

**Dawley Park, Kestrel Way,  
Hayes, London Borough of Hillingdon**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Black Country Properties Limited**

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DWP01

**May 2001**

## Summary

**Site name:** Dawley Park, Kestrel Way, Hayes, London Borough of Hillingdon

**Grid reference:** TQ 0890 7960

**Site activity:** Evaluation trenching

**Date and duration of project:** 18th–27th April 2001

**Site code:** DWP01

**Area of site:** 3 ha.

**Summary of results:** No archaeological deposits were observed. A single prehistoric flint flake, a fragment of flint-gritted prehistoric pottery, and a piece of burnt flint were the only finds recovered.

**Monuments identified:** None

**Location and reference of archive:** The site archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR. It is anticipated that the complete archive will be deposited with the Museum of London in due course, given that permission to deposit the finds is received from the owner.

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# **Dawley Park, Kestrel Way, Hayes, London Borough of Hillingdon An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Steve Ford

**Report 01/29**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Dawley Park, Kestrel Way, Hayes, London Borough of Hillingdon (TQ 0890 7960) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Taylor of Dennis, Walker, Welham Ltd, 1 St Matthews Business Centre, Gower Street, Leicester, LE1 3LJ on behalf of Black Country Properties Limited.

An application for planning permission (6198/APP/2001/508) has been made to the London Borough of Hillingdon for the construction of a large redistribution facility comprising a warehouse with service yards and carparking. A programme of archaeological work, in the form of a field evaluation, was requested by Mr R Whytehead, Archaeological Adviser of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS). This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and Borough policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr R Whytehead (GLAAS). The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford, Sian Anthony and Claire Challis between the 18th and 27th April 2001. The site code is DWP01 and the archive will be deposited with the Museum of London.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site comprises an irregular plot of land, of *c.* 3ha, on the south side of Kestrel Way and to the north of the main railway line from Paddington to the west (Fig. 2). It was previously occupied by a large factory of the Thorn EMI complex, which has been demolished. The site lies at a height of approximately 34m above Ordnance Datum and, according to the BGS survey (BGS 1981) is located on brickearth (Langley silt) of Taplow age above the Lynch Hill terrace gravels. This was confirmed during the field observations.

## **Archaeological background**

Interest in this site is dominated by the presence to the west of an area from which large numbers of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic finds were recovered during brickearth and gravel extraction during the 19th and early 20th centuries (Wymer 1968, 259; Collins 1978). The sites of these finds were Odell's and Clayton's pits, which were

dug for gravel in the earlier part of the 19th century and from which many items were recovered (Collins 1978, fig. 9). For example, Wymer (*ibid.*) lists 108 flint and stone hand axes and one cleaver in the Sturge Collection (now in the British Museum) which came from the Dawley area including Odell's pit. Seven of these items were in a sharp or mint condition. Most of the artefacts from this area occur within the Lynch Hill gravel and are abraded, indicating that they have been redeposited during the reworking of earlier gravel deposits, rather than being *in situ*. However, the various collections contain material of Middle Palaeolithic date represented by items manufactured using the *Levallois* technique. These items are in a sharp condition, which suggests they were *in situ* and are likely to have derived from contexts within the brickearth or at the brickearth–gravel interface (Wymer 1968, 257). The precise provenance of these possibly *in situ* items is not known and it is unclear if they represented important occupation sites or merely isolated stray finds from casual loss. Nevertheless, finding and excavating an undisturbed occupation site of this period is a major research objective of Palaeolithic archaeology both nationally (WA 1996, 114) and internationally (EHAD 1997, 46, chronological priority P1).

A small field evaluation and watching brief were carried out in 1998 (Ford 1998; 1999) to examine a part of an earlier phase of redevelopment of the former factory site which comprised a deep excavation into the gravel terrace. This work revealed one struck flint (a core) from the surface of the gravel and beneath a thin layer of brickearth, and one dubious flake from within the gravel.

The Greater London Sites and Monument Record (GLSMR) does not list many finds and deposits of later periods in the area of the development but further afield, such as at West Drayton to the west and Harmondsworth to the south, finds and deposits of Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval dates have been noted on both brickearth and gravel deposits (MoLAS 2000).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits on the site of the proposed redistribution facility.

To achieve these objectives there were two considerations to determine the trench configuration selected. For deposits of later periods (i.e., Neolithic and later) it is generally accepted that trenches of 1.5m wide or more and between 5m and 20m long are most suitable for locating cut features, such as ditches. However, this approach is less suitable for locating very small sites, such as flint knapping floors, which are thought to be typical of the Palaeolithic period and were anticipated here. An alternative approach that could have been employed would be to dig many more very small trenches which, in effect, would be used to map the distribution

of finds across the area and would increase the chance of locating an area of interest. However, there are a number of general and site specific problems with this approach:

a) whilst the size of hole needed to examine the brickearth/gravel interface in most cases could be very small (*c.* 1m x 1m), to inspect this horizon safely on this site would require a sizeable intervention and/or shoring as the interface is so deeply buried. Very small trenches also create a number of difficulties in the interpretation of any cut features or layers of a date later than the Palaeolithic period that might be encountered.

b) If a particular trench was coincident with the centre of a knapping cluster there would be no ambiguity as to its significance. However, for trenches not so fortunately located, the interpretation of a small number of finds would be ambiguous – are they a product of casual loss well away from the main area of occupation or peripheral to the latter? After considering the difficulties of implementing and interpreting the results of the small test pit approach, it was proposed that evidence of both the early and later periods could be best obtained by a single scheme involving the digging of conventional evaluation trenches which was a continuation of the strategy adopted by the earlier evaluation (Ford 1998).

The trenches were located to examine the footprint of the main structure (Fig. 2). The trenches were intended to expose a 10m x *c.* 3.6m area of the brickearth but, due to the nature of the ground conditions, the layout and shape of the trenches varied considerably. The trenching was designed to examine two stratigraphic horizons:

- 1) the surface of the brickearth to search for archaeological deposits of later periods (Mesolithic–medieval);
- 2) to search within the brickearth and the interface between the brickearth and the gravel for any earlier (Palaeolithic) deposits.

Following removal of concrete and other overburden, the surface of the brickearth was exposed by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket under direct and continuous archaeological supervision. This surface was then hand-cleaned where necessary and examined for archaeological deposits. Once this had been completed the machine was re-employed to excavate the brickearth in spits until the surface of the gravel was exposed. The surface of each spit exposed and the surface of the gravel were closely examined for finds, as was the resultant spoil.

## **Results (Plates 1–4)**

Fifteen trenches were dug by a JCB-type machine, as indicated on Figure 2. One of these trenches (15) was abandoned due to buried obstructions before any natural geological outcrop was revealed. The trenches at the surface of the brickearth varied in length from 12.0m to 4.5m and from 1.6m to 3.5m wide.

The trenches were fairly consistent in their stratigraphy and fell into two categories: Five trenches (1, 2, 6, 7, 12) revealed 1.35–1.8m of compact made ground overlying a buried soil. The buried soil (a dark grey brown silty clay) was typically 0.25–0.3m thick and contained material of late post-medieval date. For the remaining trenches 1.6–2m of made ground directly overlay brickearth. Many of the trenches revealed disturbance of the brickearth natural comprising pipe trenches, concrete and brick foundations and miscellaneous 19th/20th-century cut features.

The surface of the brickearth was deliberately truncated by 0.1–0.15m during machining to clearly expose any cut archaeological deposits. The brickearth surface was then hand-cleaned. Apart from three finds of pottery, struck and burnt flint (see below), no other finds or cut features of archaeological significance were observed.

As a second phase of excavation, the brickearth deposits were then removed in spits of *c.* 0.2–0.3m to reveal the surface of the underlying gravel. This revealed a thickness of brickearth varying between 0.38 and 1.1m but without any clear stratigraphy present. The gravel surface undulated and contained some convolutions. In places the brickearth and gravel contained silt-filled hollows and in Trenches 2 and 12 larger hollows infilled with a pale yellow clayey-silt are thought to represent palaeochannels traversing the surface of the gravel. Examination of both the spoil from the brickearth and brickearth-gravel interface, and the surface of the exposed gravel did not reveal any finds of archaeological interest.

## **Finds**

### *Struck flint*

A single struck flint was recovered from the cleaned surface of the brickearth in Trench 12. This was an ordinary core with scars showing broad flake removals probably using a hard hammerstone. It is not closely datable but is probably of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

### *Pottery*

A single small fragment (<1g) of flint-gritted pottery was recovered from the upper levels of the brickearth in Trench 9. The piece is too small to be closely identifiable but its friable nature suggests that it is of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

### *Burnt flint*

A single piece of burnt flint (35g) was recovered from the cleaned surface of the brickearth in Trench 12.

## **Conclusion**

The evaluation has not revealed any deposits of Palaeolithic or later periods. Two artefacts, a single struck flint and a single fragment of pottery, were recovered from the upper parts of the brickearth and point to some prehistoric (possibly Neolithic or Bronze Age) activity in the area. This activity need be no more than the farming of the area with these finds introduced onto the site as casual finds within manure. Inspection of the brickearth during removal and the surface of the gravel and the resulting spoilheaps did not reveal any additional finds. On the basis of this evidence, the site has no archaeological potential.

## **References**

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, Sheet 269, 1:50000, Keyworth
- Collins, D, 1978, *Early man in West Middlesex*, London Museum Archaeology Publication, HMSO
- EHAD, 1997, *Research Agenda* (draft), English Heritage Archaeology Division
- Ford, S, 1998, Land at Dawley Park, Hayes, London Borough of Hillingdon, an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services Report 98/53
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- MoLAS, 2000, *The Archaeology of Greater London*, Museum of London Archaeology Service, London
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, HMSO
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- Wymer, J, 1968, *Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britain*, Baker, London

## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m) (to brickearth)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	12.0	2.4-3.4	2.3	Made ground 1.8m above 0.32m of dark greyish brown silty clay (buried soil?). This overlay 0.38m of brickearth (31.81m AOD top) over gravel. Modern pits and footings on east side.
2	8.8	2.75-2.9	1.5(N), 1.75 (S)	Made ground 1.35m above 0.3m of dark greyish brown silty clay (buried soil?). This overlay 1.1m of brickearth (32.27m AOD) over gravel. Silt filled channel at south end. Modern pipes and pit.
3	4.5	2.7	1.8	Made ground 1.6m above 0.8m+ of brickearth (32.34m AOD). Concrete obstructions at southern end
4	5.1	3.2	1.9	Made ground 1.6m above brickearth (32.25m AOD) Trench abandoned to north due to concrete obstructions. Modern disturbance at south west.
5	10.8	2.75-2.9	1.85	Made ground 1.7m above 0.85m of brickearth(32.24m AOD) over gravel. Some modern disturbance of brickearth
6	7.0	3.4-3.5	2.05	Made ground 1.55m above 0.2 m of dark greyish brown silty clay (buried soil?). This overlay 0.65m of brickearth (32.21m AOD) over gravel. Modern pit.
7	4.8	2.5-3.0	1.7	Made ground 1.4m above 0.15 m of dark greyish brown silty clay (buried soil?). This overlay 0.95m of brickearth (32.41m AOD) over gravel. Pipes and concrete at north east end. Disturbed to gravel at south west end. Brick footings to north west.
8	7.8	2.8	1.9	Made ground 1.6m above 0.8m of brickearth(32.35m AOD) over gravel. Modern pit.
9	10.5	2.2-2.4	2.15	Made ground 1.8m above 1.0m of brickearth(32.10m AOD) over gravel. Concrete at north east end. Much brick pushed into brickearth.
10	8.3	2.4-3.2	1.7(W) 1.9(E)	Made ground 1.6m above 0.8m of brickearth(32.24m AOD) over gravel with silt stripes.
11	8.2	2.9	1.85	Made ground 1.7m above 0.8m of brickearth (32.24m AOD) over gravel.
12	7.5	3.0-3.5	2.0	Made ground 1.7m above 0.2 m of dark greyish brown silty clay (buried soil?). This overlay 0.6m of brickearth (31.94m AOD) over gravel at south end and silt filled channel at north end (not bottomed). Concrete obstruction to south east.
13	9.7	2.5-2.9	2.0	Made ground 1.85m above 0.55m of brickearth (32.08m AOD) over gravel, and silt stripe at south end (observed for only 3.5 m). Concrete foundations to north east.
14	8.6	1.6	2.2	Made ground 2.0m above 0.7m of brickearth (31.97m AOD) over gravel. Concrete at north end.
15	7.0			Written off - whole trench occupied by concrete foundations



## APPENDIX 2: GLSMR/RCHME NAR Archaeological Report Form

### 1. TYPE OF RECORDING

Evaluation:- yes                      Excavation                      Watching Brief

### 2. LOCATION

**Borough:** Hillingdon

**Address:** Dawley Park, Kestrel Way, Hayes, Middlesex

**Name:** Dawley Park

**Site Code:** DWP01

**National Grid Refs: Centre of site:** TQ 0890 7960

### 3. ORGANISATION

**Name of archaeological unit:** Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

**Address:** 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR

**Site director/supervisor:** Steve Ford

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Funded by:** Black Country Properties

### 4. DURATION

**Date fieldwork started:** 18/4/01

**Date finished:** 27/4/01

**Fieldwork previously notified? y/n:** yes

**Fieldwork will continue? y/n/ not known:** No

### 5. PERIODS REPRESENTED

Palaeolithic:

Roman: -

Mesolithic: -

Saxon (pre-AD 1066): -

Neolithic: -

Medieval (1066-1485): -

Bronze Age:- (YES)

Post-Medieval: -

Iron Age: -

Unknown: -

### 6. PERIOD SUMMARIES (use headings for each period (ROMAN; MEDIEVAL; ETC.) and additional sheets if necessary).

Three finds were made from on or just within the upper levels of the brickearth: A single flint flake of prehistoric date (Mesolithic- Late Bronze Age) with a single small fragment of flint gritted prehistoric pottery. One undated fragment of burnt flint also found

**7. NATURAL -**

Type: Langley silts (brickearth) and gravel

**Height above Ordnance Datum:** 31.81–31.97m at surface of brickearth

**8. LOCATION OF ARCHIVES**

a) Please tick those categories still in your possession:

Notes      Plans      Photos      NGatives

Slides      Correspondence      MScripts (unpublished reports, etc.)

b) **All records will be deposited in the following museum, record office, etc.** Museum of London

c) **Approximate year of transfer:** unknown

d) **Location of any copies:** N/A

e) **Has a security copy of the archive been made? y/n:** Not yet. Three microfiche copies will be made in due course, one for RCHME, one for museum and one to be kept by TVAS.

**If not, do you wish RCHME to consider microfilming? y/n:** no

**9. LOCATION OF FINDS:**

a) **In your possession (All/Some/None):** All

b) **All finds will be deposited with the following museum:** Museum of London

c) **Approximate. year of transfer:** unknown

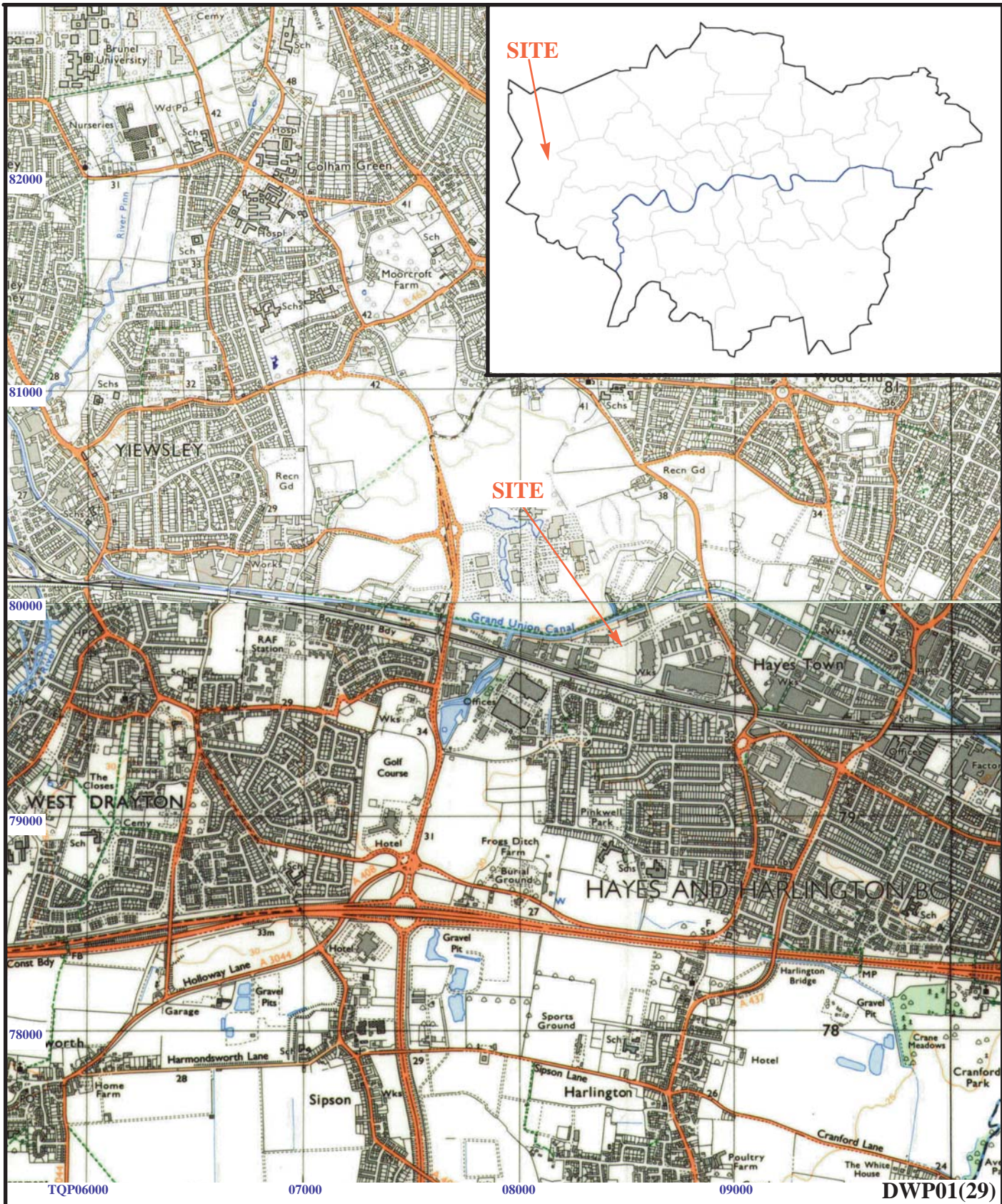
**10. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

FORD, S, 2001, Dawley Park, Hayes, London Borough of Hillingdon, An Archaeological Evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services Report 01/29, Reading

**SIGNED:**

**DATE:** 2/5/01

**Steve Ford**



**Dawley Park, Kestrel, Hayes,  
London Borough of Hillingdon, 2001**

Figure 1. Location of site within Hayes and Greater London.

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THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

# Dawley Park, Kestrel Way, Hayes, London Borough of Hillingdon, 2001

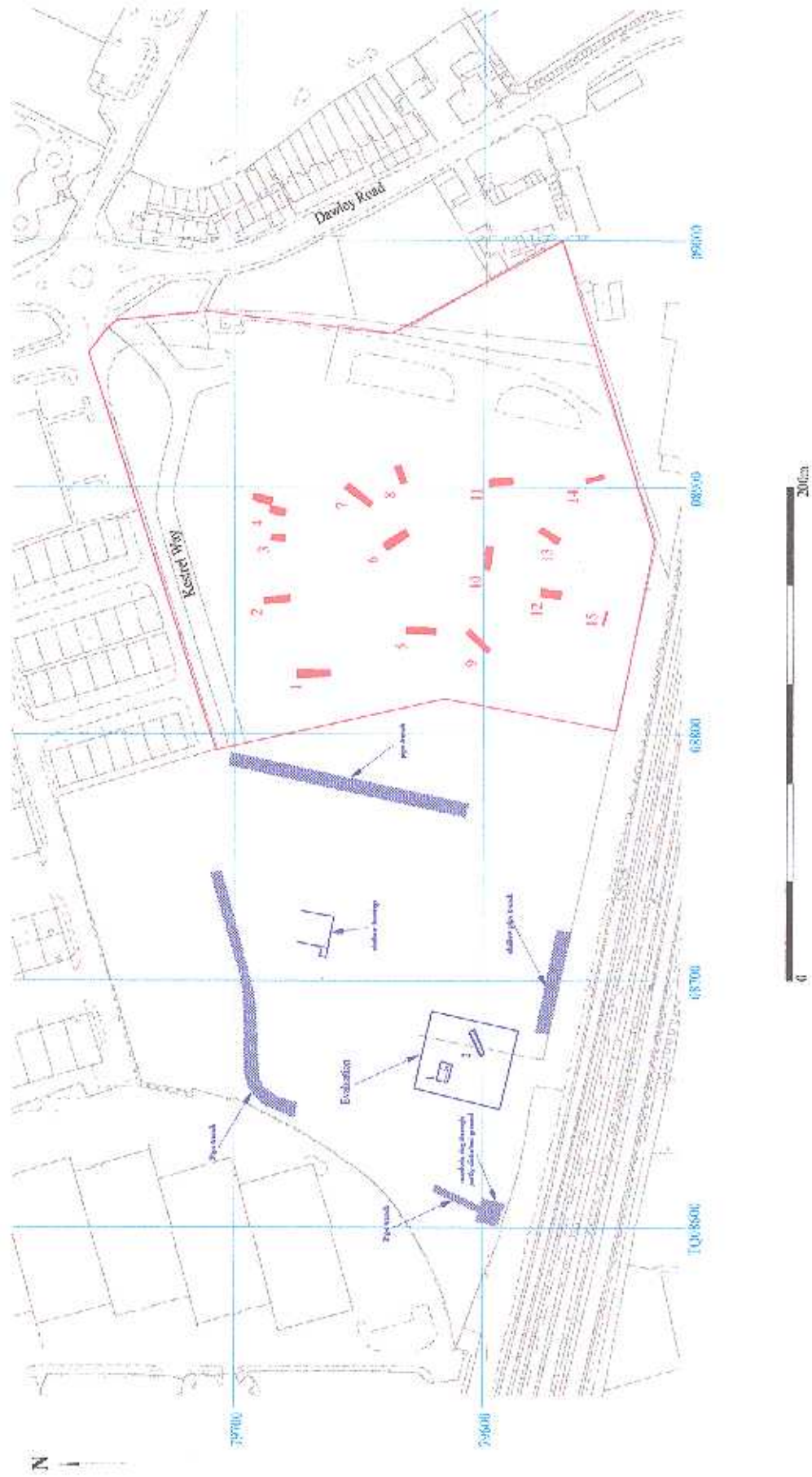


Figure 2. Location of trenches showing previous evaluation and watching brief to the west.

# Dawley Park, Kestrel Way, Hayes, London Borough of Hillingdon, 2001

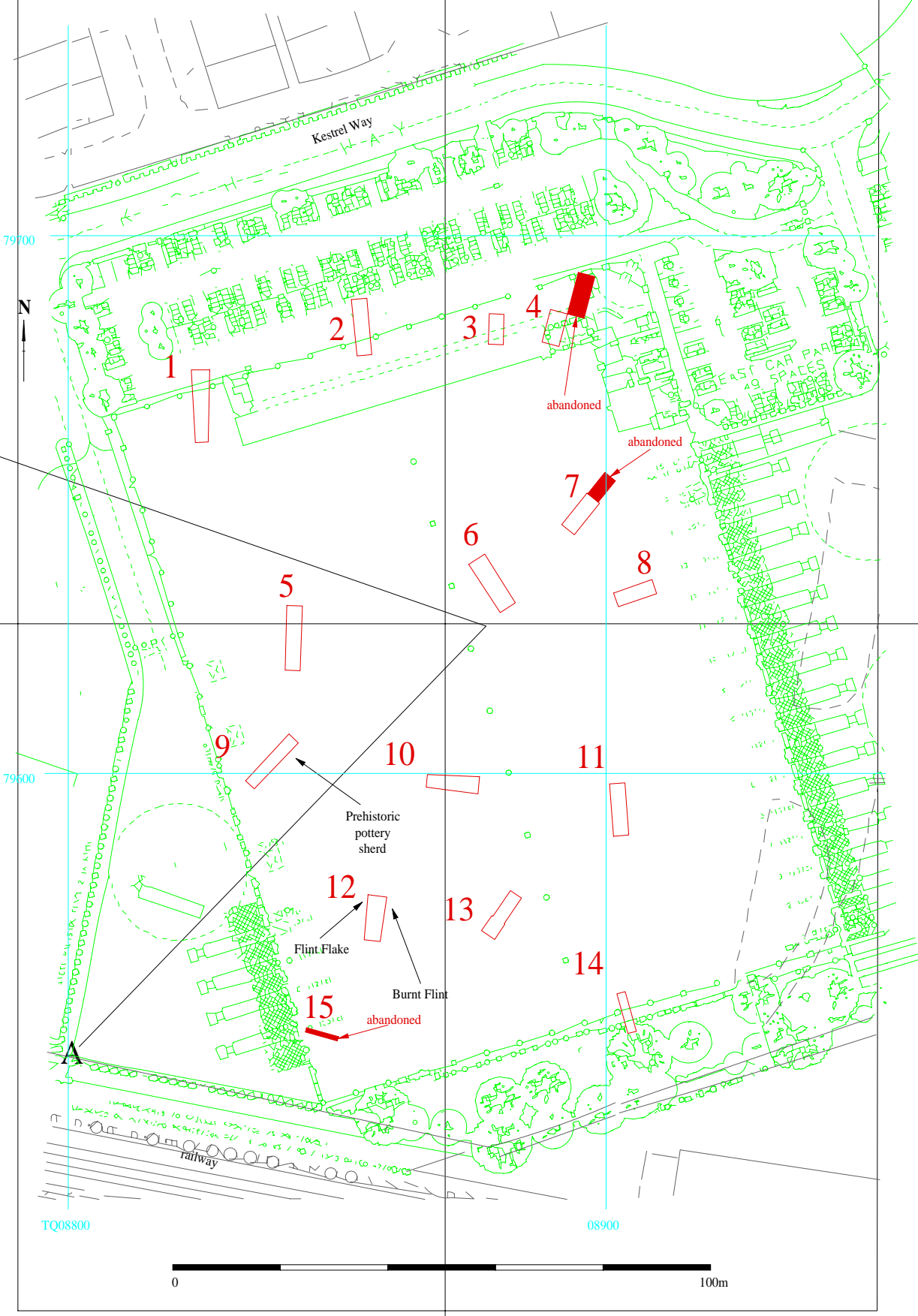


Figure 3. Trench plan showing development proposals and finds from spoil heaps.



Plate 1. Trench 1 looking north, scales: 0.50m, 1m and 2m.



Plate 2. Trench 1 looking south, scale: 1m.

