

Beverley Brook
Worcester Park
London Borough
of Sutton



**Archaeological
Evaluation Report**




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Beverley Brook, Worcester Park, London Borough of Sutton

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

In March 2012, Oxford Archaeology South undertook an archaeological evaluation of land at Back Green, off Green Lane, Worcester Park within the London Borough of Sutton.

Four trenches were excavated and no archaeological features or deposits were encountered. No physical evidence survives for the route of an historic track or lane that is depicted crossing the site in the 18th century.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project details

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology South (OAS), was commissioned by Royal Haskoning to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Back Green, off Green Lane, Worcester Park within the London Borough of Sutton (Fig. 1). The evaluation was designed to assess the archaeological preservation at the site to inform the subsequent planning application for a flood alleviation scheme.
- 1.1.2 A brief was issued by the Environment Agency's Archaeologist, via the client, detailing the scope of work required to fulfil the Local Authority's standards. Prior to undertaking the fieldwork, OAS produced and agreed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) with Diane Abrams of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) detailing how these requirements would be attained. All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies.
- 1.1.3 This document has been prepared in accordance with the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service Guidance Notes for the preparation of evaluation reports.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site boundary encloses an area of approximately 0.65 hectares known as 'Back Green' centred on National Grid Reference TQ 22340 66340 at the northern end of Worcester Park recreation ground. It is bounded to the east by the ditched water course of Beverley Brook with Green Lane beyond this. To the north the rear boundary of properties fronting Pembury Avenue back onto the site and to the west is a Electricity Sub Station and a rail line into to London. Worcester Park forms the southern boundary of the site.
- 1.2.2 At the time of the fieldwork the site was open grassland surrounded by mature hedges and trees that form the boundaries. Areas of scrub and larger trees had also recently been cleared where these extended into the site beyond the perimeter boundary. The surface topography slopes gently from west to east from approximately 20.9m aOD to 19.3m aOD.
- 1.2.3 The geology map (BGS web site) shows the site to be located on the solid geology of the London Clay Formation with drift geology of the Kempton Park Gravels (a River Terrace Deposit) present along the eastern edge in association with the Beverley Brook.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Background research for the site and the surrounding 1km area was undertaken to inform the evaluation. The following is reproduced from the background section of the WSI.
- 1.3.2 The Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER) is the main repository of archaeological data for the site. Data from this source was obtained for known sites and events within the development boundary and within the surrounding 1km study area. This search produced only eight separate sites. This low number of known archaeological sites is due, in part, to the limited amount of archaeological fieldwork which has been undertaken within the study area.



- 1.3.3 The site is located within the historic parish of Malden. The eastern boundary of the site is formed by Beverley Brook, which also marks the boundary between the parishes of Malden and Cheam. There are no known previous archaeological remains within the site itself.
- 1.3.4 The earliest evidence of human activity comes in the form of a single Mesolithic worked flint recovered from an evaluation carried out to the south-west of the site in 1996. A findspot of a Neolithic to Bronze Age flint and pot sherds has also been recovered within the study area, to the north-east of the Site. The 1996 archaeological works also recorded evidence of a small Iron Age settlement. Evidence of a more substantial Iron Age to Roman settlement has been found at the western edge of the study area, and has now been designated an area of occupation by the GLHER. Other features recorded during the 1996 evaluation and excavation included a medieval ditch and pit and the beamslot foundations of a medieval timber structure.
- 1.3.5 Worcester Park takes its name from Worcester House where the 4th Earl of Worcester lived when keeper of the great park of Nonsuch Palace in the 17th century. Nonsuch Palace was built in 1538 for Henry VIII as a hunting palace and guest house for foreign visitors, and the site is located within the former grounds of the estate. Following the break up of the great park of Nonsuch at the end of the 17th century, the site appears to have formed part of Cheam Common, located to the north-east of Worcester Park Farm, which was formed from land in the northern half of the great park.
- 1.3.6 Analysis of historic maps of the site was undertaken at the Surrey Records Office. The earliest detailed map of the site to have been viewed was Rocque's map of Surrey from 1768 which shows this as an area of open, possibly farmland, bisected by a road. To the south lies an area of cultivated land, labelled on later maps as 'Turners' Farm' or 'Lower Green Farm'. The road which crosses the site is shown on all subsequent maps until Greenwood's 1823 Map of Surrey, where this is now depicted as common ground. The 1839 Tithe Map and apportionment of the Parish of Malden lists the site as 'Back Green and lane' and is described as 'waste land'.
- 1.3.7 The London to Leatherhead railway arrived in the area in 1865, separating Back Green from Lower Green. The current layout of the site was established at this time, as shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1884. The railway runs diagonally through the enclosed land that is now Worcester Park recreation ground (then called Lower Green Farm) and Back Green which is still marked to the north east of these fields. The rest of Cheam Common has now been enclosed into a series of fields. The site has since been maintained as public common land, despite the expansive development of the surrounding area.



2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 General aims

2.1.1 The evaluation aimed to establish the archaeological potential of the site. To achieve this the general objectives were to:

- to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal/impact area,
- to determine and confirm the character of any remains present, without compromising any deposits that may merit detailed investigation under full area excavation,
- to determine or estimate the date range of any remains from artefacts or otherwise,
- to characterise any underlying archaeological strata down to undisturbed geology without significantly impacting upon younger (overlying) deposits where possible,
- to determine the geo-archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered,
- to establish what archaeological remains/deposits maybe affected by any proposed development,
- to make available the results of the investigation to inform the planning application and the potential for any further mitigation strategy,
- to produce a report and full archive,
- to disseminate the results of the investigation at a level appropriate to their importance.

2.2 Specific aims and objectives

2.2.1 The evaluation was specifically designed to;

- establish the presence/absence of physical remains relating to the former track/route through Back Green,
- establish the presence/absence of any localised alluvial deposits associated with Beverley Brook,
- establish the likely impact of the construction depth upon any deeply buried remains.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of four evaluation trenches; three measuring 30m x 2m and one measuring 20m x 2m, representing an approximate 5% sample by area of the flood alleviation earthwork impact footprint. The flood alleviation earthwork will comprise the lowering of the current ground level by c 2 m to create a flood water storage area. The impact footprint of this is approximately 0.45ha.

2.3.2 All trenches were excavated using a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

2.3.3 The exposed surface of the natural clay, which was the first horizon encountered below the topsoil/subsoil, was sufficiently cleaned to establish the presence/absence of



archaeological remains. Hand excavation of a number of soil marks was undertaken to establish their origin and significance.

- 2.3.4 The trench locations, features and variations in the geological natural, along with levels for all trenches were recorded using a Leica GPS. Individual recorded points have an accuracy to within 0.075m.
- 2.3.5 All fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with standard OAS practices and in accordance with the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service Guidance Notes for fieldwork.
- 2.3.6 GLAAS were informed of the results and offered the opportunity to visit the site prior to backfilling. Due to the negative results a site visit by GLAAS was not required. Digital images of the open trenches were also forwarded to GLAAS prior to backfilling.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, with a summary of the trench results, and a stratigraphic description of the deposits encountered. Detailed trench and context inventories are presented in Appendix A. The trench locations and associated features/deposits are presented on Figure 2.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 The underlying geology (London Clay Formation) was encountered within each trench as a consistent deposit of weathered orange brown to greyish orange clay with gravel patches and inclusions.
- 3.2.2 The topsoil across the site averaged 0.3 m thick. The base of the topsoil had a very diffuse boundary with an intermittent and shallow subsoil that was greyer and less humic than the topsoil. This was recorded in Trench 2 and at the eastern end of Trench 4. The topsoil within Trench 1 also appeared to have been disturbed being more mixed in composition than recorded in the other trenches with clay and gravel inclusions.

3.3 Trench descriptions

- 3.3.1 Trenches 1 to 3 were arranged across the width of the site to detect the presence of the north-west to south-east aligned lane or track that was postulated on the basis of historical mapping. Trench 4 was positioned to investigate the potential presence of localised alluvial deposits associated with Beverley Brook. The trenches each demonstrated a simple stratigraphic sequence comprising natural London Clay overlain by a thin subsoil deposit and a topsoil and turf horizon.
- 3.3.2 No visible features or deposits were encountered within Trenches 1 and 3. The trench sections were checked for any evidence of an infilled depression, or layers and surfaces that may have been the remnants of the trackway. No such features or deposits were present.
- 3.3.3 Within Trench 2 three irregular and poorly defined features (203, 206 and 208) were visible following machine excavation of the overlying soils. These were excavated and proved to be shallow and infilled with sterile clay similar to the natural geology. It is likely that each of these was the result of root disturbance.
- 3.3.4 Within the eastern part of Trench 4 a deposit of grey clay (403) was recorded. This lay below the subsoil horizon and extended beyond the limits of the trench towards the



current course of Beverley Brook. This deposit was consistent with silting associated with Beverley Brook and may represent a former channel course or overbank silting prior to the creation of the modern channel within which it now flows. There was no evidence of waterlogged material within this deposit.

3.4 Finds summary

- 3.4.1 Two small fragments (108g) of ceramic building material (probably tile) were recovered from the topsoil (100) within Trench 1. These are small, very worn and are likely to be of post-medieval origin.
- 3.4.2 An iron hinge of likely 19th-century date or later was also recovered from the topsoil (300) of Trench 3.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The evaluation was completed over the course of three days in good weather providing favourable conditions to recognise and record any archaeological deposits that may have been present. The evaluation percentage sample also represents a recognised high level of investigation that should identify all but the most sparsely distributed types of archaeological features. Combined with the absence of any archaeological artefacts, the results of this investigation can be viewed as being a very reliable indicator for the absence of any archaeological potential at this site.

4.2 Archaeological interpretation and discussion

- 4.2.1 The evaluation demonstrates that no physical evidence is present or survives for a trackway, lane or route through the area on an north-west to south-east alignment. The historic maps depict the route in 1768 (Rocque) although this had ceased to exist by 1823 (Greenwood). It seems likely that the lane had only ever experienced light use as no evidence for surfacing or rutting exists that one may expect to encounter within the relatively soft soils had this been used for wheeled vehicles.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		NNE-SSW
No archaeology present. Topsoil and turf overlying natural comprising mid orange clay with occasional gravel patches and inclusions.				Avg. depth (m)		0.35
				Width (m)		1.80
				Length (m)		30.45
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	CBM	-
101	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		NE-SW
No archaeology present. Topsoil and turf sealing a thin and sporadically present subsoil overlying natural comprising mid orange clay. Three soil marks excavated and recorded that are likely to be of natural origin.				Avg. depth (m)		0.40
				Width (m)		1.80
				Length (m)		31.15
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
201	Layer	-	0.16	Subsoil	-	-
202	Fill	0.45	0.16	Fill of 203	-	-
203	Cut	0.45	0.16	Tree/root hole	-	-
204	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
205	Fill	1.4	0.18	Fill of 206	-	-
206	Cut	1.4	0.18	Natural variation or possible root hole	-	-
207	Fill	0.9	0.14	Fill of 208	-	-
208	Cut	0.9	0.14	Natural variation or possible root hole	-	-



Trench 3						
General description				Orientation		NNE-SSW
No archaeology present Topsoil and turf overlying mid orange clay natural with occasional gravel inclusions.				Avg. depth (m)		0.30
				Width (m)		1.80
				Length (m)		26.50
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
300	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	Fe/Iron	-
301	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 4						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
No archaeology present. Topsoil and turf overlying subsoil at east end of trench. This overlay a grey silt clay possibly representing a former course of Beverley Brook or associated overbank silting. The natural comprised mid orange clay with occasional gravel patches.				Avg. depth (m)		0.30
				Width (m)		1.80
				Length (m)		19.90
Contexts						
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
400	Layer	-	0.31	Topsoil	-	-
401	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
402	Layer	-	0.3	Subsoil	-	-
403	Layer	3.2	>0.1	Grey silt - watercourse	-	-



APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Beverley Brook, Worcester Park, London Borough of Sutton
Site code:	BEB12
Grid reference:	TQ 22340 66340
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	12th-14th March 2012
Area of site:	0.65ha

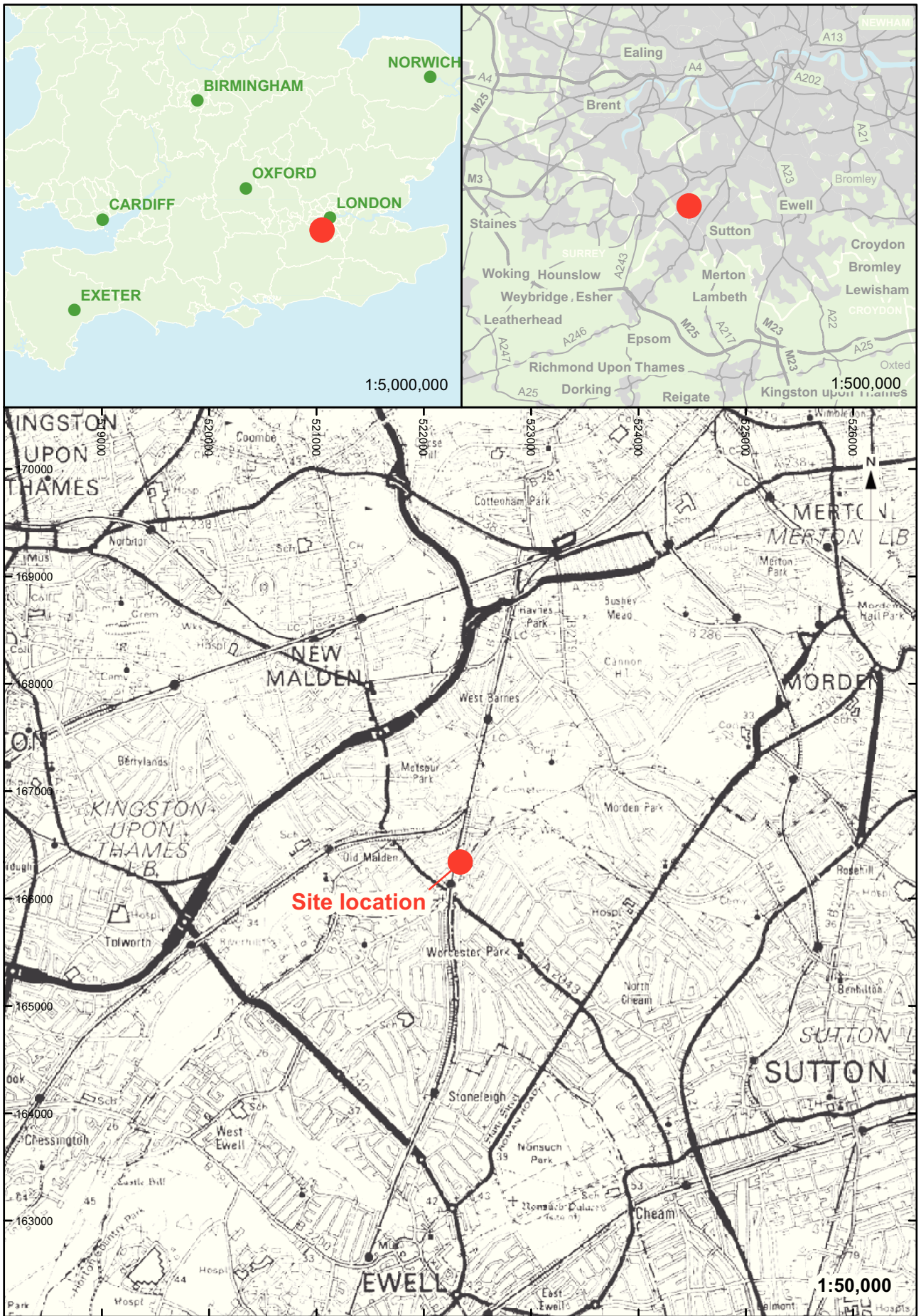
Summary of results:

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Four trenches were excavated and no archaeological features or deposits were encountered. No physical evidence survives for the route of an historic track or lane that is depicted crossing the site in the 18th century.

Location of archive:

The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Museum of London in due course under the accession code BEB12.



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Figure 1: Site location

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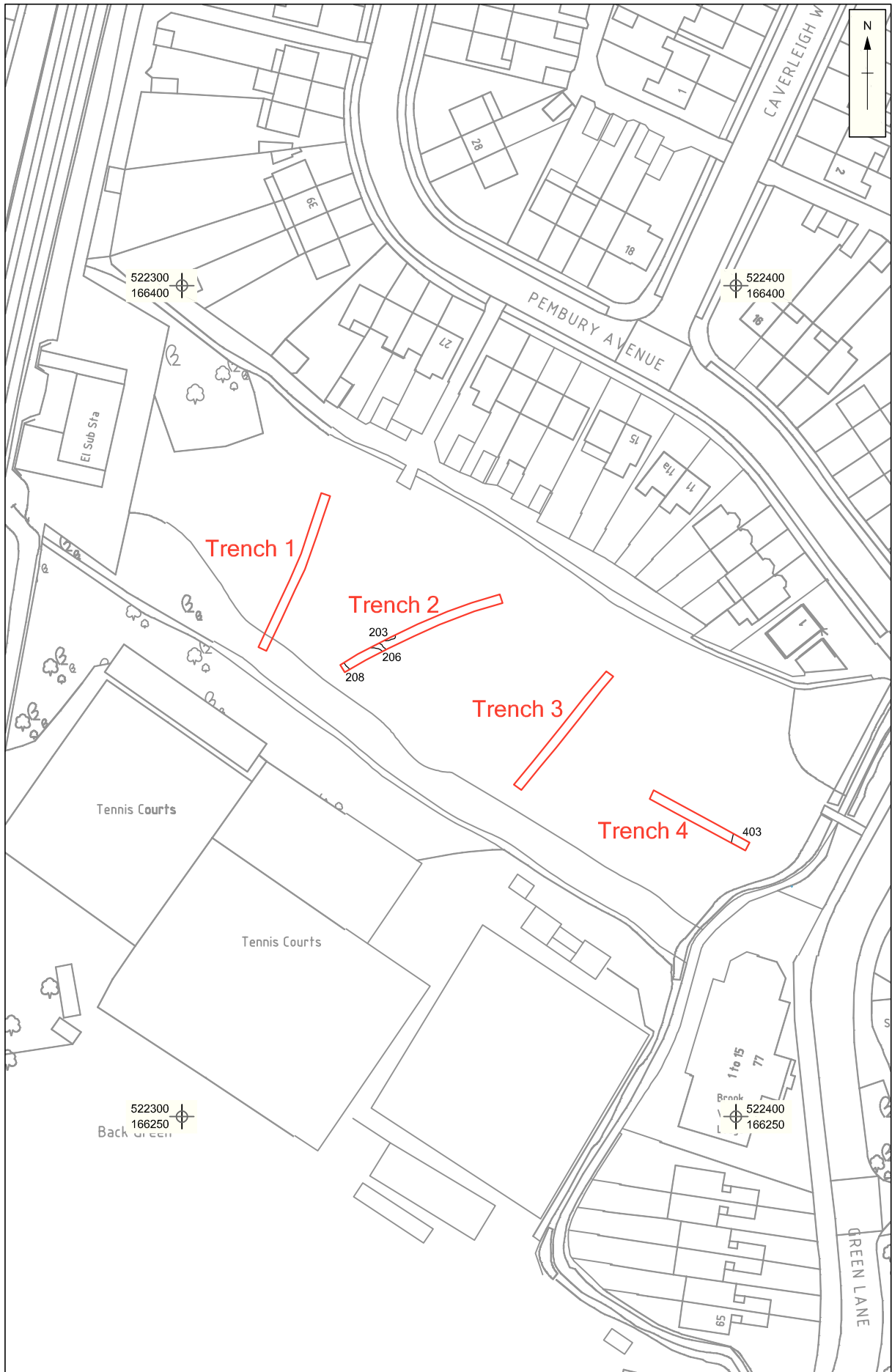


Figure 2: Trench locations



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