

**Land at Hampshire Clinic,
Basing Road, Basingstoke,
Hampshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for

Fairclough Homes Limited

October 1997

**Land at Hampshire Clinic, Basing Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Project 97/76

by Steve Ford

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out on land to the east of the Hampshire Clinic, Basing Road, Old Basing, Basingstoke, Hampshire (SU 65255275) (Figs. 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Mr. Graham Jones of Fairclough Homes Limited, Forge House, West Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9LQ, as part of a scheme of archaeological investigation prior to the development of the site for housing and as a requirement of **Archaeology and Planning** (PPG 16, 1990). The field evaluation was carried out to a project design approved by Mr. David Hopkins of Hampshire County Archaeology Section, who advises the Local Planning Authority on archaeological matters.

The granting of planning permission was to include a condition relating to archaeological matters and required, as a minimum, a watching brief to take place during groundworks. In the event, it was concluded that satisfaction of the archaeological condition would be best served if archaeological works took place in advance of groundworks. It was therefore decided that a field evaluation was more suitable in this instance as any archaeological constraints could be identified and, if possible, removed at an early stage in the planning process.

The archaeological fieldwork took place from 16th-21st October 1997 and was carried out by John Saunders, Martin Redding, Steve Ford and Kate Taylor. The site code is HCOB97/76.

Topography and Geology

The site occupies a 1.1 ha. 'L-shaped' parcel of land to the west of the recently constructed Hampshire Clinic. It lies on a south facing medium slope on the side of the Loddon Valley at between 75 m. and 90 m. above OD. It is bounded to the north by a railway line, to the east by a depot and to the south by Basing Lane (Fig. 2) and is subdivided by a substantial bank topped by mature horse chestnut trees. The southern half of the site is under grass, whereas the northern section is scrubby grassland. According to the British Geological Survey the site lies on Upper Chalk (BGS 1971) and this was confirmed during the fieldwork.

Archaeological Background

No archaeological deposits are recorded for the site or in the immediate vicinity but its location, on a valley side, is one usually regarded as favoured for early settlement. Recent field survey has located many sites of Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval date further down the valley in an area with previously very few recorded sites (Weaver 1995). Investigation of a site at Riverdene some 700 m. to the south-west, which has a similar topography to the proposal site, revealed a middle Saxon settlement and some Prehistoric activity (Mesolithic and Bronze Age) (Hall, forthcoming).

Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the proposed development site and ascertain the presence/absence, extent, condition, date, character and significance of any archaeological deposits. It was originally proposed to dig eight trenches, each 20 m. long and 1.6 m. wide, distributed across the site and including one trench across the earthwork. Although in the event,

excavation of the latter trench was not feasible. The trenches were excavated using a JCB-type mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and the resulting spoilheaps were searched for artefacts.

The evaluation

As mentioned above, seven trenches were eventually excavated, varying in length from 3.3 m. to 20.6 m. (full details are provided in Appendix 1). The trench that was to be located across the earthwork (Fig. 2) was omitted as it would have necessitated damage to mature trees which are to be retained in the development. However, the trenching has shown that it is likely that the bank is a landscaping feature of Victorian date relating to the previous use of the site.

The evaluation trenches revealed that the majority of the site has been extensively disturbed by previous developments. In the area to the south of the earthwork (Fig. 2, Trenches 1-4) the original ground surface has been stripped of topsoil and subsoil and then used as a dump for well-compacted chalk rubble of between 1.2 and 1.8 m. depth. The full extent of each trench was not emptied of this made-ground but it was examined by a series of test pits at either end of each trench. There was some uncertainty as to whether or not extensive truncation of the bedrock (chalk/coombe rock) had taken place but in some locations an uneven base and clean chalk indicates that this is likely.

The trenches to the north of the earthwork (Trenches 5-7) were located in the area of a former hospital building. Trench 6 revealed brick-built foundations and Trench 5 revealed a dump of made-ground 1.2 m. thick. In contrast, Trench 7, on the extreme western edge of the proposal site, revealed an undisturbed profile with topsoil overlying a clayey subsoil above chalk/coombe

bedrock at a depth of 0.3 m. However, no archaeological deposits were found in this trench and examination of the base of the trench and the spoilheaps revealed no artefacts.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the trenching exercise has revealed that most of the site has no archaeological potential as the relevant archaeological levels have either been truncated or heavily disturbed. Just one area of undisturbed ground on the margins of the proposal area (around Trench 7) was located but no deposits or finds of archaeological significance were seen.

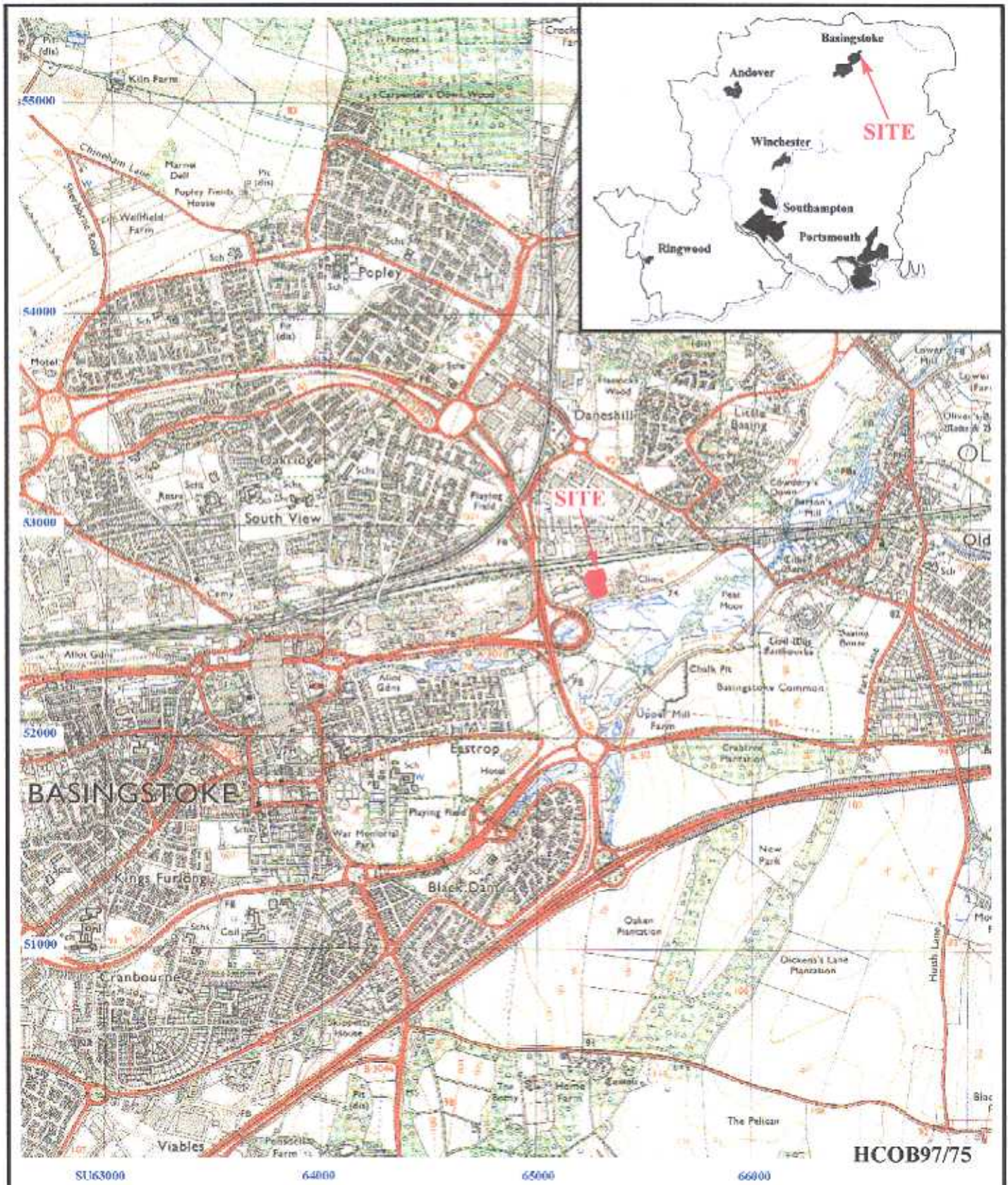
References

- BGS 1971, British Geological Survey 1:50000 Sheet 284. Keyworth.
- Hall, M., forthcoming, Excavation of Prehistoric features and a Saxon settlement at Riverdene, Basingstoke, Hampshire, (Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club).
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*. DoE Planning Policy Guidance note 16. (HMSO).
- Weaver, S. 1995, Loddon Valley (Hampshire) Fieldwalking Survey, 1994/95, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 94/1, Reading.

Appendix 1: Trench details

(0 m. at south or west end)

<i>No.</i>	<i>Length (m.)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	21	1.8 m. of made-ground (chalk) above truncated chalk/coombe rock.
2	11.5	1.5 m. of made-ground (chalk) above truncated chalk/coombe rock.
3	20.6	1.6 m. of made-ground (chalk) above truncated chalk/coombe rock.
4	20.4	1.6 m. of made-ground (chalk) above truncated chalk/coombe rock.
5	3.3	1.2 m. of made-ground above truncated chalk.
6	6.5	Trench abandoned - foundations.
7	19.8	0-0.23 m. topsoil above 0.1 m. of clayey subsoil above chalk/coombe rock. North-east end just cuts a modern bank.

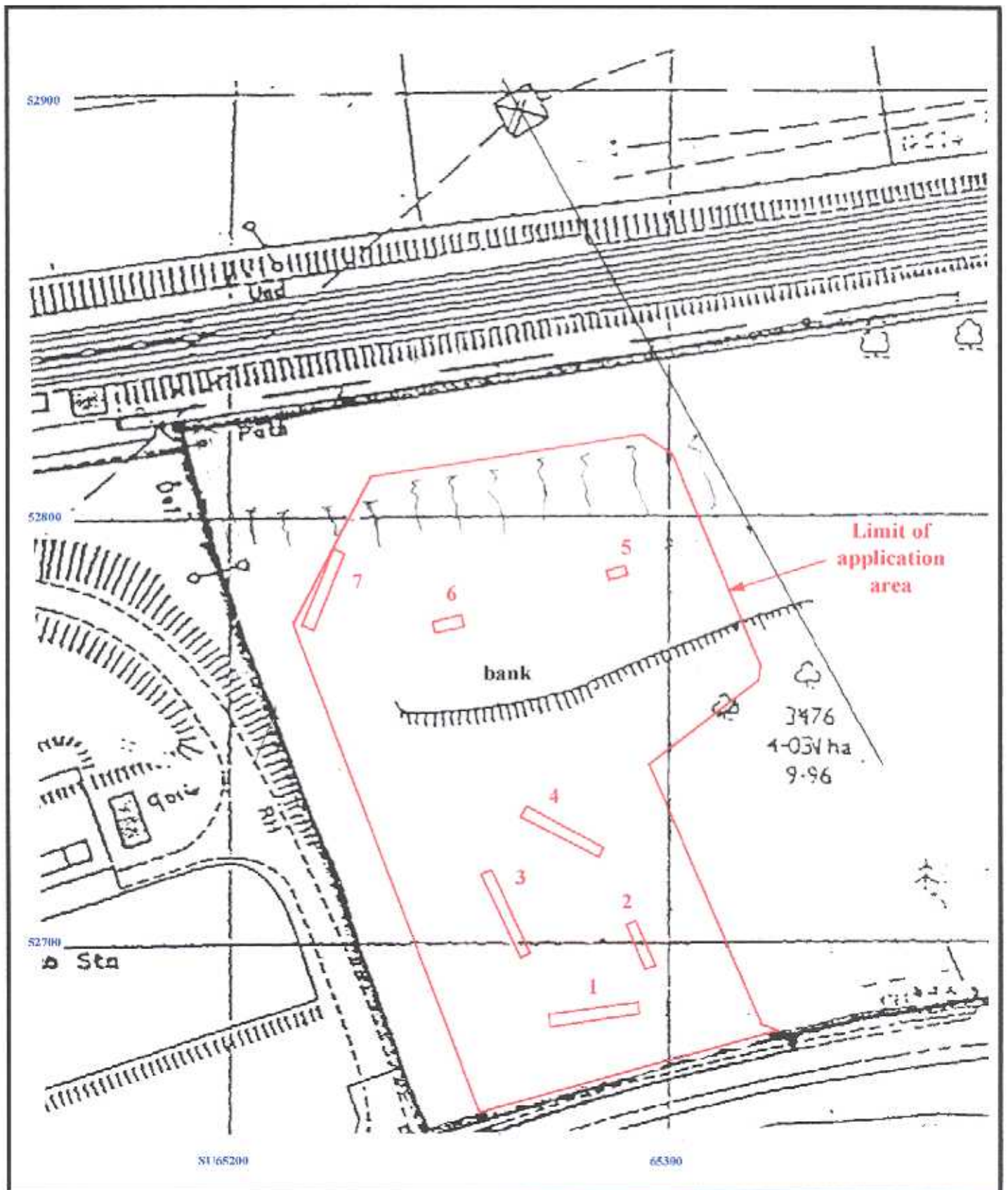


**Hampshire Clinic, Old Basing, Basingstoke,
Hampshire, 1997**

**Figure 1. Location of site within Hampshire and
Basingstoke.**

Reproduced From Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1204 SU65/75
1:25000

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
 SERVICES



Hampshire Clinic, Old Basing, Basingstoke,
Hampshire, 1997

Figure 2. Trench location plan.

Reproduced from drawing supplied by the client

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S