

Land at Abertanat Farm, Llanyblodwell, Oswestry, Shropshire – Archaeological Evaluation

Planning Reference: 16/00830/MWA

Aardvark EM Ltd

Report prepared by:

**ECUS Ltd.
Eastlands II
London Road
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG21 4AW
01256 693 063**

July 2016

ECUS Ltd

Report to: **Aardvaark EM Ltd**

Report Title: **Land at Abertanat Farm, Llanyblodwell, Oswestry, Shropshire –
Archaeological Evaluation**

Revision: **v.1**

Issue Date: **27/07/2016**

Report Ref: **8448**

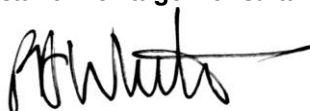
Originated By:



Daniel Bray
Assistant Heritage Consultant

Date: 24/07/2016

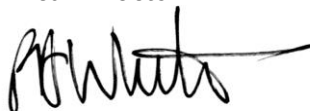
Reviewed By:



Paul White
Technical Director

Date: 27/07/2016

Approved By:



Paul White
Technical Director

Date: 27/07/2016

Prepared by:
ECUS Ltd.
Eastlands II
London Road
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG21 4AW
01256 693 063

The report and the site assessments carried out by ECUS on behalf of the client in accordance with the agreed terms of contract and/or written agreement form the agreed Services. The Services were performed by ECUS with the skill and care ordinarily exercised by a reasonable Environmental Consultant at the time the Services were performed. Further, and in particular, the Services were performed by ECUS taking into account the limits of the scope of works required by the client, the time scale involved and the resources, including financial and manpower resources, agreed between ECUS and the client.

Other than that expressly contained in the paragraph above, ECUS provides no other representation or warranty whether express or implied, in relation to the services.

This report is produced exclusively for the purposes of the client. ECUS is not aware of any interest of or reliance by any party other than the client in or on the services. Unless expressly provided in writing, ECUS does not authorise, consent or condone any party other than the client relying upon the services provided. Any reliance on the services or any part of the services by any party other than the client is made wholly at that party's own and sole risk and ECUS disclaims any liability to such parties.

This report is based on site conditions, regulatory or other legal provisions, technology or economic conditions at the time of the Service provision. These conditions can change with time and reliance on the findings of the Services under changing conditions should be reviewed.

ECUS accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of third party data used in this report.

Executive Summary

ECUS Ltd were commissioned by Aardvark Environment management Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Abertanat Farm, Llanyblodwell, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 8NA situated at National Grid Co-ordinates 325093 321972 (Figure 1). Planning permission (16/00830/MWA) has been gained from Shropshire County Council for the construction of a 750Kw on-farm anaerobic digestion (AD) facility at Abertanat Farm. The permission is subject to Condition 7 which relates to archaeology.

A total of six 20 m by 1.5 m trenches were excavated across the area of the proposed feedstock clamps outside of known areas of previous disturbance which would have removed any archaeological remains. The trenches were located in a random pattern to provide good coverage across the area and represents 5% of the total undisturbed area of the feedstock clamp area. Trenches were excavated by a mechanical JCB equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under constant supervision by an archaeologist.

Despite the archaeological potential of the site highlighted in the historic environment desk based assessment as low no features or deposits of archaeological interest were present in the excavated trenches. There was no evidence of prehistoric or Romano-British rural settlement or any evidence of medieval or post-medieval activity relating to Abertanant Farm. The River Tanat is located to the east of the site and at its closest is 123 m metres to the east. The topography around the site indicates that the river once ran across the site. The evaluation trenches revealed numerous layers of alluvium with sand and gravel lenses. There were no finds or features within the alluvium to indicate when these were deposited.

Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	5
1.1	PROJECT BACKGROUND	5
1.2	LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY	5
1.3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	5
2.	METHODOLOGY	6
2.1	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	6
2.2	FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY	7
3.	RESULTS	7
3.1	INTRODUCTION	7
	<i>Trench 1</i>	7
	<i>Trench 2</i>	7
	<i>Trench 3</i>	8
	<i>Trench 4</i>	8
	<i>Trench 5</i>	8
	<i>Trench 6</i>	8
4.	CONCLUSION	8
5.	STORAGE AND CURATION	9
5.1	ARCHIVE	9
6.	REFERENCES	10
6.1	BIBLIOGRAPHY	10
	APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DETAILS	11
	APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM	13
	PLATES	15
	ILLUSTRATIONS	17

Figures

- Figure 1: Site Location
Figure 2: Trench Locations

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 ECUS Ltd were commissioned by Aardvark Environment Management Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Abertanat Farm, Llanyblodwell, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 8NA (hereafter 'the site') situated at National Grid Co-ordinates 325093 321972 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 Planning permission (16/00830/MWA) has been gained from Shropshire County Council for the construction of a 750Kw on-farm anaerobic digestion (AD) facility at Abertanat Farm. The permission is subject to Condition 7 relating to archaeology which states:

'No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a program of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of Investigation (WSI). This written scheme shall be approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works

Reason: The site is known to hold archaeological interest.

1.1.3 An archaeological evaluation was the agreed mitigation strategy adopted to investigate the potential archaeological interest of the site. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012).

1.1.4 The work was conducted and undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Ecus, 2016) and approved by the Shropshire Council Natural and Historic Environment Manager, advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The site work was undertaken by Daniel Bray and Paul White between 19th and 21st July 2016.

1.2 Location, Topography, Geology

1.2.1 The site is situated on the English-Welsh border approximately 2.5 kilometres west of Pant and 2 km northwest of Llanymynech. The site is situated to the north of the existing dairy and cattle farm and comprises land currently used for a mixture of pasture and agricultural storage with a previously excavated slurry lagoon at its southern end. The area of the lagoon will have previously removed any archaeological remains.

1.2.2 The site is located on the flood plain, on the western side of the River Tanat and lies at a height of 80 m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The bedrock geology is mapped as Allt-Tair-Ffynnon Formation – siltstone and mudstone deposits formed approximately 455 to 457 million years ago. Overlaying this across the whole site is Alluvium – clay, silt, sand and formed up to 2 million years ago during the Quaternary Period (BGS, 2016).

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

1.3.1 The site of the proposed development has been identified as an area of background archaeological potential relating to prehistoric or Romano-British remains. The following summary is drawn from a historic environment desk-

based assessment previously prepared for the site (Ecus 2015).

- 1.3.2 Beyond the prehistoric hillfort at Blodwell Rock Camp and Llanymynech Hillfort, Archwilio and the Shropshire HER returned a further five records of Iron Age date. Cropmarks of an enclosure, with internal subdivisions, of probable Iron Age to Roman date are recorded c. 650 m northeast of Abertanat Farm. Further Iron Age features within the landscape include Tygwyn pit alignment and a number of linear crop marks at Carreghofa Farm likely to be Iron Age field systems.
- 1.3.3 Remains of two substantial Roman camps are located 930 m southeast of the site. Excavations revealed substantial ditches and ramparts which enclosed areas of 1.6 ha and 3.2 ha superseding an earlier marching camp. Remains of a number of timber buildings interpreted as barracks were revealed. Remains of another possible Roman marching camp at Bryn Tanat have also been identified through cropmark analysis.
- 1.3.4 These camps are located next to Penyeulan Roman road from Viriconium via Mediolanum to Segontium, which is thought to have once been paved. Large quantities of Roman coins are recorded by the Portable Antiquity Scheme. Their location is recorded as Llanymynech but no further details to the exact location are given.
- 1.3.5 The post-medieval development in the study area saw an increase in the number of small farmsteads, a number of which have been identified during the Historic Farmsteads Characterisation (HFC) Project 2008-2010. These include Abertanat Farm where the site is located. The southern area of the site has been previously excavated as a slurry lagoon and excavated to a depth of up to 3.5 m and as such any archaeological remains in this area will have been destroyed.

2. Methodology

2.1 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1.1 The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation is to gain information about the archaeological resource within the site (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context.
- 2.1.2 More specifically the aims of the evaluation are to:
 - to identify and record any archaeological deposits, structures or built fabric within the identified areas of interest;
 - to determine the extent, condition, character, significance and date of any encountered or exposed archaeological remains;
 - to recover artefacts disturbed by the site works;
 - to recover samples from sealed waterlogged contexts for environmental processing;
 - to prepare a comprehensive record and report of archaeological observations during the site work.
- 2.1.3 The research objectives of the project are:

- What evidence survives for early rural settlement remains which may relate to late prehistoric and Romano-British Periods?
- Are there any remains relating to the post-medieval, or earlier, farm activity of Abertanat Farm?

2.2 Fieldwork Methodology

- 2.2.1 The previous disturbance within the site means the archaeological potential is limited to the northern part of the site. This area of the site is to comprise of a concrete apron for the feedstock clamps for the AD plant and the focus of the archaeological investigation.
- 2.2.2 It was proposed to excavate six 20 m by 1.5 m trenches across the area of the proposed feedstock clamps. The trenches were located in a random pattern to provide good coverage across the area and represents 5% of the previously undisturbed area of the site. Trenches were excavated by a mechanical JCB equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under constant supervision by an archaeologist. Topsoil and recent overburden was removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. All potential archaeological deposits were to be cleaned by hand and sampled sufficiently to characterise and date them to satisfy the aims of the WSI. Photographs were to be taken of the general site conditions, location of trenches and details of excavated sections to produce a photographic record consisting of black and white and digital images in jpeg format.
- 2.2.3 The archaeological evaluation was maintained in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014).

3. Results

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 All trenches were dug as intended. This section presents the results from the archaeological evaluation and details the excavated trenches. A list of the excavated trenches and description of the stratigraphy is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

- 3.1.2 Trench 1 was aligned north-south and was 20.20 m long, 1.5 m wide and had a max depth of 0.50 m (**Plate 1**). The stratigraphy comprised 0.10m of topsoil above 0.20 m of subsoil/plough soil above 0.20 m of yellow brown sandy silt. At the northern end this overlay pale grey sandy silt with large irregular shaped stones and an orange brown sandy silt at the southern end. No archaeological features were revealed and no finds were present.

Trench 2

- 3.1.3 Trench 2 was aligned northeast-southwest and was 19.70 m long, 1.5 m wide and had a max depth of 1.10 m. The stratigraphy comprised 0.15 m of topsoil above 0.20 m of subsoil/plough soil. This overlay a number of alluvial deposits which consisted, in sequence, of 0.25 m of brown grey silty clay, 0.20 m of orange brown clay silt and 0.20 m of yellow brown silty clay. Below this was an orange and blue clay with large gravel patches towards the southern end. No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 3

- 3.1.4 Trench 3 was aligned east-west and was 19.50 m long, 1.5 m wide and had a maximum depth of 1.12 m (**Plate 2**). The stratigraphy comprised 0.15 m of topsoil and 0.20 m of subsoil/plough soil above alluvial deposits. The alluvial deposits consisted of 0.13 m of brown grey silty clay, 0.40 m of orange brown grey silty clay and 0.25 m of orange brown grey silty clay. These were above brown grey sandy silt with frequent manganese inclusions. Towards the western end this sandy silt deposit became more gravelly and sandier. No archaeological finds or features were present.

Trench 4

- 3.1.5 Trench 4 was aligned north-south and was 20.50 m long, 1.5 m wide and had a maximum depth of 1.15 m. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10 m of topsoil above 0.20 m of subsoil/plough soil above alluvial deposits. The alluvial deposits comprised 0.33 m of orange brown clay silt, 0.13 m of slightly darker orange brown clay silt, and 0.14 m of light orange brown clay silt with grey patches. These alluvial deposits were above a mid grey sandy silt deposit with frequent manganese inclusions. Within the western section darker lenses of gravel and stone were hand cleaned and found to be undulations and variations in the alluvium. A treebole and a clay patch within the base of the trench were also investigated which confirmed these features were natural in origin rather than archaeological. No archaeological finds or features were present.

Trench 5

- 3.1.6 Trench 5 was aligned northwest-southeast and was 20 m long, 1.5 m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.84 m (**Plate 4**). The stratigraphy comprised 0.10 m of topsoil above 0.18 m of subsoil/plough soil above alluvial deposits. The alluvial deposits consisted of 0.27 m of orange brown sandy silt, 0.16 m of light orange brown silt sand and 0.09 m of yellow grey sand silt with gravel inclusions. These deposits were above brown grey sandy clay with occasional manganese. An orange clay band investigated at the northern end was natural in origin and not archaeological. No archaeological features or finds were observed in the trench.

Trench 6

- 3.1.7 Trench 6 was aligned northeast-southwest and was 20 m long, 1.5 m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.79 m. The stratigraphy comprised 0.10 m of topsoil above 0.10 m of subsoil/plough soil above alluvial deposits. The alluvial deposits comprised 0.30 m of grey brown sandy silt, 0.12 m of orange brown clay silt, 0.08 m of orange brown silty clay with gravel above a light grey sandy silt with orange clay patches. At the southern western end of the trench gravel was present at the base of the trench. No archaeological finds or features were present.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the site highlighted in the historic environment desk based assessment as low no features or deposits of archaeological interest were present in the excavated trenches. There was no evidence of prehistoric or Romano-British rural settlement or any evidence of medieval or post-medieval activity relating to Abertanat Farm. The River Tanat is located to the east of the site and at its closest is 123 m metres. The

topography around the site indicates that the river once ran across the site (**Plate 4**). The evaluation trenches revealed numerous layers of alluvium with sand and gravel lenses. There were no finds or features within the alluvium to indicate when these were deposited.

5. Storage and Curation

5.1 Archive

- 5.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared and arrangements for the deposition of the Archive on completion of the project will be made in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (UKIC 1990) and the Chichester District Museum *Procedure for the Deposition of Archaeological Archives version 4* (March 2015).
- 5.1.2 The archive is currently held at ECUS Ltd, Eastlands II, London Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4AW with site code 6881/AFO16 and will be deposited with the Shropshire Museum Service within six months of the completion of fieldwork.
- 5.1.3 An OASIS form (Oasis ID – ecusltd1 – 257664(1)) has been initiated and a copy is provided in Appendix 2 of this report.

6. References

6.1 Bibliography

- British Geological Survey 2016 *British Geology Viewer*. Available at mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html [accessed 20/06/2016]
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014. Stand and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation
- Ecus, 2015. Abertanat Farm Proposed AD Scheme – Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment Unpublished client report ref 6398.01
- Ecus 2016 Land at Abertanat Farm, Llanyblodwell, Oswestry, Shropshire – Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Fieldwork
- NPPF 2012, National Planning Policy Framework, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)

Appendix 1: Trench Details

Trench	Description	Depth (m)
1	Topsoil	0 - 0.10
1	Subsoil/plough soil	0.10 – 0.30
1	Yellow brown sandy silt	0.30 – 0.50
1	Pale grey sandy silt with large irregular stone at the northern end and orange brown sandy silt at the southern end	0.50+

Trench	Description	Depth (m)
2	Topsoil	0 - 0.15
2	Subsoil/plough soil	0.15 – 0.35
2	Brown grey silty clay	0.35 – 0.60
2	Orange brown clay silt	0.60 – 0.80
2	Yellow brown silty clay	0.80 – 1.00
2	Orange and blue clay with gravel lenses at the southern end	1.00+

Trench	Description	Depth (m)
3	Topsoil	0 - 0.15
3	Subsoil/plough soil	0.15 – 0.35
3	Brown grey silty clay	0.35 – 0.47
3	Orange brown silty clay	0.47 – 0.87
3	Orange brown grey silty clay	0.87 – 1.02
3	Brown and grey sandy silt with manganese and gravel at the western end	1.02+

Trench	Description	Depth (m)
4	Topsoil	0 - 0.10
4	Subsoil/plough soil	0.10 – 0.30
4	Orange brown clay silt	0.30 – 0.63
4	Slightly darker orange brown clay silt	0.63 – 0.76
4	Light orange brown clay silt with grey patches	0.76 – 0.90
4	Mid grey sandy silt with manganese	0.90+

Trench	Description	Depth (m)
5	Topsoil	0 - 0.10
5	Subsoil/plough soil	0.10 – 0.28
5	Orange brown sandy silt	0.28 – 0.55
5	Light orange brown silty sand	0.55 – 0.71
5	Yellow grey sand silt with gravel inclusions	0.71 – 0.80
5	Brown grey sandy clay with occasional manganese	0.80+

Trench	Description	Depth (m)
6	Topsoil	0 - 0.10
6	Subsoil/plough soil	0.10 – 0.20
6	Grey brown sandy silt	0.20 – 0.50
6	Orange brown clay silt	0.50 – 0.62
6	Orange brown silty clay with gravel	0.62 – 0.70
6	Light grey sandy silt and orange clay patches	0.70+

Appendix 2: Oasis Form

OASIS ID: ecusltd1-257664

Project details

Project name Land at Abertanat Farm

Short description of the project ECUS Ltd were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Abertanat Farm, Llanyblodwell, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 8NA situated at National Grid Co-ordinates 325093 321972 . Planning permission (16/00830/MWA) has been gained from Shropshire County Council for the construction of a 750Kw on-farm anaerobic digestion (AD) facility at Abertanat Farm. The permission is subject to Condition 7 relating to archaeology. The site work was undertaken by Daniel Bray and Paul White between 19th and 21st July 2016. Six 20 m by 1.5 m trenches were excavated across the area of the proposed feedstock clamps. The trenches were located in a random pattern to provide good coverage across the area and represents 5% of the previously undisturbed area of the site. Despite the archaeological potential of the site highlighted in the historic environment desk based assessment as low no features or deposits of archaeological interest were present in the excavated trenches. There was no evidence of prehistoric or Romano-British rural settlement or any evidence of medieval or post-medieval activity relating to Abertanant Farm. The River Tanat is located to the east of the site and at its closest is 123 m metres. The topography around the site indicates that the river once ran across the site. The evaluation trenches revealed numerous layers of alluvium with sand and gravel lenses. There were no finds or features within the alluvium to indicate when these were deposited.

Project dates Start: 19-07-2016 End: 21-07-2016

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated project reference codes AFO16/8448 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Farm infrastructure (e.g. barns, grain stores, equipment stores, etc.)

Development type Farm renewable energy

PromptPlanning condition

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location SHROPSHIRE OSWESTRY LLANYBLODWEL Abertanat

Study area 0.35 Hectares
Site coordinates 325093 321972 325093 00 00 N 321972 00 00 E Point

Project creators
Name of Organisation ECUS Ltd
Project brief originator Consultant
Project design originator ECUS Ltd
Project director/manager Paul White
Project supervisor Daniel Bray

Project archives
Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient ADS
Digital Contents "Survey"
Digital Media available "GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient Shropshire Museum Service
Paper Contents "Survey"
Paper Media available "Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Survey","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Land at Abertanat Farm, Llanyblodwell, Oswestry, Shropshire -
Archaeological Evaluation

Author(s)/Editor(s) Daniel Bray

Other bibliographic details 8448

Date 2016

Issuer or publisher ECUS Ltd

Place of issue or publication Basingstoke

Description A4 ring bound report

Entered by Daniel Bray (daniel.bray@ecusltd.co.uk)
Entered on 27 July 2016

Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking north



Plate 2: Trench 3 looking east (left). Trench 3 general section looking north (right)



Plate 3: Trench 5 looking northwest



Plate 4: General view southeast across the site showing excavated trenches. Picture taken from higher ground to the north of the site, from earlier river valley terrace.

Illustrations



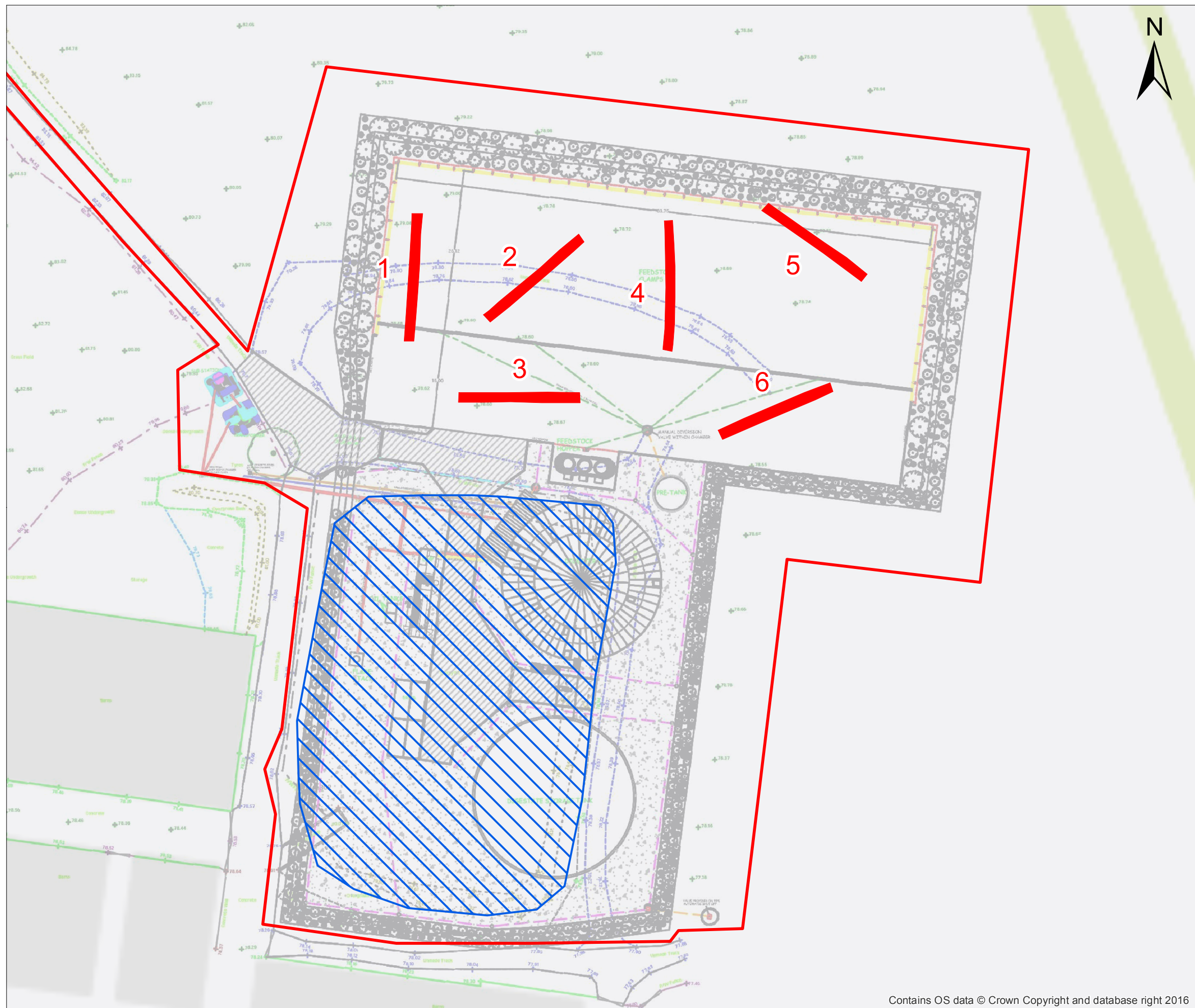
Site Boundary



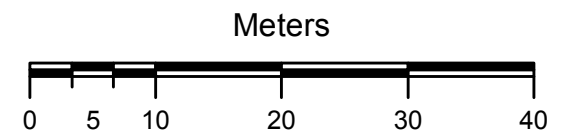
Aardvark EM Ltd
Abertanat Farm AD - Archaeological
Evaluation

Figure 1: Site Location

Brook Holt 3 Blackburn Road Sheffield S61 2DW
T: 0114 2669292 www.ecusltd.co.uk



- Site Boundary
- Excavated Trench
- Previous Disturbance



Aardvark EM Ltd
Abertanat Farm AD - Archaeological
Evaluation

Figure 2
Trench Locations

Brook Holt 3 Blackburn Road Sheffield S61 2DW
T: 0114 2669292 www.ecusltd.co.uk