

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Four Seasons Hotel, Dogmersfield Park,
Dogmersfield, Hampshire**

Archaeological Recording Action

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: DHH14/244

(SU 7718 5148)

Four Seasons Hotel, Dogmersfield Park, Dogmersfield, Hampshire

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Four Seasons Hotel

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DHH 14/244

January 2018

Summary

Site name: Four Seasons Hotel, Dogmersfield Park, Dogmersfield, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 7718 5148

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 5th-10th January 2018

Project coordinator: Danielle Milbank

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: DHH 14/244

Area of site: c.350 sq m

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed during the course of the recording action. Former garden features observed cannot be earlier than the late 20th century.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 12.01.17 Steve Preston✓ 11.01.17

Four Seasons Hotel, Dogmersfield Park, Dogmersfield, Hampshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by Andy Taylor

Report 14/244b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the Four Seasons Hotel, Dogmersfield Park, Hampshire (SU 7718 5148) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Michael de Courcy of Bell-Cornwell on behalf of the Four Seasons Hotel, Dogmersfield Park, Chalky Lane, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8TD.

Planning permission (17/01679/LBC) has been gained from Hart District Council for redevelopment of the site including construction of a children's swimming pool. The permission is subject a condition relating to archaeology requiring a programme of archaeological work to be carried out prior to the commencement of groundworks. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District's policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Neil Adam, Senior Archaeologist with Hampshire County Council, advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by the author between 5th and 10th January 2018 and the site code is DHH 14/244.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Hampshire Cultural Trust in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in Dogmersfield which lies north-east of Odiham and east of Basingstoke, in north-eastern Hampshire (Fig. 10). The site is within Dogmersfield Park and is occupied by the buildings and grounds of the mansion of the same name, currently in use as the Four Seasons Hotel Hampshire (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Bagshot Beds (BGS 1981) gravels, with the southern part of the park on London Clay, although a very compact sand with ironstone was observed during the fieldwork. The site lies at a height of *c.*99m above Ordnance Datum in the SW corner sloping down slightly to *c.*98.50m in the NE corner.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Preston 2017), drawing on heritage assessments of landscape and built heritage (CBAL 2015; 2017; EBA 2015). In summary, the site includes the likely location of a medieval bishop's palace, park and probably a church. There is also a possibility of archaeological remains of other periods to be present. The landscaping, dating in the main from the late 18th century, may also be of some archaeological interest.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the recording action was to:

- excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the development;
- produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site;
- establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic etc; and to
- produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

Specific research objectives aimed to address the following questions:

- What is the nature and extent of any medieval activity on the site?
- Do these deposits relate to the use of the site as a Bishops palace?

An area strip for the swimming pool footprint was to be monitored. This was carried out by a small 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

The site was stripped to a depth of *c.*0.65m which showed, along its western and northern edges, 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of subsoil overlying compact sand natural (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 2). The remainder of the area consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.32m of hoggin that contained a Terram layer within in it. This was overlying the natural geology. Much of the area had been truncated with a sewer running along the western edge.

The outlines of features from a former formal garden layout were clearly visible but all were found to contain modern rubble, metal and plastic. Formal gardens are shown in this location (though without any detail) in all maps from the early 19th century up to 1972 but by 1978 the area had become playing fields. Although the presence of modern material in them only dates their removal and backfilling, and not their creation, the precise

layout of these features is visible in aerial photographs from the 1990s or later. The period between 1978 and 2000 is thus certainly when these features were created and this can only reasonably have been as part of the restoration after a fire at the house in 1981. No specific evidence has been found to suggest they were a recreation of any earlier garden feature, and no earlier depiction matches this layout (CBAL 2014). These features are therefore of no archaeological interest.

Finds

No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered during the course of the recording action.

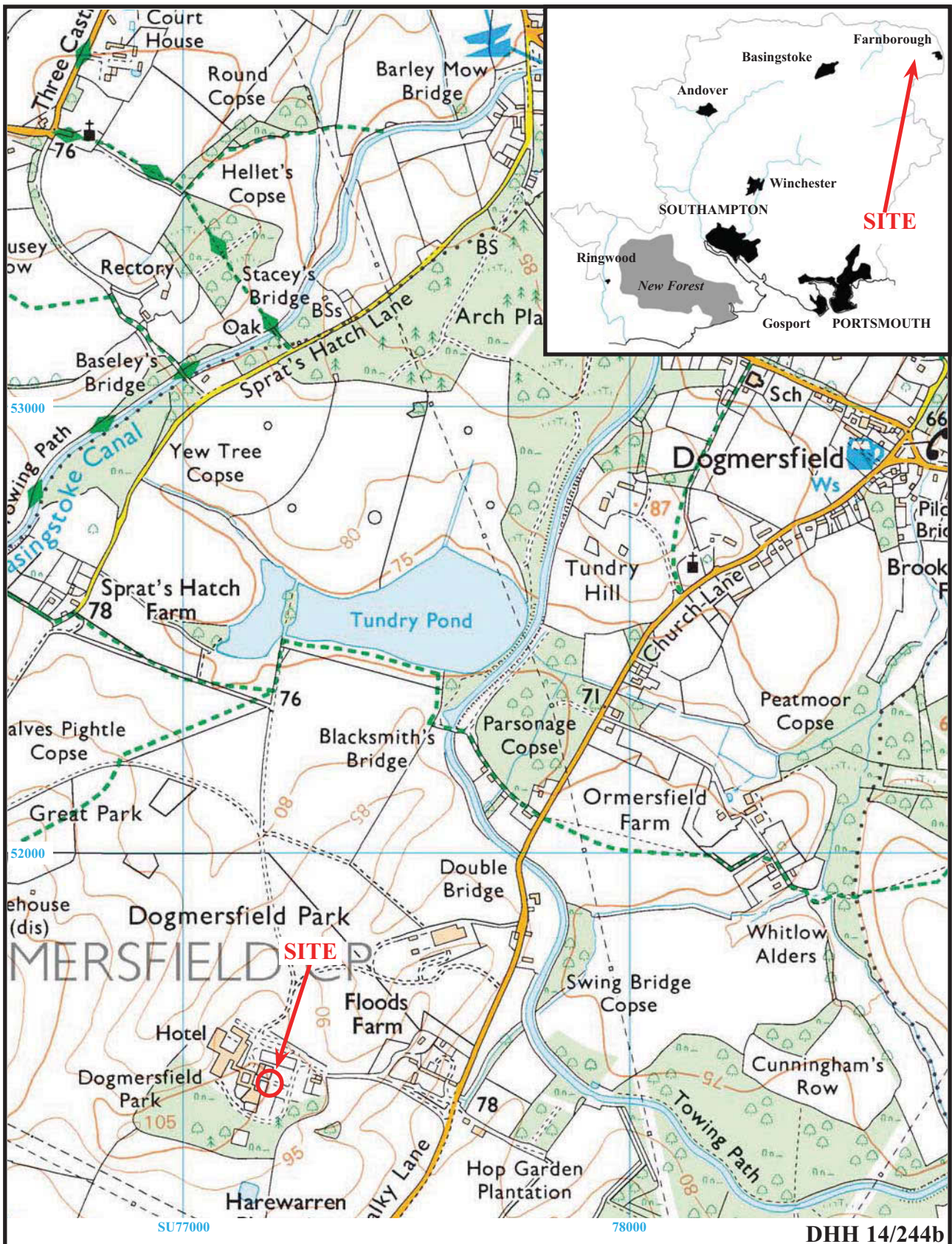
Conclusion

During the course of the stripping of the area for a children's swimming pool it became evident that much of the site had previously dug for a sewer as well as an organized garden with made ground (hoggin) lying directly below topsoil and above the natural geology, although the level of the natural geology was still evident.

Despite the site's potential for archaeology to be present no deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed during the course of the recording action. Former garden features date no earlier than the last decades of the 20th century.

References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 284, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- CBAL, 2014, 'Four Seasons Hotel, Dogmersfield, Hampshire: historic landscape appraisal,' Catherine Bickmore Associates Ltd, London
- EBA, 2014, 'Dogmersfield Park, Chalky Lane, Dogmersfield: heritage assessment', Ettwein Bridges Architects
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Preston, S, 2014, 'Dogmersfield House, Dogmersfield, Hampshire, an archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 14/244, Reading



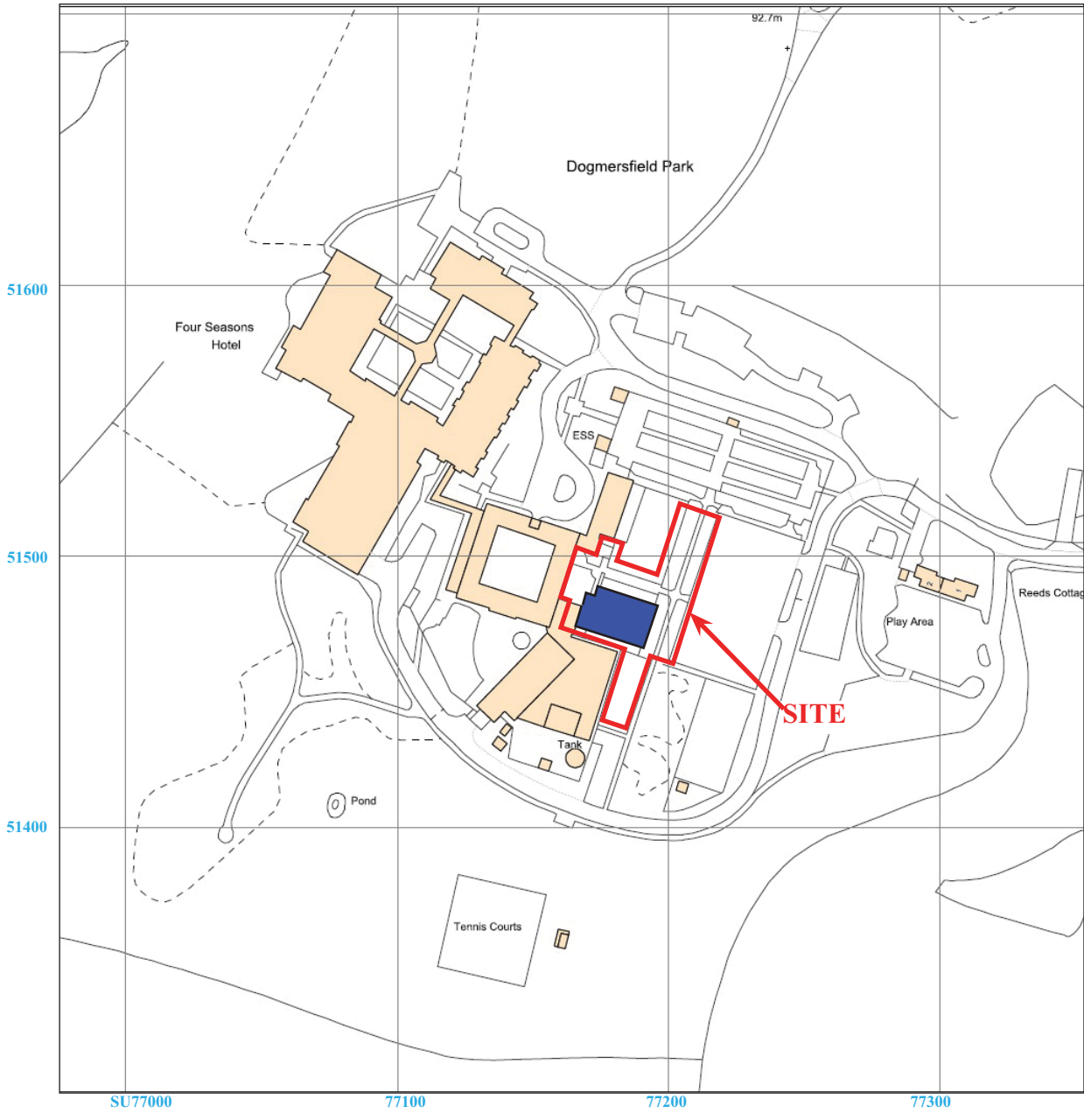
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Figure 1. Location of site at Dogmersfield Park, in relation to Dogmersfield and within Hampshire.

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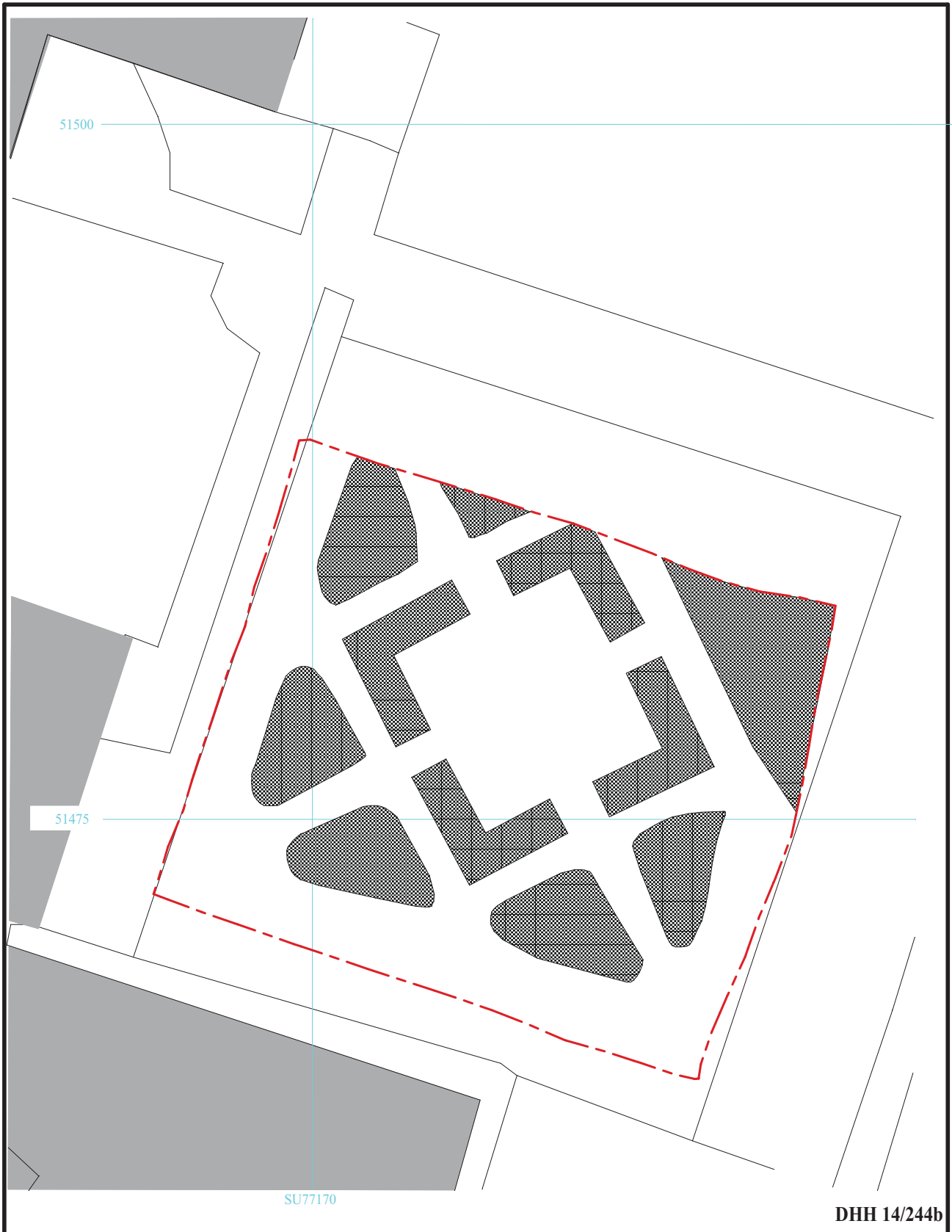
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

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Figure 3. Area location.



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Plate 1. Reduced area, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Reduced area, looking south west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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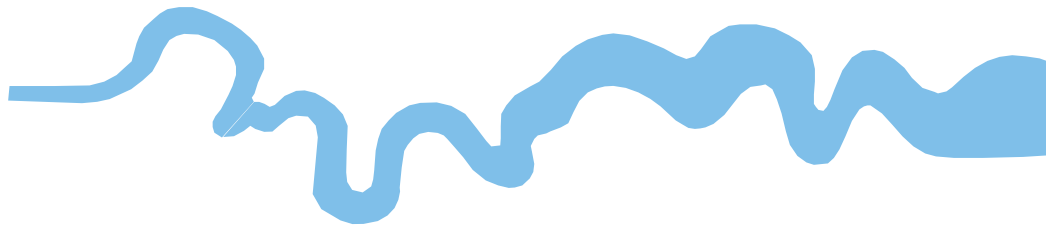
**Four Seasons Hotel, Dogmersfield Park,
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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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 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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