

**SITE OF NEW STUDENT VILLAGE,
WEST SURREY COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN,
FALKNER ROAD,
FARNHAM,
SURREY**

An Archaeological Evaluation

Prospect of Farnham Sep: 16. 1723.



Report by: K D Graham

September 1994

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**SU 836 470
Site Code: WSCAD94**

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Fig. 1 Location Plan

INTRODUCTION

The summary below is the result of an archaeological evaluation carried out on the site of the West Surrey College of Art and Design Student Village, Farnham, Surrey (Fig 1).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to acknowledge the help of the following: Mr Lawrence Tristram, WSCAD Estates Officer; Mr Roy Hamilton, Mount Anvil's site manager; Dr David Bird, Principal Archaeologist, Surrey County Council; and those volunteers both from the Farnham & District Museum Society and from the local metal detector club who gave freely of their time.

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The evaluation area lies to the north west of the medieval town of Farnham and to the south west of Farnham Castle. The Castle was the administrative centre of the medieval Hundred of Farnham, which belonged to the Bishops of Winchester from at least the 9th century A.D. The site itself is believed to have been in use as open fields during the middle ages, subsequently enclosed in the Tudor period and in use as hop fields by the 18th century (see cover illustration - Stukeley's 'Prospect of Farnham', 1723).

More recently, the area was under allotments until approx. 20 years ago, when these went out of use and the land became covered in scrub.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation work was carried out according to the general terms of the archaeological specification discussed with Surrey County Council.

This required the area subject to the archaeological evaluation to be trial trenched. The work was carried out by a small team of volunteers under the supervision of K D Graham.

Twenty five trenches were excavated using a digger-loader fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were between 3m x 0.80m and 24m x 1 m in size and were laid out on those sections of the site which had been cleared of scrub at the time the evaluation took place.

As the evaluation progressed the various deposits were investigated and recorded. On conclusion of the evaluation the trenches were backfilled. Subsequently a metal detector survey was carried out.

Site watching was carried out to examine footing trenches over a period of several weeks, as the development progressed.

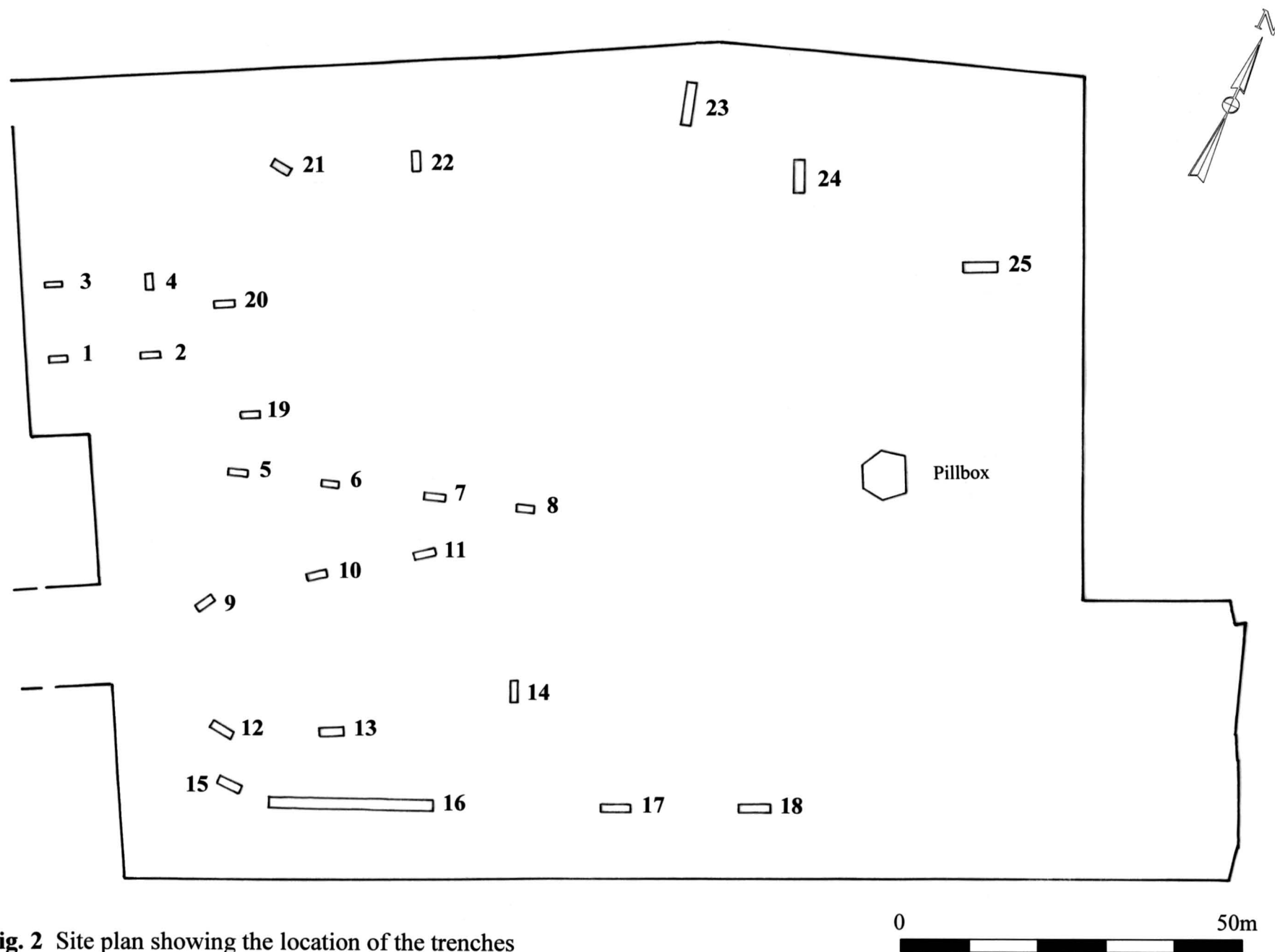


Fig. 2 Site plan showing the location of the trenches

NNW-SSE TOPOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

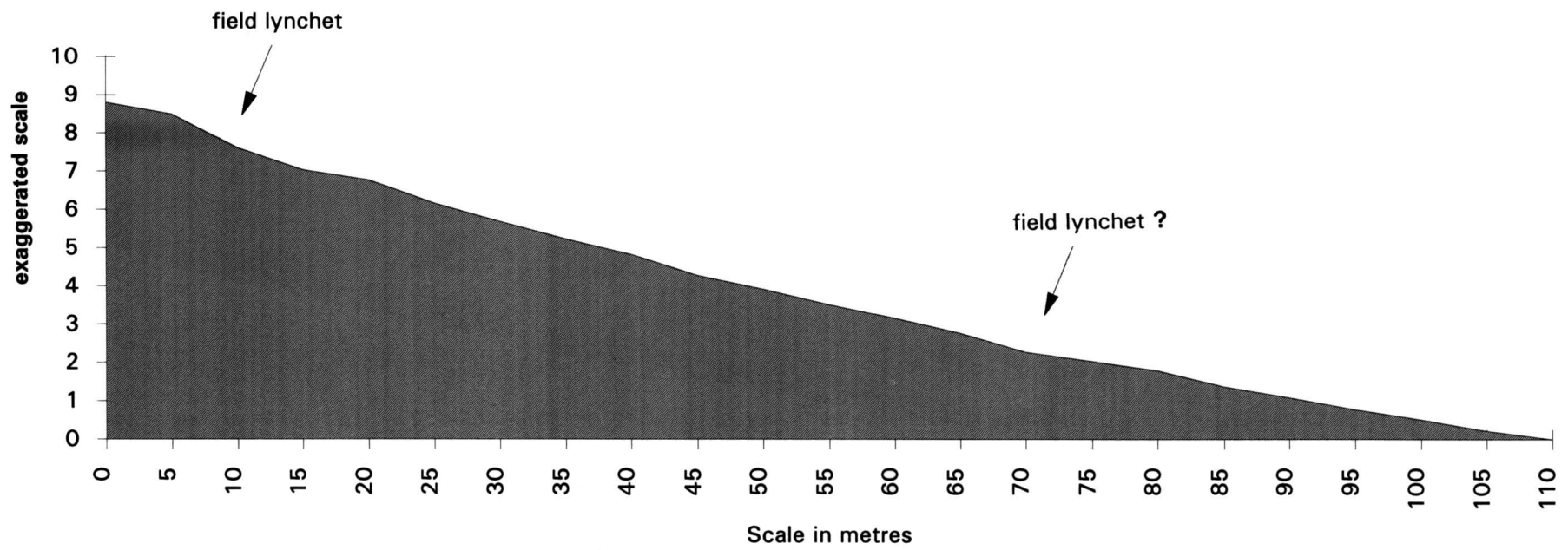


Fig. 3

THE OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

The site was covered by thick scrub and young trees, partially cleared by contractors at the time of the evaluation. The ground surface sloped from +89.40m OD in the NW corner down to +80.30m in the SW corner and from +91.50m in the NE corner down to +79.50m in the SE corner of the site. The ground was mostly fairly hard and dry.

Recorded within all the trenches (Fig 2), except 16-18, 23 and 25, was a similar sequence of topsoil that overlay a light-mid brown clayey subsoil which, in turn, overlay natural orange-brown clay/clay with flints. The underlying geology is Middle Chalk. Trench 23 contained topsoil overlying light grey-green clay which, in turn overlay natural white clay containing chalk/clunch. Within trench 25, below topsoil, was a layer of redeposited brown clay with pieces of clunch (including one piece of tooled masonry) dug into which was a pit filled with mid-brown clay.

As a result of this work, 1 Roman coin and 1 piece of RB roof tile was found with a very light scatter of medieval and post-medieval pottery and modern building debris. Apart from the pit and redeposited material in trench 25, no archaeological features were found.

A metal detector survey was carried out by members of a local club, who recovered a 17th century trader's token, but otherwise only found post-medieval (mostly 19th and 20th century) material.

A WWII pillbox located on the eastern half of the site was recorded and the information sent to the Surrey Defences Survey Group. The pillbox was subsequently demolished by the developers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Trenches 1 - 4

Top soil

Approximately 35cm in thickness of mid brown loam, containing some brick.

Sub soil

Approximately 10cm in thickness of moderately compacted mid brown clay-loam.

Natural clay

Very firm, slightly sticky, mid orange-brown clay.

Trenches 5 - 15

Top soil

Approximately 30cm in thickness of light-mid brown loam, containing some brick/tile.

Sub soil

Approximately 10-35cm of moderately compacted mid brown clay with some flint.
Occasional fragments of brick/tile.

Trenches 5 - 15 (contd.)

Natural clay with flints

Stiff and very slightly sticky, mid orange brown clay with flints.

Trenches 16 - 18

Topsoil

Approximately 30cm of dry mid-dark brown loam, containing the occasional piece of clay tobacco pipe, brick and tile.

Sub soil

Approximately 60-150cm of redeposited building material of relatively recent date. Trench 16 was tested to a maximum depth of 180cm at which point natural clay with flints was encountered. The building material, therefore, appears to be deposited in a shallow hollow dug for the purpose.

Natural clay with flints

Stiff and sticky, mid orange brown clay with flints.

Trenches 19 - 20

Topsoil

Approximately 30cm in thickness consisting of dry light-mid brown loam containing some tile and pot.

Sub soil

Approximately 15-20cm in thickness consisting of moderately compacted mid-brown clay with some flint. Occasional fragments of brick/tile and charcoal.

Natural clay with flints

Stiff and slightly sticky, mid orange brown clay with flints.

Trench 21

Topsoil

Approximately 35cm of mid brown slightly sandy loam from which 1 Roman coin was recovered.

Sub soil

Approximately 15cm of light brown clayey soil containing fragments of brick/tile, post-medieval pottery and oyster shell.

Natural clay with flints

Stiff and slightly sticky, mid orange brown clay with flints.

Trench 22

Topsoil

Approximately 15cm of light to mid-brown loam from which 1 piece of possible Romano-British imbrex (roof) tile was recovered. Other finds included a piece of clay tobacco pipe, 1 piece of 17th/18th century pottery and a very small amount of charcoal.

Trench 22 (contd.)**Sub soil**

Approximately 37cm of moderately compacted mid-brown clay with some flint. Occasional fragments of brick/tile and charcoal.

Natural clay with flints

Stiff and slightly sticky, mid-orange-brown clay with flints.

Trench 23**Topsoil**

Approximately 35cm of dry, mid brown loam containing small fragments of brick and tile.

Sub soil

Approximately 15cm of fairly stiff, light grey-green clay.

Natural clay

Stiff white clay incorporating fragments of chalk/clunch.

Trench 24**Topsoil**

Approximately 60cm of dry, mid brown loam containing fragments of brick, tile, clunch and ash.

Sub soil

Approximately 20cm of stiff, mid brown clayey soil containing a few fragments of clunch.

Clay with flints

Approximately 6cm of stiff, mid orange brown clay with flints.

Natural clay

Stiff and sticky, mid orangey brown clay.

Trench 25**Topsoil**

Approximately 25cm of mid brown loam containing small fragments of brick and tile.

Pit

Approximately 70cm diameter, filled with mid brown clay - no finds.

Redeposited clay with clunch

Approximately 18cm of mid brown clay containing many fragments of clunch, including 1 small piece of tooled masonry. This layer was cut by the pit.

Natural clay

Approximately 47cm of light to mid-brown clay overlying orange brown clay.



Fig. 4 Exterior view of the WWII pillbox (top) and interior view (below). Location shown on Fig. 2. (Photographs reproduced by courtesy of Chris Shephard)

SMALL FINDS

17th CENTURY TRADER'S TOKEN ($\frac{1}{4}$ d) (Identified by Mrs M Alexander, Guildford Museum)

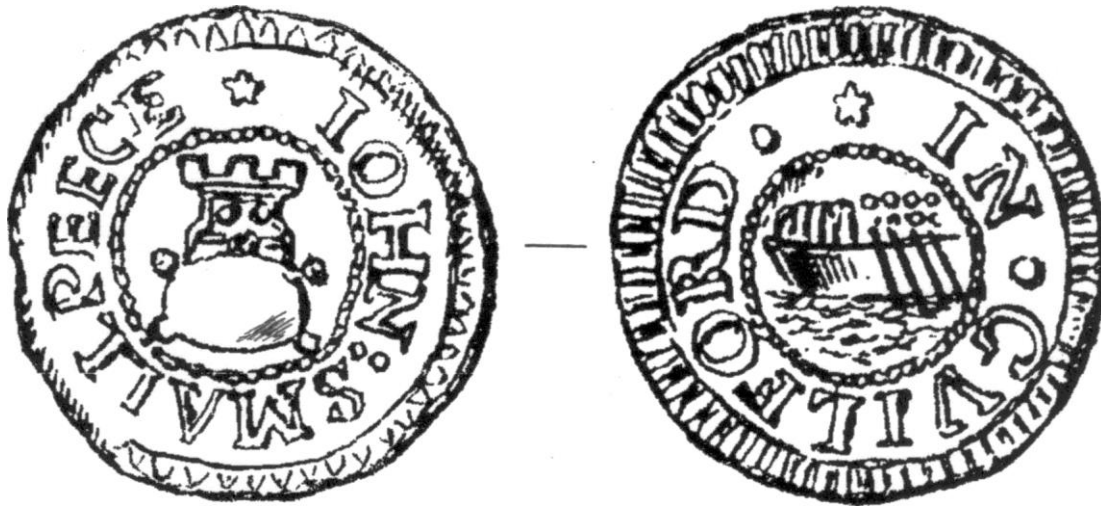


Fig. 5 (Actual size: 15.5 mm.)

Obverse: IOHN.SMALLPEECE. A castle with a woolpack before it.

Reverse: IN.GVILFORD. A barge with four men rowing.

Reference: *Seventeenth Century Tokens of the British Isles*, M Dickinson, Surrey 123.

ROMAN COIN (identification and comment by R A Merson)

Silver Denarius (large fragment)

Faustus Cornelius Sulla c 63-62 B.C.

Obverse: Diademed bust of Diana, draped, right, crescent above, lituus behind, FAUSTUS before.

Reverse: Sulla seated left, Bocchus, king of Mauretania, kneels before and offers olive-branch; Jugurtha, king of Numidia kneels behind; above on right FELIX.

Comment: Fairly worn. There is no reason why this coin should not have been lost in the 1st-2nd century A.D. Worn Republican denarii were still in circulation in A.D. 43 and came over to Britain with/after the Claudian invasion.

References:

Monnaies de la Republique Romaine by E Babelon: Cornelia 59.

British Museum Catalogue, No 3824.

The Roman Republican Coinage by E A Sydenham, No 879.

CONCLUSION

Due to the absence of primary archaeological features and artifacts it appears that the area under evaluation contains no evidence for direct human occupation at any period. The area has, however, been under cultivation at least since the medieval period as evidenced by the field lynchet to the north and the general soil profile of the slope. It is highly likely to have been the area referred to as the 'West Field' in the 13th century Bishopric account rolls.

Finds of Roman material from the northern edge of the site appear to be the result of drift effects from higher up the slope and not to be directly related to any activity on the site itself.

Rapid field survey of the area lying uphill of the site revealed a concentration of Roman roof tile below the crest of the hill ('A' on location plan). This is likely to have been the source of the Roman material recovered during the evaluation and almost certainly represents the site of a building.

The pieces of chalk and clunch masonry rubble noted in trenches 23 and 25, were not associated with any features on the site itself and probably represent disposal of rubbish from some phase of building at the Castle.

Subsequent to the evaluation, examination of builders' trenches in the centre of the site revealed a band of gravel which in places filled periglacial run-off channels cut into the underlying chalk. These features are a result of natural erosion and deposition at the end of the last ice age.

In conclusion there appears to be no need for further archaeological measures in relation to the current development.