

Mercedes Benz  
Heritage & Technology Centre  
Brooklands  
Weybridge  
Surrey



**Archaeological Evaluation Report  
Phase 1**



**Oxford Archaeology**

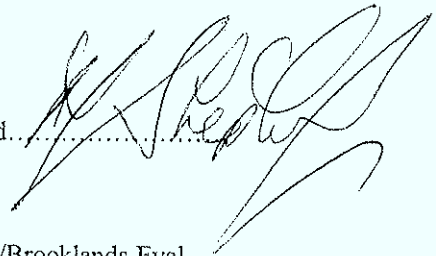
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Daimler Chrysler UK Ltd**

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Signed.....



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## Mercedes Benz Heritage & Technology Centre Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey.

### *ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION*

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## SUMMARY

*Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey, on behalf of Daimler Chrysler UK Limited. The evaluation revealed that the present day landsurface had been made-up with dumps of redeposited natural silt, sand and debris over much of the area explored by the evaluation. This had taken place subsequent to the substantial truncation of the natural geological deposits and as a result the potential for the survival of archaeological deposits is very low across most of the evaluated area. Where the geology was relatively untruncated (the northeast of Site 7 and Trench 27 Site 8 (Fig. 2)), only one potential feature was identified and one find was retrieved. As the feature (ditch 1800 in Trench 18) was undated and the find (a Mesolithic worked-flint projectile point in Trench 27) was residual and not in situ the archaeological potential of these areas remains low.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out by OA between 18-08-03 and 26-08-03 in advance of proposed development of land at Brooklands near Weybridge in Surrey by DaimlerChrysler UK Limited. The development is to consist of three main structural elements - a heritage and technology centre, a hotel and an office development. Other areas of impact comprise flood compensation zones and car parking. The application boundary encompasses the Brooklands memorial and surviving sections of the former motor racing circuit, which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The remaining areas of current land use comprise a disused private airfield and part of Brooklands Museum, which incorporates a number of structures associated with the former racing circuit.

1.1.2 Twenty trenches (30.0 m x 1.90 m) were excavated in total, covering an area of approximately three hectares. This was the first phase of a rolling-programme of archaeological investigations that will proceed in advance of the development and dealt with site areas 4, 7 and 8. Further phases of field evaluation are proposed including trenches as shown on Fig. 2.

1.1.3 The work was undertaken in accordance with guidance set out in PPG16, policy SE5 of the Surrey Structure Plan December 2002 Deposit Draft and policy HEN17 of the Elmbridge Local Plan and was required by the County Archaeologist for Surrey County Council as a condition attached to the planning permission. OA was appointed by Terence O'Rourke plc to undertake the required evaluation in accordance with the approach established by the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (OA 2003).

### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The proposed development site (centred NGR TQ 065602) lies approximately 2km south-west of Weybridge town centre and is surrounded to the east, west and south by developed land. The site lies on a relatively flat area of the river Wey floodplain

(c 13.8-14.2m OD), although a number of higher areas did exist in central (c 14.3-5m OD) and southern (c 14.5-15m OD) parts. It is upon these higher areas that the majority of important archaeological features have previously been located.

- 1.2.2 The site lies on river gravels, from 1 to 5m in depth, associated with the River Wey, which borders the site to the east. Alluvial deposits overlie the gravel, varying up to 5m thick in areas adjacent to the river. The geology underlying the gravels comprises Bagshot Beds, then London Clay.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### *General*

- 2.1.1 The information below is a brief summary of the archaeology and history of the Brooklands site. It is based upon information in the existing Environmental Impact Assessment (Terence O'Rourke 2002), and a much fuller account is contained within that document.

### *Early prehistoric*

- 2.1.2 The archaeological record provides evidence for the use of the area from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age. The earliest find from within the area enclosed by the racing circuit is a Neolithic polished flint axe (SMR 756). A Bronze Age copper alloy blade was recovered from the same general area.

### *Iron Age*

- 2.1.3 During the Iron Age the area was used far more intensively, with a series of linked sites of different function and status. A hill fort was located 1.6km to the east and a small settlement associated with iron-working was revealed just to the north of the site in excavations of the 1960s and 1970s (Fig. 2). Trial trenches and limited wider excavation by Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) (see 2.2.2 below; Fig. 2) in 1990/1 revealed two areas of occupation in the central (Hollick Farm) and southern part of the site. The southern site was particularly significant and included an Iron Age ring ditch approximately 24m in diameter, along with numerous pits and ditches.

### *Roman*

- 2.1.4 A late 3rd century coin hoard was discovered during construction of the race track, and the 1990/1 evaluations revealed part of a 1st to 4th century settlement in the same area as the Iron Age settlement in the south of the site.

### *Early Medieval*

- 2.1.5 There are a number of finds in the area around Brooklands that indicate activity in the early Medieval period, and some literary evidence for the use of the hill fort as a Saxon administrative centre.

### ***Later Medieval***

- 2.1.6 A 12th- to 13th-century settlement lay to the north of the site, while the 1990/1 evaluation produced material from 12th- through to 16th-century date in the central part of the site (Hollick Farm).

### ***Post Medieval***

- 2.1.7 From the 16th century to the mid-18th century, the site appears to have been common land used for seasonal grazing, after which arable production commenced. The site of Hollick Farm appears on a map of 1872, and was partially revealed in the central area of the 1990/1 evaluation.

### ***Modern***

- 2.1.8 Hollick Farm was demolished during construction of the motor racing circuit in 1907, which remained in use until 1939. Flying schools were also established at the site from 1909, and used by the Royal flying Corps during the First World War. During the Second World War the track and Aerodrome were requisitioned by the Air Ministry for use by the Vickers and Hawker aircraft companies, and much of the track was covered in earth. Post-war, the site belonged to Vickers-Armstrong Ltd and a hard runway was built in 1951. Much of the original racing circuit was destroyed but the remaining parts were made a Scheduled Ancient Monument, along with a memorial to commemorate 50 years of motor racing and aviation, erected in 1957. The 30 acres of the Brooklands Museum opened in 1991.

## **2.2 Previous archaeological work**

- 2.2.1 Excavations in 1964 and 1970 revealed part of a multiphase Iron Age/Saxon/Medieval settlement just to the north of the current site, on the far side of the railway and River Wey (Fig. 1).
- 2.2.2 An evaluation was carried out between January and May 1990 by Surrey County Archaeological Unit (Fig. 2) in advance of proposed mineral extraction. A geophysical survey took place initially around the site of a previously postulated Iron Age village in the north of the site, though subsequent trial trenches in the area found nothing.
- 2.2.3 A further 55 machine dug trial trenches were dug throughout the site, with the aim of revealing features or stray finds which might indicate the presence of an archaeological site. The majority of trenches were selectively located in order to test those areas believed to be of higher potential, either because of previous information or because they appeared to occupy slightly higher ground. Supplementary trenches were placed more randomly to give an average overall coverage, and to test ground considered to be of low potential. Only those trenches which contained finds or features of archaeological interest were assigned letters (Fig. 2). In total the area covered by the evaluation represented 1-2%.
- 2.2.4 The results of the evaluation indicated that there were two important settlement areas within the circuit. To the north, features of Iron Age, medieval and post medieval date were found, while to the south, Iron Age and Roman features were revealed.



These were both upon areas that were raised slightly above the surrounding floodplain, and had an average topsoil depth of 0.3 to 0.5m before archaeological features were reached.

- 2.2.5 Between October 1990 and February 1991, these two areas were subject to machine stripping and excavation (Fig. 2). The northern site produced a number of Iron Age features but no structural remains. The remaining features dated from the 12th to 20th century, and included part of Hollick Farm. The southern site produced a large number of significant Iron Age and Roman features, including a large Iron Age ring ditch and a Roman 4-post structure.

### 3 EVALUATION AIMS

- 3.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were as follows: -
- 3.1.2 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the investigation areas.
- 3.1.3 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 3.1.4 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 3.1.5 To establish the likely impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains present.
- 3.1.6 To determine the potential for preservation *in situ* of significant archaeological remains, should they be present.
- 3.1.7 Should the development proceed, to inform the strategy for mitigation of the impact of development on the areas proposed for 'cutting', and for monitoring and mitigation of the impact of the proposed topsoil stripping in the area not proposed for 'cutting'.
- 3.1.8 To make available the results of the investigation.

## 4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 4.1.1 The evaluation consisted of twenty trenches (30.0m x 1.90 m) arranged in an even and regular distribution over the three areas of investigation (Fig. 2). The northern and central areas (Sites 4 and 7) had not been previously evaluated and the trenches in the southern area (Site 8) were intended to further evaluate and define the archaeology recorded in the SCAU excavation. The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator and a JCB, both fitted with a toothless buckets.

### 4.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 4.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All trenches were digitally surveyed and archaeological features were planned and, where excavated, their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 4.3 Finds

- 4.3.1 Finds are recovered by hand during the course of evaluations and bagged by context. Finds of special interest are given a unique small find number.

### 4.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 4.4.1 It was proposed to take bulk soil samples in order to characterise the potential of archaeological deposits. In the event no deposits were deemed worthy of sampling.

### 4.5 Presentation of results

- 4.5.1 It is proposed to discuss the trenches as three spatially distinct groups with the details of individual contexts listed within the table at the end of this report (Appendix 1). Due to the general paucity of archaeology encountered it is not felt that individual trench descriptions are warranted.

## 5 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 5.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 5.1.1 The site is located on coarse sandy-gravels or finer alluvial sands and was well drained at the time of investigation. No services or other impediments to excavation were encountered other than some coppice in the northern part of the site (Site 4) and a go-cart track in the southern part of the site (Site 8) that occasioned minor adjustment to the location of several of the trenches from the scheme that was originally proposed



## 5.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

5.2.1 Generally, no archaeological features or deposits of any description were encountered in any of the evaluation trenches. Where natural alluvial deposits were reached (within most of the trenches) these had commonly been truncated well below the level of the archaeological horizon. Subsequent to truncation, the ground had been made-up to a varying extent in order to level and landscape the site. The only trenches to contain untruncated geological deposits (16,17,18,20,21,22,27) contained no archaeological features (with the exception of an undated ditch **1800** in Trench 18), and only a single find, retrieved from Trench 27, that was not thought to be *in situ*.

## 6 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 6.1 Description of deposits

6.1.1 The nature of the archaeological deposits will be discussed below. It is not proposed to discuss the trenches individually due to the paucity of the recovered remains. Instead the trenches will be discussed as three spatially distinct sets corresponding to the three areas of the site that were subject to investigation: Site 4 (in the extreme north of the development area), Site 7 (in the centre of the development area) and Site 8 (in the extreme south of the development area).

6.1.2 **Site 4:** this area contained six trenches (10-15). It was necessary to relocate the trenches from the scheme originally proposed and outlined in the WSI (OA 2003) due to coppice covering some of the site. The area was however comprehensively covered by the sample. No archaeological features were encountered in any of the trenches, although Trenches 10, 11, 15,12 and 13 reached *in situ* alluvial deposits. These were characterised by a mid-red/brown clay-silt that was, on occasion, mottled with greyer silts. These sealed finer blue/grey clay-silts containing inclusions of manganese. No organic deposits were encountered and it is not known to what degree the alluvium was truncated. Generally, the area was more heavily truncated in the north than the south (alluvial deposits being reached at 1.90 m and 1.10 m respectively) and on average the area had been truncated by 1.50 m. The land had been made-up with dumped deposits of redeposited natural sands and silts sealing an initial layer of rubbish and demolition debris that might date to either the construction or demolition of the racetrack. It is extremely unlikely that any archaeological deposits would survive in this area due to the degree of recent truncation.

6.1.3 **Site 7:** this area contained seven trenches (16-22). The southwest of this area was more truncated than the northeast. Trenches 16,20, 21 and 22 came straight down onto light-yellow/brown natural alluvial sands that were encountered at approximately 0.20 m below ground surface, natural sandy-gravel was reached at 1.10 m in Trench 19 and at approximately 0.70 m in the southern ends of Trenches 17, 18 and 20.

- 6.1.4 Several negative features were recorded in several of the trenches but these all turned out to be modern on investigation, containing modern materials. The exception was an ephemeral, undated feature **1800**, possibly a ditch, in the north end of Trench 18 (Fig. 3) that has the potential to be older and may be of archaeological significance. Trench 19 was the deepest trench and had been backfilled with redeposited sands that also backfilled the south of trenches 17,18,20 and 22. Below the redeposited sands in Trench 19 was a dark, organic layer that had formed in a wet environment, this contained machine-sawn tree stumps demonstrating the recent grubbing-out of trees at the same time as the deposit formed. It would seem the ground surface had been truncated and made-up in the southwest of the area whereas the natural geology remained untruncated in the east and north.
- 6.1.5 There is some potential for the *in situ* survival of archaeological deposits in the north and east of the area, although none were identified with the possible exception of feature **1800**. The degree of truncation in the south and west of the area makes it highly unlikely that archaeological deposits have survived.
- 6.1.6 **Site 8:** this area contained seven trenches (23-29) as well as an additional trench (30) that was proposed in the WSI (OA 2003). This latter trench was not excavated as it was located across the track of the go-cart racetrack; after discussions on-site with the county representative it was agreed that this trench was no longer required. The only trench to sample untruncated, *in situ* geological deposits (at 0.20 m) was Trench 27, which had been rotated from its original projected alignment due to the route of a go-cart track. This contained no archaeological features or deposits but did produce a Mesolithic worked-flint point from the interface between the topsoil and the natural gravels in the east end of the trench; this was however thought to be residual and therefore not *in situ*.
- 6.1.7 The remaining trenches to the south and east reached truncated natural sandy-gravels at a depth of approximately 1.0 m on average. The ground surface had been made-up subsequent to truncation by the dumping of redeposited sands and silts over a dark organic layer containing rubbish and debris. Trench 23 was particularly contaminated being used as a sump for the disposal of diesel and a dump for rubbish. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in any of these trenches and the archaeological potential of the area was generally thought to be low due to the degree of truncation.

## 6.2 Finds

- 6.2.1 A single find was recovered from the evaluation. This was retrieved from the interface between the topsoil **2701** and the untruncated natural sandy-gravels **2700** within Trench 27. The find was a rolled and iron-stained worked-flint implement thought to be a Mesolithic projectile point. The point was not thought to be within a primary context and such finds occur in isolation within the London area. As such this does not necessarily denote an activity focus, although it does indicate a general Mesolithic presence.

### 6.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

6.3.1 No environmental samples were retrieved during the evaluation.

## 7 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 7.1 Reliability of field investigation

7.1.1 It is felt that any archaeological deposits or features that had survived would have been identified within the evaluation trenches – none were, nor were any residual finds recovered. Given the degree to which the site had been truncated it is not felt that any significant finds, deposits or features would have survived in the vicinity of the trenches.

### 7.2 Overall interpretation

7.2.1 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered except for the undated ditch 1800 in Trench 18, and the single flint find retrieved from Trench 27. Although this find is of general interest it was not *in situ* nor thought to relate to any surviving stratigraphy. The recent modifications to the site which have truncated the natural geological deposits and the subsequent making-up of the land by the dumping of earth, demolition-debris and waste are thought to have destroyed any archaeology that might have survived over most of the evaluated area.

7.2.2 There is some potential for the survival of archaeological remains in the general vicinity of Trench 18 and Trench 27 where the ground is untruncated. However, it is very unlikely that archaeological deposits could have survived the truncation which has taken place over most of Sites 7 and 8 and the degree of truncation over Site 4 militates against the survival of any archaeological deposits, unless early prehistoric remains lie cloaked by the alluvium.

## 8 IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT

### 8.1 Impacts

8.1.1 The precise level of impact within the area of Site 4, 7 and 8 is currently uncertain although outline proposals exist to cut these areas down to a depth in excess of 100 mm as part of flood-alleviation measures. Any excavation or other works that will penetrate below 200 mm in the area around Trench 27 (Site 8) or in the north or east of Site 7 has the potential to impact on any surviving archaeology as in these areas the truncation of the deposits by modern intrusions is not as great. However, no significant archaeological deposits were positively identified during the evaluation of these areas and the risk therefore remains slight. Due to the nature of previous land-use it is very unlikely that excavations even in excess of 1.0 m would impact on archaeology over most of Sites 7 and 8 and all of Site 4.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
10								
	1000	Layer		1.20	Overburden G.S. 13.80 O.D.			
	1001	Layer			Natural (clay-silt)			
11								
	1100	Layer		1.60	Make-up			
	1101	Layer		0.10	Topsoil G.S. 13.70 O.D.			
	1102	Layer			Natural (clay-silt)			
12								
	1200	Layer		1.60	Make-up			
	1201	Layer		0.10	Topsoil G.S. 13.55 O.D.			
	1202	Layer			Natural (clay-silt)			
13								
	1300	Layer		1.30	Make-up			
	1301	Layer		0.15	Topsoil G.S. 13.10 O.D.			
	1302	Layer			Natural (clay-silt)			
14								
	1400	Layer		1.20	Overburden G.S. 14.00 O.D.			
	1401	Layer			Natural (clay-silt)			
15								
	1500	Layer		1.10	Overburden G.S. 14.00 O.D.			
	1501	Layer			Natural (clay-silt)			
16								
	1600	Layer		0.30	Topsoil G.S. 13.80 O.D.			
	1601	Layer			Natural			
17								
	1700	Layer		0.70	Topsoil G.S. 13.80 O.D.			
	1701	Layer			Natural (sandy-gravel)			

Trench	Cxtt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No./wt	Date
18								
	1800	Cut	0.40	0.10	Ditch Cut			
	1801	Fill	0.40	0.10	Ditch Fill			
	1802	Layer		0.15	Topsoil G.S. 13.80 O.D.			
	1803	Layer		0.65	Make-up			
	1804	Layer			Natural (sandy-gravel)			
19								
	1900	Layer		0.15	Topsoil G.S. 13.80 O.D.			
	1901	Layer		0.70	Make-up			
	1902	Layer		0.05	Organic Layer			
	1903	Layer			Natural (sandy-gravel)			
20								
	2000	Layer		0.10	Topsoil G.S. 13.90 O.D.			
	2001	Layer		0.80	Overburden			
	2002	Layer			Natural (sand)			
21								
	2100	Layer		0.20	Topsoil G.S. 13.80 O.D.			
	2101	Layer			Natural (sand)			
22								
	2200	Layer		0.15	Topsoil G.S. 13.90 O.D.			
	2201	Cut	3.20	1.00	Cut that truncates land			
	2202	Fill	3.20	1.00	Backfill			
	2203	Layer			Natural (sand)			
23								
	2300	Layer		1.80	Overburden			
	2301	Layer		0.10	Topsoil G.S. 14.10 O.D.			
	2302	Layer			Natural (sandy-gravel)			
24								
	2400			0.20	Topsoil G.S. 14.30 O.D.			
	2401			0.30	Overburden			
	2402			0.20	Overburden			
	2403			0.07	Overburden			
	2404				Natural (sandy-gravel)			

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No./wt	Date
	2405	Layer		0.40	Overburden			
25								
	2500	Layer		0.20	Topsoil G.S. 14.50 O.D.			
	2501	Layer		0.80	Overburden			
	2502	Layer			Natural (sandy-gravel)			
26								
	2600	Layer		0.10	Topsoil G.S. 14.50 O.D.			
	2601	Layer		0.80	Natural (sandy-gravel)			
27								
	2700				Natural (sandy-gravel)			
	2701			0.20	Topsoil G.S. 14.45 O.D.	Flint point	1	Mesolithic
28								
	2800			0.70	Overburden			
	2801			0.15	Topsoil G.S. 14.20 O.D.			
	2802				Natural (sandy-gravel)			
29								
	2900			0.30	Topsoil G.S. 14.45 O.D.			
	2901			0.50	Overburden			
	2902			0.30	Overburden			
	2903			0.20	Overburden			
	2904				Natural (sandy-gravel)			

**APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

Oxford Archaeology 2003 (July) *Mercedes Benz Heritage and Technology Centre Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey Written Scheme of Investigation*

Terence O'Rourke 2002 *Environmental Statement, UK Heritage & Technology Centre, Brooklands*



**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Mercedes Benz Heritage and Technology Centre, Brooklands

**Site code:** WEBR 03

**Grid reference:** TQ 065 602

**Type of evaluation:** First phase of evaluation comprising twenty 30 m machine excavated trenches (Sites 4, 7 and 8)

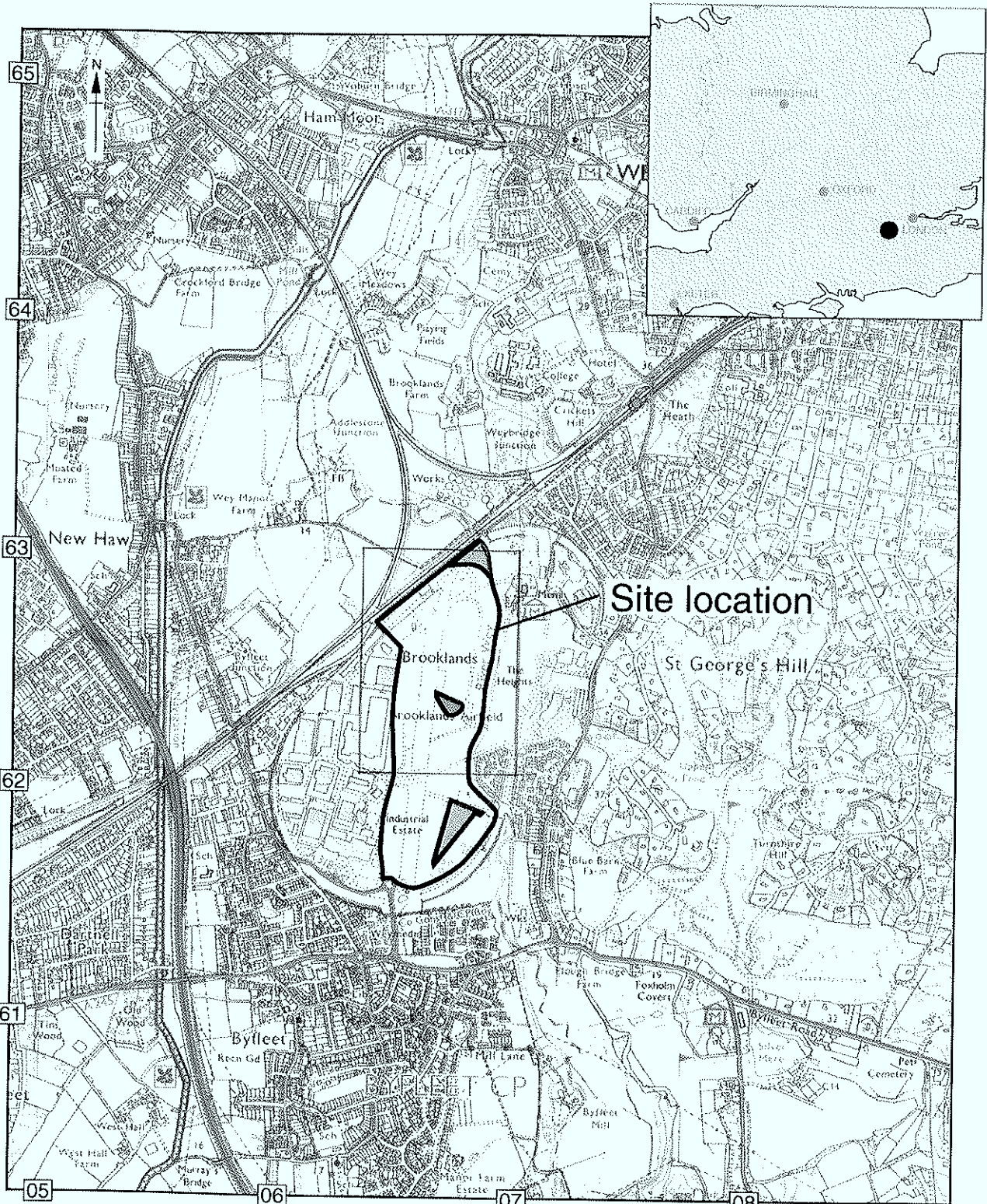
**Date and duration of project:** 18/8/03 - 26/8/03

**Area of site:** 42 ha

**Summary of results:** One shallow ditch, undated but of possible archaeological significance was recorded.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Surrey County Museums Service in due course.

\\Server10\oapubs1\_Rte\Z\W\_codes\WEBREV\Brooklands, Weybridge\*LRA\*29.08.03



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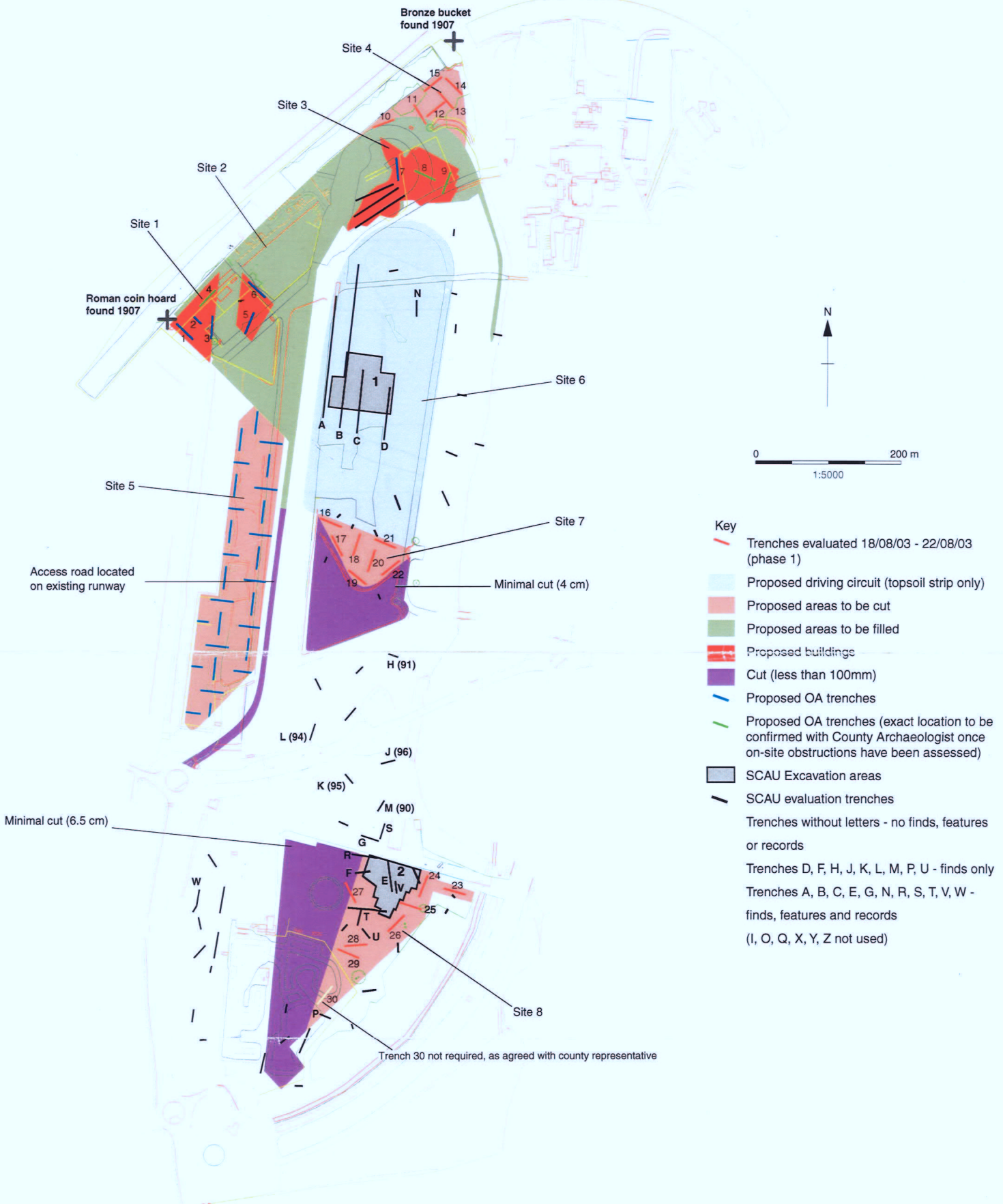
 Areas Evaluated in Phase 1

Figure 1: Site location

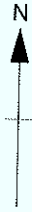
Iron Age and Medieval excavation 1970 - 71



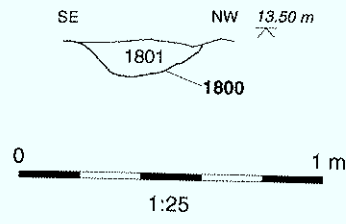
- Key**
- Trenches evaluated 18/08/03 - 22/08/03 (phase 1)
  - Proposed driving circuit (topsoil strip only)
  - Proposed areas to be cut
  - Proposed areas to be filled
  - Proposed buildings
  - Cut (less than 100mm)
  - Proposed OA trenches
  - Proposed OA trenches (exact location to be confirmed with County Archaeologist once on-site obstructions have been assessed)
  - SCAU Excavation areas
  - SCAU evaluation trenches
  - Trenches without letters - no finds, features or records
  - Trenches D, F, H, J, K, L, M, P, U - finds only
  - Trenches A, B, C, E, G, N, R, S, T, V, W - finds, features and records
  - (I, O, Q, X, Y, Z not used)

Figure 2: Location of evaluation trenches





### Section



### Plan

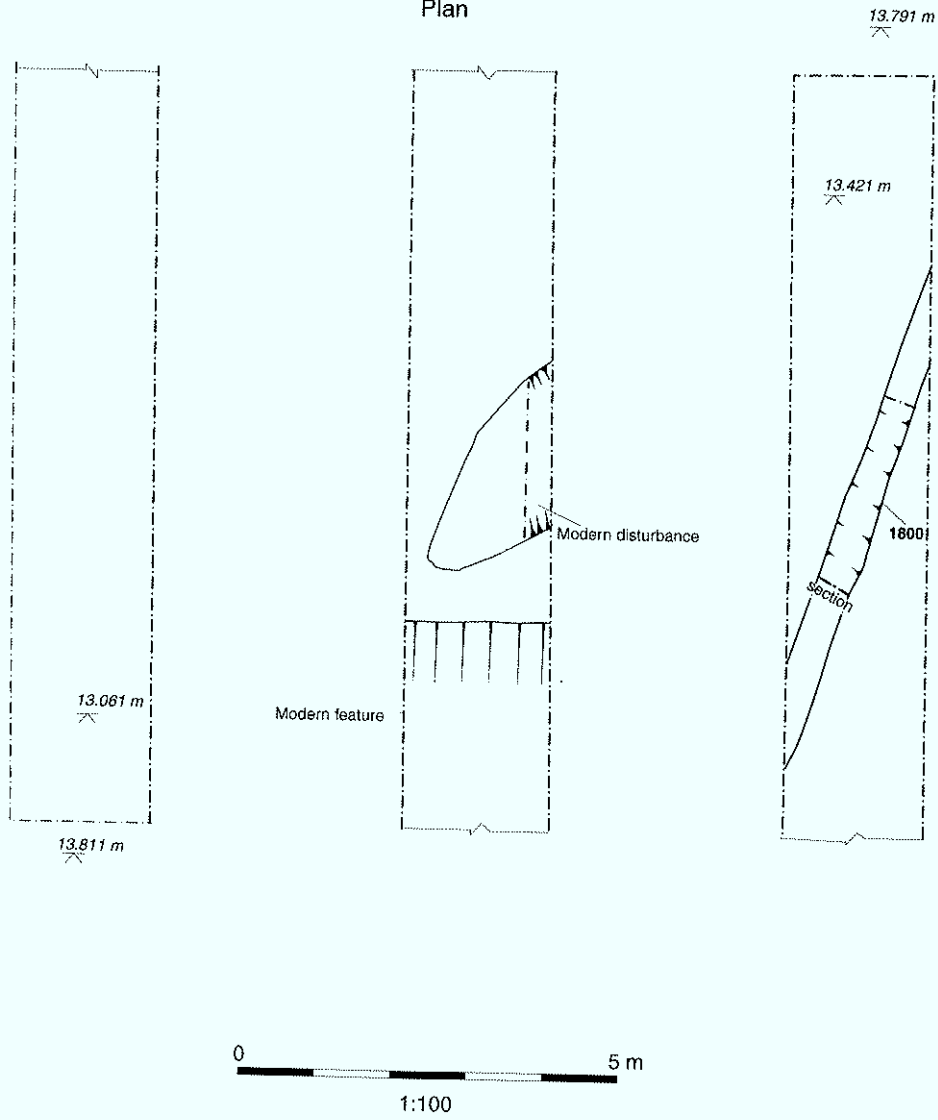


Figure 3: Trench 18 plan and section



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