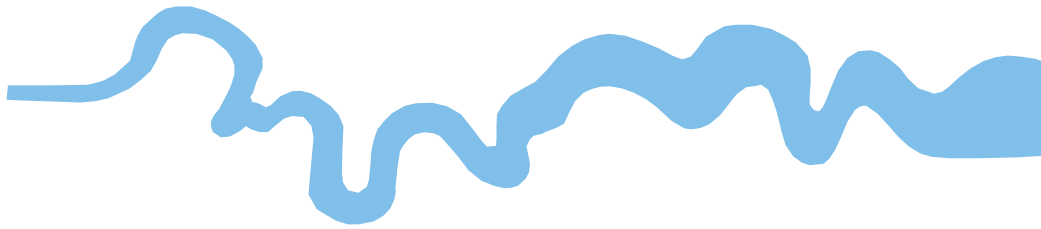


T V A S



SOUTH

**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
High Street, Dorking, Surrey**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: WHD16/213

(TQ 1672 4941)

**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
High Street, Dorking, Surrey**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Runnymede Homes Ltd**

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WHD16/213

May 2017

Summary

Site name: Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel, High Street, Dorking, Surrey

Grid reference: TQ 1672 4941

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20th December 2016 to 16th May 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sean Wallis

Site code: WHD 16/213

Area of site: c. 0.31 ha

Summary of results: The archaeological evaluation to the rear of the White Horse Hotel successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of new buildings on the site. The results suggest that the area had been heavily affected by previous activity, with some parts of the site clearly being truncated in the past. The trenches in the southern part of the site indicated that this area had been disturbed when the (now demolished) hotel block was built in the 1960s. It is possible that the northern part of the site had been built up in the past, but no archaeological features were recorded.

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

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

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| Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 31.05.17 Steve Preston ✓ 31.05.17 |
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Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel, High Street, Dorking, Surrey An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sean Wallis

Report 16/213

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out to the rear of the White Horse Hotel, Dorking, Surrey (TQ 1672 4941) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Julian Grundy of Runnymede Homes Ltd, 182 Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0RJ.

Planning permission (MO/2015/1157) had been gained from Mole Valley District Council for a new development at the rear of the White Horse Hotel, following the demolition of some existing buildings. The consent was subject to a condition (6) relating to archaeology and the historic environment.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Nigel Randall of Surrey County Council, who advises Mole Valley District Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Virginia Fuentes-Mateos, Sean Wallis and Jim Webster between 20th December 2016 and 16th May 2017, and the site code is WHD 16/213. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading, and will be deposited at Dorking Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The White Horse Hotel is located within the historic core of Dorking (Fig. 1). Whilst the oldest part of the hotel fronts onto Dorking High Street, the development site was located to the rear of the main hotel building, and was accessed via Dene Street (Fig. 2). The development area had been heavily landscaped in the past, probably when the (now demolished) hotel block was built in the south-western part of the site in the 1960s. The area to the south-east of this hotel block sloped up to the southern boundary, and seemingly reflected the original steep slope of the site. A large retaining wall had been constructed to the east of the hotel block (shown in blue on Fig. 3), and the area to the north of this wall had clearly been reduced by several metres. The northern part of the site was relatively flat, and had largely been used as a car park until recently. As a result of the previous landscaping, the height above Ordnance Datum varied from about 69m in the southern corner of the site, to approximately 64m in the northern part of the site, close to where trench 2 was excavated. According to the British Geological

Survey, the underlying geology of the area largely consists of the Folkestone Beds of the Lower Greensand Formation, with small patches of overlying Higher Terrace River Gravels (BGS 1978). The natural geology recorded during the evaluation generally consisted of light orange brown sand, with varying amounts of gravel inclusions.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of Dorking (Robertson 2004) and has been summarised in a desk-based assessment (PCA 2015). In summary, Dorking is first mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086 as a royal manor. It also possessed a church which is likely to have been sited close to the current (medieval) church. It is possible that a contemporary Saxon settlement was located nearby, though little evidence has been recorded for this. The settlement clearly grew during medieval times, and a market was documented in 1278, which is indicative of the existence of an established town by then.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of proposed development.

Specific aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if archaeological deposits dating from the prehistoric period are present; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits dating from the Saxon, Medieval or early post-medieval periods are present.

Six trenches were to be dug, each measuring 15m in length and 1.60m in width. The trenches were largely positioned to target those parts of the development site which had not obviously been disturbed by previous activity. The trenches were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

It became apparent early on that the trenches could not be dug to their original intended length, due to various logistical problems (Fig. 3). In addition, the area behind the 1960s hotel block could not be accessed until that structure had been demolished and, as a result, the evaluation was carried out in two stages. All the changes to

the agreed scheme were discussed with the Surrey County Council Archaeological officer. Six trenches were eventually excavated, measuring between 1.80m and 16.30m in length, and between 0.50m and 1.78m in depth. Trenches 1-4 were 1.60m wide, but a larger machine was used for trenches 5 and 6, which resulted in them being 2.15m wide. A complete list of the trenches, giving lengths, breadths, depths, and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was orientated SW-NE, and was 5.70m long and up to 0.62m deep. It was excavated in a former car park area, but could not be dug to its full intended length due to the close proximity of the site entrance. The top of the natural geology was recorded beneath 0.10m of Tarmac and 0.50m of made ground. It was clear that the natural sand had previously been truncated in this part of the site, and that any archaeological deposits which might have been present would have been destroyed.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 2)

This trench was 2.50m long and up to 1.78m deep at its base, and was orientated SW-NE. The trench had to be stepped at the top to enable safe access, and could not be excavated to its full intended length due to a lack of space for the resulting spoil. The natural geology was recorded beneath 0.10m of Tarmac, 1.43m of made ground, and 0.20m of mid brown sandy silt, which was interpreted as representing a possible buried soil horizon. The presence of this buried soil deposit suggests that this part of the site may have been built up in the past. Nevertheless, no archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

Trench 3 was 6.20m long and up to 0.50m deep, and was orientated approximately WSW-ENE. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.10m of Tarmac and 0.40m of made ground. It was clear that the natural sand had been heavily truncated in this area, as the trench was located very close to a large retaining wall which was probably built when the site was landscaped in the 1960s. Not surprisingly, no archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 4)

This trench was excavated in a small grassy area, but could not be dug to its full intended length due to various logistical problems, including the presence of a large conifer tree. As a result, the trench ended up as a test pit to establish how this part of the site had been affected by the previous landscaping work noted elsewhere. The trench was 1.80m long and up to 1.48m deep, and was orientated approximately SW-NE. The stratigraphy was very similar to that recorded in trench 1, to the north. The natural geology was recorded beneath 0.20m of topsoil, 1.00m of made ground, and 0.25m of buried soil, which indicates that this part of the site had been built up in the past. No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

Trench 5 (Figs 3 and 5; Pl. 5)

Trench 5 was 4.80m long and up to 0.75m deep, and was orientated approximately NW-SE. The trench was positioned in a area which sloped up quite steeply towards the south-east, on the high ground close to the retaining wall. The natural geology was observed beneath 0.40m of topsoil. The area had clearly been disturbed in the past, as a pile of solidified cement bags were observed in the trench. These had been placed in a large pit which was partially exposed in the trench, presumably when the hotel block was built in the 1960s. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Trench 6 (Figs 3 and 5; Pl. 6)

This trench was 16.30m long and up to 0.90m deep, and was orientated SW-NE. It was excavated in part of the site which sloped up quite steeply towards the south-east. The natural geology was generally observed beneath 0.65m of topsoil. A large modern truncation ran the length of the trench, and the eastern half of the trench had clearly been used as a storage area in the past, probably when the hotel block was built in the 1960s, as a dump of breeze blocks was observed. No archaeological finds or features were recorded in the trench.

Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered during the evaluation.

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation to the rear of the White Horse Hotel successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of new buildings on the site. Despite various logistical restraints, six trenches were excavated. The results suggest that the area had been heavily affected by previous activity, with some parts of the site clearly being truncated in the past. The trenches in the southern part of the site indicated that this area had been disturbed when the (now demolished) hotel block was built in the 1960s. It

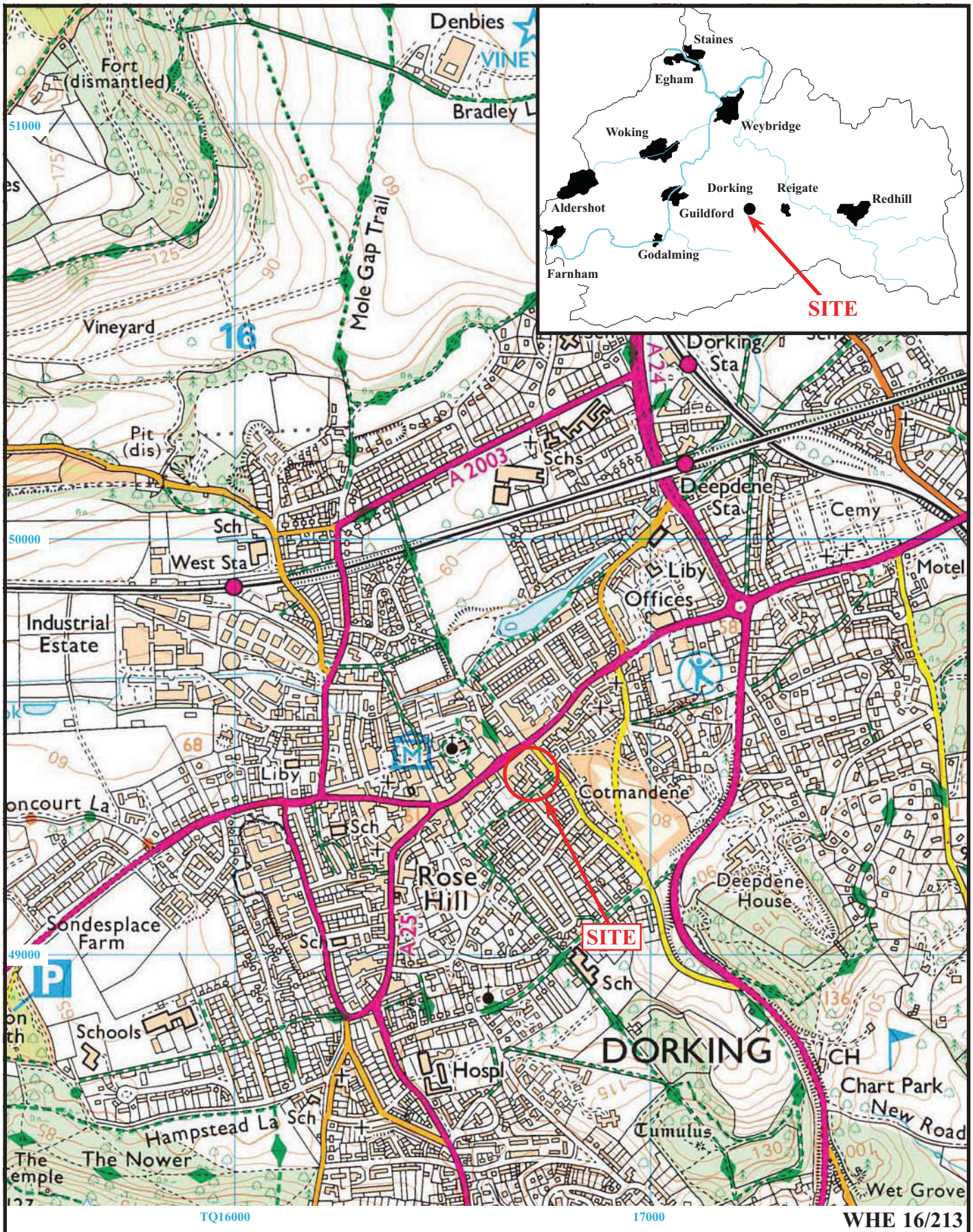
is possible that the northern part of the site had been built up in the past, but no archaeological features were recorded beneath a possible buried soil horizon.

References

- BGS, 1978, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 286, Drift Edition, Keyworth.
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept of Communities and Local Government, London
- PCA 2015, The White Hart, (Land to the rear of) High Street, Dorking, an archaeological desk-based assessment, Preconstruct Archaeology report 11871, Brockley
- Robertson, J, 2004, *Dorking - Extensive Urban Survey of Surrey*, Surrey County Council Archaeological Unit, Woking

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

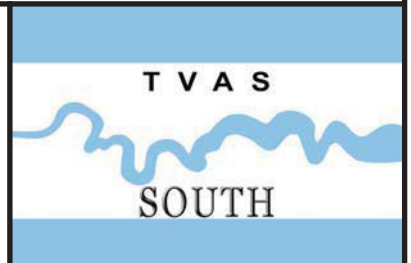
| <i>Trench</i> | <i>Length (m)</i> | <i>Breadth (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|
| 1 | 5.70 | 1.60 | 0.62 | 0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.60m made ground; 0.60-0.62m+ light orange brown sand (natural geology). Base of trench 64.05m aOD. [Pl. 1] |
| 2 | 2.50 | 1.60 | 1.78 | 0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-1.53m made ground; 1.53-1.73m possible buried soil; 1.73-1.78m+ mid orange brown sand (natural geology). Base of trench 63.20m aOD. [Pl. 2] |
| 3 | 6.20 | 1.60 | 0.50 | 0-0.10m Tarmac; 0.10-0.40m made ground; 0.40-0.50m+ light orange brown sand (natural geology). Base of trench 64.51m aOD. [Pl. 3] |
| 4 | 1.80 | 1.60 | 1.48 | 0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20-1.20m made ground; 1.20-1.45m buried soil; 1.45-1.48m+ mid orange brown sand (natural geology). Base of trench 63.92m aOD. [Pl. 4] |
| 5 | 4.80 | 2.15 | 0.75 | 0-0.20m loose topsoil (heavily rooted); 0.20-0.40m compact topsoil; 0.40-0.75m+ light orange brown sand (natural geology). Base of trench 68.19m aOD. [Pl. 5] |
| 6 | 16.30 | 2.15 | 0.90 | 0-0.20m loose topsoil (heavily rooted); 0.20-0.65m compact topsoil; 0.65-0.90m+ light orange brown sand (natural geology). Base of trench 67.58m aOD. [Pl. 6] |

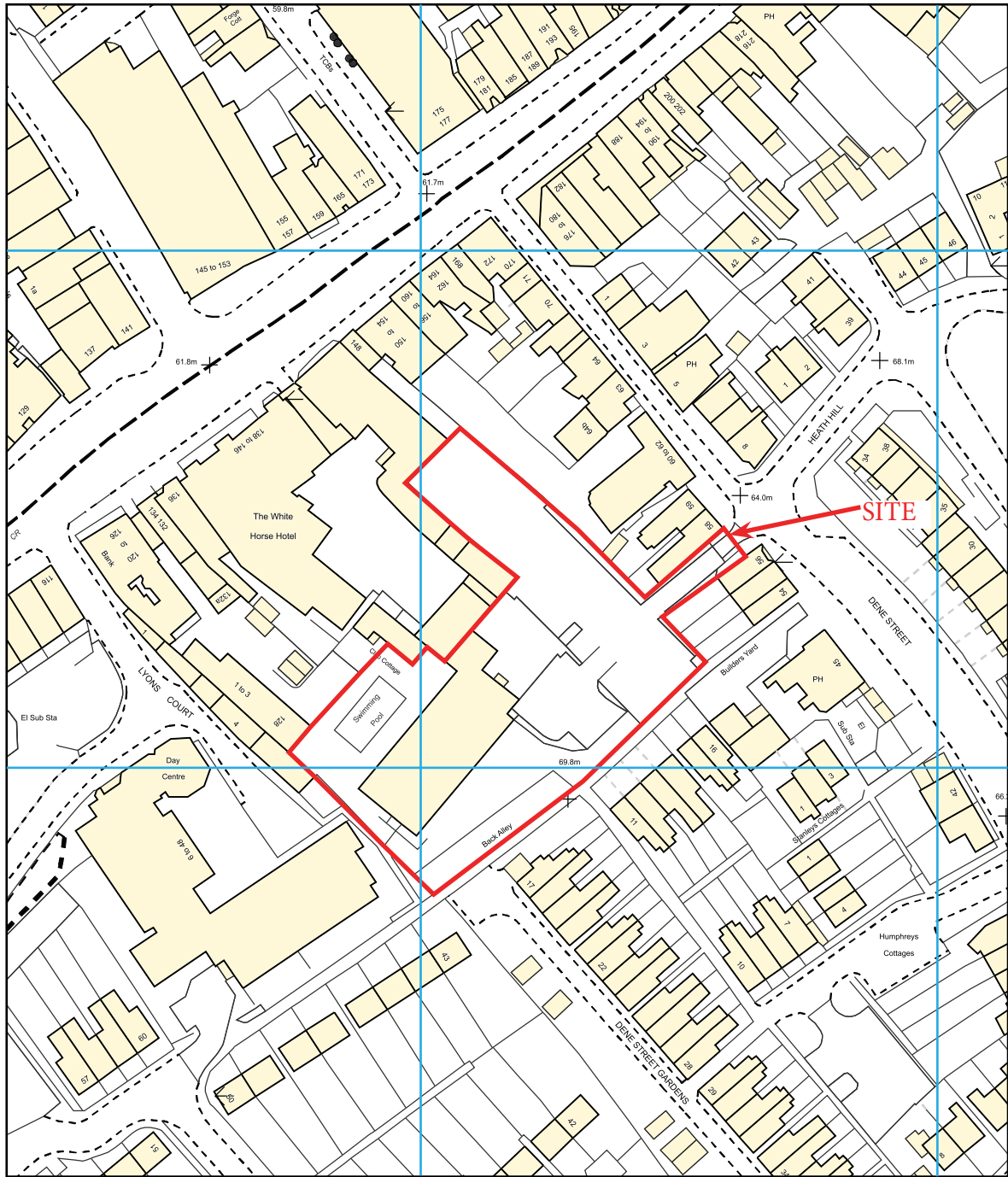


**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
High Street, Dorking, Surrey, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Dorking and Surrey

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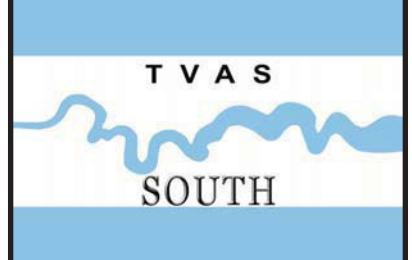
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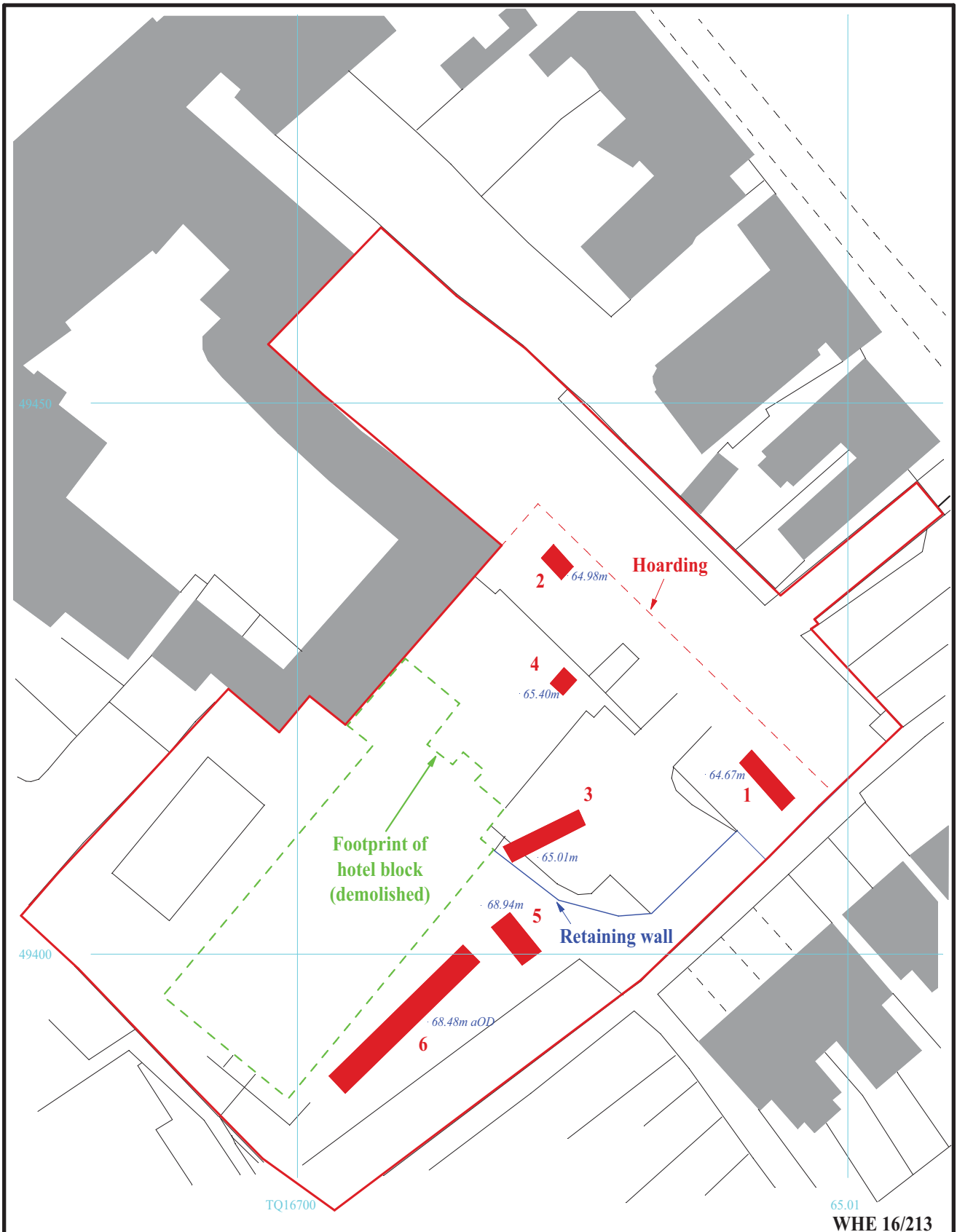


**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



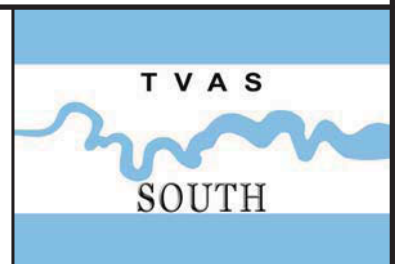
THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
SOUTH



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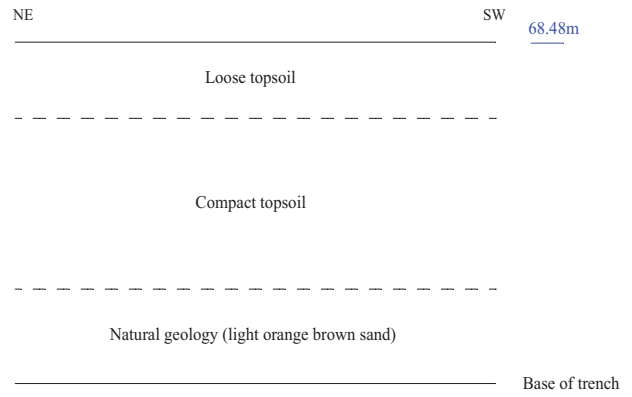
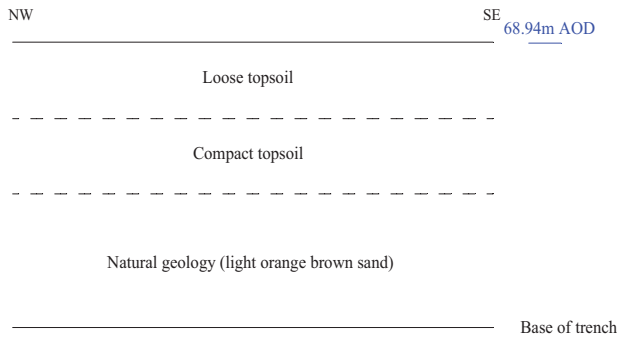
**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
 Dorking, Surrey, 2017
 Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Representative sections.



Trench 5

Trench 6



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**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
Dorking, Surrey, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 5. Representative sections.

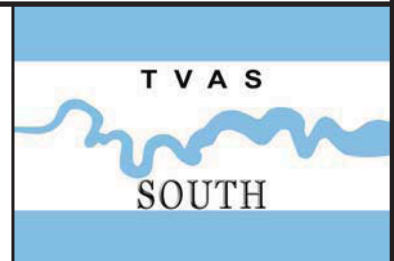




Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north-west. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

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**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
High Street, Dorking, Surrey, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 2.**





Plate 3. Trench 3, looking south-west. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



Plate 4. Trench 4, looking north-west. Scale: 2m.

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**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
High Street, Dorking, Surrey, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 3 - 4.**





Plate 5. Trench 5, looking south-east. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.



Plate 6. Trench 6, looking north-east. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.50m.

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**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
High Street, Dorking, Surrey, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 5 - 6.**





Plate 7. General view (panoramic) of the site, looking South-east. Trench 1 was located to the right of the chemical toilet. The retaining wall can be seen at the back of the site, and to the right of the excavator. Trench 5 was located to the right of the retaining wall.



Plate 8. General view of site looking North-east from location of demolished hotel block. Trench 5 can be seen on the right.

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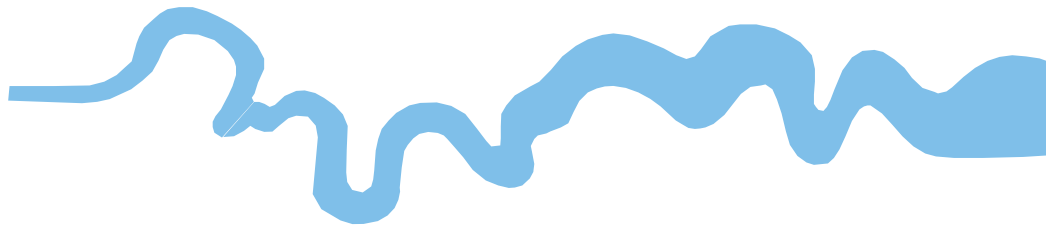
**Land to the rear of the White Horse Hotel,
High Street, Dorking, Surrey, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 7 - 8.**



TIME CHART

| | Calendar Years |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Modern _____ | AD 1901 |
| Victorian _____ | AD 1837 |
| Post Medieval _____ | AD 1500 |
| Medieval _____ | AD 1066 |
| Saxon _____ | AD 410 |
| Roman _____ | AD 43 AD 0 BC |
| Iron Age _____ | 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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