



# Princess Royal Barracks (Parcel R-S-V) Deepcut, Surrey

*Historic Building Recording*

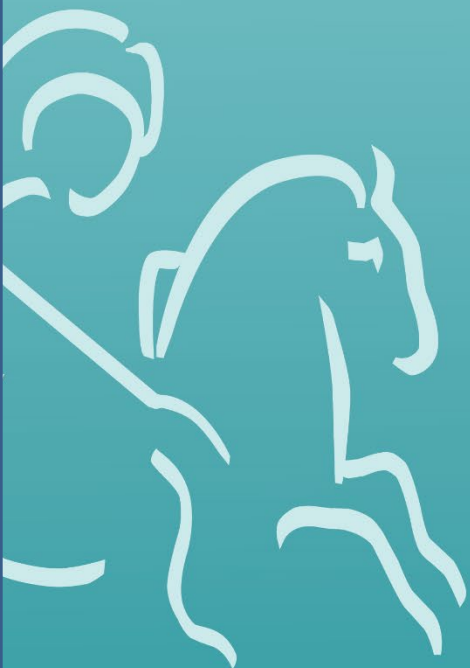


*Report prepared for:*  
Stonebond Properties (Guildford) Ltd

CA Project: AN0746

CA Report: AN0746\_1

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In August 2023, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out a programme of Historic Building Recording (HBR) at Princess Royal Barracks (Parcel R-S-V), Deepcut, Surrey (centred at NGR: 490938 157215; hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). This HBR survey was commissioned by Stonebond Properties (Guildford) Ltd.
- 1.2. Surrey Heath Borough Council has granted hybrid planning permission for the construction of housing and other facilities at the former Princess Royal Barracks site (planning ref: 12/0546). Condition 52 of this planning permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological works.
- 1.3. A previous Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the wider Deepcut site (CA 2016) identifies specific areas of archaeological potential. Parcel R-S-V is outside of these areas of potential; as such, no archaeological works for this parcel are proposed in the WSI.
- 1.4. The scope of the present HBR was defined in subsequent consultation with Matt Saywood (Archaeological Officer, Surrey County Council). As part of this consultation, Mr Saywood undertook a review of ground investigation data from Parcel R-S-V and carried out a site walkover. Mr Saywood concluded that there was limited potential for below-ground archaeological remains within this plot and that the majority of the standing structures within the plot were of no significance. The exceptions were two areas of former army training features, including the remains of a running track, balance beams, a climbing wall and a plunge pool. Mr Saywood requested that these structures be subject to HBR. No further archaeological works are required within Parcel R-S-V.
- 1.5. The HBR was carried out in accordance with a WSI produced by CA and approved by Matt Saywood (CA 2023). A copy of this WSI is appended to the current report.
- 1.6. The HBR was undertaken in accordance with:
  - *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (Historic England 2016);
  - *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (CIfA 2020);
  - *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991);

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- *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: the MORPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

## 2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. The HBR covered two areas (Areas A and B) of former army training features, including the remains of a running track, balance beams, a climbing wall and a plunge pool. These features were part of the wider complex of the former Princess Royal Barracks.

2.2. The HBR was carried out to Level 1 standard, as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (Historic England 2016). A Level 1 record is defined as a basic visual record, comprising a drawn, written and photographic record of the structures.

### Site visit

2.3. The HBR site visit was undertaken on 12 September 2023.

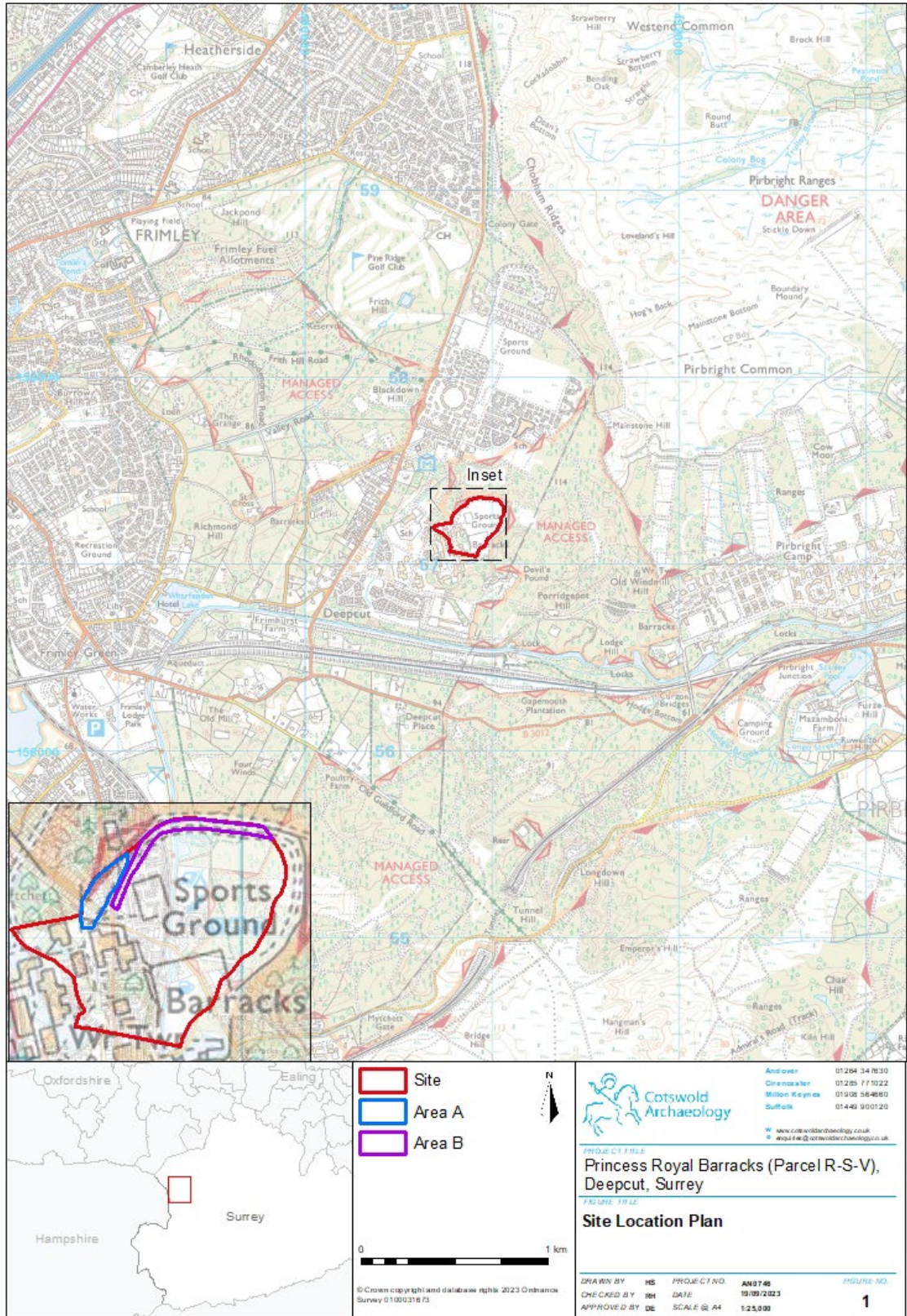
### Drawn record

2.4. The drawn record comprises annotated site plans (as existing) which have been labelled with the obstacle/apparatus numbers and the locations of photographs.

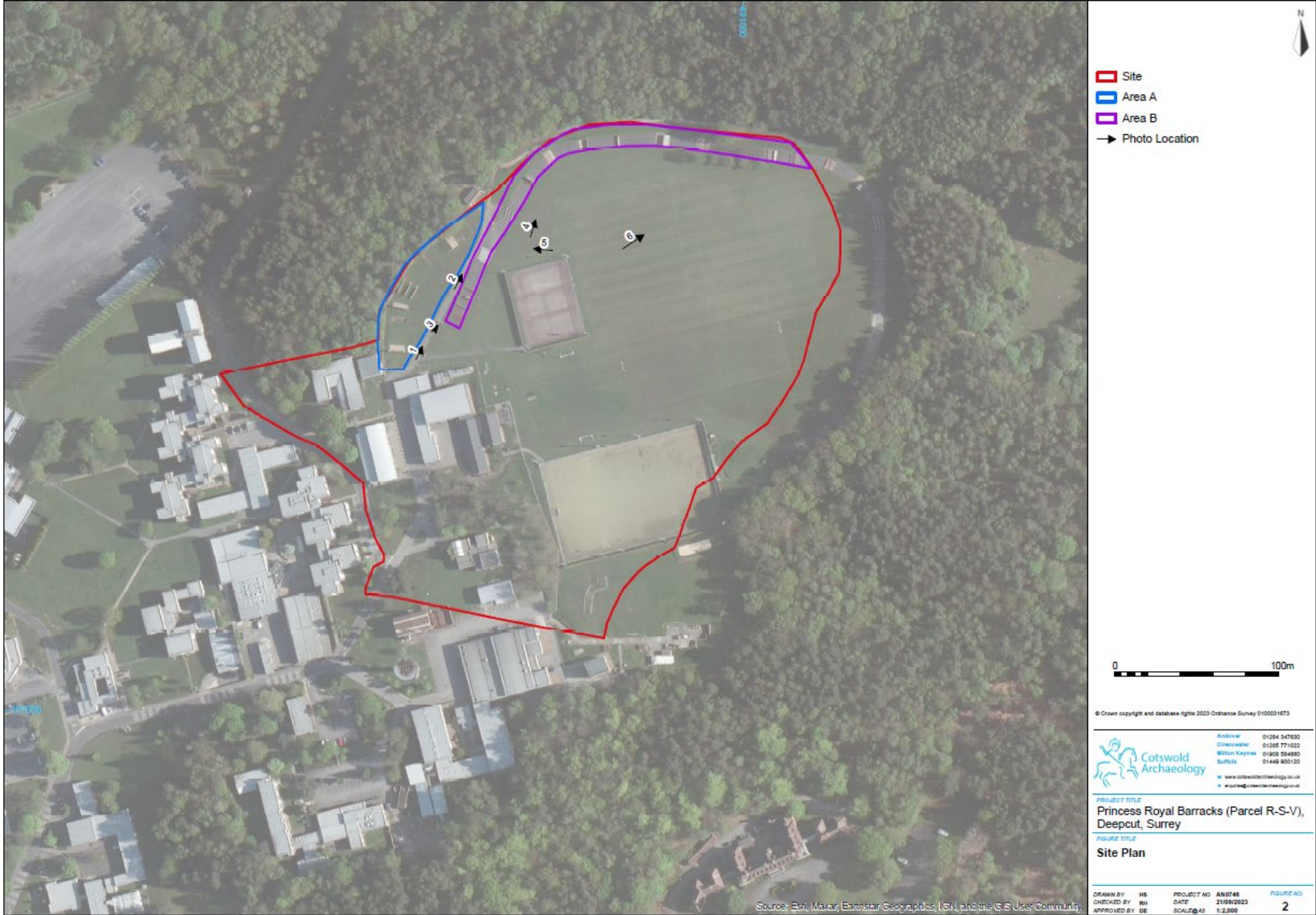
### Photographic record

2.5. A digital photographic record has been compiled. Photography was undertaken with a Canon EOS 1200D 20mpx TTL digital camera set to TIFF format, in accordance with Historic England guidance (HE 2016). The photographic record includes general views of the Site and more detailed photographs of each piece of recorded apparatus.

2.6. Selected images have been converted to .jpeg format for use in the report; however, original RAW or TIFF versions will be maintained in the project archive. Appropriate levels of Metadata will be maintained and included in the digital archive, following the approach set out in the Historic England guidance (HE 2016). Appropriate scales are located in most archive photographs; however, where appropriate (i.e. where scaling can be seen from items within the view), photographs without scales have also been taken.







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### Written record

- 2.7. The written record is intended to supplement and support the other elements of the recording. It comprises a summary statement describing the structures' type or purpose (historically and at present), their materials and possible date.
- 2.8. Information on the historic background of the Site has been derived from a previous assessment (CA 2020).

### Report and archive

- 2.9. The archive will comprise the illustrated report presenting the results of the work, in addition to a catalogue of digital photographs. Copies of the report and metadata will be uploaded to the OASIS online repository (which publishes to the Archaeology Data Service; ADS).
- 2.10. A short note on the HBR results will be produced for inclusion within an appropriate local archaeological journal.
- 2.11. A digital copy of the report will be made available for public viewing via CA's *Archaeological Reports Online* web page (<http://reports.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk>).

### Limitations of the assessment

- 2.12. This assessment is principally based upon a historic building survey, undertaken on 12 September 2023, which has been supplemented by secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined for the purpose of this assessment. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from other secondary sources, is reasonably accurate. The focus of the survey was the physical fabric of the structures.

## 3. HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

- 3.1. This section provides a summary of the historic context and development of the Site. It also provides a brief summary and photographic record of the recorded features. The recorded features are identified on Fig. 6 (Area A) and Fig. 7 (Area B).

### Site context and history

- 3.2. Military use of the area around Deepcut began in the early to mid-19th century. The British Army used the heathland around Chobham Common for training and exercises. Initially, tented encampments were used rather than permanent camps.

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Construction of a semi-permanent barracks began in 1900 and was completed in 1903. This construction was prompted by the advent of the Boer War (1899–1902) which led to the War Department purchasing 252 acres (101 hectares) of land from the estate of William Henry Bellew Pain at Wykeham Park, Frimley.

- 3.3. Historic cartographic sources dating to the late 19th century indicate that the Site formed part of an open scrub area of rough or heathy pasture with interspersed trees. The outbreak of the First World War (1914–1918) prompted the extension of the Bisley Railway, initially constructed in 1890 to serve the National Rifle Ranges at Bisley, to serve both Deepcut and Blackdown Barracks.
- 3.4. Historic maps dating to 1918 show the establishment of an extensive barracks at Deepcut. At this time, Area A and the south-western part of Area B were occupied by a number of small, regularly-shaped buildings set out in parallel pairs along a broadly north/south axis; these are labelled as stables on the mapping. The tree-covered area to the north-west was used at the time as a manège (i.e. a training area for riders and horses). The stables appear to have been demolished by the mid-20th century, when the Site appears to have formed part of an area of open space separating Deepcut Barracks to the south and Blackdown Barracks to the north.
- 3.5. A map of 1973 shows an open area labelled as ‘Sports Ground,’ which corresponds to the tree-lined boundaries and paths which currently incorporate the Site and another sports facilities formerly associated with Deepcut Barracks. This suggests that the Site was used for sport and exercise activities but the map is not detailed enough to depict any individual apparatus or equipment.
- 3.6. A 1:10,000 map dating to 2002 depicts the apparatus within Area A and the track and obstacles within Area B. The track within Area B is depicted as extending around the north-western and northern parts of the open area labelled as a ‘Sports Ground.’ It also extends outside the Site, along the eastern side of the ‘Sports Ground.’
- 3.7. Google Earth Aerial Imagery dating to the late 20th and 21st centuries (Figs. 3–5) shows the Sports Ground in use, with the training facilities in Areas A and B laid out and further pitches and courts occupying the open space to the south. There appear to be seven pieces of apparatus in Area A, corresponding to the extant features (Fig. 6). There appear to have been approximately 19 features in Area B, of which 10 are still extant (see Fig. 7).



**Fig. 3: Extract from Google Earth Aerial Imagery dating to 1999**

- 3.8. Area A encloses c. 2,744m<sup>2</sup>, with the apparatus set within a grassed area.
- 3.9. Area B encloses c. 3,304m<sup>2</sup> and comprises of the remaining northern and north-western parts of a running track, with ten remaining obstacles.
- 3.10. Area B is bound by a narrow grass area to the north; beyond this is a wooded area, which directly bounds Area A to the north-west. A tarmac path separates the two areas and connects the north-eastern part of Deepcut Barracks with a network of paths in the wooded area to the north (Photos 1–6).



**Fig. 4: Extract from Google Earth Aerial Imagery dating to 2009**



**Fig. 5: Extract from Google Earth Aerial Imagery dating to 2021**



**Photo 1: View north-east along the track between Area A and Area B**



**Photo 2: View north-east along the track between Area A and Area B**



**Photo 3: Sign at the entrance into the training area, viewed from the south-west**



**Photo 4: The eastern half of Area B, viewed from the south-west**



**Photo 5: The north-eastern end of Area A, viewed from the south-east**



**Photo 6: The eastern end of Area B, viewed from the south-west**

### **Area A**

- 3.11. Area A contains seven obstacles/pieces of equipment (Photos 7 and 8). The direction of use appears to have been on a broadly south-west/north-east axis. The course



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layout pattern comprises a brick-built obstacle followed by a pit or ground-based obstacle. Three of the obstacles, which consist of brick wall obstacles and a ramp, have painted numbers on them:

- Apparatus Feature 1 has a painted '1;'
- Apparatus Feature 4 has a painted '3;'
- Apparatus Feature 6 has a painted '4'.

3.12. This seems to confirm the direction of use. It is likely that Apparatus Feature 3, which also consists of a brick wall obstacle, would have been number 2, but there is no painted number present.

3.13. The painted numbering sequence appears to incorporate only those obstacles of upstanding brick form, ignoring the concrete water splash features (Apparatus Features 2 and 5). For the purposes of this record, the water splash features have been assigned numbers within the sequence, resulting in a disparity between the sequencing of the painted numbers and that used for the purposes of this record.



**Photo 7: View north of Area A**



**Photo 8: View south-west of Area A**

*Apparatus Feature A1*

- 3.14. Apparatus Feature A1 is the first obstacle Area A. It consists of a c. 3m tall wall with flanking walls at its eastern and western ends; these extend northwards for approximately 0.5m (Photos 9 and 10). This structure is of redbrick construction in English bond. The wall is capped with concrete and is supported by two stepped brick-built buttresses on its northern side (Photo 11).



**Photo 9: Apparatus Feature A1, viewed from the south**



**Photo 10: Apparatus Feature A1, viewed from the south-east**



**Photo 11: Apparatus Feature A1, viewed from the north**

#### *Apparatus Feature A2*

- 3.15. The second obstacle in the course comprises a shallow, concrete-lined pit (Photos 12 and 13). This is the same approximate width as the wall forming Feature A1. There is a ramp on the northern side of the pit. It is assumed that the pit would have been water-filled; the ramp on the northern side would have facilitated exit from the pit.

#### *Apparatus Feature A3*

- 3.16. The third obstacle in the Area A course consists of a brick wall in English bond and capped with concrete (Photos 14 and 15). This wall is lower than Feature A1, at approximately 1.7m tall. Again, flanking walls extending northwards from the western and eastern ends of the main wall. The northern side of the wall is supported by two brick-built buttresses (Photo 16).



**Photo 12: Apparatus Feature A2, viewed from the south-east**



**Photo 13: Apparatus Feature A2, viewed from the east**



**Photo 14: Apparatus Feature A3, viewed from the south**



**Photo 15: Apparatus Feature A3, viewed from the south-east**



**Photo 16: Apparatus Feature A3, viewed from the north**

#### *Apparatus Feature A4*

- 3.17. The fourth obstacle in the course consists of three parallel brick-built walls aligned on a broadly north/south axis. They are constructed in English bond. The walls are just over 1m tall and are sloped their northern and southern ends (Photos 17 and 18). The walls are capped by wooden planks. The sloped ends have timber foot holds. These features presumably functioned as a form of balance wall (Photo 19).
- 3.18. The walls have '3' painted on them, indicating that they formed the third feature in the course. The presence of three parallel balance walls might indicate that the course was intended for use by up to three people at the same time.

#### *Apparatus Feature A5*

- 3.19. Obstacle number 5 in the Area A course is of the same form as Apparatus Feature A2. It consists of a shallow, concrete lined pit with a ramp to its northern edge, and was presumably intended to be filled with water (Photos 20 and 21).

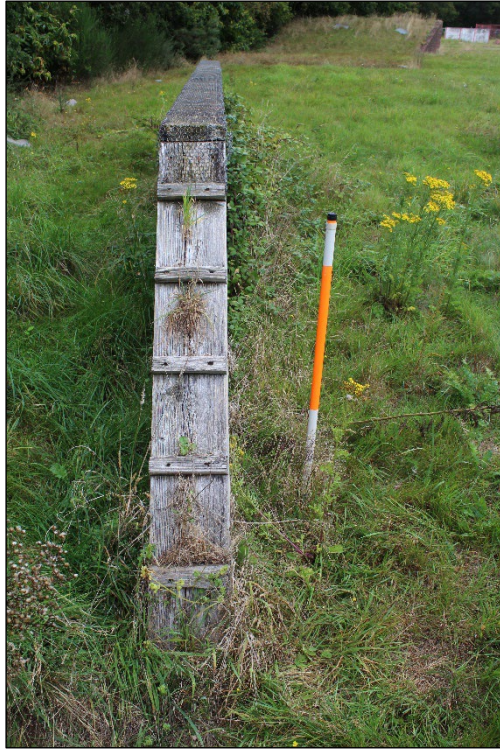


**Photo 17: Apparatus Feature A4, viewed from the south-east**



**Photo 18: Apparatus Feature A4, viewed from the north-east**





**Photo 19: Apparatus Feature A4, viewed from the south-west**



**Photo 20: Apparatus Feature A5, viewed from the east**



**Photo 21: Apparatus Feature A5, viewed from the south-east**

#### *Apparatus Feature A6*

- 3.20. The sixth obstacle in the course consists of a ramp which is approximately 1.8m tall at its highest (north) end. The ramp is formed of brick-built flanking walls to the north, west and east, which are in English bond and are capped with bricks (Photos 22, 24 and 25). The ramp itself is turfed (Photos 22–25). This obstacle has '4' painted on it, presumably as it formed the fourth brick built/above ground obstacle in the course.



**Photo 22: Apparatus Feature A6, viewed from the south**



**Photo 23: Apparatus Feature A6, viewed from the south-west**



**Photo 24: Apparatus Feature A6, viewed from the east**



**Photo 25: Apparatus Feature A6, viewed from the north-east.**

### *Apparatus Feature A7*

- 3.21. This structure forms the final obstacle in the Area A course. It comprises concrete foundations forming a grid which divides the space into three grassed areas. It is not

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clear how this obstacle was used but it is possible that there may have been netting fixed to the foundations for participants to crawl through (Photos 26 to 28).



**Photo 26: Apparatus Feature A7, viewed from the north-east**



**Photo 27: Apparatus Feature A7, viewed from the south-west**



**Photo 28: Apparatus Feature A7, viewed from the south**

### **Area B**

- 3.22. The running track course within Area B consisted of ten obstacles at the time of the survey. However Google Earth Imagery shows that the course originally extended further around the eastern side of the open sports ground area; it also indicates that there may once have been a further nine obstacles as part of the course. These further obstacles were not visible during the site visit and would have fallen outside of the Site area.
- 3.23. The start of the running track appears to have been at its southern end. It appears to have been used in an anticlockwise direction, so that it finishes at its western end, adjacent to Area A. The tarmac track has painted lines dividing the course into three lanes.

### **Apparatus Feature B1**

- 3.24. Apparatus Feature B1 is the easternmost surviving obstacle of the running track, although it would originally have been situated approximately halfway through the complete course. It consists of a rendered and painted wall (presumably of concrete block or brick construction), with areas of matting to the east and west (Photos 29–31). There are three tunnels through the wall; these are approximately 50m wide by