

Morrison Hospital
Swansea
Phases 1 & 2



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



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Morrison Hospital, Swansea Phases 1 and 2 Final Report

NGR SN 6625 0025

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

Alongside two construction phases between January and August 2009, Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an archaeological watching brief within the grounds of Morrison Hospital, Swansea, prior to the development of new parking facilities. Three areas were observed (Areas 1, 2 and 3). A linear field boundary was encountered in Area 1. Within the garden associated with the former Maes y Gwernen Hall (Area 2), landscaping and extant ornamental features were recorded. Area 3 had previously been impacted upon by the construction of the former parking facilities and helicopter landing pad and no archaeological or historical remains were recorded within this portion of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Throughout 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an archaeological watching brief within the grounds of Morrison Hospital, Swansea (NGR SN 6625 0025, Fig. 1). The watching brief was commissioned by WYG Environment (consultants) on behalf of their clients, BAM Construct UK ahead of the construction of a new car park and associated access (Planning Ref: 2008/1495).

1.1.2 The development works requiring the watching brief attendance were completed in two main construction phases. Phase 1 was undertaken in two separate periods between 23rd January to 2nd February and 23rd April to 1st May 2009. Phase 2 was completed between 20th to 28th August 2009. Phase 1 has been reported separately as an interim statement (OA 2009) although the results are presented in full (including figures and plates) within this report alongside those of the second phase.

1.2 Geology

1.2.1 The British Geological Survey for the Swansea area indicates that the site is covered by two geological strata. The majority of the proposed development site, the northern area of the hospital and fields beyond are recorded as glacial sand and gravel deposits. The south of the proposed development area below the staff car park around Maes y Gwernen and the south east of the hospital site are recorded as composed of undifferentiated glacial drift deposits (BGS, sheet 247).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The following is based upon the background section produced in the Desk Based Assessment and summarised in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WYG, 2008a and 2008b). These record no previous archaeological investigation within the site boundary or its immediate surroundings.

Prehistoric to early medieval

- 1.3.2 There are no records of remains dating from the prehistoric through to early medieval period within the surrounding area of the site and the potential for the presence of these was considered low prior to the start of the fieldwork.

Medieval and post-medieval periods

- 1.3.3 No recorded sites of medieval date exist within the vicinity of the hospital and it is most likely that the area was occupied by farmers in isolated settlements and farmsteads during this period rather than in small nucleated villages. Within this likely settlement pattern there is potential for relict medieval field boundaries or evidence of other associated agricultural practices being preserved.
- 1.3.4 The economy, population and layout of settlements and field patterns continued in broadly the same pattern from the medieval into the post-medieval period and much of the land within the vicinity of the hospital is anticipated to have fallen within the Beaufort and Briton Ferry estates. It was only with the development of industrial processes in the area that the surrounding environs witnessed significant change. Coal mining acted as the catalyst for the development of other industries such as the melting of non-ferrous metals, particularly copper for which Swansea become world famous.
- 1.3.5 Morrison town itself is located to the south of the Hospital and site. Morrison was a planned development of the late 18th century as envisaged by the industrialist John Morris I, from whom the place name derives. The town is the earliest (started 1773) and largest of the planned settlements built by the copper magnates in Swansea (Hughes 2005, 200). Development and expansion continued into the 19th century based upon the double grid iron street arrangements reflecting the original field boundary layout (ibid., 200-201) before expanding beyond these in the late 19th century and 20th century.
- 1.3.6 Within the current hospital grounds are the house and garden of Maes y Gwernen. The tithe map for Llangyfelach (1842) depicts Maes y Gwernen as two buildings within several small enclosed areas which may represent gardens. By the time of the first edition Ordnance Survey map (1878) Maes y Gwernen was a more extensive arrangement of buildings approached from the south by a tree-lined avenue. Gardens are depicted with paths and trees surrounding the buildings. A survey of the garden to record the extant features has been undertaken by the consultants prior to the current watching brief (WYG 2009).
- 1.3.7 Morrison Hospital was originally built in 1942 to the immediate north-east of Maes y Gwernen Hall as an Emergency Medical Service hospital to accept patients from the armed forces and personnel engaged in war service activities. Although the hospital had a military function there was an agreement in principle that it would assist with civilian needs in the post-war era is possible (Scoville, 1994). Some of the Second World War buildings have survived and are currently in use, but the majority

have been replaced by modern buildings. Development of the hospital has continued since the 1940s incorporating the 19th century buildings with a significant number of new buildings being completed in the 1980s.

2 PROJECT AIMS

2.1 Aims of the watching brief

2.1.1 The following is reproduced from the WSI.

2.1.2 The overall aim of the watching brief is to identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the initial construction works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource and enable discharge of the planning condition for the site. Specific objectives of the watching brief are to:

- Monitor the topsoil stripping and excavation to archaeological sterile sub-soils;
- Identify archaeological features and deposits of interest;
- Record identified archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance;
- Undertake sufficient post-excavation analysis to confidently interpret archaeological features and phasing identified during site works;
- Undertake sufficient post-excavation analysis of artefacts and samples to interpret their significance;
- Report the results of the watching brief and post-excavation analysis and place them within their local and regional context;
- Compile and deposit a site archive at a suitable repository.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Soil stripping and excavation

3.1.1 The methodology varied slightly between the phases of construction work reflecting the clearance or demolition activities being undertaken. However, the general principal of removing the modern topsoil and/or hard standing deposits (car park, garden paths etc.) through machine excavation under archaeological supervision remained consistent throughout the project. Throughout both phases the main site contractor established the limits of the areas to be stripped of topsoil and subsoil. The main contractor supplied all plant and all topsoil and subsoil removal was undertaken mechanically using 360° excavator(s) fitted with a toothless (flat-bladed) grading bucket. Machine removal of the topsoil and subsoil was completed under archaeological supervision either to the level of any significant archaeological deposits or the required initial construction level depending upon which was encountered first.

3.1.2 Within Phase 2 the machine stripping method varied slightly due to the existing car park construction and the degree of previous construction related impact/disturbance

identified at an early stage during the removal of the car park associated deposits. In the first instance all of the imported hard materials (tarmac and stone) were removed mechanically using a 360° excavator(s) fitted with a toothed bucket. Subsequently, the underlying deposits were removed through a combination of a using 360° excavator(s) fitted with a toothless (flat-bladed) grading bucket and a bulldozer blade where it was clearly evident that previous construction had removed all archaeological potential.

3.1.3 Due to the perceived relatively low archaeological potential of the site, the attending archaeologist monitored and instructed more than one machine at any one time. However, this did not exceed three machines working at distance from each other. Where areas of modern disturbance were identified such as existing buildings, hard standings and modern make up, these were stripped without direct supervision to the level where undisturbed soil horizons were encountered. Thereafter supervision followed the established methodology as outlined above.

3.1.4 All traffic was excluded from stripped areas until the attending archaeologist confirmed the presence/absence of archaeological deposits and had made appropriate records. In the event that archaeological deposits or features worthy of additional investigation were identified, these were cleaned and excavated by hand where warranted. Sample excavation was undertaken in a controlled manner in order to establish their extent, form, date, function and relationship to other features.

3.1.5 The Phase 1 fieldwork was undertaken by Michael Harris and the second phase by Ian Cook. All phases of the project were managed by Steve Lawrence.

3.2 **Recording and finds**

3.2.1 All excavated/stripped areas, deposits and archaeological features were recorded according to OA standard principles of stratigraphic excavation (*OA Fieldwork Manual* ed. Wilkinson, OAU 1992). This includes written, drawn and photographic records appropriate to the importance of the feature/deposit recorded.

3.2.2 The location and extent of all features and deposits were recorded at appropriate scales and in relation to Ordnance Survey co-ordinates. All levels and spot heights were also recorded in relation to Ordnance Survey Datum.

3.2.3 All excavated features and deposits were photographed using colour and black and white 35mm format film. Additional digital site and feature photographs were also taken as appropriate to place excavated features within the wider context.

3.2.4 Stratified artefacts were not encountered during this phase of fieldwork.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Area 1

4.1.1 Area 1 refers to the open field immediately to the northwest of the existing car park (Fig. 2). A sequence of topsoil (101) overlying subsoil (102) was recorded across the whole area (Plate 1). The underlying surface of the geology was not exposed within this area.

4.1.2 A single linear boundary (103) was recorded inside the western boundary to the stripped area and parallel to the existing field boundary marking the limit of excavation. The boundary was aligned NW-SE and was visible for approximately 25 m comprising a shallow (0.13 m) trench containing sandstone rubble (104) of a former drystone wall (Plate 2).

4.2 Area 2

4.2.1 Area 2 refers to the line of the new access road to be constructed through the former gardens associated with Maes y Gwernen Hall (Fig. 2 and Plate 3). A variety of associated garden soils were encountered across this area including a sequence of buried soils, and made ground sealed by existing topsoil (contexts 110-115) reflecting the landscaping of the garden. The extant fountain (106) was also partly excavated as part of the watching brief (Plate 4). This was infilled with modern rubble debris (109) and was recorded to a depth of 1.8 m without encountering the base of the feature. A short linear length of a brick drain (105) was recorded to the north of the fountain.

4.3 Area 3

4.3.1 Area 3 refers to the former car parking facilities and the helicopter landing pad. Both of these were surfaced constructions that had caused moderate to severe impacts affecting the potential for any archaeological remains to be present.

4.3.2 Within the area of the helicopter landing pad a sequence of topsoil (117) overlying subsoil (118) was recorded over the clay geology (119). Within the remainder of the area defined by the former car park, only materials associated with its construction were noted (120 and 121) overlying the clay geology. No remnants of topsoil or subsoil were present under the car park and it was clear that the upper levels of the geology had been removed to varying depths estimated at 0.10 m to 0.50 m across the area.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1.1 The Phase 1 watching brief provided very limited results. The surface of the geology was not exposed across most of Area 1 leaving the potential for earlier archaeological features and deposits to be preserved under the remaining horizon of subsoil.

- 5.1.2 No features that had not been previously recorded by the garden survey (WYG 2009) were encountered within the garden associated with Maes y Gwernen Hall.
- 5.1.3 Removal of the former car park revealed that the surface level of the underlying geology had previously been lowered during construction removing the limited potential for archaeological remains to be present within the majority of the Phase 2 watching brief.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Findings/date</i>
101	Layer		c. 0.15 m	Topsoil	C20th pottery
102	Layer		c. 0.25 m	Subsoil	C20th pottery
103	Cut	0.30 m	0.12 m	Linear field boundary	-
104	Deposit/ structure	0.30 m	0.12 m	Sandstone rubble filling 103. Possible remains of a dry stone wall field boundary	-
105	Structure	0.30 m	0.07 m	Garden brick drain	C19th
106	Structure	c. 3.60 m diam.	1.80 m +	Garden fountain	
107	Cut	0.30 m	0.07 m	Channel for brick drain 105	-
108	Cut	c. 3.60 m diam.	1.80 m +	Construction cut for the Garden fountain 106	-
109	Deposit	c. 3.60 m diam.	1.80 m +	Rubble and silt infill of the foundation	C20th
110	Layer		0.35 m	Topsoil within the garden west of Maes Y Gwernen	-
111	Layer		0.29 m	Probable made ground deposit associated with the garden landscaping	-
112	Layer		0.22 m	Probable made ground deposit associated with the garden landscaping	
113	Layer		0.18 m	Probable made ground deposit associated with the garden landscaping	
114	Layer		0.12 m	Buried garden soil	?C19th
115	Layer		0.20 m	Probable natural glacial till	-
116	Natural			Natural sandy silt/clay	-
117	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil	-
118	Layer		0.20 m	Subsoil	-
119	Natural			Natural sandy silt/clay	
120	Layer		0.10 m	Tarmac car park surface	-
121	Layer		0.30 m	Stone base for car park	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- Hughes, S., 2005 *Copperopolis: Landscapes of the early industrial period in Swansea*. Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (1st edition 2000, 2005 revision)
- OA 2009 Morrison Hospital, Swansea. Phase 1 Interim Archaeological Watching Brief Report (July 2009)
- OAU 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition, August 1992, ed. D. Wilkinson)
- Scoville, A. 1994 *Morrison's Pictorial Past 2* Cambridge: Brown and Sons
- WYG 2008a Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment. HvS Morrison Hospital, Swansea (August 2008)
- WYG 2008b Written Scheme of Investigation for Watching Brief. Car Park and Access Road, Morrison Hospital, Swansea (November 2008)
- WYG 2009 Post Survey Assessment for a Historic Garden Survey at the Car Park and Access Road, Morrison Hospital, Swansea (March 2009)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Morrison Hospital, Swansea. Phases 1 and 2 Final Report

Site code: SWAMHO 09

Grid reference: SN 6625 0025

Type of fieldwork:

Watching brief recording during topsoil removal and landscaping prior to the construction of a new car park and access road to the west of the hospital.

Date and duration of project:

Phase 1: between 23rd January to 2nd February and 23rd April to 1st May 2009

Phase 2: between 20th to 28th August 2009

Summary of results:

Alongside two construction phases between January and August 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an archaeological watching brief within the grounds of Morrison Hospital, Swansea, prior to the development of new parking facilities. Three areas were observed (Areas 1, 2 and 3). A linear field boundary was encountered in Area 1. Within the garden associated with the former Maes y Gwernen Hall (Area 2), landscaping and extant ornamental features were recorded. Area 3 had previously been impacted upon by the construction of the former parking facilities and helicopter landing pad and no archaeological or historical remains were recorded within this portion of the site.

Location of archive:

The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Swansea Museum under the accession code SM 2009.125 in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location

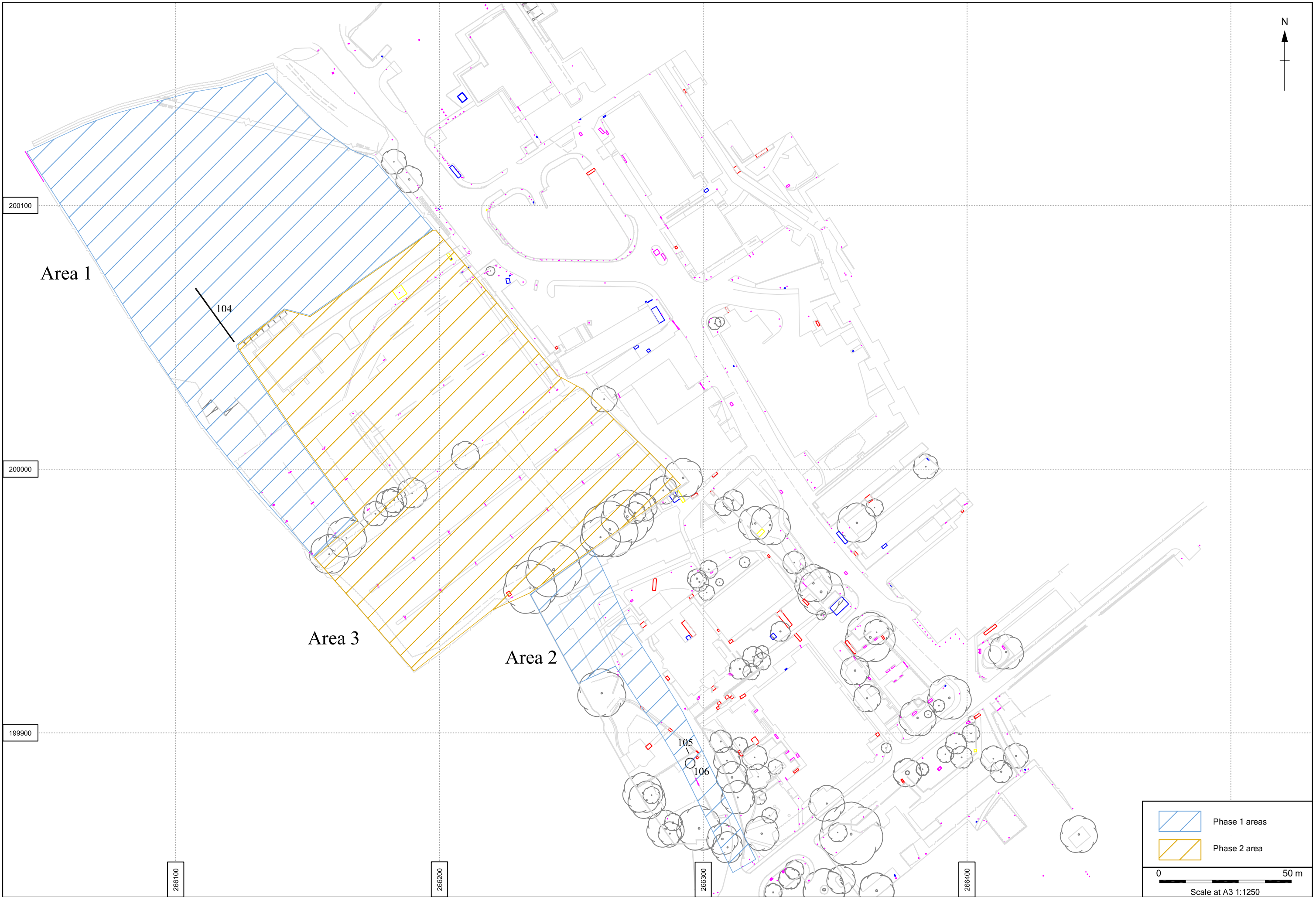


Figure 2: Site plan



Plate 1: General view across Area 1 during stripping



Plate 2: Area 1, Field boundary 104



Plate 3: View across the extant garden features



Plate 4: Foundation, Fountain 106



Plate 5: Area 3, General view



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