

## **Archaeological Watching Brief, Riverside Development, Farnham, Surrey**

### **Background:**

The site (c SU846 471) lies immediately north of the north branch of the river Wey and several hundred metres to the south-east of the centre of Farnham (see fig 1). The development (WA/2007/1967) is intended to provide car parking and sports facilities and covers an area of 1.79 hectares. The topography rises gently northwards from the river, with a moderate extra rise in levels along the north boundary - basically the edge of the flood plain. From west to east the slope is barely discernible. The ground consists of alluvium and was partially covered by industrial buildings in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These buildings were demolished about forty years ago and subsequently the site had become woodland. The author was asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief largely on the grounds of the size of the area involved in the proposed works. There were no known sites of archaeological interest within the boundary, but a Roman villa existed about a kilometre to the north-east on the higher ground.

### **Results:**

Work on the site commenced in the autumn of 2013 when the trees and vegetation were stripped by machine and the soil surface left exposed. Work was then delayed on a number of occasions because of problems in dealing with pollution 'hotspots' left by the various industrial processes that had taken place on the site. This meant that, because of the delays and time constraints, the author was only able to make one visit, unfortunately before major earthmoving had started. However, the exposed surface of the ground - largely bare soil - was thoroughly examined and no finds of any material were noted earlier than late Victorian in date. The ground was scattered with brick rubble and, in places, brick footings were visible, left from the industrial phase of use of the site.

The position of Riverside immediately adjacent to the Wey means that, until the river was deepened and straightened in the twentieth century, the site had been subject to regular winter flooding. This would suggest that it was an unlikely area for permanent occupation in antiquity. Taken with the complete lack of any earlier archaeological material visible in the exposed soil this almost certainly means that there was no direct occupation of the area prior to the late nineteenth century.

David Graham  
29/11/2013

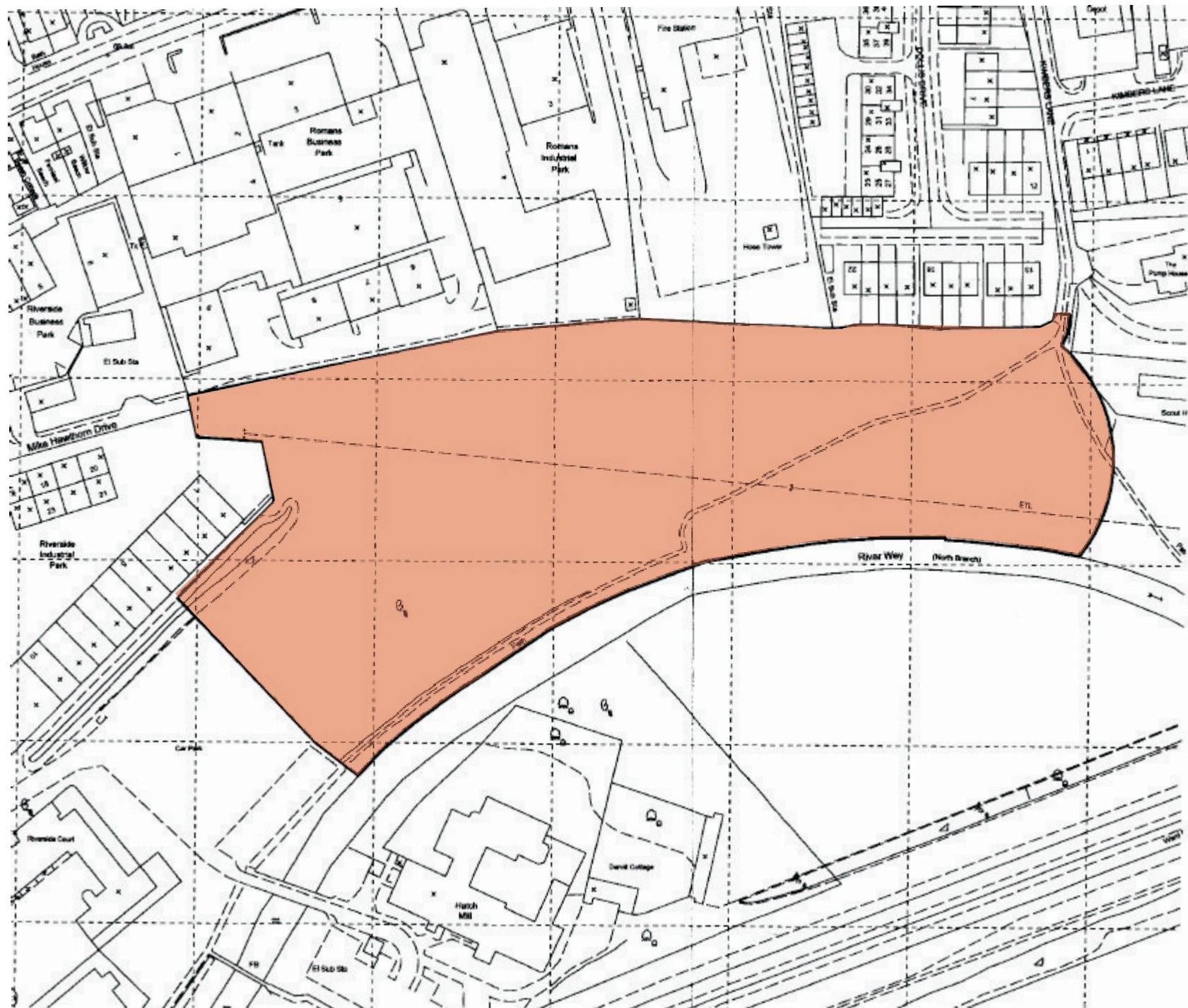


Fig 1