

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Wedgewood, Fireball Hill,
Sunningdale, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Muddin

Site Code: FHS 11/08

(SU 9383 6637)

Wedgewood, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Richard Finlay Homes**

by Andrew Munding
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code FHS 11/08

January 2011

Summary

Site name: Wedgewood, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9383 6637

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 28th January 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Muddin

Site code: FHS 11/08

Area of site: 0.41ha

Summary of results: Three trenches were dug for the evaluation around the existing location of the current house. No archaeological deposits or finds were uncovered and the site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

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

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 02.02.11 Steve Preston ✓ 01.02.11

Wedgewood, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Muddin

Report 11/08

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Wedgewood, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire, SL5 9PJ (SU 9383 6637) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Finlay of Richard Finlay Homes, PO Box 1609, Windsor, SL4 2YS.

A planning consent has been granted (10/02405) by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of a new house on the site of the previous structure. This consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological works prior to the development. In this instance this was to take the place, initially, of field evaluation by trial trenching, based on the results of which a mitigation strategy could be devised as appropriate.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Royal Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to specification based on a brief prepared by Berkshire Archaeology (BA 2010) and was approved and monitored by Mr Paul Falcini, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Royal Borough on matters pertaining to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin on 28th January 2011 and the site code is FHS 11/08. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a pentagonal area of land, with an extended drive, situated to the south of Fireball Hill, a residential part of Sunningdale (Fig. 2). Currently, the site contains the existing house, which is to be demolished and replaced (Fig. 3). The underlying geology consists of Bracklesham Beds (BGS 1981), which was identified in all the evaluation trenches as a sandy silt. The site is slightly sloped from north to south with a fall of c.2m from a height of c. 59m above Ordnance Datum (OD) on its northern extent.

Archaeological background

The site lies within 70m of the projected course of the Roman Road, known locally as ‘the Devil’s Highway’. This road linked the Roman towns at Silchester and London (Margary 1973). Whilst the route of this road is generally known, there may be some variation on alignment and detail. Despite several attempts to locate it, evidence of it in this part of Sunningdale has not been found. Several large Roman roadside sites are known to exist along its course further afield, such as at Wickham Bushes (Ford 1987, 83; Roberts and Leese 1933; Corney and Gaffney 1983). Previous archaeological works have investigated the immediate area southwards adjacent to the course of this route here on Fireball Hill (Coles and Ford 2004; Taylor 2006), and on Devenish Road and Devenish Lane (Colley *et al.* 2011; Cass 2007) but have not found any evidence of Roman occupation.

Of other archaeological interest for the general area is a medieval priory site in Broomhill, and there is potential for prehistoric activity, with the location of several Bronze Age round barrows known to the south, and isolated Mesolithic and Neolithic findspots without contextual information in the vicinity of the site.

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. The specific aims of the project were:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeologically deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits associated with the Roman road are present; and
- to determine if any deposits representing Roman roadside settlement or burial are present.

In total, three trenches were proposed, each to be 10–12m long and 1.8m wide and located on the proposed of the new building. These were to be excavated with a bladed bucket, using a Kubota-type tracked mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision. Trench 1 and 2 were to be 10m long, and Trench 3 was to be 12m long (Fig 3). Any possible archaeological deposits were to be cleaned and excavated using hand tools. Archaeologically significant deposits were to be excavated and sampled to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might be better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

The three trenches excavated were positioned on their agreed locations. In total, 32.5m length of trenching was excavated. All trenches were 1.6m wide. A complete list of trench details giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4)

This trench was 10.4m in length aligned SW- NE and was dug to a depth of 0.46m. This trench was located to the south-east of the current house, covering an area which would contain the new garage. The stratigraphy observed was topsoil, which was moderately dense with tree roots and was 0.42m deep, overlying natural geology, which was a light brown/yellowish-grey sandy silt. The ground here contained no sign of truncation and was sterile of finds. No archaeology was present.

Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4, Pl. 1)

Trench 2 was 10.6m in length aligned W- E, and was excavated to a depth of 0.43m. This trench was positioned to examine the furthest extent south of the new development. The stratigraphy comprised 0.31m of topsoil over a thin and intermittent layer of light brown/grey silty clay subsoil. This reached a depth of 0.37m and overlay undisturbed natural geology. No archaeology was present, and this trench was sterile of finds.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4, Pl. 2)

Trench 3 was 11.5m in length aligned W- E, and was excavated to a depth of 0.48m. This trench was positioned to examine the northern extent of the proposed development. The stratigraphy comprised a mixed deposit of decayed red brick crush with topsoil to a depth of 0.21m, beneath which was a buried topsoil to a depth of 0.45m. This in turn overlay natural geology. A slight area of subsurface truncation, which contained modern wire debris and tree roots, was noted between 9.1m from the western end of the trench to the east end. No deposits of archaeological interest nor finds were recorded in this trench.

Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered.

Conclusion

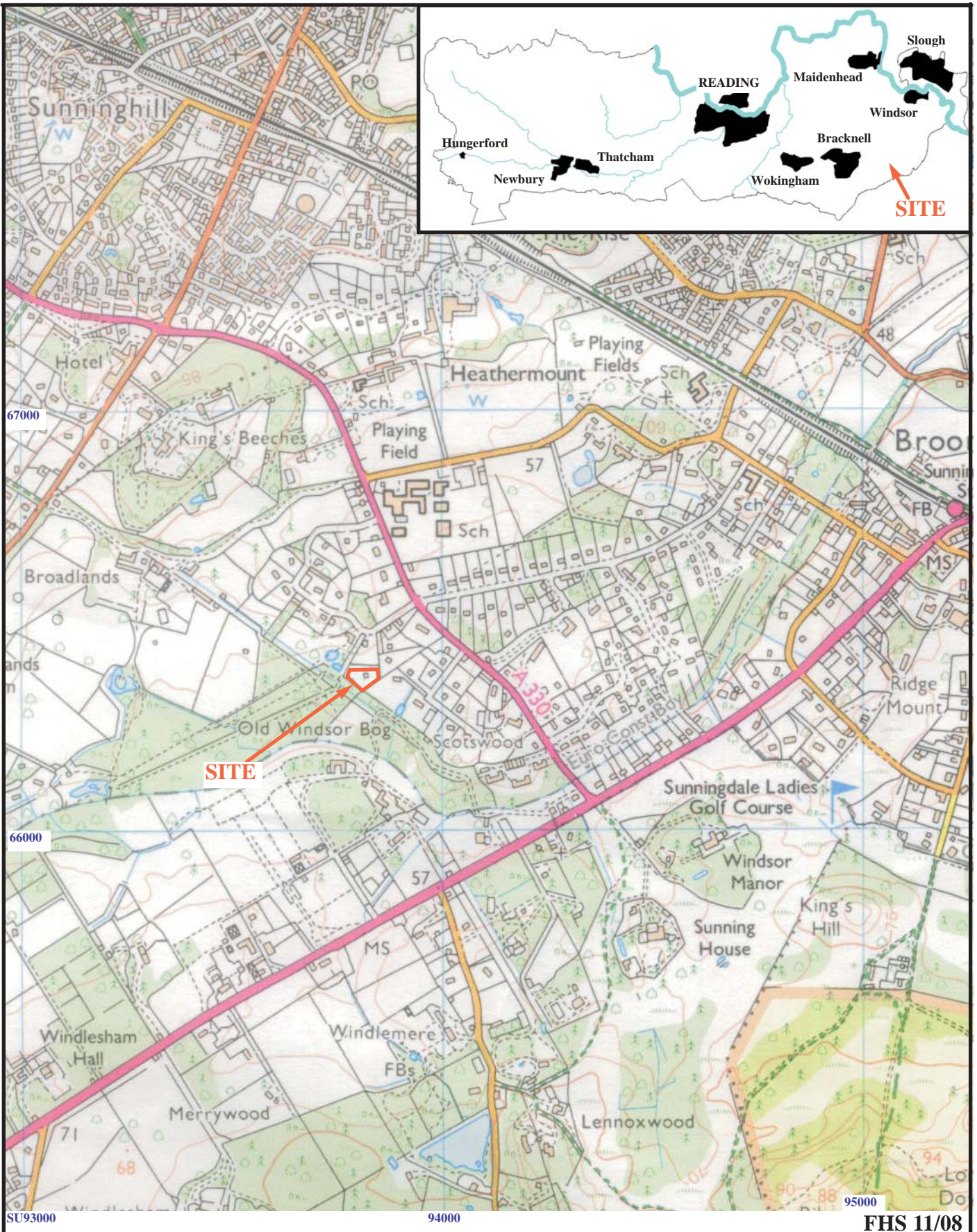
No archaeological finds or deposits were encountered during the evaluation. Despite its close proximity to the route of the Roman road, no evidence of Roman activity was noted. It seems that the site may have been previously landscaped, as subsoil was only intermittently noted. On the basis of these results the site has no archaeological potential.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.4	1.6	0.46	0-0.42m topsoil; 0.42m+ brown/yellowish/grey sandy silt (natural geology).
2	10.6	1.6	0.43	0-0.31m topsoil; 0.31-0.37m light brown/grey silty clay subsoil; 0.37m+ natural geology [Pl. 1]
3	11.5	1.6	0.48	0-0.21m topsoil mixed with decayed brick; 0.21-0.45m, buried topsoil; 0.45m+ natural geology [Pl. 2]



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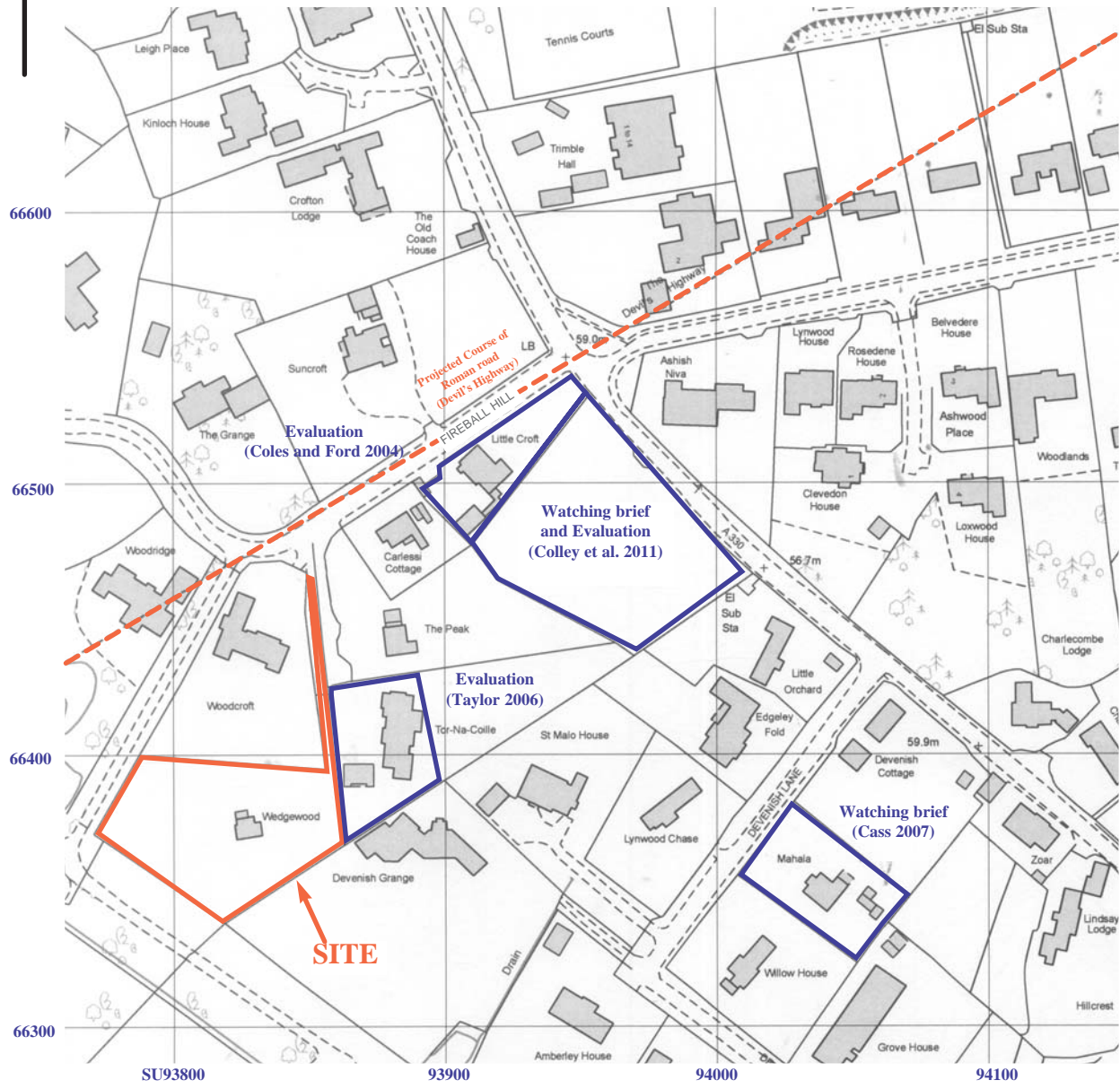
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Figure 1. Location of site within Sunningdale and Berkshire.

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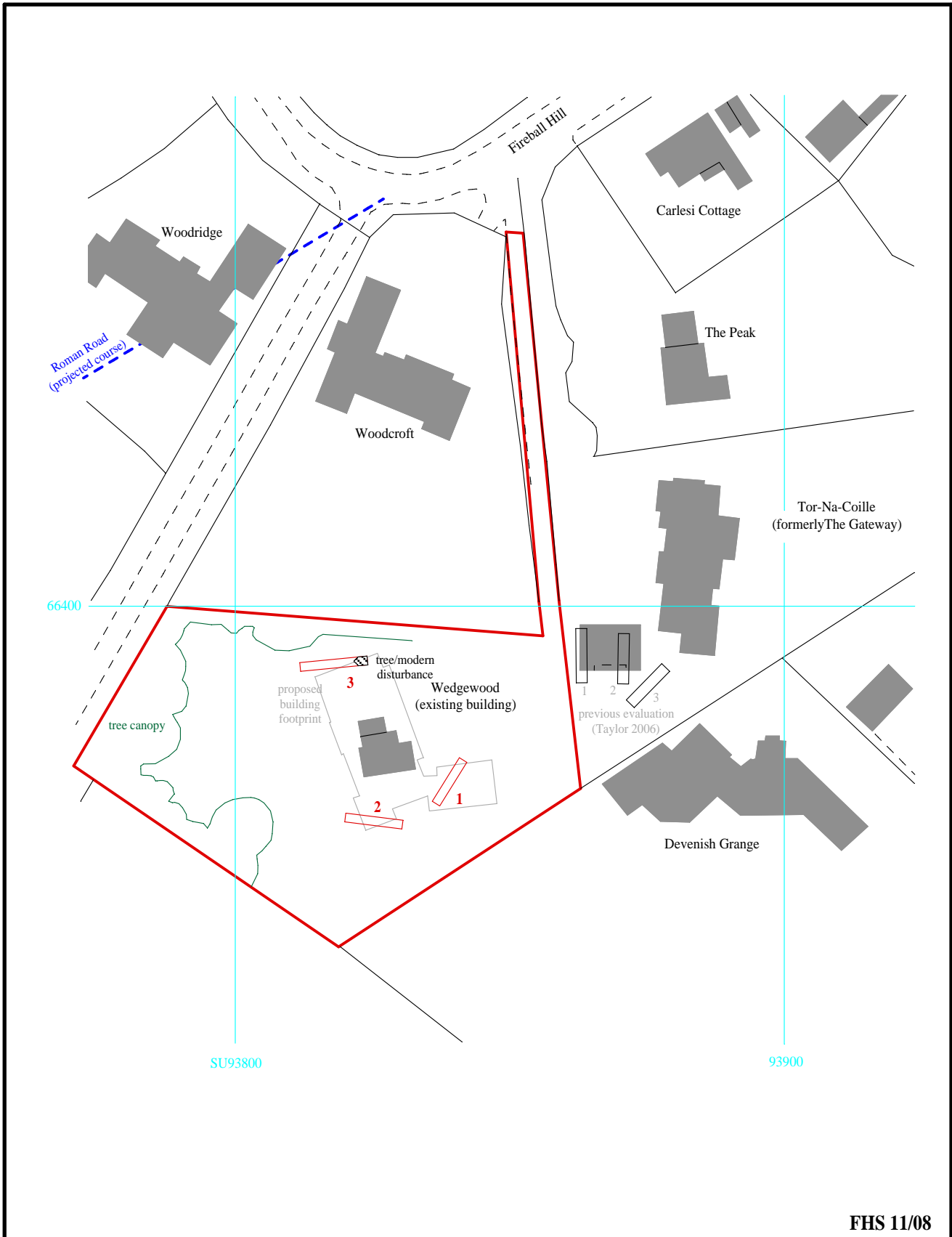
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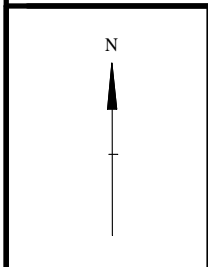
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Fireball Hill.

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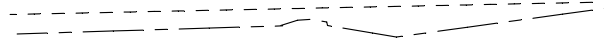
Figure 3. Location of trenches.



Trench 1

SW _____ NE [58.52maOD](#)

Rooty topsoil (Dark brown clayey silt)

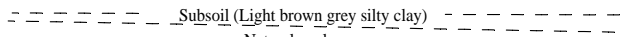


Natural geology (light brown grey sandy silt)

Trench 2

WNW _____ ESE [58.86m](#)

Rooty topsoil



Subsoil (Light brown grey silty clay)

Natural geology

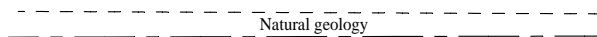
Trench 3

WSW _____ ENE [59.43m](#)

Decayed brick mixed with topsoil



Topsoil (buried)



Natural geology

FHS 11/08

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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 2, looking east. Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking east, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

FHS 11/08

Wedgewood, Fireball Hill, Sunningdale, Berkshire, 2011
Archaeological Evaluation

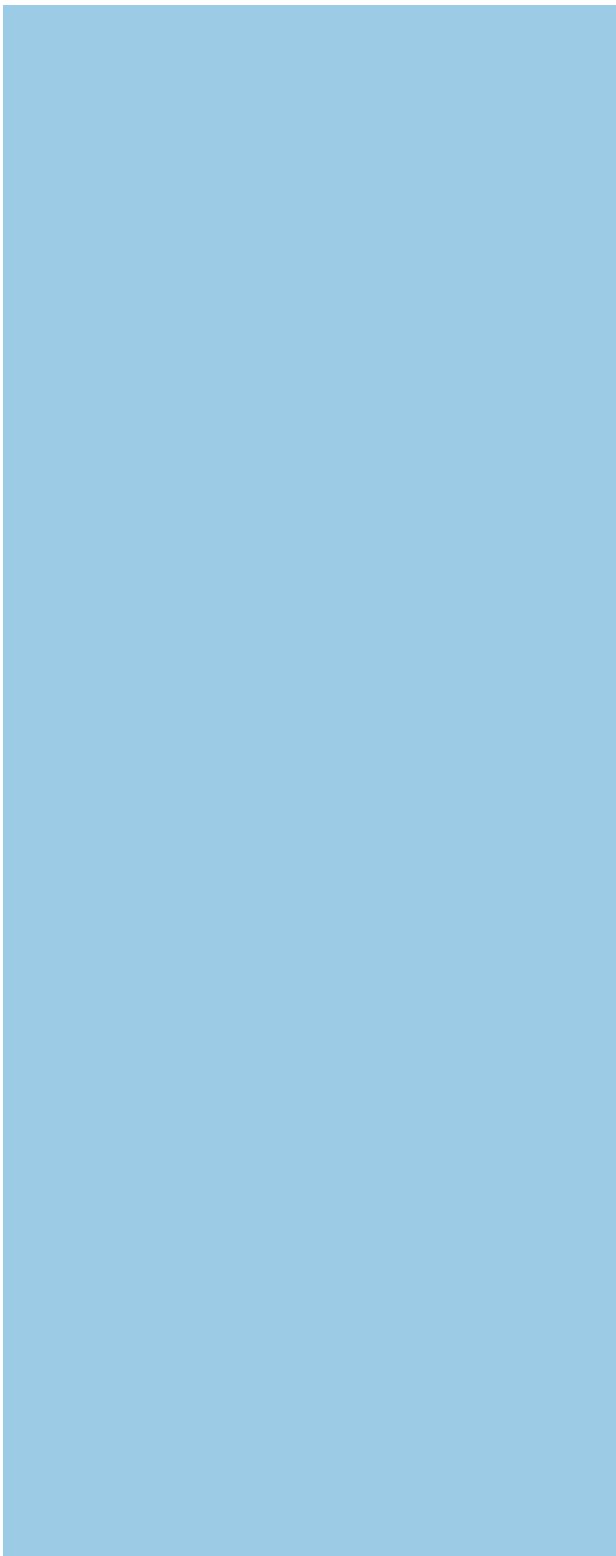
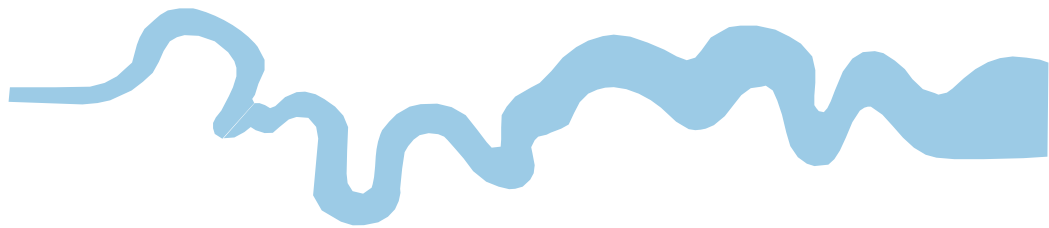
Plates 1 and 2.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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