

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Wexham Park Hospital, Wexham Street,
Slough, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Ellen McManus-Fry and David Sanchez

Site Code: WPH15/275

(SU 9907 8240)

Land at Wexham Park Hospital, Wexham Street, Slough, Berkshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For CgMs Consulting

by Ellen McManus-Fry and David Sanchez
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WPH 15/275

December 2016

Summary

Site name: Land at Wexham Park Hospital, Wexham Street, Slough, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9907 8240

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 2nd December 2015 - 24th November 2016 (19 days in total onsite)

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Ellen McManus-Fry/David Sanchez

Site code: WPH15/275

Area of site: c. 0.8 ha

Summary of results: Areas of overburden removal for new car parks were observed along with the digging of various test pits and service trenches. Although the natural geology was not exposed for several parts of the site, none of the groundworks revealed deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 19.12.16
	Steve Preston✓ 19.12.16

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Report 15/275

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Wexham Park Hospital, Wexham Street, Slough, (SU 9907 8240) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Alexandra Thornton, CgMs Consulting.

Full planning permission for development of the site (ref: P/06622/075) was granted by Slough Borough Council in November 2015. This consent is subject to a number of conditions, one of which relates to archaeology, and requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks. The proposed development comprises eight areas for alteration to existing car parking and two areas of additional car parking, on land presently used as green space. Only two of those areas have been identified and agreed with the Planning Archaeologist for Slough Borough Council as potentially archaeologically sensitive: areas A and D. Area A occupies 0.5ha and area D is approximately 0.3ha size.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Roland Smith, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological advisors to Slough Borough Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Sanchez and Ellen McManus-Fry from 2nd December 2015 to 24th November 2016 and the site code is WPH15/275.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a museum willing to accept the material in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the northern side of Slough and covers an area of approximately 24ha, bounded by Wexham Park Lane to the south, Wexham Street to the west and unnamed roads associated with the hospital to the north and east. The two areas of archaeological potential (Areas A and D) cover an area of 0.8ha, and are situated in the southwest corner (Area A) and east side (Area D) of the complex, on land presently used as green space. The underlying geology is mapped as Lynch Hill Gravel which was observed on site during the watching

brief in both areas. The site falls from a high point of 45m aOD along the eastern boundary to 40m aOD along the western boundary.

Archaeological background

There are no known heritage assets within Areas A or D. However, the site is located within an area of the Thames Valley which has high archaeological potential, particularly for material of prehistoric or Roman date. Archaeological investigations on Wexham Road, less than 500m southwest of Area A, revealed evidence of activity across the prehistoric and historic periods (Ford 2012). Among the most significant discoveries were an Early Iron Age enclosure, within which was a roundhouse, and two Early Saxon post-built halls. A limited amount of Roman and possible Palaeolithic material was also recovered. Another excavation at All Souls Farm Quarry on Wexham Park Lane, 300m south east of Area D revealed a middle Bronze Age occupation site, Bronze Age enclosure and an extensive but low status, Roman settlement (Ford 2012). The latter comprised a number of rectilinear enclosures, separated by droveways, and numerous large pits and postholes. Archaeological work at Georges Green quarry, c. 1.3km south south east of Wexham Park Hospital, has also revealed various pits and ditches and pottery dated to the Bronze Age and Iron Age periods (TVAS forthcoming).

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To determine the presence or otherwise of buried remains of archaeological interest within Areas A and D
- To preserve by record any significant archaeological remains within Area A. To provide further information on the archaeological potential of Areas A and D to enable the archaeological implications of the proposed development to be assessed
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate repository and to provide information for accession to the Historic Environment Record

In general the watching brief was to involve archaeological monitoring of the clearance, topsoil stripping and intrusive groundworks carried out in connection with the development in Areas A and D, including ground reduction and excavation of service trenches. Archaeological deposits which were threatened by groundworks were to be excavated and recorded.

Results

Area A.

The groundworks observed during the watching brief on Area A consisted of the excavation of 6 test pits and 2 test trenches in the central and north sector of the area in order to locate two gas pipes before the continuation of the groundworks, the excavation of one services trench in the central and south sector, and the stripping and ground reduction of the full area to a maximum depth of 0.60m (Plates 1-8).

The general stratigraphy of Area A consisted of 0.23m of topsoil, overlying 0.22m of a mixed deposit with clay and silt sediment and frequent construction debris (52), above a light grey sandy sediment with frequent construction debris (bricks, tarmac and concrete fragments) and 20th century pottery (53).

At 22m from the south edge of Area A a depression in the natural geology is observed, filled with several modern deposits levelling the ground in this sector, possibly resulting from the construction of the hospital buildings from the 1960s. In this sector underneath the topsoil a 0.22m layer of clay and silt sediment (52) was dug, with frequent construction debris (bricks, tile, Tarmac and concrete fragments), above a second levelling layer (53) composed of 0.15m of light grey sandy sediment with frequent construction debris and 20th century pottery fragments.

The concrete foundation from a previous building was observed and removed in this sector, consisting of two parallel concrete foundations running east-west, each 12.5m long and 0.85m wide, and one single line of bricks from a wall connecting the end of both foundations to the west. The ground level between these foundations had been reduced and above layer (53) a 0.25m light brown sandy sediment, once again with frequent construction debris, was observed (54). At the north side of the building foundations, filling the area between these and the depression in the natural geology, and below layer (56), a different deposit was observed, composed of light brown sand and gravels with frequent bricks, tarmac and concrete fragments (55).

A third concrete foundation was observed in the south sector of Area A running north-south 18m from the west edge of the Area A, 4.40m long and 0.80m wide, with no apparent relation to the building foundation described above.

One services trench was dug in the central and south sector of Area A, running northeast to southwest and then turning south, 42.5m long, 0.48m wide and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.25m of topsoil above 0.30m of dark brown silt and small size gravel (56), directly on top of the natural geology consisting of small and medium size gravel with occasional yellowish brown clay patches. At 19.8m from the north end of the trench the depression in the natural geology described above was observed, filled with deposit

(55) already described, and with a maximum depth recorded of 0.55m. In the area between the building foundations, deposit (54) was observed, above a 0.15m concrete surface directly on top of deposit (53).

Six test pits and two test trenches were dug in the north and central sectors of Area A in order to locate two gas pipes before any other groundworks. The stratigraphy observed in all of them was very similar and consisted of between 0.18m and 0.25m of topsoil on top of between 0.14m and 0.41m of dark brown silt and small size gravel deposit (57) with occasional inclusions of modern brick and tile fragments, tarmac and concrete fragments and modern artefacts as well as "china pottery" sherds, overlying the natural geology. A complete list of test trenches and pits giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description is presented in Appendix 1. No archaeological features or deposits were observed in any of the test pits or trenches. The trenches of two gas pipes were observed in test pits 1, 2, 3 and 6 as well as in both test trenches, and one modern ditch was observed in trench 1 at 2m from the northeast end of the trench. It was aligned WNW - ESE and filled with dark brown silt and construction debris (bricks, Tarmac, concrete etc.).

Area D

Area D is located on the eastern side of the hospital site, adjacent to an existing car park area (Figure 4). It comprises a grassed area sloping up to the existing hospital buildings to the west, with a strip 110m by 9m running north-south in the northern part of the area and an southern area approximately 22m by 23m, which extends eastwards, with a tarmac footpath currently separating the two. The groundworks to be observed in this area comprised topsoil removal, ground reduction, and the excavation of a pipe trench (Plates 9-16).

Archaeological monitoring was carried out for the entirety of the groundworks in the northern section of Area D. Ground reduction was carried out to a depth of between 0.2m and 1.2m, depending on the height of the existing ground level. The general stratigraphy consisted of between 0.1m and 0.2m of topsoil (50), overlying 0.15-0.25m of mid red brown silty clay with gravel and occasional construction debris (brick, concrete, Tarmac fragments) (58) over dark yellow-brown/light blue-grey clay and gravel with occasional construction debris (59). Several modern pipe trenches ran across the area. The profile of the mound nearest the existing hospital building revealed a layer of topsoil, over layers of made ground (61)(62) with a thick deposit of very compact blue-grey sand (60) in the centre. Ground reduction in this part of the site exposed a red-brown gravel which appears to be the natural geology. Following ground reduction, a pipe trench 0.6m wide and 0.25m deep was excavated running north-south 0.9m from and running parallel to the eastern edge of the northern area. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of dark yellow-brown/light blue-grey clay and gravel with occasional construction debris (59)

over blue and orange clay with patches of red-brown gravel (natural geology). Archaeological monitoring was only carried out during part of the groundworks in the southern part of Area D (see Fig. 4). Ground reduction was observed in the western half of this area, where the general stratigraphy was the same as previously observed. However, due to the evidence of previous ground disturbance at the depth of the groundworks in Area D, and with the consultation and agreement of Mr Roland Smith, a decision was made to conclude the watching brief. No archaeological deposits or finds were observed during this watching brief.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered during this watching brief.

Conclusion

The watching brief revealed that much of Areas A and D was covered in modern made ground, probably associated with the construction of the hospital buildings in the 1960s. Natural geology was exposed in places in both areas but no deposits or features of archaeological interest were observed.

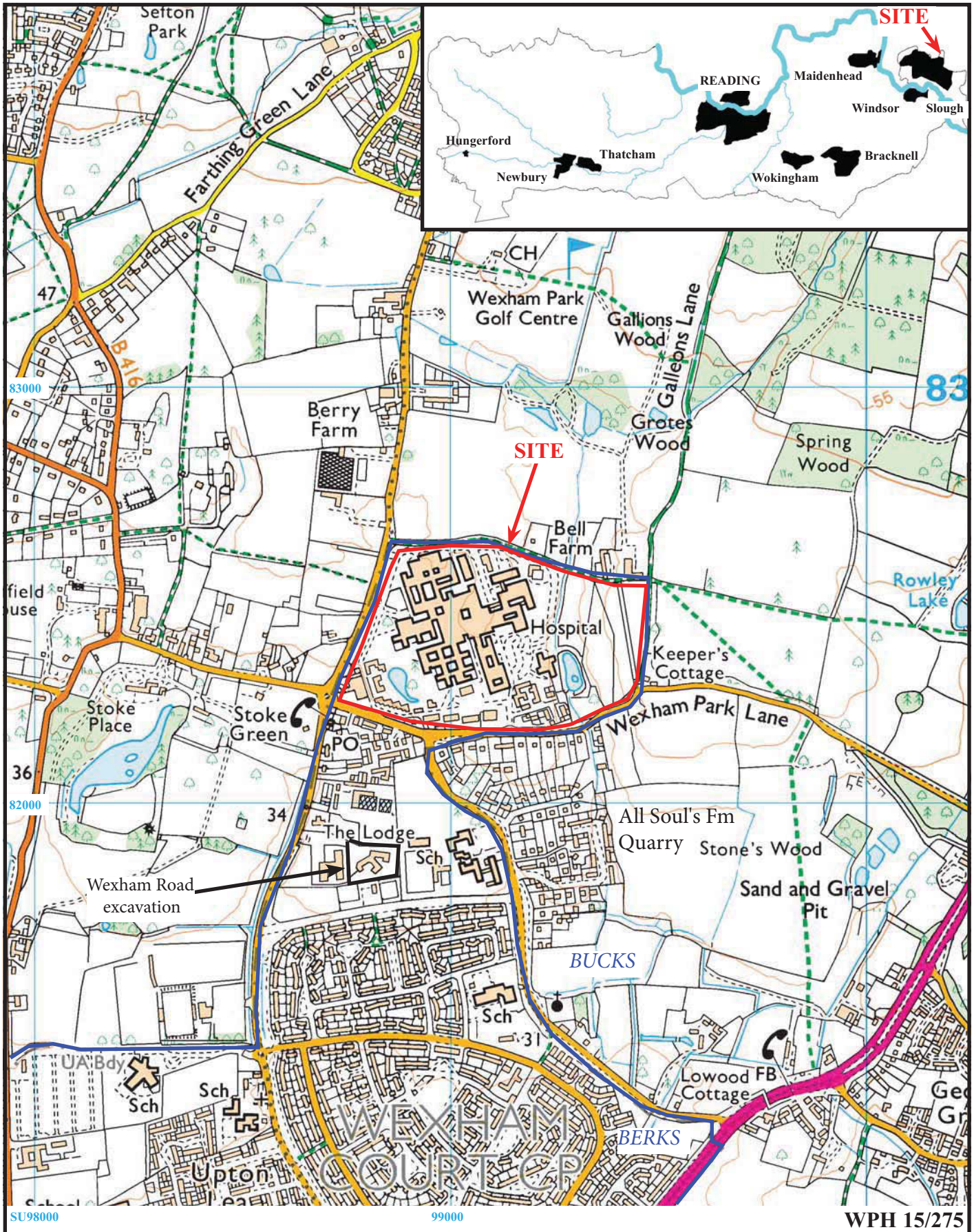
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- Ford, S, 2012, 'An Early/Middle Iron Age Enclosure, Saxon Halls and Roman Features at Wexham Road, Wexham, Slough, Berkshire' in S Preston (ed), *Settlement and Landscape Archaeology in the Middle Thames Valley: Slough and Environs*, TVAS Monogr **14**, Reading, 63–86
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- Platt, D, forthcoming, George Green Quarry, Wexham, Slough, Buckinghamshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief, TVAS report.

APPENDIX 1: Test pits and trenches details

Pit	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Aligned	Comment
1	5.00	2.00	0.45	NE - SW	0-0.18m Topsoil, 0.18-0.35m Deposit (57), 0.35m+ natural geology. Gas pipe trench aligned W - E
2	4.00	2.00	0.60	NE - SW	0-0.22m Topsoil, 0.22-0.50m Deposit (57), 0.50m+ natural geology. Gas pipe trench aligned W - E
3	3.00	2.00	0.40	NE - SW	0-0.19m Topsoil, 0.19-0.40m Deposit (57), 0.40m+ natural geology. Gas pipe trench aligned NW - SE
4	4.00	2.00	0.82	NE - SW	0-0.21m Topsoil, 0.21-0.35m Deposit (57), 0.35m+ natural geology.
5	3.10	2.00	0.90	NW - SE	0-0.20m Topsoil, 0.20-0.50m Deposit (57), 0.50m+ natural geology.
6	3.90	1.90	0.63	NE - SW	0-0.22m Topsoil, 0.22-0.63m Deposit (57), 0.63m+ natural geology. Gas pipe trench aligned NW - SE

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Aligned	Comment
1	21.30	2.00	0.64	NE - SW	0-0.21m Topsoil, 0.21-0.55m Deposit (57), 0.55m+ natural geology. Gas pipe trench aligned NE - SW
2	14.50	2.00	0.90	NE - SW	0-0.25m Topsoil, 0.25-0.75m Deposit (57), 0.75m+ natural geology. Gas pipe trench aligned NE - SW
3	40.00	0.6	0.25	N-S	0-0.2m Deposit (59), 0.2-0.25 natural geology.



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Figure 1. Location of site within Wexham, Slough and Berkshire showing other nearby excavations.

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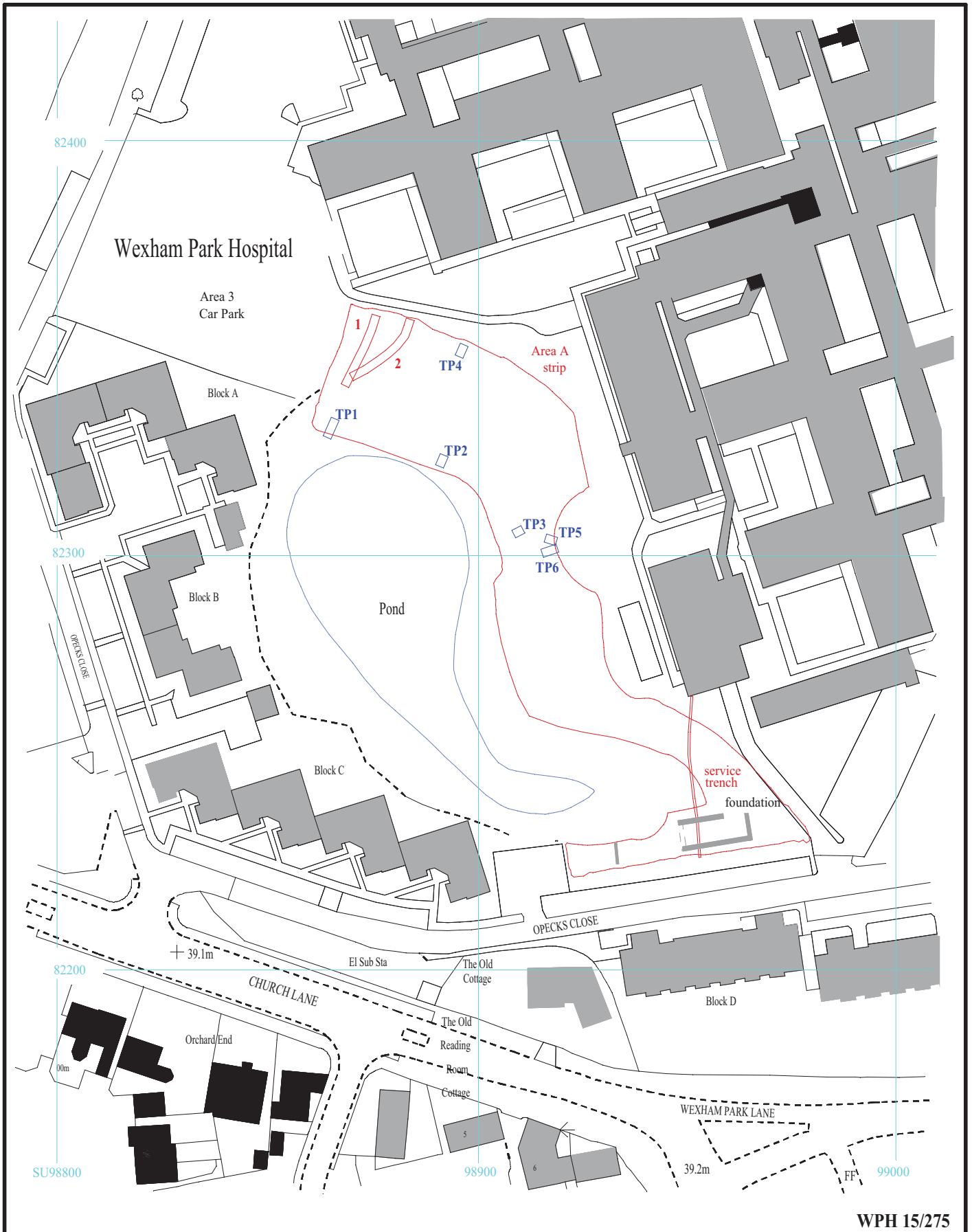
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

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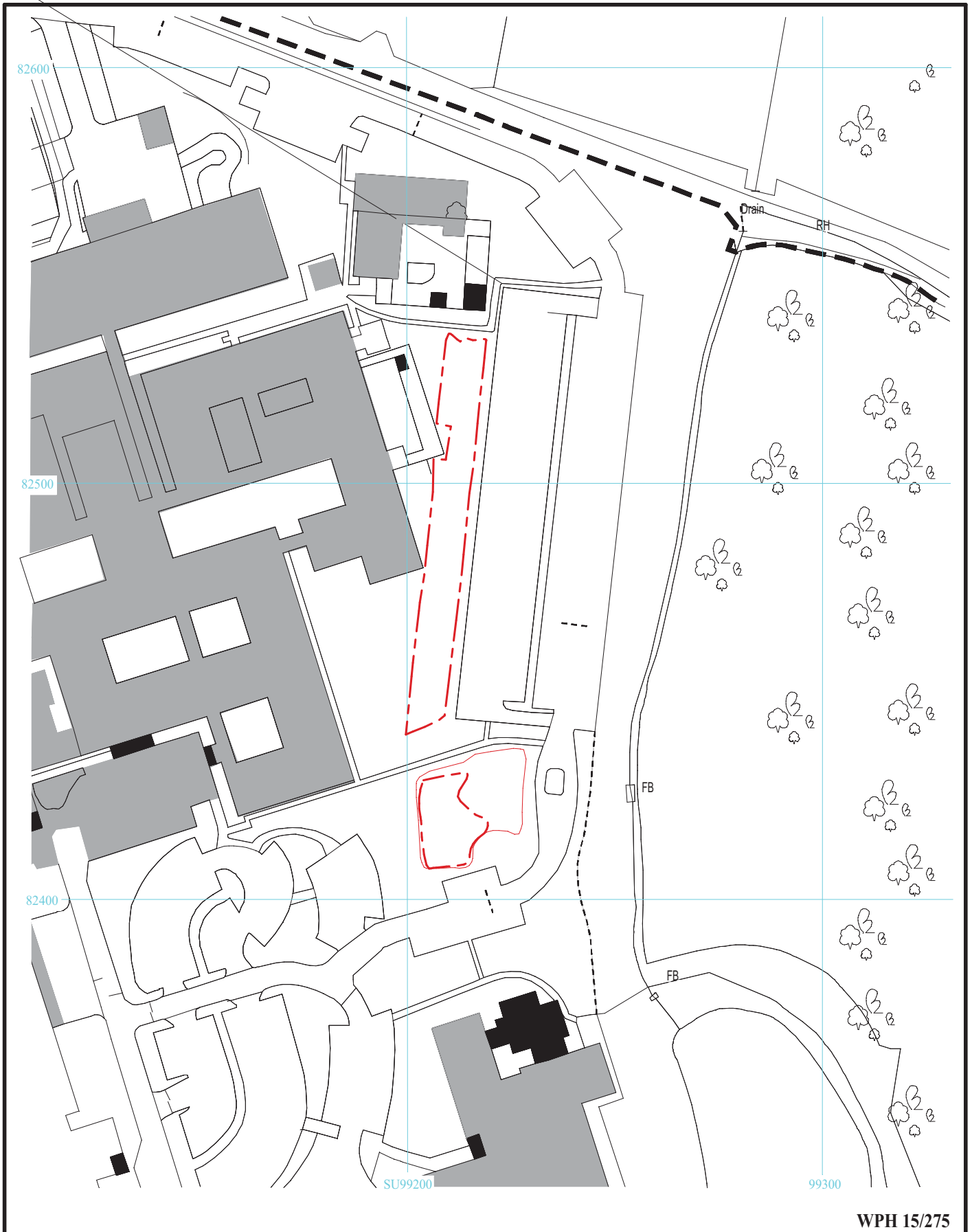
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Figure 3. Detail of Area A.

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0 125m



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Figure 4. Detail of Area D.



0



125m

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Plate 1. Area A, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Area A, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. Area A, concrete footings of building, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 1, looking north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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Plates 1 - 4.**

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Plate 5. Area A, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 6. Area A, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 7. Area A, service trench, looking south east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 8. Test pit 1, looking south west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.

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Plates 5 - 8.**

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Plate 9. Area D, looking northeast, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 10. Area D, looking southeast, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 11. Area D, service trench, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.



Plate 12. Area D, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 9 - 12.**

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Plate 13. Area D, southern part, looking north,
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 14. Area D, southern part, looking west,
Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 15. Area D, southern part,
looking west, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 16. Area D, southern section, looking east,
Scales: 2m and 1m.

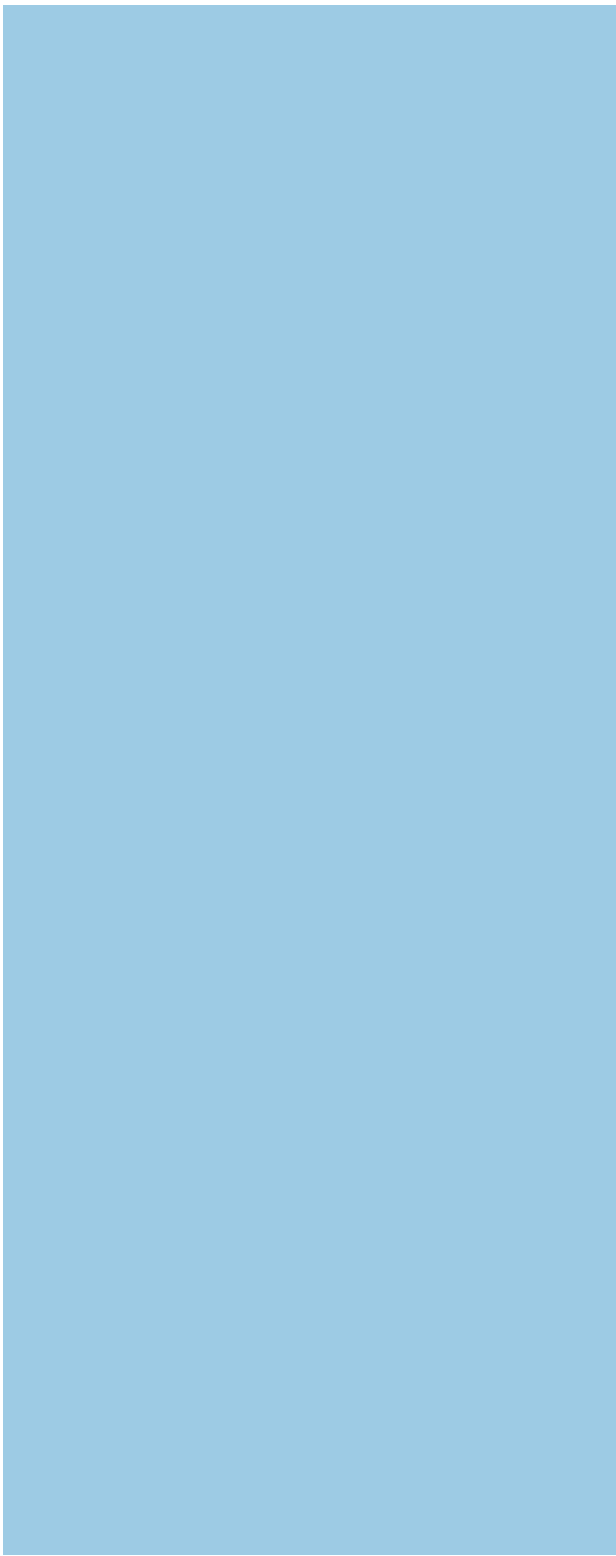
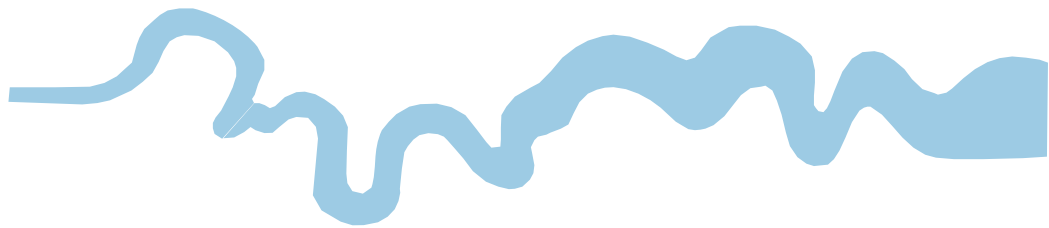
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Plates 13-16**

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
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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