

The Gateway, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

For Richard Finlay Homes

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code FHS 06/23

March 2006

Summary

Site name: The Gateway, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9388 6641

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 10th March 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: FHS 06/23

Area of site: c.200 sqm

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were observed

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 16.03.06
	Steve Preston✓ 15.03.06

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Report 06/23

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out The Gateway, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire (SU 9388 6641) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Finlay, of Richard Finlay Homes, PO Box 1609, Windsor, SL4 2YS.

Planning permission has been sought (05/02567) from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the demolition of the current house and its replacement with a larger dwelling and detached triple garage. In order to assess the potential for survival of archaeological remains to inform Berkshire Archaeology on behalf of the Royal Borough as to the need for further mitigation, a programme of evaluation trenching was required as the first stage in a potential wider programme of investigation.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Royal Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona MacDonald, Principal Archaeologist with Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological advisers to the Royal Borough.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Mary O'Donaghue on the 10th March 2006 and the site code is FHS 06/23. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a rectangular parcel of land on the south side of Fireball Hill (Fig. 2), a residential road on the A330 (Devenish Road) in Sunningdale and c.1km to the south of Ascot. Currently the site is occupied by the garden of the former house, which had been demolished. The underlying geology consists of Bracklesham Beds (BGS 1981) and the site lies at a height of c. 60m AOD.

Archaeological background

The site lies within 70m of the projected course of the major Roman Road that runs between London and Silchester known as 'the Devil's Highway'. Several large sites are already known to be located adjacent to the

road, such as Wickham Bushes, Crowthorne and perhaps at Surrey Hill (Ford 1987) to the west and other roadside sites can be anticipated. However, no archaeological deposits were recorded during an evaluation c.100m to the north (Coles and Ford 2004). A medieval priory is recorded in the general area at Broomhill to the east and several Bronze Age round barrows are present to the south.

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.

Specific aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if any deposits relating to Roman occupation or burial are present which reflect Roman roadside settlement.

A total of three trenches were excavated (Fig. 3) using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. These measured between 10.50m and 12.50m in length and 2m wide and were dug as near as possible to their intended positions to examine areas where new construction work would be taking place (Fig. 3). The presence of large tree stumps resulted in the position of Trench 1 being slightly moved, in consultation with the monitor. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Trench 1 (Plate 1, Figs. 3 and 4)

This trench was 11m long and revealed a simple stratigraphy consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil overlying a sand natural. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were revealed.

Trench 2 (Plate 2)

This trench was 10.5m long and again revealed a simple stratigraphy consisting of topsoil overlying subsoil overlying sand natural. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were revealed.

Trench 3

This trench was 12m long and revealed the same stratigraphy of c topsoil overlying subsoil overlying sand natural. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were revealed in this trench.

Finds

No finds of an archaeological nature were retrieved.

Conclusion

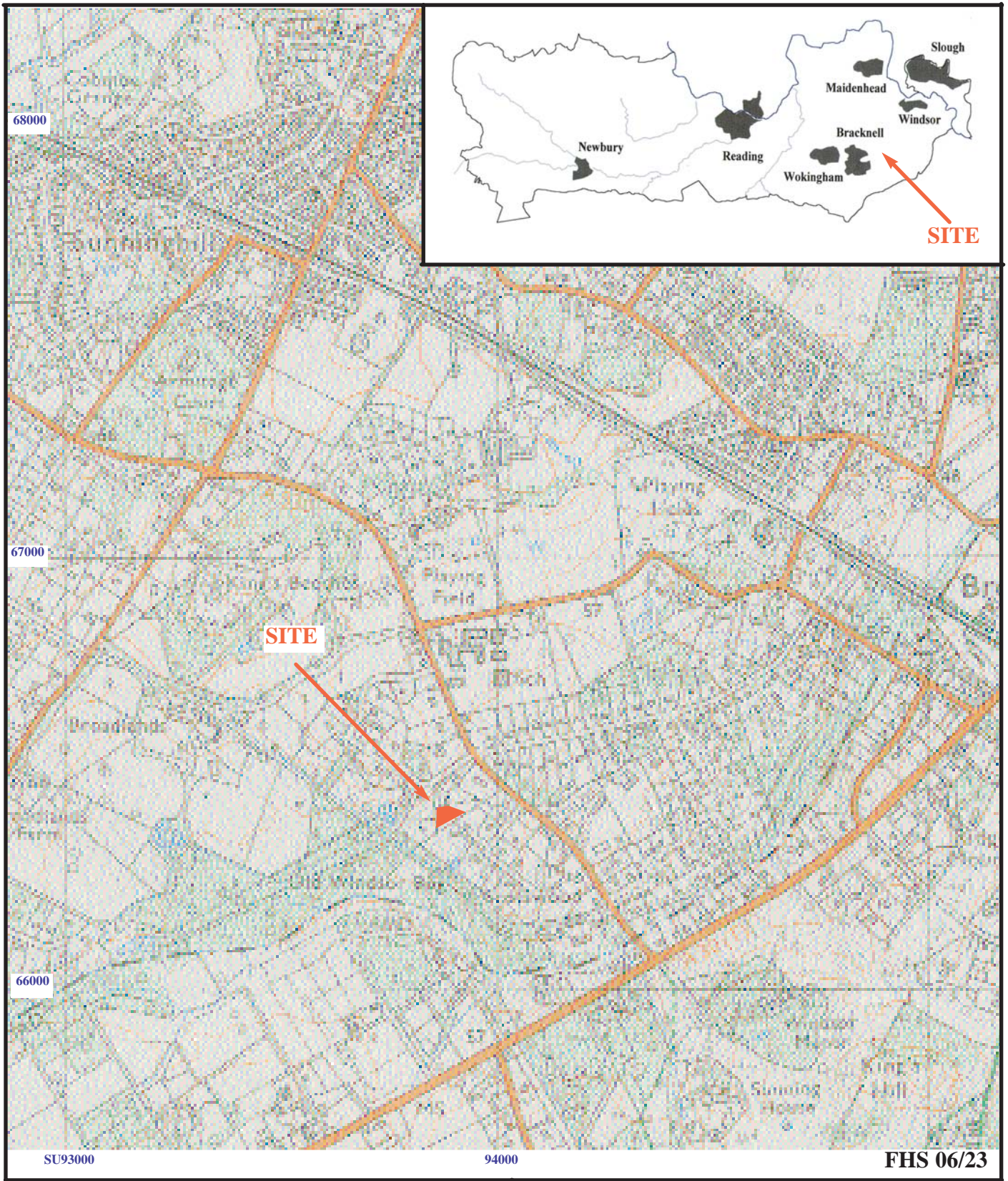
Despite the site's close proximity to the Roman Road (the Devil's Highway) no deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were observed. Therefore no archaeological deposits are expected to be compromised during construction works.

References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Coles, S and Ford, S, 2004, 'Little Croft, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire, An Archaeological Evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 04/122, Reading
Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at S or W end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	11.00	2.20	0.50	0.00m-0.32m topsoil; 0.32m-0.45m subsoil; 0.45m-0.50m+ sand natural. [Plate 1]
2	10.50	2.20	0.45	0.00m-0.25m topsoil; 0.25m-0.34m subsoil; 0.34m-0.45m+ sand natural. [Plate 2]
3	12.00	2.20	0.54	0.00m-0.38m topsoil; 0.38m-0.48m subsoil; 0.48m-0.54m+ sand natural.



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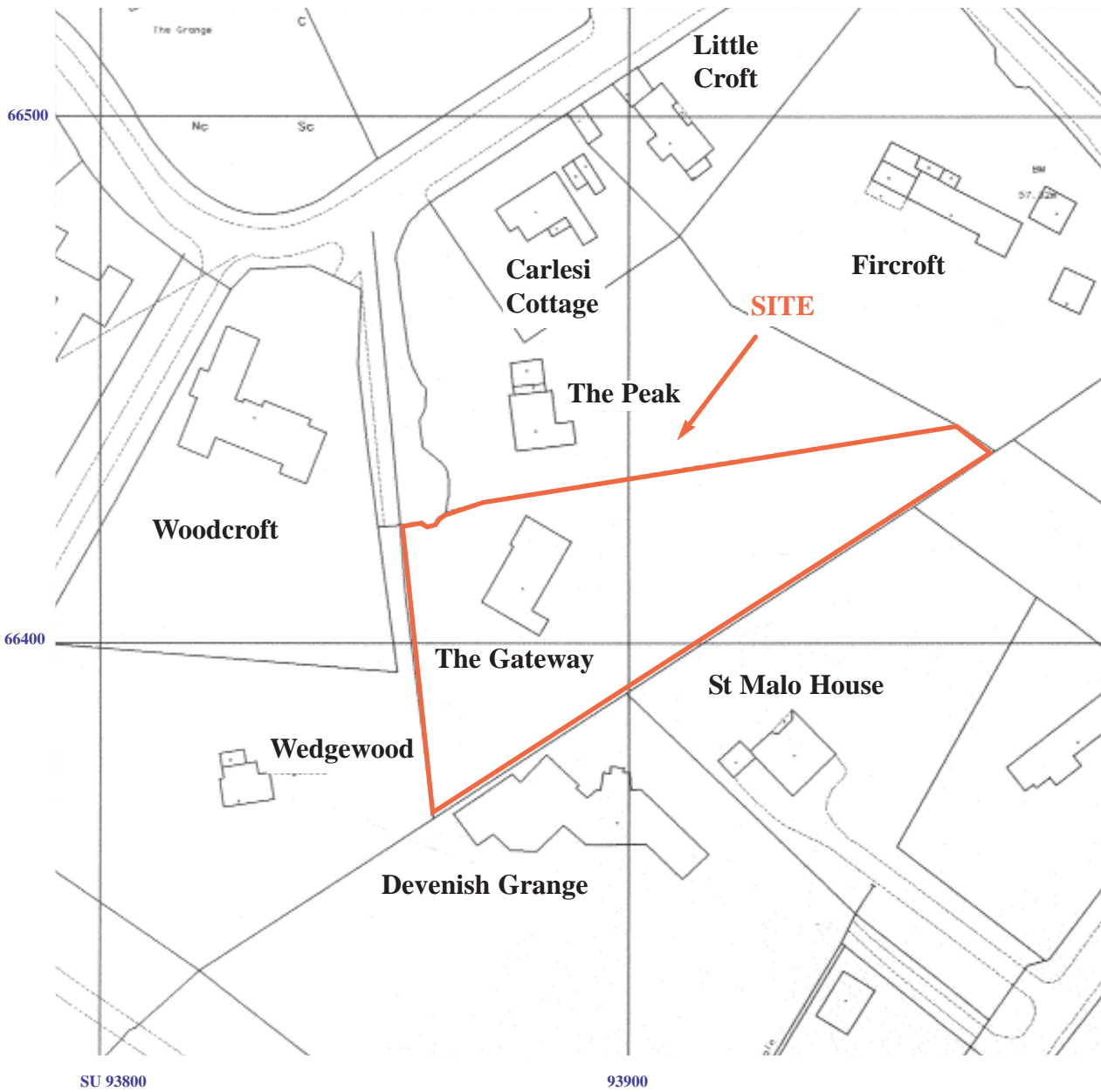
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Figure 1. Location of site within Sunningdale and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site on Fireball Hill.

Scale:1:1250.

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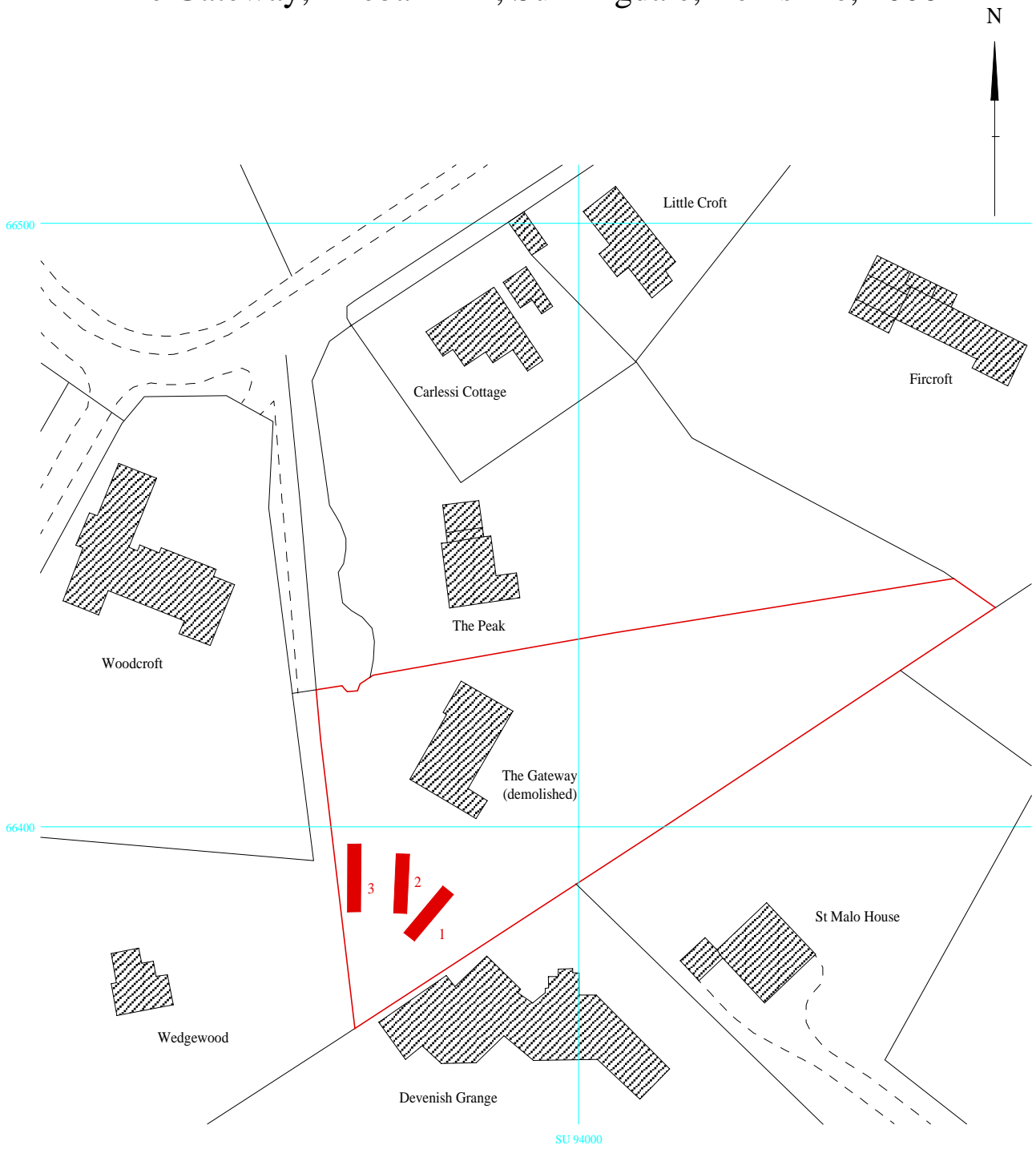


Figure 3: Trench Locations

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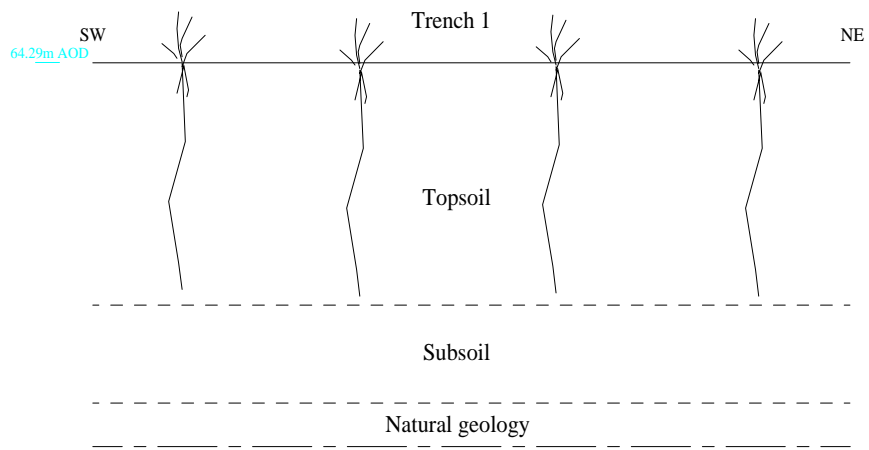


Figure 4: Representative Section



Plate 1. Trench 1 looking north-east, scales 2m, 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2 looking north, scales 2m, 1m.