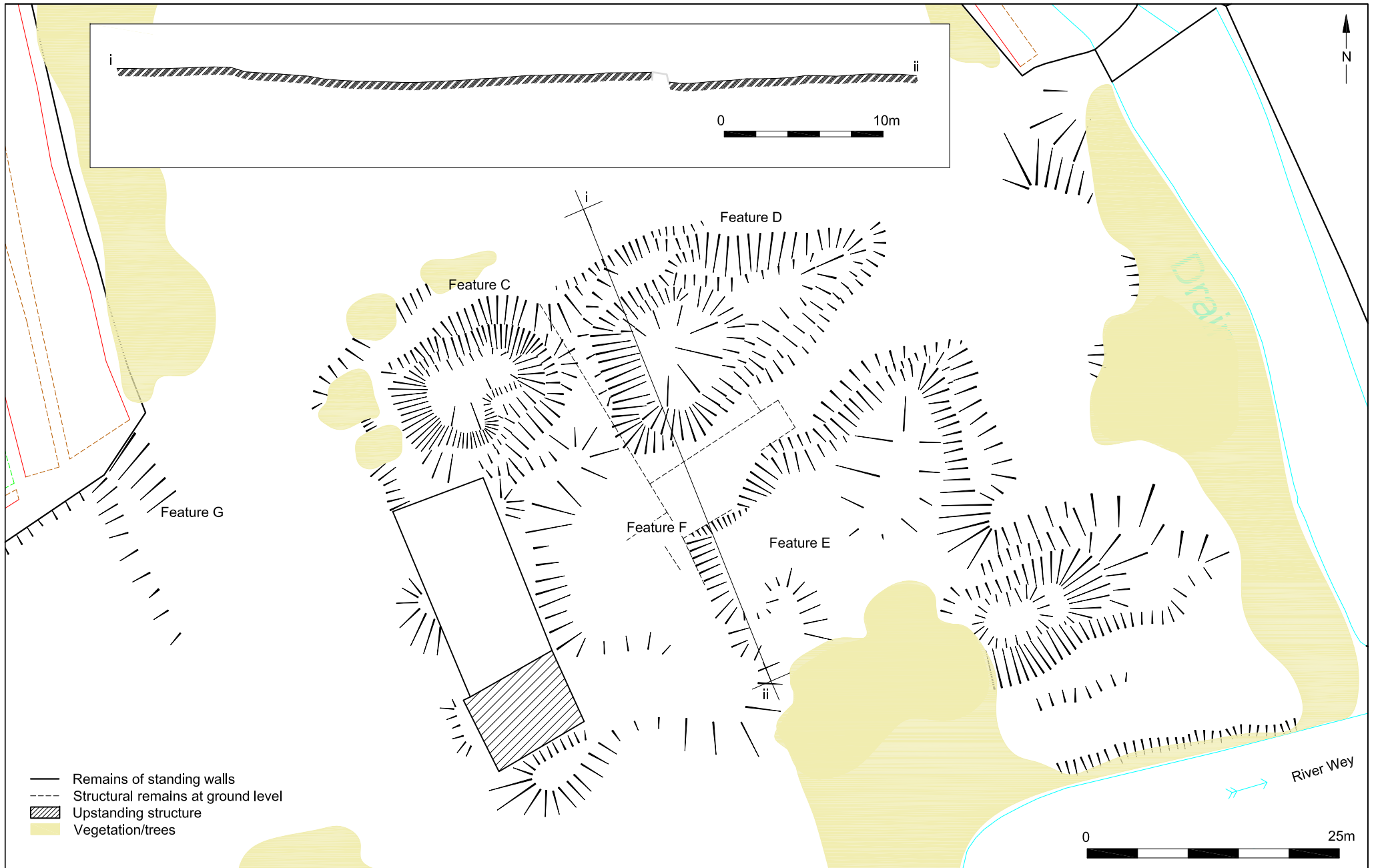




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Project Ref: P83	July 2009	Detail of Hachure Plan, Feature A	
Report Ref: 2009102	Drawn by: LD		



© Archaeology South-East		Woking Palace	Fig. 5
Project Ref: P83	July 2009	Detail of Hachure Plan, Feature B	
Report Ref: 2009102	Drawn by: LD		



© Archaeology South-East		Woking Palace		Fig. 6
Project Ref: P83	July 2009	Detail of Hachure Plan, Features C through G		
Report Ref: 2009102	Drawn by: LD			



<b>© Archaeology South-East</b>		Woking Palace	Fig. 7
Project Ref: P83	July 2009	Feature F, looking south-west	
Report Ref: 2009102	Drawn by: LD		

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