

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT 'WEYHANGER'
50 COMPTON WAY, MOOR PARK, FARNHAM, SURREY**

Summary

A trial trench evaluation was undertaken on the site of a proposed new dwelling at Weyhanger, Moor Park, Farnham, in order to satisfy an archaeological condition placed on the planning permission for the development. A single trial trench was machine excavated and revealed a localised colluvial (hillwash) layer, but nothing of archaeological interest. Consequently no further archaeological investigation is recommended in relation to this phase of the development scheme.

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| Client | MICA Projects Ltd |



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1. Introduction

1.1 On the 23rd November 2006, an archaeological field evaluation was carried out by staff of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit on the site of the proposed development at 'Weyhanger' 50 Compton Way, Moor Park, Farnham, Surrey (fig 1). The work was undertaken on behalf of MICA Projects Ltd, who have been granted planning permission for the development subject to an archaeological condition.

1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation for an evaluation was prepared by SCAU (Shaikhley 2006), following the consultation comments of Tony Howe, Archaeological Officer (Surrey County Council). The consultation comments indicated that the site fell within an Area of High Archaeological Potential for the prehistoric period. Consequently the aim of the evaluation was to examine the area for archaeological remains prior to any construction work or landscaping of the site.

2. Methodology

2.1 The evaluation was carried out using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m toothless bucket to excavate a single 20m trench, orientated north east/south west and within the footprint of the proposed building (fig 2). The trench was sited on a relatively level area adjacent to the existing building and above the steeply sloping ground to the west. This area was also less likely to have suffered either disturbance from tree roots, or from the construction of the existing building.

2.2 The machining process was carefully watched for the occurrence of any features or artefacts of archaeological interest, which might relate to ancient activity in the immediate vicinity. The natural surface below the subsoil, or below any 'made-ground' was carefully examined for evidence of features cutting it and hand excavation and recording carried out as necessary.

3. Results

3.1 The natural Folkestone Beds Sand was exposed along the whole length of the trench, visible as a crisp layer of mottled orange-buff colour sand. There was however some variation in stratigraphy along the length of the trench. The south west end had clearly suffered truncation due to the construction of the current driveway and only a very sparse 10cm thick layer of grey, slightly humic sandy soil (100) was visible, underlying a 20cm thick layer of made ground (104). Below 100 a 25cm thick pale grey-yellow sandy layer (105) was visible, with distinct brown 'veins' running horizontally through it. This was interpreted as either a subsoil interface or probably the degraded surface of the natural, that had been subject to leaching and water percolation, creating its striped 'veined' effect. An irregular shaped hollow, filled with pale cream colour sand was also identified at the southwest end of the trench. The hollow was excavated but found to have

an uneven base and sides, along with a sterile fill and was therefore interpreted as a natural feature.

3.2 The central area of the trench had also suffered truncation and showed the same shallow grey layer (100) and overlying made ground (104), as the south west end of the trench. The pale grey-yellow 'veined' interface layer (105) was also visible, but at a much greater depth (80cm below the ground surface). Sandwiched between 100 and 105 was a 60cm thick grey silty-sandy layer (101), which only began 4.5m from the south west end of the trench and was present, but at the shallower depth of 30cm at the trench's north east end. 101 was interpreted as a localised subsoil, that was most likely to be colluvial in nature, probably having been created by the movement of soil from upslope. In the central area of the trench, 101 had been subject to considerable tree root disturbance and it seemed likely that there had been a tree in the immediate locality, perhaps prior to clearance for the current building. It was not possible to suggest the date of origin for layer 101, except that it must have accumulated before layer 100 and before the construction of the current building.

3.3 The north east end of the trench presented the most intact stratigraphic sequence (fig 3 below), as it had not suffered any obvious modern truncation and showed that the uppermost layer (100) survived to a depth of 30cm. A distinct line of rooting was also obvious at the interface of layers 100 and 101 and this supported the idea of there having been a tree in the immediate vicinity and suggesting the 'topsoil' (100) may be relatively recent in origin. Unlike the rest of the trench, the north east end also showed a very dark soil horizon (102) between 101 and the natural surface (103). Despite the dark colour of 102, the lack of charcoal, burnt flint or artefacts relating to it made it unlikely this was directly the result of anthropogenic activity. It is more likely the dark colour was created by an increased organic content within the soil, such as would occur from the decay of leaf mould or extant roots in-situ, or the leaching of such material through the soil profile, thus creating an accumulation at the top of the natural surface.



Fig 3: Photo showing the stratigraphic sequence at the northeast end of the trench
4. Conclusion & Recommendations

4.1 Good archaeological coverage of the area to be developed was achieved and the natural geology was exposed along the whole of the length of the trench. No archaeological finds or features were discovered, despite thorough examination of the machined surface and spoil. The stratigraphy was variable and the presence of a localised layer of colluvium should be noted for any future developments on similar terrain in the locality, as although in this case no archaeology was identified, such evidence may survive intact underneath similar deposits.

On the basis of the above information it is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is required in respect of this development scheme.

Reference

Shaikhley, N, 2006 *Written scheme of investigation for the conduct of an archaeological evaluation at 'Weyhanger' 50 Compton Way, Moor Park, nr Farnham.* Client report prepared by Surrey County Archaeological Unit

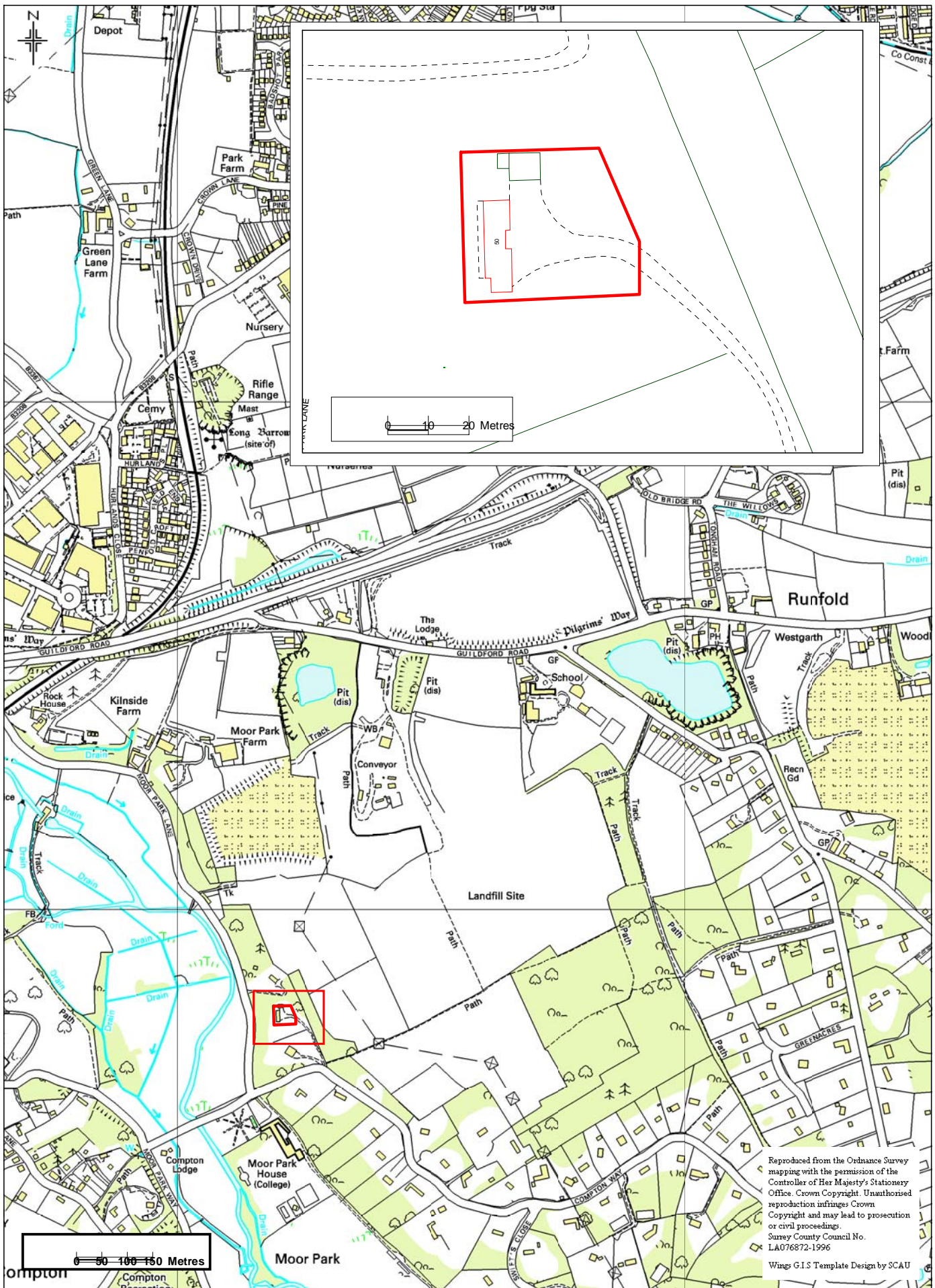


Fig 1 Weyhanger, 50 Compton Way Farnham: Location of the site

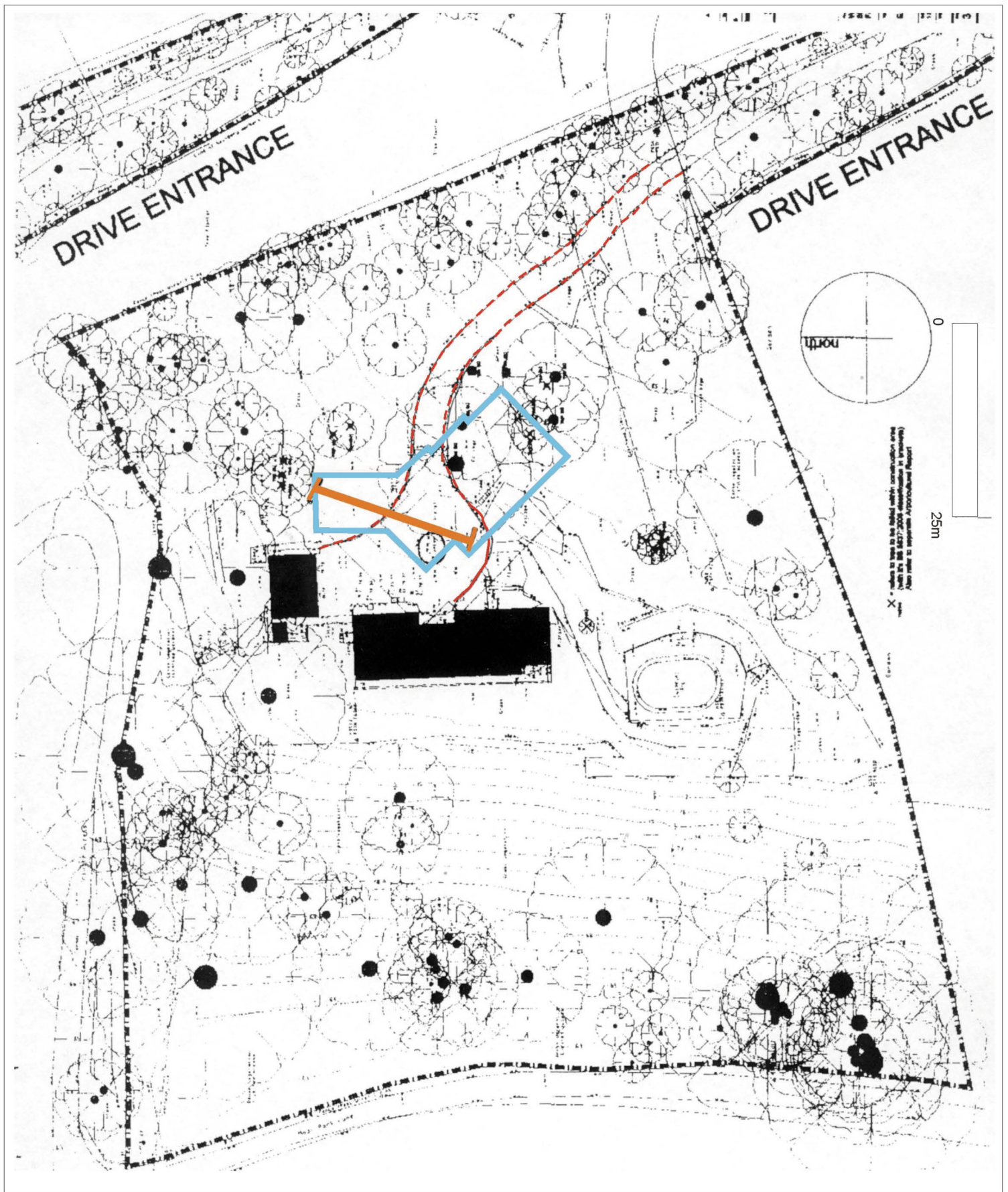


Figure 2 Weyhanger, 50 Compton Way, Farnham: Plan showing location of the original house (black), outline of the new house (blue), and the location of the excavated trial trench (orange)