

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Four Winds, Fireball Hill,  
Sunningdale, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Chris Crabb**

**Site Code: FWS12/116**

**(SU9372 6650)**

# **Four Winds, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Saxby Homes**

by Christopher Crabb

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

SiteCode: FWS12/116

**October 2012**

## Summary

**Site name:** Four Winds, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire.

**Grid reference:** SU9372 6650

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 19<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Christopher Crabb

**Site code:** FWS 12/116

**Area of site:** c. 650 sq m

**Summary of results:** Areas of the proposed swimming pool and new house were stripped to the top of the natural geology but no features or artefacts of archaeological interest were observed.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an approved local Museum in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 04.10.12
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# **Four Winds, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Christopher Crabb

**Report 12/116**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Four Winds, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, (SU9372 6650) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Warren Joseph, Ascot Design Berkshire House 39-51 High Street, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 7HY on behalf of Saxby Homes Ltd, 60 Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 7QA.

Planning permission (app no 12/01511) for the demolition of an existing dwelling and replacement by a new house including a swimming pool has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. This consent is subject to a condition (6) requiring that a watching brief be carried out during groundworks. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona McDonald, Principal Archaeologist at Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Christopher Crabb, David Platt and Andrew Taylor between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2012 and the site code is FWS 12/116.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an approved local Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located to the south of Sunninghill and west of Sunningdale on the west side of Fireball Hill (Figs 1 and 2). The site consists of a plot sloping away to the south-west from Fireball Hill from a height of 72m above Ordnance Datum, at Fireball Hill, down to 61m aOD at the furthest extent of the garden. The underlying geology is mapped as Bracklesham pebble beds (BGS 1981) but which was observed as a fine, pale yellow sand on the site. in the larger area of work.

## **Archaeological background**

The site lies a short distance to the north of the projected route of the Silchester to London Roman road (the Devil's Highway), and a possible Roman villa was revealed east of the site presumably when the railway was



constructed though its exact location is unclear (Hughes 1890). The exact course of the Roman road through the area is also unclear with recent evaluations 300m to the east on Sunning Avenue failing to intersect its predicted course (Porter 2012a and b).

Bronze Age round barrows in the vicinity suggest the presence of as-yet unlocated settlement activity from that period also. However, three previous investigations at Fireball hill revealed no finds or features of an archaeological nature (Coles and Ford 2004; Taylor 2006; and Munding 2011).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological remains affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any topsoil stripping prior to ground reduction and the digging of foundation trenches and service runs as necessary. Two components of the development that had potential to impact on archaeologically relevant levels, namely the stripping of a footprint for a swimming pool, the levelling and subsequent excavation of footings for the house.

## **Results**

### *The swimming pool*

Stripping of overburden from the footprint of both the swimming pool and adjacent areas was observed (Fig. 3, Plate 1). Sandy topsoil to a depth of 0.30m was initially removed and was found to overlie the natural geology with no discernable subsoil present. The natural geology was a grey greenish silty sand (Fig. 4). Two tree boles were observed, both of which contained modern debris, (eg a garden hose) but no archaeological features or finds were observed.

Further footings adjacent to the eastern side of the swimming pool were dug to a depth of 1.4m through the natural sand geology, in an area previously stripped of topsoil (Fig. 4). no archaeological features or finds were observed.

### *The house*

The entire footprint of the proposed new house was also stripped of overburden to the level of the natural geology. Up to 0.75m of demolition rubble and topsoil was removed to expose a very disturbed geology from both previous construction and demolition (Plate 2). In this area the natural geology was a very fine, yellow-

white sand. Two pits containing modern brick/tile which was retained on site, presumably relating to the demolition of the previous house (Fig. 3). no archaeological features or finds were observed.

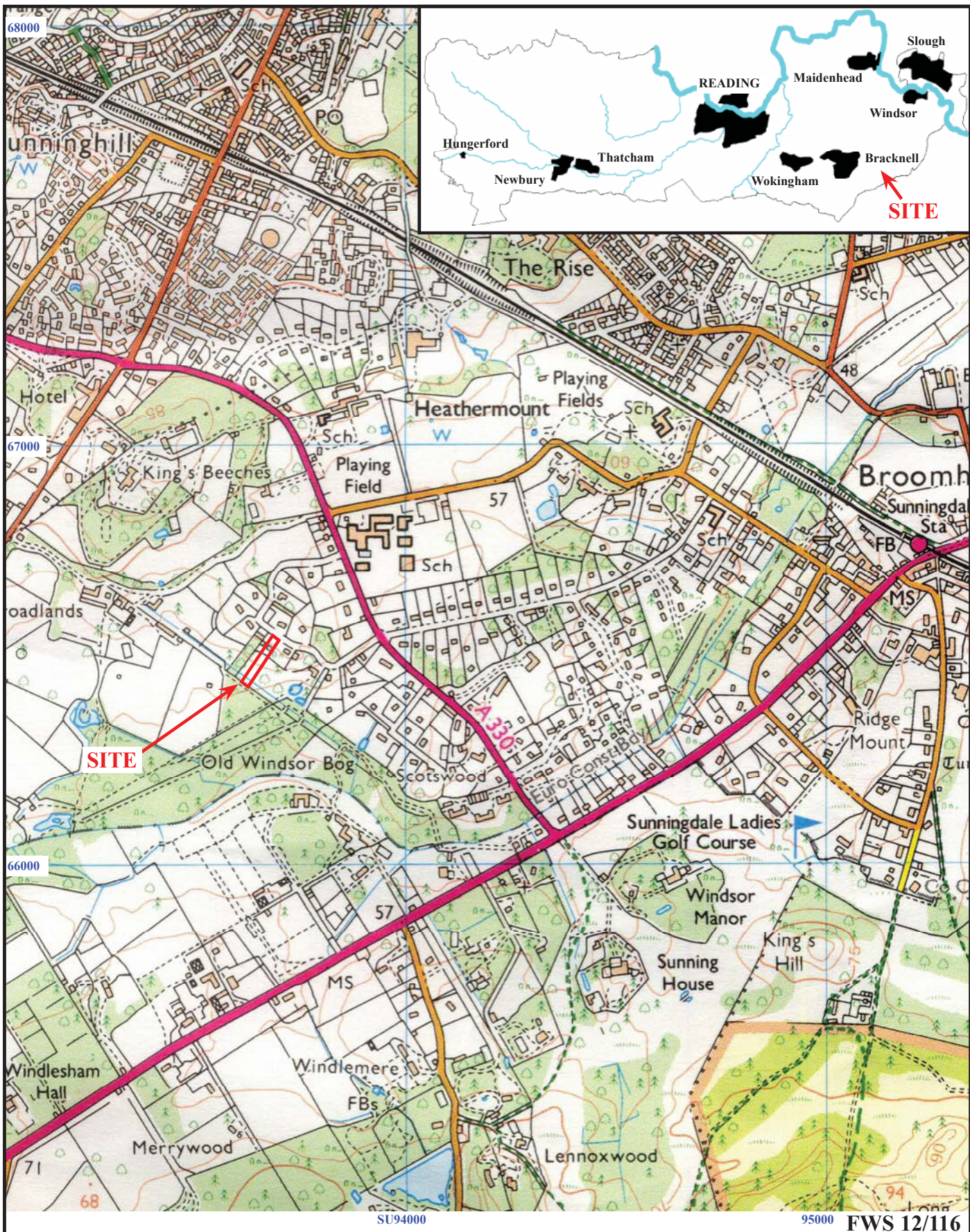
## **Conclusion**

No deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were observed during the groundworks. A number of features cutting the natural geology were investigated but were unambiguously of modern date and/or of natural origin.

## **References**

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, 1981 Edition, Keyworth
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- Porter, S, 2012b, '4 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Berkshire: An Archaeological Evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Service, unpubl client rep 12/59, Reading.
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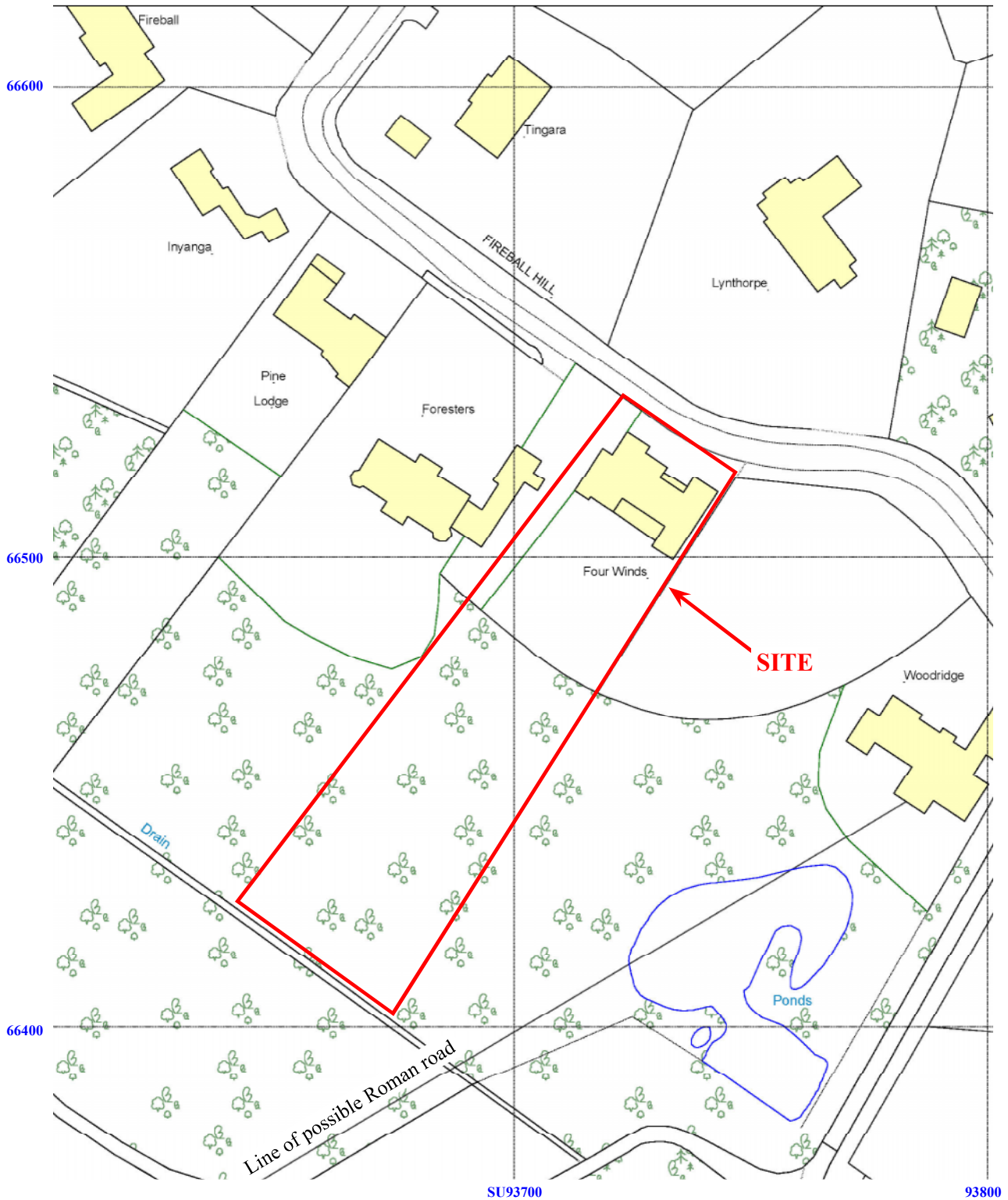
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Figure 1. Location of site within Sunningdale and Berkshire.

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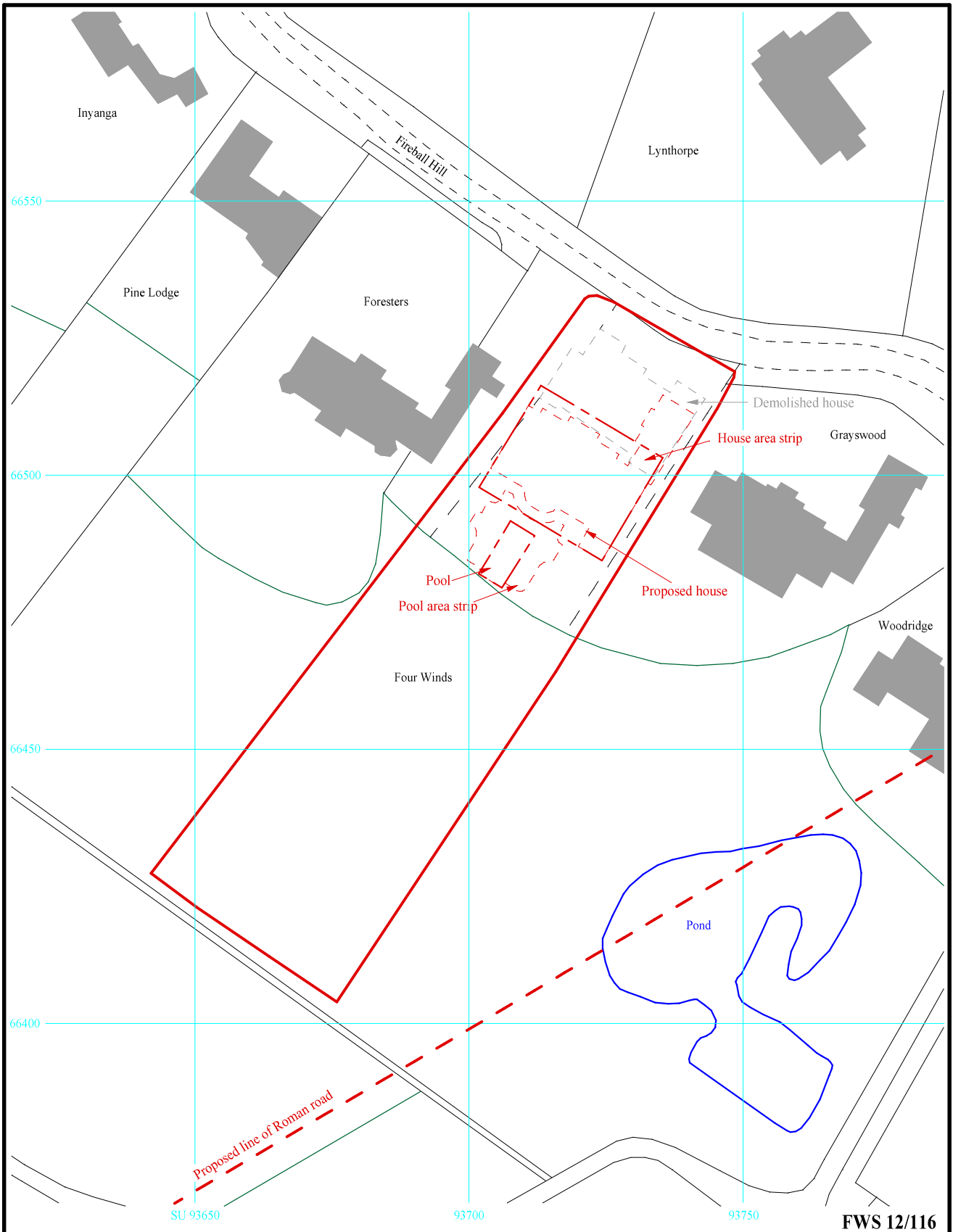
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Fireball Hill.

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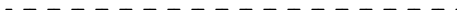
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Figure 3. Areas observed.



SE \_\_\_\_\_ NW 71m aOD

Topsoil



Grey-green silty sand natural geology



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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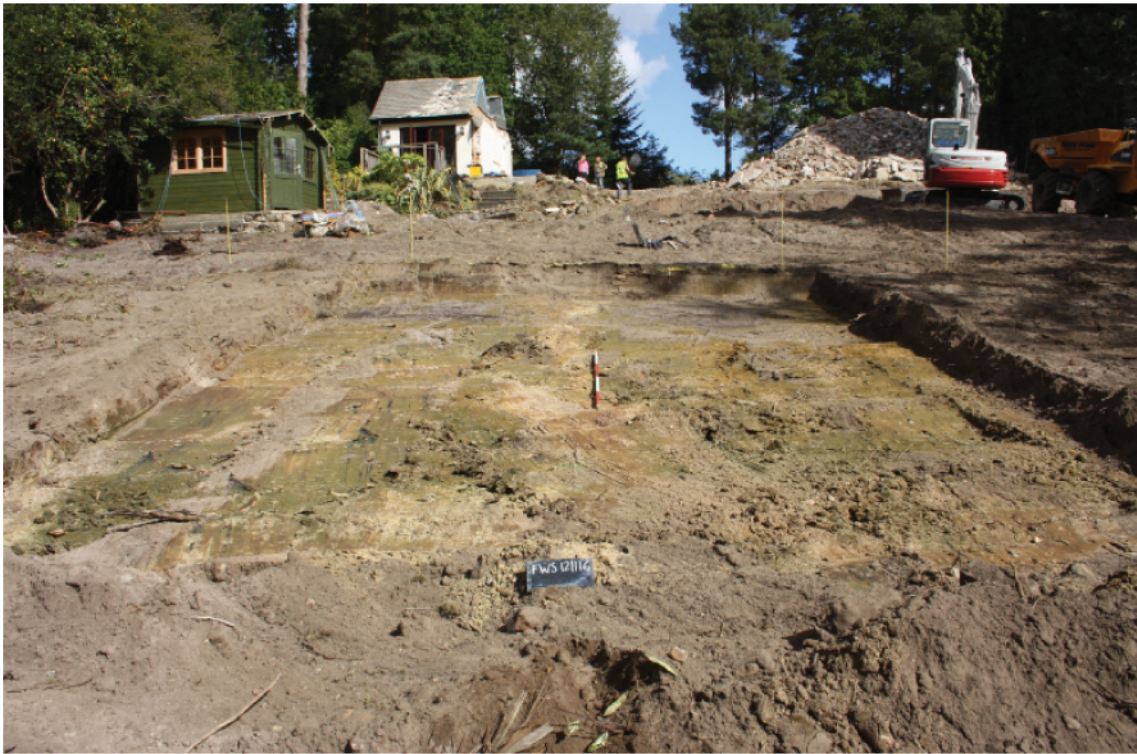


Plate 1. Pool strip, looking northeast, Scale: 2m.



Plate 2. House strip, looking southwest, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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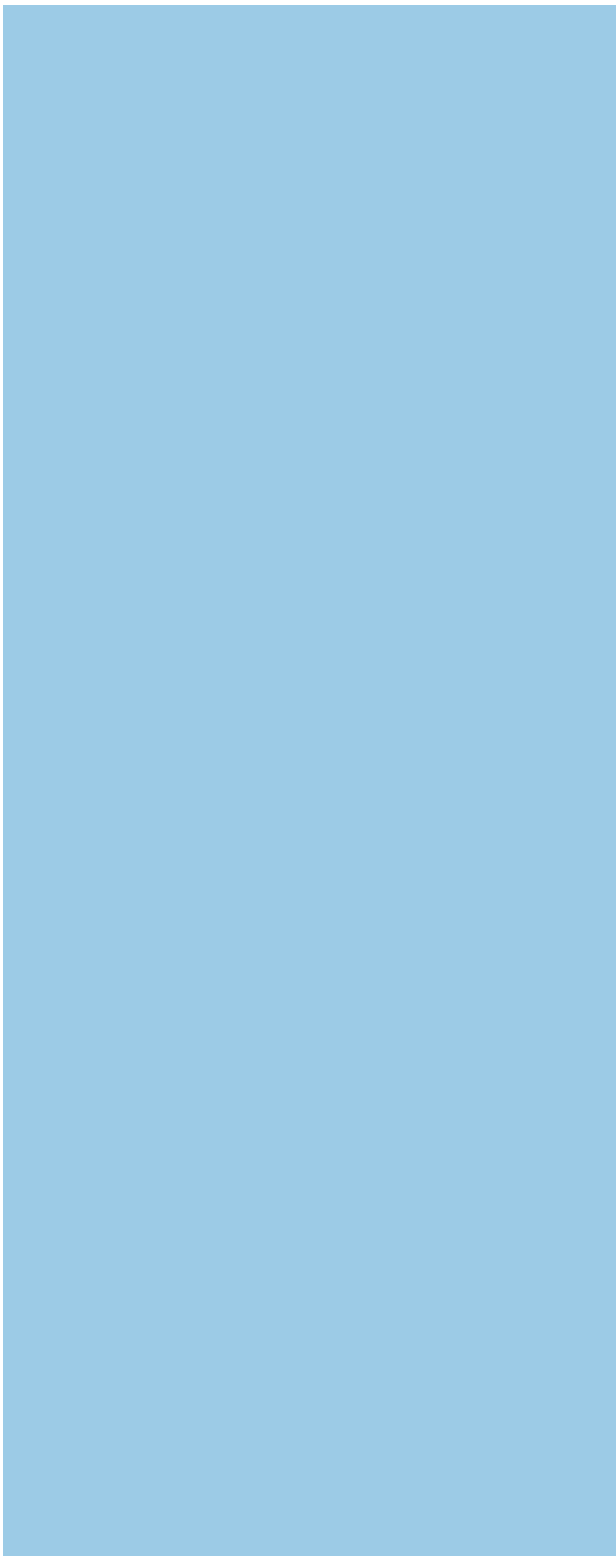
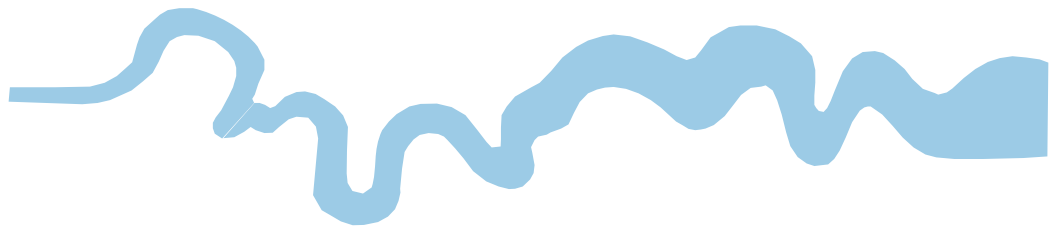
Plates 1 and 2.

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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓





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