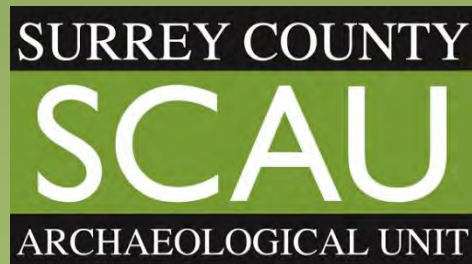


**LANGLEY VALE WOODLAND PROJECT  
HEADLEY ROAD, EPSOM, SURREY**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL  
TRENCH EVALUATION OF THE  
PROPOSED CAR PARK AREA**



LANGLEY VALE WOODLAND PROJECT, HEADLEY ROAD,  
EPSOM, SURREY,  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION OF THE  
PROPOSED CAR PARK AREA

**Summary**

*A trial trench archaeological evaluation was undertaken between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of February, 2019, on the site of the proposed car parking area for the Langley Vale Woodland project, which is located to the east of Headley Road, Epsom, Surrey. The seven excavated trenches all revealed a similar stratigraphic sequence with topsoil, a degraded natural upper horizon, and an underlying more clearly defined natural geological horizon beneath. Trench 1 was the only trench to record a feature of archaeological interest, whilst the remaining trenches were devoid of any archaeological remains*

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Site code	ELV-19
Client	Woodland Trust



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation undertaken between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of February, 2019, on the site of the proposed car parking area for the Langley Vale Woodland project, which is located to the east of Headley Road, Epsom, Surrey (fig 1).

1.2 The Surrey County Archaeological Unit were commissioned by the Woodland Trust to undertake the archaeological evaluation.

### Archaeological and historical background

1.3 In March 2014, The Woodland Trust acquired 259 acres of land at Langley Bottom Farm, Langley Vale, near Epsom in Surrey, with the intention of it becoming one of four First World War Centenary sites. As part of this a car park and visitor centre was proposed in the fields located at the corner of Headley Road and Downs Road, for the purpose of servicing the new woodland.

1.4 The archaeological and historical potential for the proposed visitors' centre, car park, play areas and memorial area were initially assessed in an Environmental Statement prepared by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (Shaikhley, May 2014).

However, during the planning application process, further archaeological potential for the site was identified in the form of the possible meeting place of the Cophorne hundred. It was suggested that this might be located either within the field proposed for the car park or the area of the visitor centre, as both were defined on one side by an ancient banked boundary, referred to as 'Nutshambles'.

Archaeological Interest in this banked boundary can be traced back to 1964, when a section was excavated across the 'Nutshambles' bank and associated ditch (located on the western side of the bank). The excavation revealed the bank and ditch in section, and it was suggested by the excavators that the bank had been built from a turf core topped by chalk rubble, whilst the associated ditch was cut to a maximum depth of 1.72m deep. However, no construction date for the feature was established (Coward 1965).

1.5 In light of the potential importance of the 'Nutshambles' bank and ditch, the County Archaeological Officer, advised that this potential archaeological site should be evaluated via non-intrusive survey. Therefore a Written Scheme of Investigation (Shaikhley 2018) was prepared and approved for a programme of non-intrusive investigation that included geophysics, fieldwalking and metal detecting. This (Various 2017) was subsequently carried out across the proposed car park and visitor centre field (avoiding areas of newly planted trees or proposed tree planting).

1.6 The Geophysical survey (magnetometry) results identified a couple of possible enclosures c.15-20m in diameter and some possible pits.

A series of striped anomalies over the whole area were thought to be more likely the results of a geological phenomenon, or possibly associated with modern agricultural activities. There was no evidence of the ditch or artificial ledge to the west of the bank, noted during the 1964 archaeological excavation. The magnetometer survey was able to detect several anomalies which lay within the area of the proposed development, which would require further investigation to verify their form, nature and date, and these were subsequently targeted in the evaluation.

1.7 The fieldwalking and metal detecting survey produced an assemblage of 788 objects, comprising mostly post-medieval material, although objects worthy of special mention were a probable 16<sup>th</sup> century jetton, a very worn silver coin, possibly a short cross penny of 13<sup>th</sup> century date, and four Romano-British coins.

In summary, the range of finds which was collected during the field survey mostly represented the periods from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, possibly introduced through agricultural activities such as manuring, with a few earlier finds. The low density of finds, however, did not provide support for the use of the site over several hundreds of years as the meeting place of as Hundred.

### **The archaeological potential**

1.8 The general archaeological potential (outside of the specific issue of the Hundred meeting place) of this site was considered to be moderate, based on the number of archaeological finds, features and sites that lay within the search area, as covered by the original Heritage Statement (Shaikhley 2014). However, it was highlighted that the area had seen very little formal archaeological investigation either in association with new developments or as a result of research projects. It was suggested therefore, that the low level of archaeological material found from within the search radius could have been due to a lack of archaeological survey rather than an absence of archaeological deposits.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

2.1 The Trial Trench Evaluation was undertaken using an 8 tonne tracked mechanical excavator, fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless bucket. No on-site alterations to the original trench plan were required and no modern obstructions were encountered during the excavation of the trenches.

2.2 Trench locations were set using GPS marking prior to excavation, with two of the trenches placed specifically across anomalies identified during the Geophysical survey (Trenches 4 and 5).

2.3 The machine excavation was carefully monitored throughout, with trenches being periodically CAT scanned during the soil reduction process.

The recognition of features or artefacts of archaeological interest, occurred at the interface between the degraded upper part of the natural geological horizon, and the less disturbed underlying geology.

Upon visual identification, cleaning, hand excavation and recording of identified archaeology was carried out as necessary.

2.4 The excavated trenches were recorded using pro-forma trench and context sheets, whilst plans and sections were drawn at scales of 1:50, 1:20 or 1:10.

2.5 Digital photographs were taken of trenches upon excavation and reinstatement, and of individual features at various stages of the work, a sample of which have been incorporated into this document.

### 3 RESULTS

3.1 The seven excavated trenches revealed a similar stratigraphic sequence with topsoil, a degraded upper natural and an underlying more clearly defined natural geological horizon beneath. Trench 1 was the only trench to record a feature of archaeological interest, whilst the remaining trenches were devoid of any archaeological remains

#### Trench 1 (figs 3 and 4)

3.2 Trench 1 was orientated north to south and measured 26.30 in length. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.38m below the existing ground surface to partly reveal a small feature of archaeological interest (see Cut 103 below).

#### *Stratigraphic sequence*

**Context 102** was seen throughout the whole length of the trench and comprised a mixture of mid brownish orange clay with flint, and concentrated areas of degraded chalk with clay. This deposit represents part of the undifferentiated Lewes Nodular, Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations, although the presence of intrusive clays and flints suggest this has been heavily broken and disturbed by Late Glacial or Periglacial action.

**Cut 103** was located at the southern end of the trench comprised a straight sided cut which was partly revealed within the east facing trench section. The revealed extent of the cut measured 0.47m north to south by 0.60m east to west, with the western limit lying somewhere beyond the trench edge. Subsequent excavation of this cut revealed a very steep, straight sided cut with a flat base. The single fill, context 104, comprised a dark reddish-brown silty sand with occasional flint fragments. Finds comprised two struck flints, which although of possible later Bronze Age date, were fresh and un-weathered, suggesting a more recent origin (see 4.2). This was also suggested by the archaeologist excavating the feature, as the cut was of a very regular shape and the fill was of a dark colour, both characteristics more typical of modern than of ancient features.

**Context 101** was seen to extend throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a mixture of mid orange-brown clay and chalk fragments of approximately 0.07m in thickness. This deposit is not thought to represent a true subsoil, but is more likely to be a degraded part of the underlying geological horizon.

**Context 100** was the latest deposit revealed and again extended throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a 0.29m thick, dark brownish-grey sandy clay, with frequent angular and sub angular flint, and equates to the existing plough soil, which extended across the site.

Context number	Length	Width	Thickness / Depth	description	Highest top level	Lowest base level
100	25.50m	1.60m	0.40m	Existing site plough soil	118.45m	117.68m
101	25.50m	1.60m	0.12m	Degraded geological horizon	118.17m	117.64m
102	25.50m	1.60m	0.04m+	Solid geology	118.13m	117.80m
103	0.62m	0.54m	0.25m	Incomplete, straight sided cut, filled by 104	118.15m	117.80m
104	0.62m	0.54m	0.25m	Fill of cut 103	118.15m	117.80m



**Trench 1, Looking South**



**Trench 1, Cut 103, Looking West**

### Trench 2 (fig 3)

3.3 Trench 2 was orientated east to west and measured 25.50m in length. The trench was excavated to a depth of between 0.32m and 0.56m below existing ground surface, and revealed no features of archaeological interest.

#### *Stratigraphic sequence*

**Context 202** was seen throughout the whole length of the trench and comprised a mixture of mid brownish orange clay with flint, and concentrated areas of degraded chalk with clay. As with Trench 1, this deposit also represents part of the undifferentiated Lewes Nodular, Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations.

**Context 201** was also seen to extend throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a mixture of mid orange-brown clay and chalk fragments of approximately 0.12m in thickness. As with Trench 1, this deposit is not thought to represent a true subsoil deposit, but more is likely to be a degraded part of the underlying geological horizon.

**Context 200** was the latest deposit revealed and again extended throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a dark brownish-grey sandy clay, with frequent angular and sub angular flint. The deposit increased in thickness towards the west (roadside and hedge line), being 0.22m at the eastern end of the trench, increasing to 0.40m at the trench's western end. This deposit equates to the existing site plough soil.

Context number	Length	Width	Thickness / Depth	description	Highest top level	Lowest base level
200	25.50m	1.60m	0.40m	Existing site plough soil	118.72m	118.10m
201	25.50m	1.60m	0.12m	Degraded geological horizon	118.50m	117.96m
202	25.50m	1.60m	0.04m+	Solid geology	118.42m	117.94m



**Trench 2, Looking West**



### Trench 3 (fig 3)

3.4 Trench 3 was orientated northeast to southwest and measured 26.00m in length. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.36m below the existing ground surface, and no features of archaeological interest were revealed.

#### *Stratigraphic sequence*

**Context 302** was seen throughout the whole length of the trench and comprised a mixture of mid brownish orange clay with flint, and larger, concentrated areas of degraded chalk with clay. As previously, this deposit also represents part of the Lewes Nodular, Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations.

**Context 301** extended throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a mixture of mid orange-brown clay and chalk fragments of approximately 0.05m in thickness. This deposit is also thought to be the degraded upper part of the underlying geological horizon.

**Context 300** was the latest deposit revealed and again extended throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a 0.29m thick, dark brownish-grey sandy clay, with frequent angular and sub angular flint and equates to the existing site plough soil.

Context number	Length	Width	Thickness / Depth	description	Highest top level	Lowest base level
300	26.00m	1.60m	0.29m	Existing site plough soil	119.37m	119.06m
301	26.00m	1.60m	0.05m	Degraded geological horizon	119.10m	119.02m
302	26.00m	1.60m	0.04m+	Solid geology	119.05m	119.00m



**Trench 3, Looking Southwest**

### Trench 4 (fig 3)

3.5 Trench 4 was orientated northwest to southeast and measured 25.50m in length. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.33m below the existing ground surface and was sited in order to investigate an identified geophysical anomaly. Despite this, no features of archaeological interest were revealed.

#### *Stratigraphic sequence*

**Context 402** was seen throughout the whole length of the trench and comprised a mixture of mid brownish orange clay with flint, and larger, concentrated areas of degraded chalk with clay. As with the previous trench, this deposit also represents part of the undifferentiated Lewes Nodular, Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations.

**Context 401** was also seen to extend throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a mixture of mid orange-brown clay and chalk fragments of approximately 0.09m in thickness. As previously, this deposit is not thought to represent a true subsoil deposit, but more likely to be a degraded part of the underlying geological horizon.

**Context 400** was the latest deposit revealed and again extended throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a 0.24m thick, dark brownish-grey sandy clay, with frequent angular and sub angular flint and equates to the existing site plough soil.

Context number	Length	Width	Thickness / Depth	description	Highest top level	Lowest base level
400	25.50m	1.60m	0.24m	Existing site plough soil	119.89m	119.25m
401	25.50m	1.60m	0.09m	Degraded geological horizon	119.64m	119.19m
402	25.50m	1.60m	0.05m+	Solid geology	119.63m	119.14m



**Trench 4, Looking southeast**

### Trench 5 (fig 3)

3.6 Trench 5 was orientated north to south and measured 25.00m in length. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.32m below the existing ground surface, and as with Trench 4, was sited upon an identified geophysical anomaly which required further investigation. As with the previous trench, no features of archaeological interest were revealed.

#### *Stratigraphic sequence*

**Context 502** was seen throughout the whole length of the trench and comprised a mixture of mid brownish orange clay with flint, and areas of degraded chalk with clay. The areas of clay within this trench were noticeably larger than in other trenches, which may in part explain why the geophysical results highlighted areas of possible archaeological interest. However, as with the previous trench, this deposit represents part of the undifferentiated Lewes Nodular, Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations.

**Context 501** was also seen to extend throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a mixture of mid orange-brown clay and chalk fragments of approximately 0.03m in thickness. As previously, this deposit is not thought to represent a true subsoil deposit, but more likely to be a degraded part of the underlying geological horizon.

**Context 500** was the latest deposit revealed and again extended throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a 0.26m thick, dark brownish-grey sandy clay, with frequent angular and sub angular flint and equates to the existing site plough soil.

Context number	Length	Width	Thickness / Depth	description	Highest top level	Lowest base level
500	25.00m	1.60m	0.26m	Existing site plough soil	120.69m	119.64m
501	25.00m	1.60m	0.03m	Degraded geological horizon	120.43m	119.62m
502	25.00m	1.60m	0.02m+	Solid geology	120.39m	119.60m



**Trench 5, Looking North**

### Trench 6 (fig 3)

3.7 Trench 6 was orientated east to west and measured 25.20m in length. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.42m below the existing ground surface, and no features of archaeological interest were revealed.

#### *Stratigraphic sequence*

**Context 602** was seen throughout the whole length of the trench and comprised a mixture of mid brownish orange clay with flint, and larger, concentrated areas of degraded chalk with clay. As with the previous trench, this deposit also represents part of the undifferentiated Lewes Nodular, Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations.

**Context 601** was also seen to extend throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a mixture of mid orange-brown clay and chalk fragments of approximately 0.09m in thickness. This deposit is not thought to represent a true subsoil deposit, but more likely to be a degraded part of the underlying geological horizon.

**Context 600** was the latest deposit revealed and again extended throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a 0.26m thick, dark brownish-grey sandy clay, with frequent angular and sub angular flint and equates to the existing site plough soil.

Context number	Length	Width	Thickness / Depth	description	Highest top level	Lowest base level
600	25.20m	1.60m	0.26m	Existing site plough soil	120.52m	119.94m
601	25.20m	1.60m	0.09m	Degraded geological horizon	120.28m	119.88m
602	25.20m	1.60m	0.10m+	Solid geology	120.20m	119.84m



**Trench 6, Looking East**

### Trench 7 (fig 3)

3.8 Trench 7 was orientated north to south and measured 25.00m in length. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.38m below the existing ground surface, and no features of archaeological interest were revealed.

#### *Stratigraphic sequence*

**Context 702** was seen throughout the whole length of the trench and comprised a mixture of mid brownish orange clay with flint, and larger, concentrated areas of degraded chalk with clay. As with the previous trench, this deposit also represents part of the undifferentiated Lewes Nodular, Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations.

**Context 701** was also seen to extend throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a mixture of mid orange-brown clay and chalk fragments of approximately 0.05m in thickness. This deposit is not thought to represent a true subsoil deposit, but more likely to be a degraded part of the underlying geological horizon.

**Context 700** was the latest deposit revealed and again extended throughout the whole length of the trench. It comprised a 0.26m thick, dark brownish-grey sandy clay, with frequent angular and sub angular flint and equates to the existing site plough soil.

Context number	Length	Width	Thickness / Depth	description	Highest top level	Lowest base level
700	25.00m	1.60m	0.26m	Existing site plough soil	119.82m	119.34m
701	25.00m	1.60m	0.05m	Degraded geological horizon	119.60m	119.27m
702	25.00m	1.60m	0.11m+	Solid geology	119.57m	119.22m



**Trench 7, Looking South**

## **4 FINDS**

4.1 Finds from the evaluation were particularly sparse, with only two struck flints being retrieved from within an excavated feature (Trench 1 context 104). Other finds included a single fragment of CBM from Trench 4.

Additionally a small assemblage of struck flints were retrieved from within the area of the evaluation, but not specifically from within a trench. These are classed as unstratified finds from the plough soil within the development area.

### **Worked flint; by Nick Marples**

4.2 Five struck flints weighing 104g were recovered from the plough soil (unstratified). Four are patinated pale blue/white, characteristic of finds deriving from sites located on chalk subsoils, and all are in fair to poor condition, with clear signs of surface weathering. Small spots or linear trails of 'iron-mould', typical of surface collected flint, are present on all four patinated artefacts.

The latter include an edge modified blade and the proximal fragment of another similar piece that may have been detached using a soft hammer, a notched flake, and an endscraper produced on a thick hard hammer struck flake. The notched piece, with evidence of centripetal flaking on its dorsal surface and prior platform preparation on its butt, may derive from a Levallois-like core of Later Neolithic date, and the notch has been formed by short abrupt and semi-abrupt retouch applied to the mesial section of its right lateral edge. The scraper has been manufactured by the application of abrupt and semi-abrupt retouch principally to the distal end of the artefact, and this is also likely to be of broadly Neolithic date. The blades could be of Neolithic or Mesolithic origin.

A fifth, unpatinated artefact can be attributed to the later Bronze Age. This has been produced on a thermally fractured pebble of weathered Bullhead flint, and has been abruptly retouched around most of its perimeter to create a crude scraping edge characteristic of tools from this period. Incipient cones, indicative of hard hammer miss-hits, which are also frequently found on later Bronze Age flintwork, are present on its thermal striking platform.

Two struck flints weighing 36g were collected from context 104. Both are in mint condition and unpatinated, and they both derive from a chalk flint source. One is a squat primary flake with a hinged termination, and the other is a piece of irregular waste. Although they could be of later Bronze Age date, their fresh, unweathered condition suggests that they may be of much more recent origin, and accidentally produced from the impact of a tool used for other purposes.

### **Ceramic Building Material (CBM)**

4.3 A single abraded fragment of CBM, weighing 71g was retrieved from Trench 4, context 400 (plough soil). This is currently awaiting specialist analysis and identification.

### **Finds and Archive Deposition**

4.4 The excavated material and archive, including plans, photographs and written records, are currently held by SCAU at the Surrey History Centre under the site code GMH-19. The archive will be prepared in accordance with nationally recognised guidelines (Brown 2007).

---

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 Good archaeological coverage of the available area was achieved, and the site preserves an in-situ plough soil, which directly overlies a disturbed geological horizon.

5.2 The prehistoric lithic assemblage comprised two poorly worked flints from feature 103 in Trench 1, which are most likely of modern, accidental origin, and five unstratified flints retrieved incidentally during the work's progress, which provide some indication of Neolithic activity.

5.3 The archaeology encountered in Trench 1 is certainly anthropogenic in nature, although due to the composition and colour of the infilling material (context 104), and the fact that the retrieved flint appeared freshly struck, it may be suggested that the feature may be relatively recent.

5.4 The excavation of trenches 4 and 5 failed to reveal any sub-surface features corresponding with those suggested by the geophysical survey. It is not certain why that proved to be the case, although variation in the character of the natural deposits is a possible explanation. The results suggest that no great reliance should be placed on the other indications from the geophysical survey.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 The evidence from the evaluation suggests that the area of the development has little archaeological potential.

6.2 The feature within Trench 1 lies within the footprint of the development area, although whether it, as an isolated and probably modern feature, should be deemed of sufficient interest to warrant further investigation may be doubted.

6.3 The statements and recommendations in 6.1 and 6.2 are the considered views of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit, based on the evidence presented in the earlier part of this report. It must be emphasised, however, that whether further archaeological work is required, what form it should take and when it might be scheduled are decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority (generally acting under the advice of Surrey County Council's Heritage Conservation Team), and any further action in response to this report should await their opinion

---

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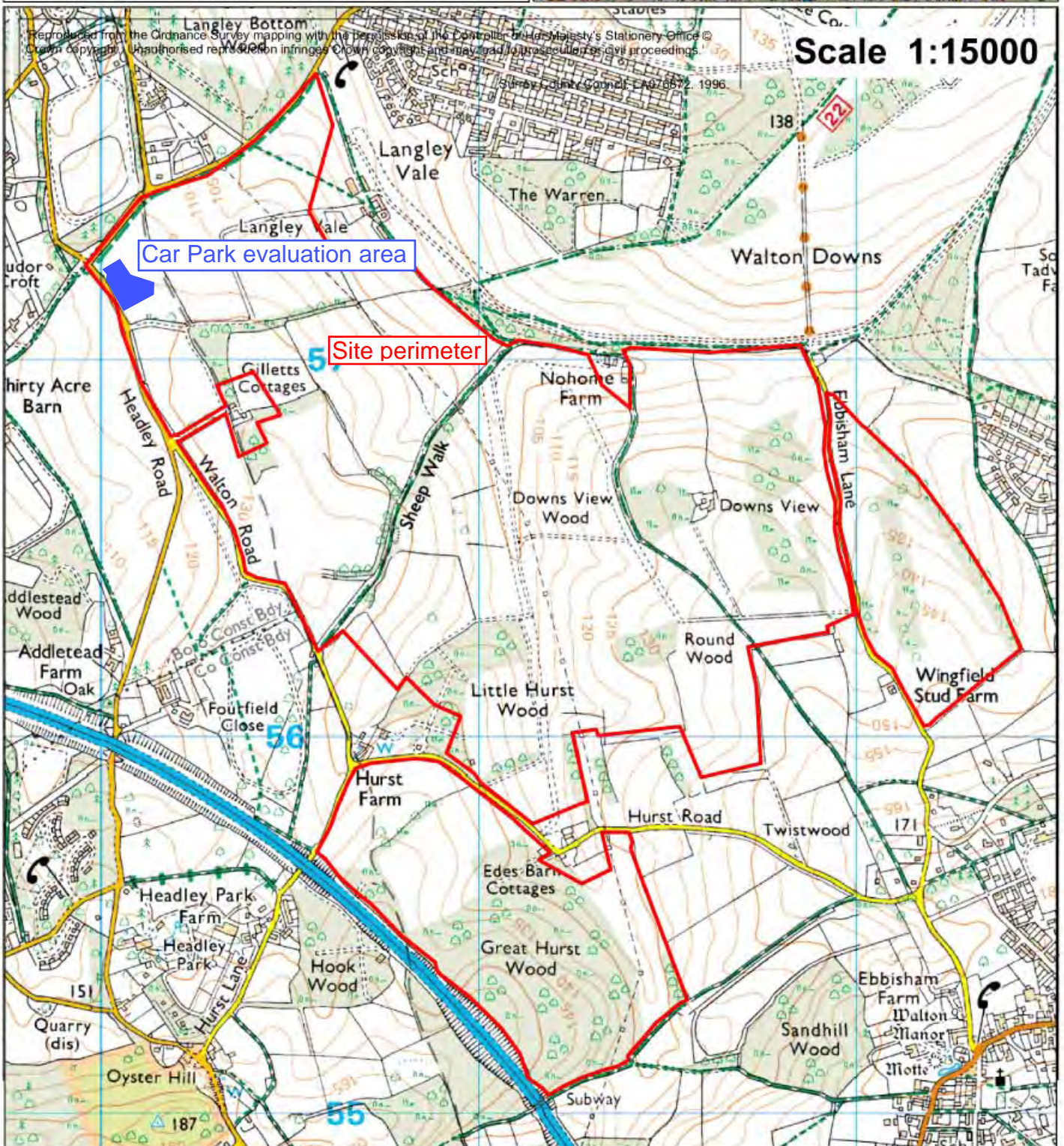
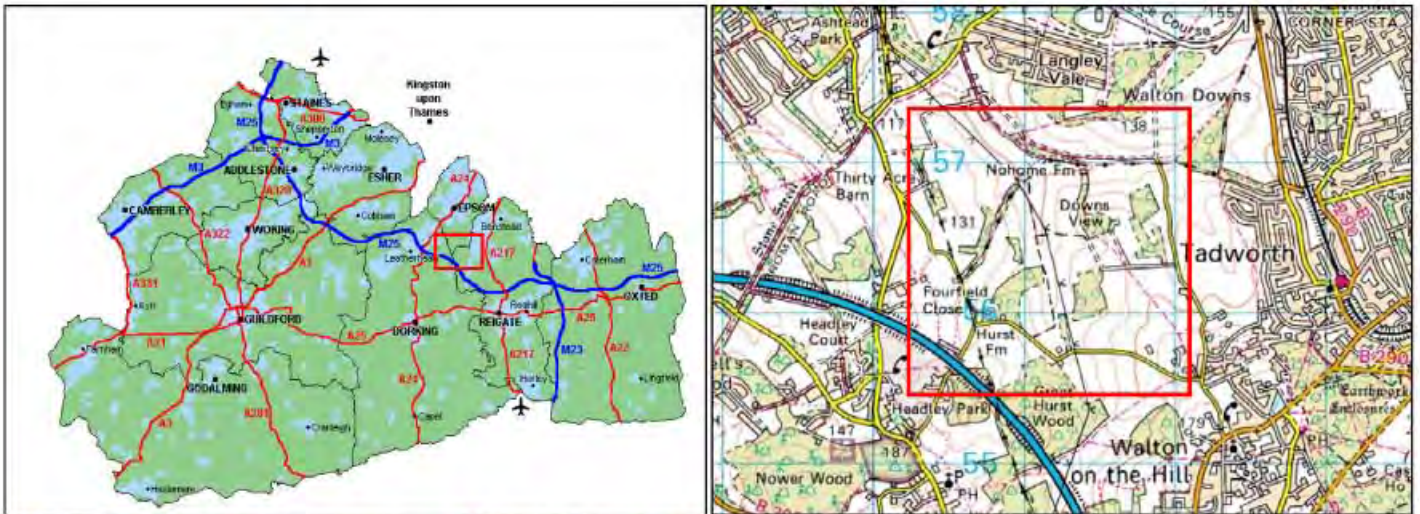


Fig 1 Langley Vale Woodland Project, Headley Road Epsom, Surrey.  
**General location plan.**



**Fig 2 Langley Vale Woodland Project, Headley Road Epsom, Surrey.  
Plan and Aerial photograph showing existing layout of the proposal area.**

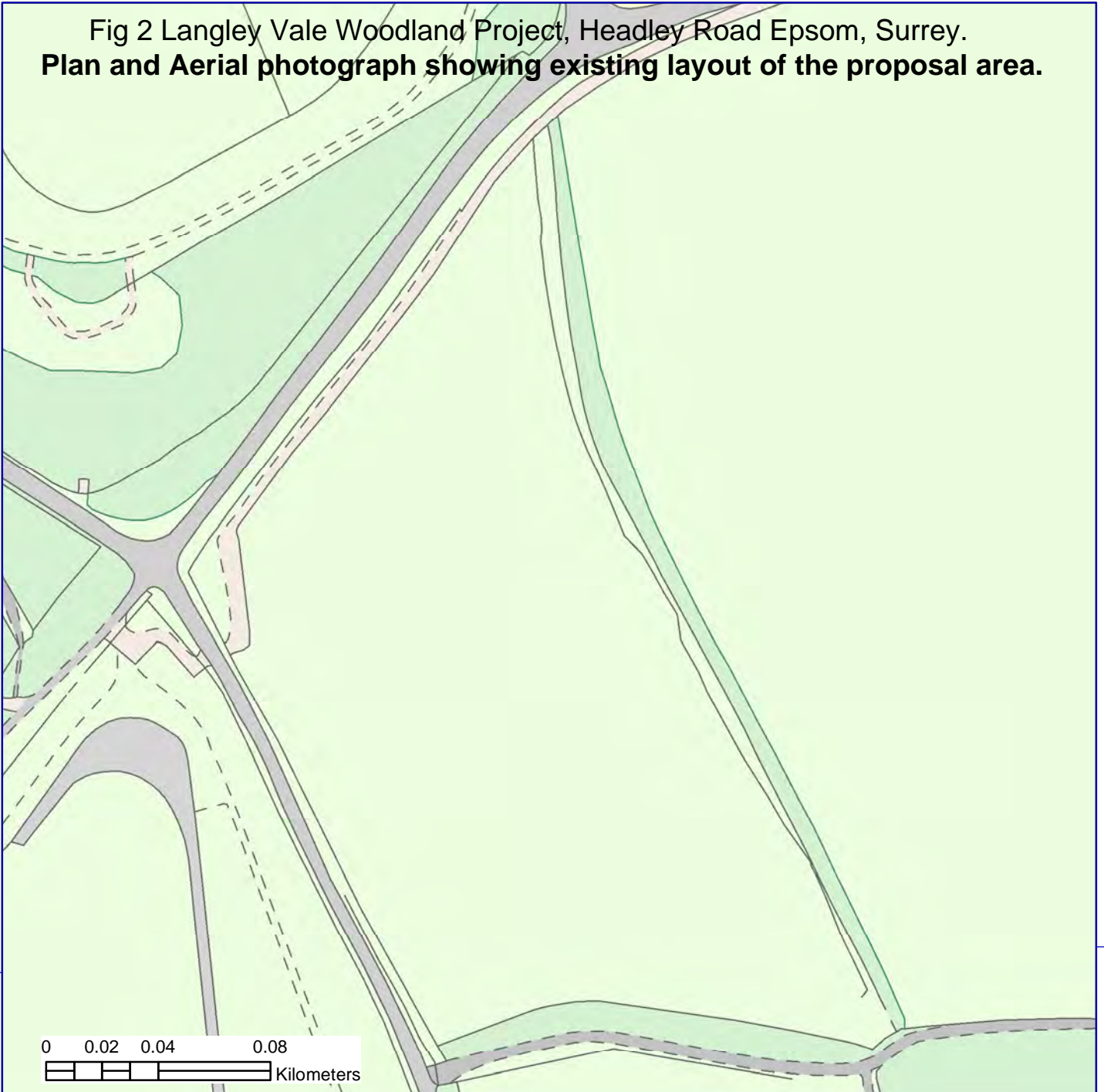


Fig 3 Langley Vale Woodland Project, Headley Road, Epsom, Surrey.  
**Trench location plan.**

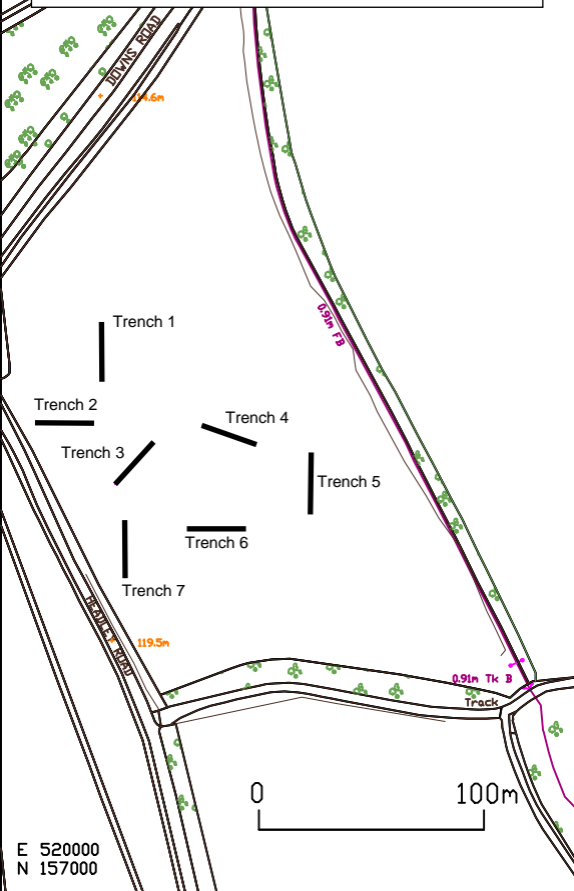
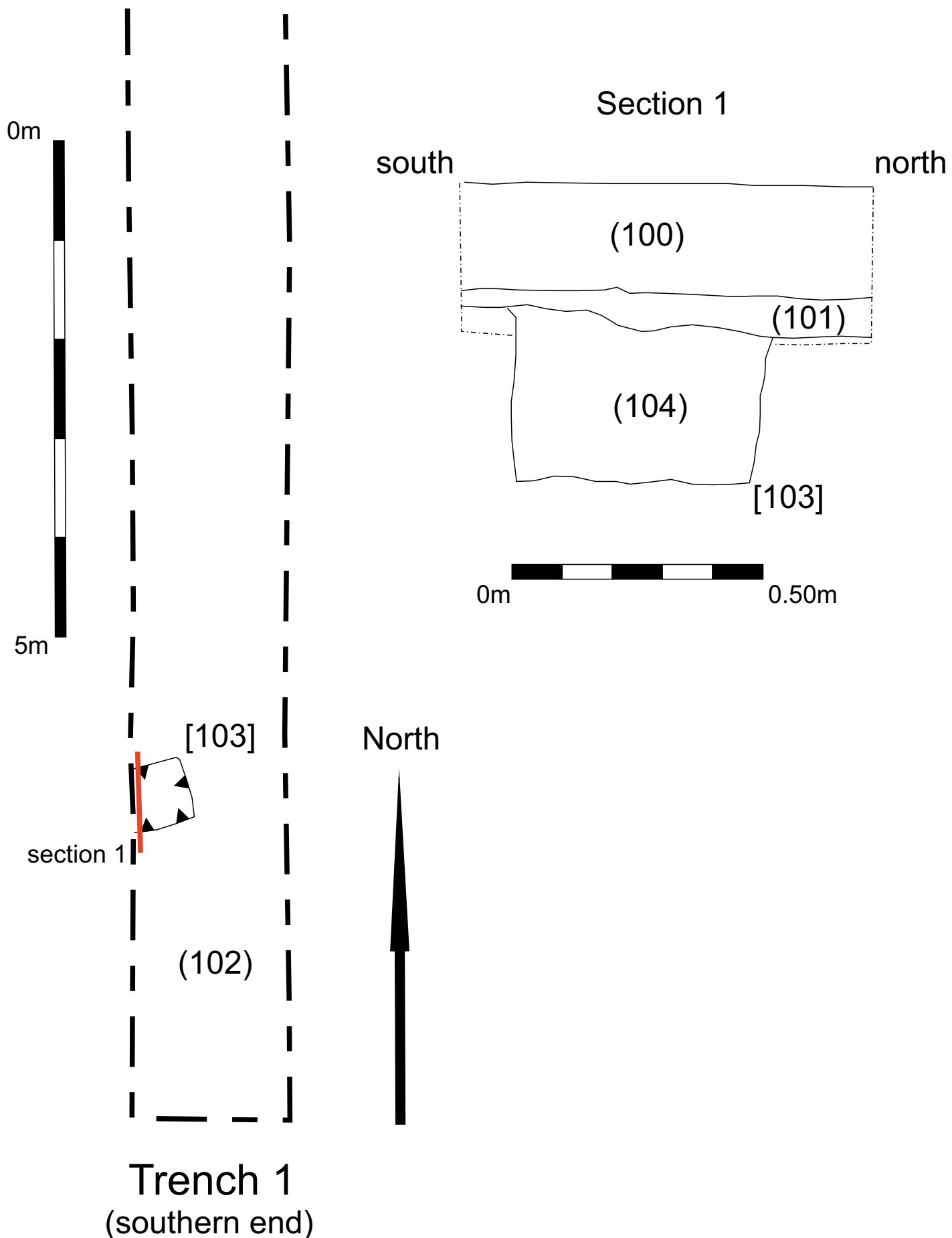


Fig 4

Langley Vale Woodland Project, Headley Road, Epsom, Surrey.

**Section and Plan of Cut 103, Trench 1**



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SURREY HERITAGE  
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