



High Lodge Sound Trail, Brandon, Suffolk Archaeological Watching Brief Report

March 2020


Client: Forestry England

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High Lodge Sound Trail, Brandon, Suffolk

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

Between 25th and 27th February 2020 OA East conducted a watching brief on works for Forestry England at the High Lodge Sound Trail. This work involved monitoring the removal of older play equipment and the excavation works to install new equipment.

No archaeological features or deposits were found during the works. Three later prehistoric flints were recovered from the made ground cleared from the site of the original playground equipment.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Helen Winter of Forestry England for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to David Robertson, Forestry England's East of England Historic Environment advisor, who approved the WSI for the work.

The project was managed for OA East by Patrick Moan. The fieldwork was monitored by Lindsey Kemp. Figures were produced by Dave Brown.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) was commissioned by Forestry England to undertake a watching brief at High Lodge Sound Trail, Suffolk (Figure 1, NGR TL 81081 84736). The monitoring was required by the Forestry England Historic Environment advisor due to the high potential for prehistoric and Romano-British remains within the locality.

1.1.2 Forestry England are replacing the bell tower on the High Lodge Sound Trail with new play equipment collectively called 'The Working Forest Play Space'. A Brief was set by Forestry England (Robertson 2020) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by OA East detailing the methodologies (Moan 2020).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The site is situated at approximately 56m above Ordnance Datum (OD), 2.5km south-east of Brandon, Suffolk. The area is heavily wooded, forming part of Thetford Forest.

1.2.2 The geology of the area is mapped as Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, with superficial deposits of Cover Sand (British Geological Survey 2014; British Geological Survey online map viewer <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>, accessed 2nd March 2020).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site is extensive as it lies in a rich area of prehistoric and Romano-British activity (Fig. 2). The following is a summary based on the data held by the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (SHER). A 1km search radius of the SHER has been undertaken, with the data then used to produce the background below.

Prehistoric

1.3.2 A number of prehistoric flint tool findspots are located within 1km of the site. These are not associated with features but instead were flints found within the topsoil. They could, however, be indicative of potential prehistoric activity within the area (e.g. STN 016 & STN 059).

Romano-British

1.3.3 Iron Age and Romano-British pottery has been recovered within the vicinity of the site, near to the Forestry England Visitor Centre (STN 002, STN 029 and STN 187) along with a hone, knife and stylus from STN 009. These finds are not associated with any known archaeological features but are indicative of the potential for remains of this date to be found within the area. Iron Age and Romano-British archaeological features have also been recorded directly to the south of the Visitor Centre and there is the potential this settlement activity could extend outside of the known area of remains depicted on the Suffolk HER.

- 1.3.4 Numerous records relate to a Roman settlement, historically named as High Lodge Camp. This “camp” is a potential Late Iron Age to Roman site, with a scatter of Romano pottery sherds recorded just east of High Lodge (STN 002) and features and finds recorded south of High Lodge Farm in the mid 1930’s (STN 008). Archaeological excavation works directly north-west of the site were undertaken in the early 20th century by R. R. Clarke, who found a “Roman occupation site”, including Roman colour coated ware pottery (STN 008).

Medieval, post-medieval and modern

- 1.3.5 Medieval activity is also known within the area; historic maps show the site of Downham (High) Warrener's Lodge to be located south of where the Visitors Centre is now situated and within the locality of the site itself (STN 008). Post-medieval or modern banks and ditches (STN 060, STN 064, STN 067, STN 068 & STN 109) and a clay extraction pits (STN 110 & STN 111) have also been associated with High Lodge.
- 1.3.6 A potential rabbit warren was identified from documentary sources at Brandon, established in the medieval period. Earthworks remains of the boundary bank and internal banks (BRD 082, not illustrated).
- 1.3.7 Lingheath flint mines near Brandon and west of the site, was a major flint mining site during the post-medieval and modern periods, with mining continuing into the 1930s. Substantial areas of earthworks still survive (BRD 066, not illustrated), west of High Lodge. Gun flint production waste has been identified at High Lodge (STN 236).
- 1.3.8 High Lodge was the location of a labour camp, established in the late 1920s to provide retraining for the unemployed, and a source of labour for the Forestry Commission. The camp is visible still intact on 1940s aerial photographs and appears to have remained in some sort of use at least until the end of the Second World War (STN 029). Further earthworks of modern origin associated with High Lodge include a pond (STN 058).

Previous Archaeological works

- 1.3.9 A number of previous archaeological works have taken place within the vicinity previously. Monitoring of groundworks for a new footpath at High Lodge revealed an undated buried soil horizon and several Neolithic and Late Bronze Age/Iron Age struck flints (STN 094). The construction of new car parks at High Lodge Visitor centre was monitoring to the north of the site. The work identified a ditch and bank earthwork (associated with STN 061 or 063, not illustrated) that contained residual later Roman pottery (ESF20291). Archaeological monitoring was also carried out on during the installation of a tree house and climbing forest. The topsoil was stripped above each of the 12 postholes. No finds or features of archaeological significance were found (ESF22982).
- 1.3.10 The remaining archaeological events within the area generally relate to the rapid earthwork surveys undertaken within the region during the 1990s, to identify and assess the potential impact that forestry works (particularly de-stumping) could have on previously unrecorded earthworks (e.g. ESF19178 & ESF19514).

2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To identify, investigate and record any archaeological features or deposits encountered during excavation of foundations for the new play equipment.
- ii. To determine the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The on-site methodology followed that set out in the WSI (Moan 2020) with monitoring conducted during excavation of the foundations by the clients nominated contractor (Green Play Projects Ltd). All excavated material was scanned with a metal detector.

2.2.2 All site clearance and preparation and foundation excavations took place under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist to the full depth required.

2.2.3 All excavation work was monitored, artefacts recovered, and sections cleaned and recorded where appropriate. The stratigraphic sequence was also recorded within the foundation holes.

2.2.4 All excavation works were photographed and an appropriate written record made. General working shots were taken throughout the monitoring to provide a detailed account of work undertaken.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the watching brief are presented below. The full details of deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data is presented in Appendix B. Figure 1 inset shows the areas monitored.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence was fairly uniform. The natural geology of silty gravelly sand was overlain by a heavily bioturbated yellowy brown fine silty sand subsoil (up to 0.4m thick), which in turn was overlain by dark greyish brown sandy silt topsoil (c.0.3m thick).

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the watching brief were good, and the site remained dry throughout. No archaeological features were present; however, they would have been easily identifiable against the underlying natural geology.

3.2.3 The only deviation from these was within the central portion of the site where, as part of the existing play structures a mound had been created by digging a shallow circular ditch and piling the excavated material in the centre of it. This mound was c.0.65m in height and constructed of redeposited material. As such, the mound's soil sequence was one of mixed natural geology and topsoil.

3.2.4 Three flints were recovered from the made ground of the mound during its excavation. Analysis of these flints (Appendix B.1) suggested they may be later prehistoric in origin.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Once the pre-existing structures and associated below ground concrete supports had been removed, small targeted excavations were conducted across the site at the location of the new postholes or concrete settings for the new play equipment.

3.3.2 These small excavations included a broad and shallow (0.2m) pit to contain wood chips, as well as several posts and beams forming the play structures. None of these excavations were particularly large although some were fairly deep (maximum 0.9m). None of these yielded any finds or other evidence for occupation. The stratigraphic sequence was found to be the natural geology, overlain by subsoil (up to 0.4m thick) in turn overlain by topsoil or made ground from the previous work on site (c. 0.3m thick).

3.4 Finds summary

3.4.1 In all, three struck flints were recovered from the artificially constructed mound. Analysis (Appendix B.1) suggests these relate to later prehistoric activity. These finds are residual within a modern context and as such of limited interest.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The results of the investigation can be viewed as sound as the conditions were generally fine and monitoring was constant.

4.2 Watching Brief objectives and results

4.2.1 As no *in situ* archaeological features or deposits were encountered and the investigations are considered to be reliable the aims set out in the WSI can be seen as being fulfilled.

4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 The lack of evidence for occupation is unsurprising given the restricted nature of the individual investigations. The three flints recovered are suggestive of later prehistoric activity in the landscape, however their presence in redeposited material means we can assign no significance to them as we cannot be sure of their original source, place or manner of deposition.

APPENDIX A DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

General Deposits						
Description				Orientation	-	
<p>Area monitored was devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and heavily bioturbated subsoil overlying a sand geology.</p> <p>Redeposited natural mixed with topsoil was recorded during the removal of the mound construction and old play equipment. This had been up-cast from the small ditch excavated around the mound location, with the old play equipment then built on top.</p>				Length (m)	-	
				Width (m)	-	
				Avg. depth (m)	-	
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
100	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.4	Subsoil – Mid yellow fine silty sand	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Natural – Yellowy brown clayey silt with occasional small chalk nodules.	-	-
103	Layer	-	0.65	Made ground consisting of redeposited natural with some top- and subsoil within in the matrix.	Flints x 3	Later prehistoric

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Flint

By Anthony Haskins

- B.1.1 Three struck flints, two flakes and a blade, were recovered from the topsoil of the site. The flints are struck from a mid to dark greyish blue raw material with a thick off-white chalky cortex and areas of recortication. The flints are largely undiagnostic but are probably hard hammer struck from poorly structured cores suggesting a later prehistoric date.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Moan, P. 2020. Written Scheme of Investigation: High Lodge Sound Trail, Brandon, Suffolk. OA East unpublished document

Robertson, D. 2020. High Lodge Sound Trail: Brief for archaeological supervision and monitoring during the installation of 'The Working Forest' play equipment. Forestry England, dated 31th January 2020

APPENDIX C OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-384131		
Project Name	High Lodge Sound Trail, Suffolk		
Start of Fieldwork	25/02/2020	End of Fieldwork	27/02/2020
Previous Work	n/a	Future Work	n/a

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	STN 244	Planning App. No.	n/a
HER Number	ESF27382	Related Numbers	n/a

Prompt	Brief issued by Forestry England
Development Type	Playground equipment
Place in Planning Process	Not known/Not recorded

Techniques used (tick all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography – interpretation | <input type="checkbox"/> Grab-sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-core | <input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording of Fabric/Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Augering | <input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search | <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling | <input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief |

Monument	Period	Object	Period
	Choose an item.	flintwork	Late Prehistoric (- 4000 to 43)
	Choose an item.		Choose an item.
	Choose an item.		Choose an item.

Insert more lines as appropriate.

Project Location

County	Suffolk	Address (including Postcode) Thetford Forest, High Lodge, Brandon IP27 0AF
District	West Suffolk	
Parish	Santon and Santon Downham	
HER office	Suffolk	
Size of Study Area	446sqm	
National Grid Ref	TL 81081 84736	

Project Originators

Organisation	Forestry England
Project Brief Originator	Forestry England
Project Design Originator	Oxford Archaeology
Project Manager	Patrick Moan
Project Supervisor	Lindsey Kemp

Project Archives

	Location	ID
Physical Archive (Finds)	SCCAS	STN 244
Digital Archive	SCCAS	STN 244
Paper Archive	SCCAS	STN 244

Physical Contents	Present?	Digital files associated with Finds	Paperwork associated with Finds
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Remains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media

Database	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images (Digital photos)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Illustrations (Figures/Plates)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Text	<input type="checkbox"/>
Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/>

Paper Media

Aerial Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context Sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manuscript	<input type="checkbox"/>
Map	<input type="checkbox"/>
Matrices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microfiche	<input type="checkbox"/>
Miscellaneous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research/Notes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos (negatives/prints/slides)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sections	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further Comments

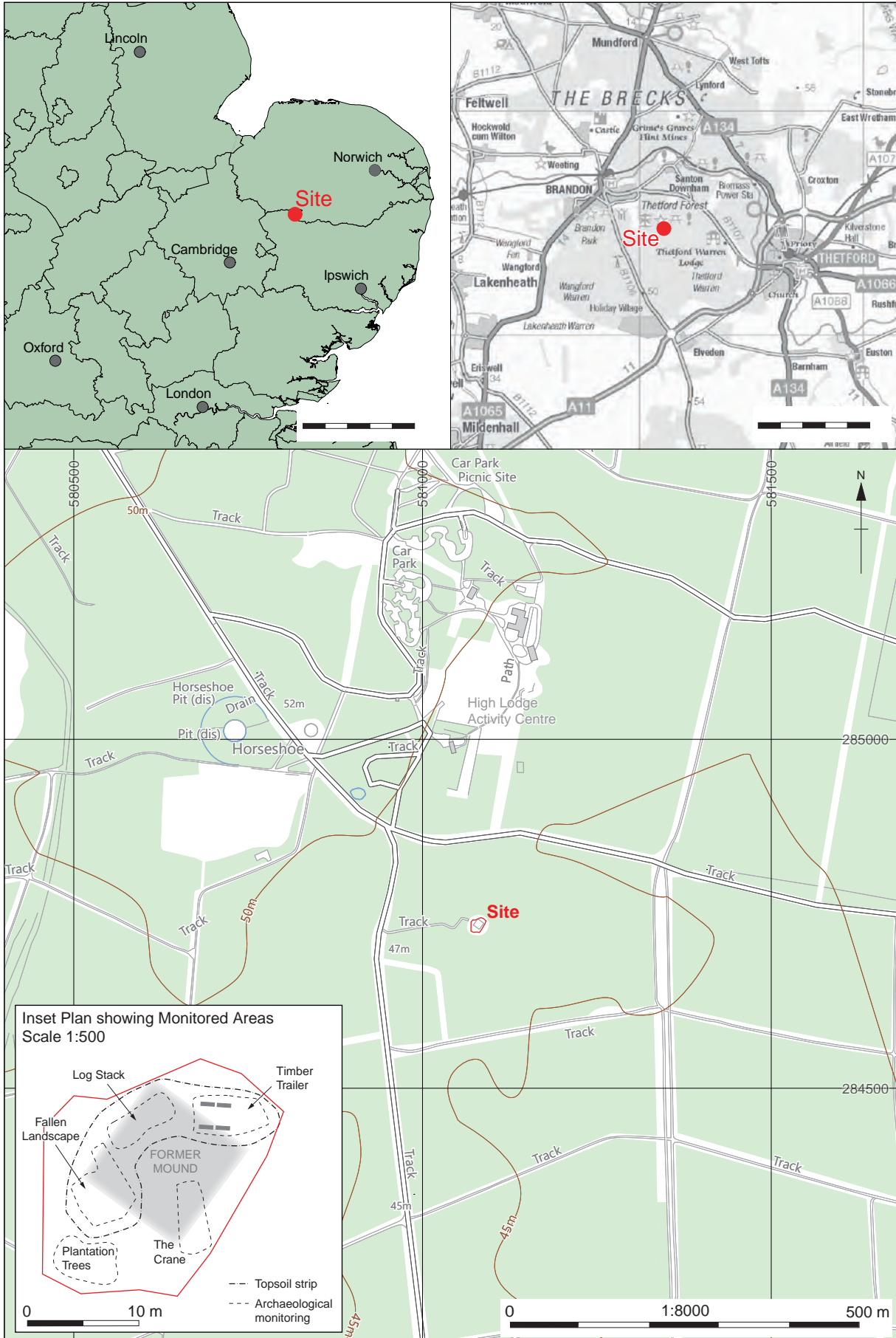


Figure 1: Site location showing area of archaeological monitoring (red)

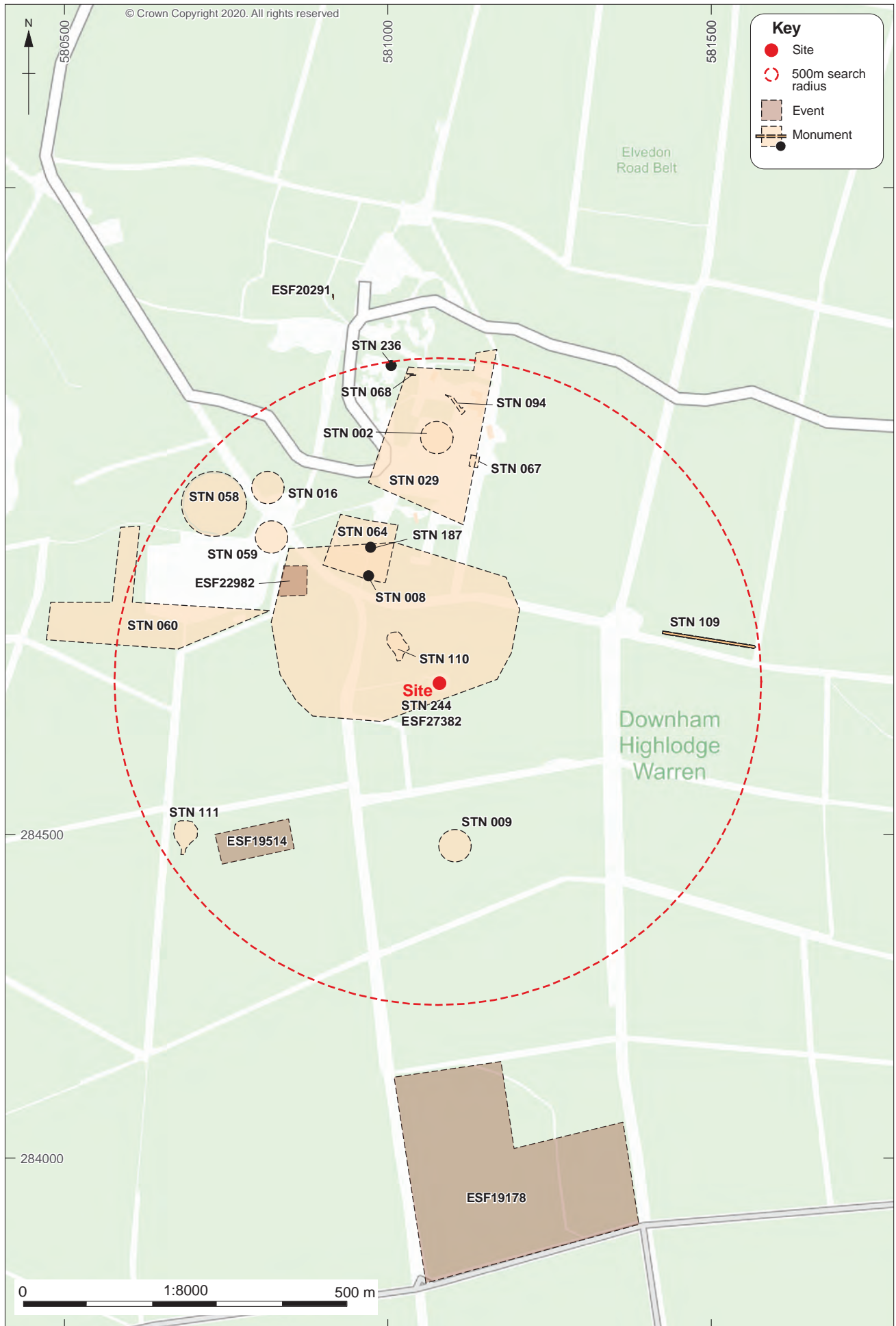


Figure 2: HER monument entries within 500 metres of site and events entries mentioned in the text



Plate 1: Pre-excavation, looking north



Plate 2: Section through redeposited mound material to subsoil, looking north



Plate 3: Timber Trailer slots, looking east



Plate 4: Excavation slot to south east of site



Plate 5: Postholes to north east of site



Plate 6: General work shot, looking south



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