

**Hydestile Hospital,
Hambleton,
Surrey**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for

Bryant Country Homes Southern Limited

October 1997

**Hydestile Hospital,
Hambledon, Surrey**

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by M. John Saunders

Report 97/55

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Hydestile Hospital, near Hambledon, Surrey (NGR SU 972 402). The work was commissioned by Mr. Gordon Piper of Bryant Country Homes Southern Limited, St. Leonard's House, Mill Street, Eynsham, Oxford, OX8 1JS.

Planning permission has been granted by Waverley Borough Council for the development of the former Hydestile Hospital for housing, subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note, **Archaeology and Planning** (PPG 16, 1990). The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Dinah Saich, Archaeological Officer for Surrey County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Keith Cooper, Adam Croney, M. John Saunders and Steven Weaver between 21st August and October 1st 1997 and the site code is HHH 97/55.

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desktop study carried out by Surrey County Archaeological Unit (Poulton 1997). Although the site lies in an area with few entries in the Sites and Monuments Record, Roman and Medieval pottery was recovered during construction of the hospital and a macehead and stone axe of late Neolithic or early Bronze Age date were found nearby.

Location, Topography and Geology

The site is located south of Godalming, close to the village of Hydestile and a little to the north-east of Hambledon (Fig. 1). It is bounded to the north by Salt Lane. The proposal area is located on Sandgate Beds of the Lower Greensand formation (BGS 1981) at an average height of 100 m. above Ordnance Datum. It occupies an area of approximately 10 ha., 4 ha. of which will be subject to new building. All of the existing hospital buildings have been demolished and the majority of the concrete hardstanding and roads removed. Wooded areas exist to the north-east and east of the site with fields and areas of grassland to the west and in the central area. The site slopes down to the north-west with several areas showing evidence of landscaping and terracing.

Archaeological Background

The preliminary desktop assessment carried out by Surrey County Archaeological Unit (Poulton 1997) included examination of early cartographic sources, secondary historical sources and the Sites and Monuments Record held by Surrey County Council. A walkover survey was also carried out in order to identify areas of archaeological potential or surviving earthworks. The study showed there to be few SMR entries for the locality, but during building works in the 1940's two sherds of pottery were discovered, probably Roman but possibly Medieval in date. A sandstone macehead and a stone axe of probable late Neolithic or early Bronze Age date were discovered during the digging of foundations at 'Feathercombe' some 600 m. to the south. The Lower Greensand is notably rich in Mesolithic worked flint and the possibility exists for finds of this nature within the development area.

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 development in order to devise an appropriate mitigation strategy should archaeological deposits be under threat. It was proposed that 21 trenches be excavated, each 1.8 m. wide and 20 m. long, subject to localised constraints. A contingency for a further 50 m. of trenching was allowed should clarification of the nature of any deposits be needed. The trenches were to be excavated under close archaeological supervision using a JCB-type mechanical excavator fitted with a ditching bucket. Should any certain or possible features or deposits be present the surfaces were to be hand-cleaned using the appropriate tools and sufficiently excavated to satisfy the terms of the brief. Following the excavation and recording of features the spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds and the trenches backfilled. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Due to the presence of a number of natural obstructions and mounds of demolition debris a small number of trenches had to be repositioned but these were placed as close to their intended positions as possible. A total of 21, trenches each 1.8 m. wide, were excavated under close archaeological supervision. These varied in length from 16 m. to 25.50 m., the majority being 20 m. long. The trenches were positioned to reflect the location of the former hospital buildings and the proposed development, and formed

three discrete groups (Fig. 2). Ten trenches were dug in the eastern part of the proposal area, positioned mainly between the former hospital wards.

Trenches 2, 4, 5, 6 and 9 revealed considerable amounts of disturbance from services associated with the hospital. Nearly all trenches exhibited evidence of landscaping; some areas had been terraced into the slope of the land whereas others had been levelled to provide building platforms. In all cases the natural geology consisted of a light to mid-brown sand or sandy clay with, in some of the trenches, a complete absence of topsoil and subsoil, the natural being overlain directly by made ground. No archaeological features or deposits were present in Trenches 1 - 10 and no finds were recovered from the spoilheaps.

Trenches 11 and 12 were situated in the central southern part of the site. The stratigraphy in Trench 11 consisted of turf and topsoil over sandy subsoil onto a buff coloured sandy clay natural. In contrast, Trench 12 (Plate 2) comprised 1.25 m. of made ground at the southern end over a grey-brown sandy clay, becoming orange-brown further north. A single flint flake was recovered from the base of the trench 5 m. from the south end but it seems quite probable that this may have been imported with the overburden. No archaeological features or deposits were present in either trench and no finds were recovered from the spoilheaps.

Trenches 13 to 21 were located roughly in the central part of the development area with modern services comprising drains, water pipes, electricity cables and cast-iron heating pipes present in Trenches 13, 14, 15, 18 and 21. Trench 15 was repositioned due to the presence of trees and Trenches 17 (Plate 1) and 18 were similarly moved because of large mounds of concrete and scrap metal. Trench 20 also had to be repositioned as its original location would have crossed the main access road

for contractors' vehicles. The natural geology varied slightly from trench to trench between a buff coloured sandy clay and orange-brown sand/sandy clay. The majority of this part of the site appeared to have been less disturbed than elsewhere although made ground was apparent in Trenches 13, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 21. A distinct buried topsoil was identified in Trenches 16 and 21. Trench 20 was situated on a steeply sloping area of made ground with the natural ground surface beneath having been heavily truncated by foundations. No archaeological features or deposits were present in any of these trenches and no finds were recovered from the spoilheaps.

The Finds

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A single flint flake was recovered from the base of Trench 12. This was not closely dateable, although it may belong to the Mesolithic period.

Conclusion

Of the 21 trenches examined none produced features or deposits of an archaeological nature and no artefacts were recovered from the spoilheaps. The only find was the single flint flake, of possible Mesolithic date from the base of Trench 12, which is likely to have been imported. The majority of the development area would appear to have been heavily truncated by landscaping and terracing during the construction of the original hospital. Should archaeological features have been present, it is almost certain that they would have been destroyed during this process.

References

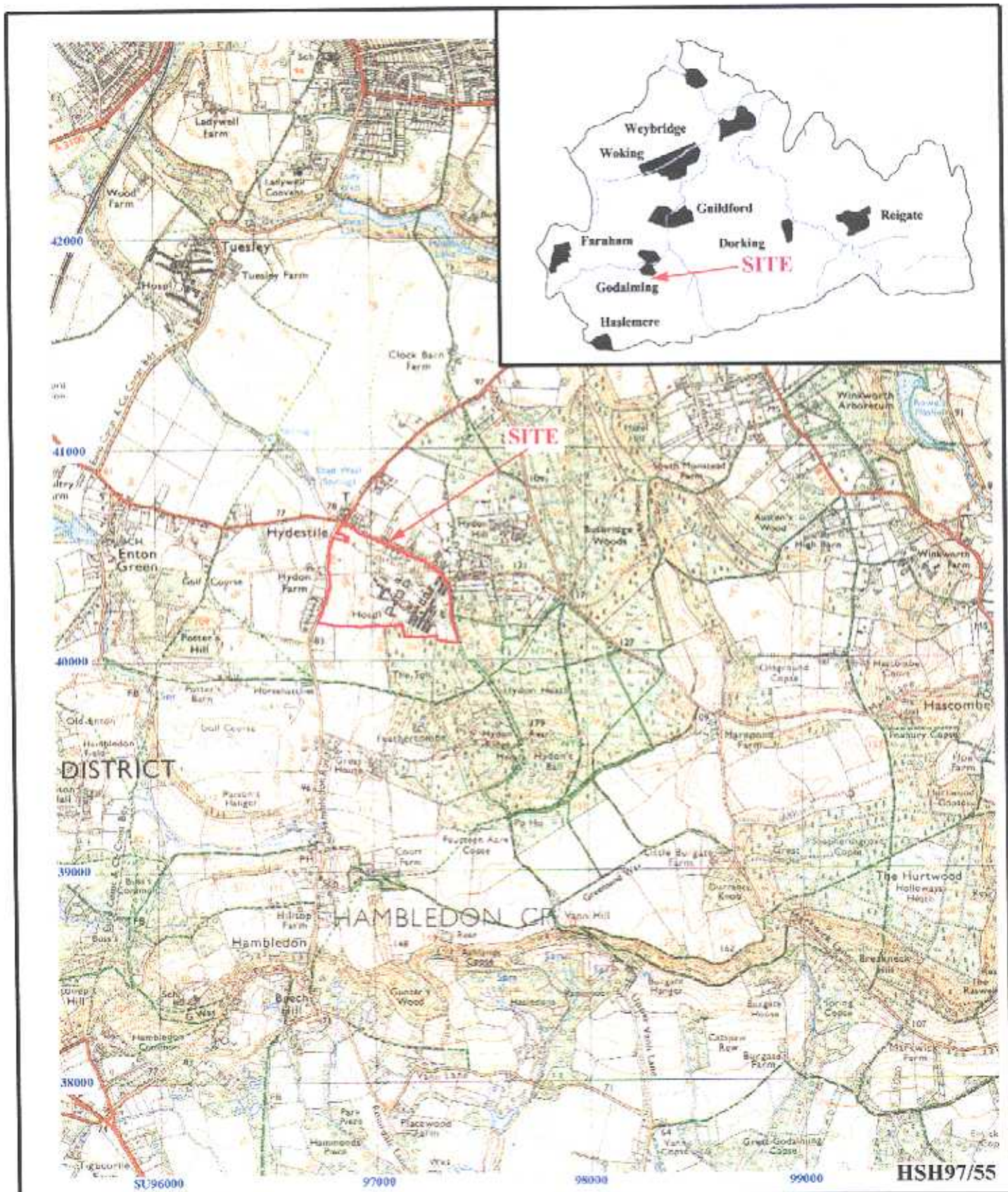
- BGS, 1981: **British Geological Survey**, 1: 50 000, Sheet 301, Solid and Drift Edition. Keyworth.
- PPG 16, 1990: **Archaeology and Planning**. Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16. (HMSO)
- Poulton R, 1997: A Preliminary Archaeological Assessment of the Proposed Development of the Former Hydestile Hospital, near Hambledon. SCAU, Dorking.

APPENDIX 1 - Trench Details

| Trench No. | Length (m) | Breadth (m) | Depth (m) | Comment |
|------------|------------|-------------|----------------------|---|
| 1 | 21.6 | 1.8 | 1.21 (E) 0.80 (W) | 0.16 m. of turf and topsoil over 0.30 m. of brown sandy silt onto natural sandy clay. |
| 2 | 17.4 | 1.8 | 1.10 | 1.00 m. of made ground onto natural sandy clay. |
| 3 | 21.7 | 1.8 | 1.40 (N) 1.20 (S) | 0.30 m. of made ground over 0.40 m. of brown silty fill above 0.40 m. of sandy subsoil onto natural sandy clay. |
| 4 | 19.30 | 1.8 | 1.80 (E) 1.90 (W) | 0.15 m. of topsoil over 0.35 m. sandy subsoil onto natural sandy clay. |
| 5 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 1.00 (N) 0.75 (S) | 0.4 m. of made ground onto reddish brown natural sand. |
| 6 | 19.40 | 1.8 | 0.60 | No topsoil, 0.10 m. of scalpings over fill onto natural sandy clay. |
| 7 | 22.70 | 1.8 | 0.80 (N) 1.10 (S) | 0.55 m. of turf and topsoil onto natural silty sand. |
| 8 | 25.20 | 1.8 | 0.50 (N) 1.00 (S) | No topsoil, chippings onto light orange brown natural sandy clay. |
| 9 | 24.50 | 1.8 | 1.00 | No topsoil, rubble infill over natural sandy clay. Drain and two heating pipes cross trench. |
| 10 | 25.50 | 1.8 | 0.70 | No topsoil, scalpings onto natural sandy clay. |
| 11 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 0.88 (N) 1.00 (S) | 0.30 m. turf and topsoil over 60-70 m. subsoil onto buff natural sandy clay. |
| 12 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 0.80 (N) | S. half - 1.25 m. of made ground onto natural orange brown sandy clay. Greyish brown natural sandy clay towards S. end. 1 worked flint flake from base of trench. |
| 13 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 0.62 (N) 0.95 (S) | 0.38 m. of topsoil over 0.24 m. of subsoil onto buff natural sandy clay at north end. 0.54 m. of made ground below topsoil at south end. Modern water pipe and heating pipe cross trench. |
| 14 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 0.63 | 0.30 m. over 0.33 m. subsoil onto orange brown natural sandy clay. Modern pipe: trench. |
| 15 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 0.90 (N) | 0.80-0.90 m. of make-up layer onto orange brown natural sandy clay. Modern drain present. |
| 16 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 1.16 (N) | 0.15 m. of topsoil over 0.20 m. of yellowish sand (made ground) over 0.18 m. of buried topsoil over 0.48 m. of subsoil onto buff natural sand. |
| 17 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 1.10 (W) 0.80 (E) | 0.25 m. of topsoil over 0.72 m. of subsoil onto yellowish brown natural sand. Brick drain inspection cover in N. section at 13 m. |
| 18 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 0.80 | 0.30 m. of turf and topsoil over 0.35 m. of subsoil onto buff natural sandy clay. Drain crosses trench N/S at 16 m. Drain inspection cover in N section at 1.2-1.9 m. |
| 19 | 16.00 | 1.8 | 0.65 | 0.60 m. of infill onto buff natural sand. |
| 20 | 16.00 | 1.8 | 1.45 (S) | Made ground onto natural sand. Foundations heavily truncate natural from 8-16 m. |

APPENDIX 1 - Trench details - continued

| Trench No. | Length (m.) | Width (m.) | Depth (m.) | Comment |
|------------|-------------|------------|----------------------|---|
| 21 | 20.00 | 1.8 | 2.12 (W) 1.16 (E) | 1.15 m. of turf and topsoil over 0.20 m. of buried topsoil onto natural sand at W. end. 0.30 m. of topsoil over 0.80 m. of subsoil onto natural sand at east end. Electricity cables and drain cross trench at W. end. Tree stumps at E. end. |

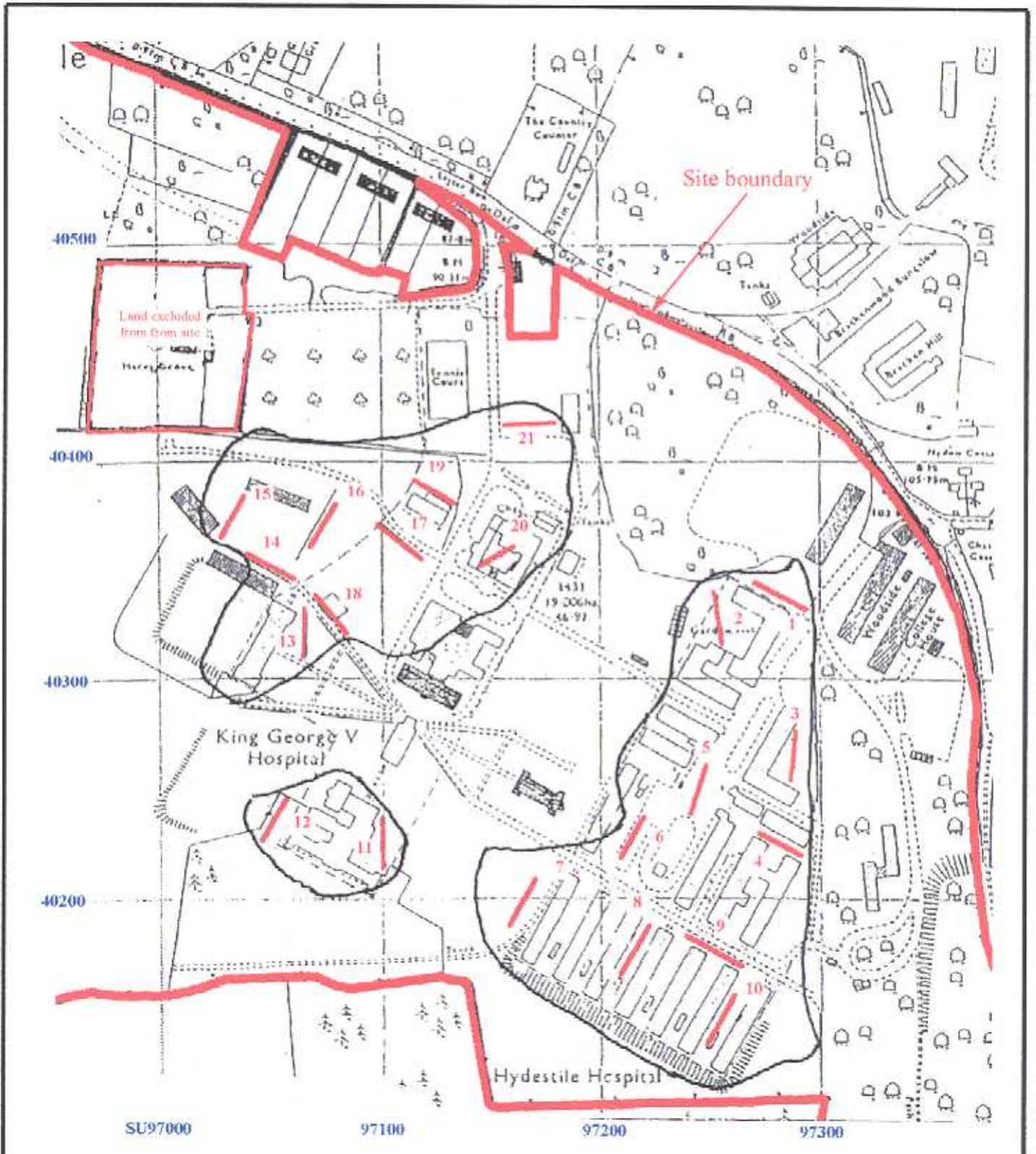


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Figure 1. Location of site within Surrey and Hambledon.

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Figure 2. Location of trenches.

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Plate 1. Trench 17 looking west, horizontal scales 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Representative section , Trench 12 looking east, horizontal scale 2m, vertical scale 1m.