



Savill Court Hotel Lake, Bishopsgate, Surrey

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Savill Court Hotel Lake, Bishopsgate, Surrey

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Written by Robin Bashford

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Summary

In August 2018 Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Grove Developments Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation within the footprint of a proposed new lake at Savill Court Hotel, Bishopsgate, Surrey. This followed an earlier evaluation in 2017 within the footprint of an extension to the hotel.

The evaluation comprised four trenches excavated within and around the footprint of the lake, centred on NGR SU 9822 7174. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Grove Developments Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Nick Truckle, who advised on and approved the work on behalf of Surrey County Council, for his advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Steve Lawrence. The fieldwork was directed by Robin Bashford, who was supported by Chris Richardson. Survey and digitising was carried out by Steve Lawrence. Thanks are also extended to the team of OA staff that prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Commission and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Grove Developments Ltd to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of a new lake to be created as part of the redevelopment of Savill Court Hotel, Bishopsgate, Surrey.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of the planning permission (planning ref. RU.16/0850). No brief was set for the work by the local planning authority, but discussions with Nick Truckle, Archaeological Officer for Surrey County Council, established the scope required to adequately evaluate the site. This comprised an approximate 5% evaluation sample of the footprint of a proposed lake within the grounds of the hotel (Fig. 2). A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by OA and approved by Nick Truckle prior to the start of the fieldwork (OA 2018). This document outlined how OA would implement the agreed scope.
- 1.1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken on 30th August 2018.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 Savill Court Hotel is situated in mature parkland east of Wick Lane and between Great Windsor Park to the west and Englefield Green to the east. The footprint of the lake measured approximately 3,100m² and was centred on NGR SU 9822 7174, to the north-east of the hotel (Fig. 1). The immediate surroundings of the hotel previously comprised maintained lawns, mature trees and shrubs, paved access roads, parking and paths. At the time of the evaluation, the site was undergoing redevelopment and compound areas, large spoil heaps and stored materials were present. The pre-construction ground surface lay between 71.5-72.5m aOD.
- 1.2.2 The geology of the area is mapped as sand and gravel river terrace deposits overlying a solid geology comprising sand of the Bagshot Beds formation (BGS nd).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in a desk-based assessment and heritage impact assessment (Morriss 2016). This has not been reproduced in full here and the assessment should be referred to for detailed information regarding the 19th- and 20th-century development of the building, gardens and parkland. In summary, the current building was constructed in the early 20th century and has undergone significant structural alteration in more recent decades.
- 1.3.2 The following is a verbatim reproduction from the assessment with regards to the known archaeological potential of the site (Morriss 2016):

Very little is known about the archaeology of the area and there are very few entries relating to archaeological features or finds in or adjacent to the hotel site in the Surrey HER. A single Neolithic flint was found at Lime Lodge in Englefield Green (SMR 19021). The site is not within one of the LPA's 'Areas of High Archaeological Potential.'

The available evidence suggests that the area around the present building has been open space – either fields or gardens – since at least the 18th century and, probably, since the medieval period and before. The area has also been subject to considerable disturbance and landscaping, especially since the end of the 19th century.

The only known feature of note within the proposed excavations will be the line of Ham Lane – and that is likely to have been erased when the house was extended after 1912. Overall the archaeological potential is considered to be low.

- 1.3.3 In September 2017 Oxford Archaeology undertook a four trench evaluation within the footprint of the extension to the existing hotel (OA 2017). No archaeological features or deposits were encountered, although the trenches did reveal traces of 20th-century landscaping and disturbance relating to the construction history of the hotel.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains.
- ii. To determine the character of any remains present, without compromising any deposits that may merit detailed investigation or preservation.
- iii. To determine the date range of any remains from artefacts or otherwise.
- iv. To characterise any underlying archaeological strata down to undisturbed geology without significantly impacting upon significant younger (overlying) deposits where possible
- v. To determine the geo-archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered.
- vi. To recover suitable materials for scientific dating where appropriate.
- vii. To establish what archaeological remains/deposits may be affected by any proposed development.
- viii. To make available the results of the investigation to inform subsequent mitigation strategies.
- ix. To produce a factual report, full archive and HER data submission.
- x. To disseminate the results of the investigation at a level appropriate to their importance.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording can be found in appendix A of the WSI. Standard methodologies for geomatics and survey, environmental evidence, artefactual evidence and burials can also be found in that document (appendices B, C, D and E respectively).

2.2.2 The evaluation was intended to comprise an approximate 5% sample by area of the lake footprint. This equated to the excavation of 75m of linear trench based on a trench width of 1.8m. However, a large volume of spoil generated by the current development was stored across the eastern part of the lake footprint during the fieldwork. Therefore, the trenches were arranged at the nearest available space that had not been impacted upon by either previous activities or the current plant movements and construction. In the event, four trenches were excavated, including one to the north of the lake footprint (Fig. 2, Trenches 6-9). This was undertaken on the principle that the trench to the north situated on ground not affected by the development activities would provide a reasonable compromise to inform on the archaeological potential of the lake area.

2.2.3 Site-specific methodologies were as follows:

- i. Each trench location was laid out with GPS prior to machine excavation.
- ii. A number of the proposed trench locations were not accessible, and consequently the locations were modified in order to evaluate the area in and around the proposed lake.

- iii. A summary of the results and accompanying images of the trenches were forwarded to Nick Truckle prior to backfilling.
- iv. Backfilling of the trenches was undertaken in reverse order of excavation with the deposits lightly tracked in by the machine.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below. Details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.
- 3.1.2 The first digit of a context number reflects the associated trench number unless otherwise stated.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were good, and the trenches were free-draining and remained dry throughout. No archaeological features were present.

3.3 Trench 6 (Plates 1 and 2)

- 3.3.1 Trench 6 measured 30m long x 1.6m wide and was 0.5m deep. The natural geology (603) comprised a mid-yellow sand with gravel inclusions, overlain by a predominantly yellow brown silty clay subsoil (602) with patches of grey brown variation in colour. Both the natural geology and deposit 602 had been heavily disturbed by tree roots. Deposit 602 was overlain by a mid-brown sandy silt deposit with modern material throughout (601). At the eastern end of the trench, the natural geology had been truncated by a series of irregular features which are highly likely to represent disturbance associated with the recent use of this area as a haul road for the deposition of spoil. Two of these were sample excavated and proved to contain fragments of concrete and other modern material. No archaeological features were revealed.

3.4 Trench 7 (Plate 3 and 4)

- 3.4.1 Trench 7 was excavated to the north of the proposed lake footprint and measured 20m long x 1.6m wide and was 0.8m deep. The natural geology (704) comprised a yellow sand with irregular spreads of mid-grey brown sandy silt at the surface. These were irregular in plan and profile, although a small fragment of ceramic building material (not retained) was noted in the surface of one. The natural geology was overlain by a 0.16m thick, mid-grey brown sandy silt deposit (705), and it seems likely that the irregular spreads noted above represent a disturbed and uneven interface between the natural sand and the overlying deposit.
- 3.4.2 At the north-eastern end of the trench the natural geology, and possibly deposit 705, had been truncated by a modern service trench (703). Both deposit 705 and the fill of 703 were overlain by a sterile sandy silt layer (702) which was overlain by the existing topsoil and turf (701). No archaeological features were revealed.

3.5 Trench 8 (Plates 5 and 6)

- 3.5.1 The excavation of Trench 8 was restricted by a large spoil heap covering the eastern part of the proposed lake. However, it was possible to excavate a small trench adjacent to the former tennis court. Trench 8 was approximately 5m long and 1.6m wide, with an average depth of 1.25m. The natural geology (804) comprised a yellow sandy silt

and was overlain by a redeposited layer of light yellow brown sandy silt (803). At the north-eastern end of the trench, deposit 803 was truncated by a trench containing a ceramic drainage pipe. Deposit 803 was overlain by a layer of buried topsoil (802) which was in turn overlain by recently deposited hardcore (801) forming the haul road to the spoil heap. No archaeological features were revealed.

3.6 Trench 9 (Plates 7 and 8)

- 3.6.1 Trench 9 measured 10m long x 1.6m wide and was 0.6m deep. The natural geology (902) comprised a yellow brown silty sand. A vaguely linear spread of darker brown material was present across the centre of the trench and was sample excavated. This proved to be a colour variation in the natural geology. The natural geology was directly overlain by a layer of hardcore containing brick, metal and tarmac (901). No archaeological features were revealed.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 Weather and light conditions were good throughout the evaluation and the distinction between the natural geology and other deposits was clear and well defined. There was a significant level of modern disturbance and truncation. However, this was clearly identifiable in each trench. It was also reasonably clear that significant truncation to depths that would have removed archaeological potential had not been experienced across the full extent of any trench. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the negative results of this evaluation are a true reflection of the archaeological potential at this location.

4.2 Interpretation

4.2.1 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were encountered. Although access to the eastern part of the lake footprint was excluded by a large spoil storage heap, the location of Trench 7 was sufficiently close and in the same topographical setting so as to provide an adequate assessment of the archaeological potential of the area.

4.2.2 Truncation or disturbance of the geological deposits was noted in each trench, although there was no evidence to suggest that this was sufficiently extensive to have previously removed the potential archaeological horizon.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 6						
General description					Orientation	ENE-WSW
No archaeology. Heavily disturbed by tree roots. Modern intrusions at eastern end.					Length (m)	30m
					Width (m)	1.6m
					Avg. depth (m)	0.5m
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
601	Deposit		0.22	Disturbed topsoil	-	
602	Deposit		0.32	Root disturbed subsoil	-	
603	Layer			Natural geology	-	

Trench 7						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
No archaeology. Services at eastern end. Some evidence for modern landscaping.					Length (m)	20m
					Width (m)	1.6m
					Avg. depth (m)	0.8m
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
701	Deposit		0.23	Topsoil	-	
702	Deposit		0.30	Landscaping deposit	-	
703	Cut/Fill			Service trench(es)	-	
704	Layer			Natural geology	-	
705	Deposit		0.16	Landscaping deposit	-	

Trench 8						
General description					Orientation	ENE-WSW
No archaeology. Increased depth of natural may indicate fall in elevation of geological deposits.					Length (m)	5m
					Width (m)	1.6m
					Avg. depth (m)	1.25m
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
801	Deposit		0.80	Hardcore	-	
802	Deposit		0.20	Topsoil	-	
803	Deposit		0.70	Subsoil	-	
804	Layer			Natural geology	-	

Trench 9						
General description					Orientation	N-S
No archaeology. Vaguely linear spread of darker brown sand almost certainly a geological variation.					Length (m)	10m
					Width (m)	1.6m
					Avg. depth (m)	0.6m
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
901	Deposit		0.60	Hardcore	-	
902	Layer			Natural geology	-	

APPENDIX B BIBLIOGRAPHY

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OA, 2017 Savill Court Hotel, Bishopsgate, Surrey: archaeological evaluation report, Oxford Archaeology unpublished document September 2017

OA, 2018 Savill Court Hotel Lake, Bishopsgate, Surrey: written scheme of investigation for an archaeological evaluation, Oxford Archaeology unpublished document

APPENDIX C SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name: Savill Court Hotel, Bishopsgate, Surrey
Site code: BISC18
Grid Reference SU 9822 7174
Type: Evaluation
Date and duration: 30th August 2018, 1 day
Area of Site 3,100m²

Location of archive: There is currently no receiving museum for this collection area. The archive will be stored at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. The status of this archive and receiving area will be reviewed in two years.

Summary of Results: In August 2018 Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Grove Developments Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation within the footprint of a proposed new lake at Savill Court Hotel, Bishopsgate, Surrey. This follows the earlier evaluation in 2017 within the footprint of an extension to the hotel.
The evaluation comprised four trenches excavated within and around the footprint of the lake centred on NGR SU 9822 7174. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.



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Figure 1: Site location

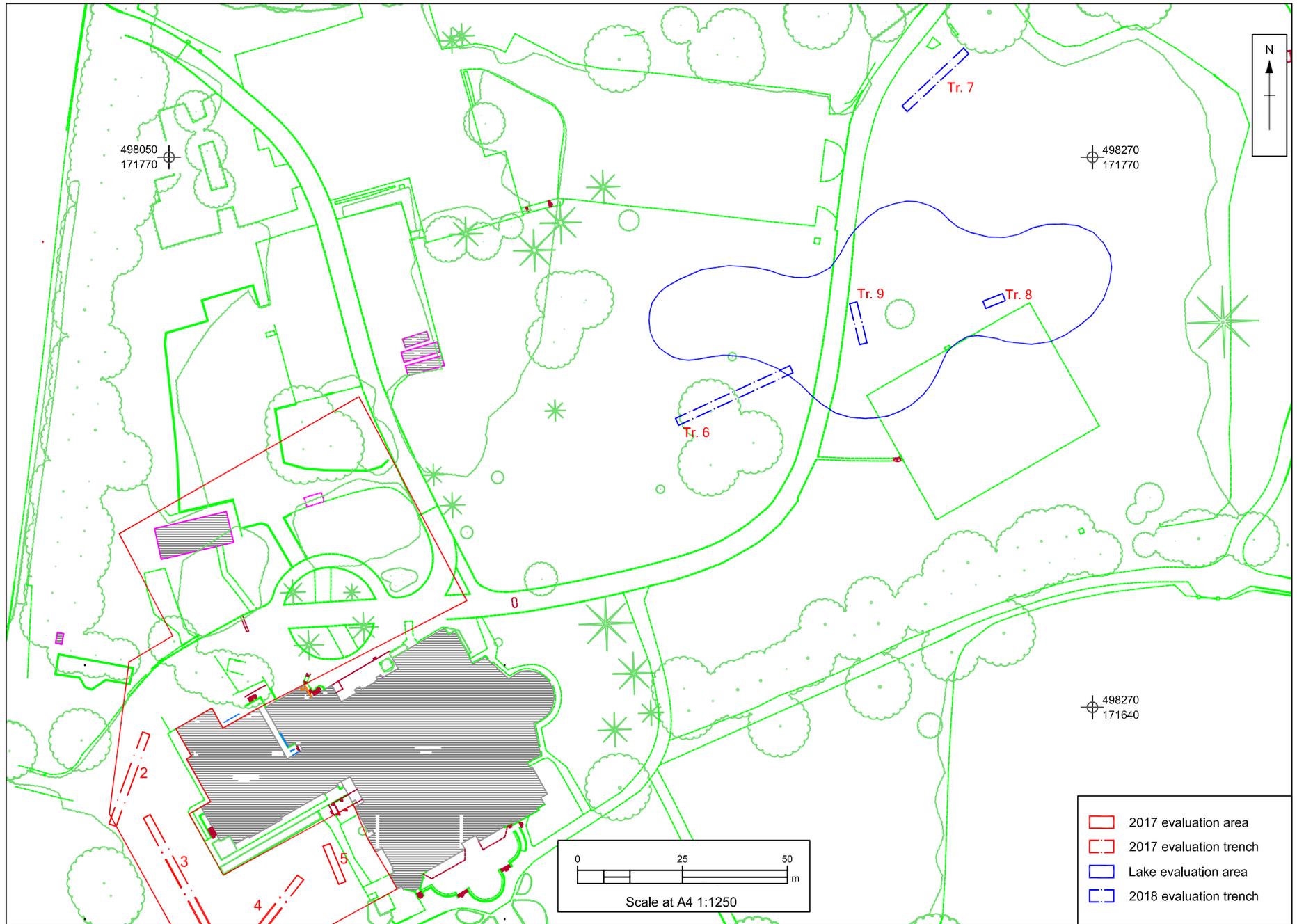


Figure 2: Trench location plan



Plate 1: Trench 6, looking east



Plate 2: Trench 6 section



Plate 3: Trench 7, looking east



Plate 4: Trench 7 section



Plate 5: Trench 8, looking east



Plate 6: Trench 8 section



Plate 7: Trench 9, looking north



Plate 8: Trench 9 section



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