

**HITHERCROFT ESTATE, LUPTON  
ROAD, WALLINGFORD, OX10 9WA**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY: SOUTH  
OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PCA REPORT No: R11349**

**SITE CODE: OLUP12**

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**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**



DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

HITHERCROFT ESTATE, LUPTON ROAD,  
WALLINGFORD, OX10 9WA

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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**Site Code:** OLUP12

**Central NGR:** SU59928905

**Local Planning Authority:** South Oxfordshire District Council

**Commissioning Client:** Peacock and Smith  
On behalf of  
Optimisation Developments Ltd

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the working methods and results of an archaeological evaluation by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited designed to determine the archaeological potential of the Hithercroft Estate, Lupton Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 9WA (Figure 1). Peacock and Smith commissioned the archaeological evaluation on behalf of Optimisation Developments Ltd and the work was monitored by Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council.
- 1.2 Although the site does not lie within an 'Area of Archaeological Restraint' as stipulated by the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, significant archaeological remains, predominantly early Iron Age in date, were identified immediately southeast of the current site during an extensive archaeological evaluation at Winterbrook. Therefore, in order to make an informed decision about the pending planning application the Planning Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council requested that archaeological trial trenches should be excavated in order to determine the archaeological potential of the current site.
- 1.3 Four evaluation trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed building in order to determine if archaeological deposits were present and if so to characterise their nature and extent (Figure 2). These uncovered a number of features, including field boundary ditches and pits, though due to a lack of temporally diagnostic material these remain undated.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology was commissioned by Peacock and Smith on behalf of Optimisation Developments Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the Hithercroft Estate, Lupton Road, Wallingford, OX10 9WA in Oxfordshire. The plot of land under investigation covered an area of 19,703m<sup>2</sup> most of which is presently used for external storage and car parking. In the northern area of the site, it is occupied by a large building housing workshops and offices.
- 2.2 The site is located approximately 500m to the southwest of the Saxon defences of Wallingford. Its boundaries are defined to the north by Hithercroft Road, to the east by the Cholsey and Wallingford Railroad and to the west by Lupton Road. Lupton Road also forms part of the southern boundary of the site – the rest of which is defined by Bradford's Brook. The site lies within the administrative jurisdiction of South Oxfordshire District Council and is centred at National Grid Reference SU59928905.
- 2.3 Although the site is not located within an Area of Archaeological Restraint archaeological remains pertaining to early Iron Age and Roman occupation of the area have been identified at the nearby Winterbrook site. Because of this, and in order to make an informed decision about the pending planning application for the proposed scheme, the Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council has requested that the site be subject to pre-determination archaeological trial trenching.
- 2.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared for the project (Mayo 2012), detailing the proposed methodology for the excavation of four evaluation trenches measuring 20m by 1.5m at ground level. The WSI was approved by the Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council.
- 2.5 The fieldwork was completed over two consecutive weekends on the 24th and 25th November 2012 and the 1st and 2nd December 2012. The fieldwork was supervised by Paw Jorgensen and project-managed by Chris Mayo, of PCA. The project was monitored by Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council, which included a site visit on 25th November 2012.
- 2.6 Upon completion of all phases of the archaeological work the archive will be deposited with the County Museum and Archive Store in Standlake, Oxfordshire.
- 2.7 The site was assigned the unique PCA site code OLUP12.

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 National Guidance: National Planning Policy Framework**

3.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted on March 27 2012, and now supersedes the Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications.

3.1.2 In considering any planning application for development the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by the NPPF, by current Local Plan policy and by other material considerations.

#### **3.2 Local Guidance (i): The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011**

3.2.1 The relevant local policy is provided by the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, which was adopted in 2006. Relevant sections with regards to the archaeological resource are found at Policy CON11, Policy CON112 and Policy CON13 (<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan>).

3.2.2 The Local Plan will eventually be replaced by the Local Development Framework, which is currently in preparation.

#### **3.3 Local Guidance (ii): The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027**

3.3.1 The Core Strategy, adopted December 2012, was prepared as part of the Local Development Framework. It contains "Policy CSEN3 Historic Environment" which is relevant to the heritage resource at the site (<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>).

#### **3.4 Planning Permission**

3.4.1 A planning application for the proposed development is in preparation. No case number has yet been obtained for the scheme. The proposed development will involve the clearance of the site and the construction of a new retail unit with associated car-parking and marshalling areas.

#### **3.5 Original Research Objectives**

3.5.1 Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork a number of primary research objectives were established within the WSI (Mayo 2012), as follows:

- To determine the natural topography of the site.
- To establish the presence or absence of prehistoric activity.
- To establish the presence or absence of Roman activity.
- To establish the presence or absence of early medieval and later medieval activity.
- To establish the presence or absence of post-medieval activity at the site.
- To establish the nature, date and survival of activity relating to any archaeological periods at the site.

- To establish the extent of all past post-depositional impacts on the archaeological resource.

3.5.2 In addition to the primary objectives the investigation also aimed to answer the following research questions:

- Can the natural deposits be shown to conform to the expected deposit model and profile suggested by the geotechnical study?
- Is there any evidence for Iron Age and Roman activity and settlement such as was recorded at the Winterbrook site to the SE? If not, can any evidence be seen or conjectured for its absence, or an extent to that settlement?
- If settlement evidence is found, does it conform to the nature and date of archaeological remains from the nearby site?
- To establish whether any evidence is present for Saxon or early medieval activity, or whether this area lay as marginal land at those times.
- To establish whether the site was located within agricultural land through the later medieval and post-medieval periods, or whether any evidence survives for different types of land-use.



## **4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey records the geological bedrock formation below the site as Glauconitic Marl Member - Glauconitic Sandstone. The BGS defines this as “Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 94 to 99 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. Local environment previously dominated by warm chalk seas” (BGS 2012).
- 4.2 The BGS records the superficial deposits below the site as Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member, Upper Facet - Sand and Gravel, which it defines further as “Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local environment previously dominated by rivers” (BGS 2012).
- 4.3 A geotechnical study which has been undertaken recorded superficial deposits in all but one of the four BHs and seventeen WSs. The superficial deposits ranged from natural sand to natural sands and gravels, and were found at depths below ground level between 0.7m (BH3 and WSs 13, 16) and 1.6m (WS 1). The depth of the superficial deposits averages to 1.02m below ground level. Unfortunately no plan of the intervention locations has been provided.
- 4.4 Topographically there is presently little variance within the site resulting in relatively flat terrain. A topographical survey of the site (Davis Weatherall Partnership, Oct 2012) shows the ground level slopes very gently from 47.60m OD in the north to 47.30m OD in the south. While this could be a result of artificial levelling of the terrain in order to create a gradient more suitable for the property’s current use as a storage yard, the same lack of variance was observed at the top of the untruncated natural horizons during the current work.
- 4.5 The nearest watercourses to the site are Bradford’s Brook, which runs E-W parallel to the southern edge of the site, and was created in perhaps the medieval period as a flood alleviation ditch (Grayson 2004). The River Thames is approximately 600m to the east of the site.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

5.1 The following section draws heavily on the information reported by predominantly three secondary sources namely the Wallingford Conservation Area Character Appraisal (The Conservation Studio 2012) and the archaeological desk based assessment (Preston 2009) and subsequent evaluation report (Lewis 2009) produced by Thames Valley Archaeological Services for the site at Winterbrook to the immediate southeast of the present site.

### **5.2 Mesolithic and Neolithic**

5.2.1 From a quick examination of the previously recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity of the study site it quickly becomes evident that the area sustained human habitation at least intermittently from the Mesolithic period onwards. While evidence for Mesolithic occupation within the vicinity is sparse the nearby recovery of a number of Mesolithic stone implements found to the east of the current site (Wymer and Bonsall 1977) as well as a Mesolithic tranchet axe (SMR: MOX8169) and a blade (SMR: MOX11247) dated to either the Mesolithic or early Neolithic attest to at least transient use of the area during this time. The latter was recovered during an archaeological watching brief which also documented a pit dated either to the Neolithic or Bronze Age as well as numerous Neolithic flints from the ploughsoil. Additional evidence for Neolithic activity was seen in 1959 when excavations to the east of the current site recorded a double-ditched round barrow (SMR: MOX532). Neolithic flints were also recovered to the south and southwest of the site during work ahead of the construction of the Wallingford bypass (Boyle and Cromarty 2006). To the southeast of the present site an extensive archaeological evaluation carried out in 2009 at Winterbrook recorded two late Neolithic or early Bronze Age graves as well although no other features of this period were observed (Lewis 2009).

### **5.3 Bronze Age and Iron Age**

5.3.1 Evidence for Bronze Age activity has been recorded in and near the River Thames by Wallingford, and further evidence of settlement and burial sites has also been recorded in the vicinity of the town. This is not surprising considering the town's advantageous position along a fordable part of the river where a number of prehistoric trackways converge (The Conservation Studio 2012).

5.3.2 The Thames Valley National Mapping Programme (NMP) established by the former Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) in 1992 recorded the cropmark remains of two possible Bronze Age round barrows to the southwest of the current site. To the south and southwest of the site excavations carried out ahead of the construction of the Wallingford bypass recorded late Bronze Age land divisions, a possible roundhouse and waterhole (Preston 2009). Features excavated to the southeast of the current site during the Winterbrook evaluation yielded late Bronze Age pottery suggesting that this area was settled by this time. While both Bronze Age and Roman features were recorded during the evaluation there was a definite increase in activity during the early Iron Age, comprising a

number of ditched enclosures and trackways (Lewis 2009).

- 5.3.3 To the east of the study site a rectangular enclosure was visible on aerial photographs until the area was built over. Part of the enclosure was excavated in 1959 and the pottery recovered suggested an early Iron Age date although medieval pottery and tiles were also recovered during the archaeological work (Preston 2009).

## **5.4 Roman**

- 5.4.1 The 2009 Winterbrook evaluation recorded a zone of Roman occupation immediately to the southeast of the current site. This comprised predominantly ditches though a single metalled surface of late Roman date was also recorded. The Roman occupation complex recorded occupied the same portion of the site as core of the Iron Age occupation zone although the former was less extensive (Lewis 2009).

- 5.4.2 Other investigations in the vicinity have also recorded a number of ditches and a single 4th century grave. Earlier investigations to the south of the current site excavated a number of Roman period ditches, which were at the time interpreted as representing settlement along the Dorchester-Silchester Road passing the site less than 1km to the west (Preston 2009).

## **5.5 Saxon**

- 5.5.1 An early Saxon cemetery dated to the 5th/6th century was recorded outside the town's defensive earthworks hinting at the presence of a settlement of this date nearby. The first documentary mention of Wallingford comes in form of a document dated c. AD 919. The town was founded by King Alfred as a burh in the 9th century to help defend Wessex from the Danes. The defensive earthworks established by Alfred encircled the town on three sides and still form the boundary between the historic town of Wallingford and the more recent suburban developments. When the construction of the defences was complete Wallingford was the largest fortified town in the kingdom of Wessex. The town's importance can further be gauged by the fact that by the 10th century the settlement had its own mint (The Conservation Studio 2012).

- 5.5.2 Archaeological investigations to the south and southeast of the present site have recovered Saxon period pottery and field-walking along the route of the Wallingford bypass recovered a glass bead possibly of Saxon date. An evaluation to the southeast of the site recorded a number of deposits of late Saxon or early medieval date (Preston 2009).

- 5.5.3 The Winterbrook evaluation recorded an inhumation burial that, although no dating evidence was found, was classed as being possibly of Saxon date (Lewis 2009).

## **5.6 Medieval**

- 5.6.1 Following the Norman Conquest William I ordered the defences of Wallingford strengthened with the construction of a motte and bailey castle. Not long after this a Benedictine priory was founded near present day Bullcroft and in 1155 the town was granted the Charter of Liberties permitting markets to be held regularly within the town defences. Throughout this period the town had enjoyed a period of prosperity, though this came to an end in the 15th

century when the effects of the plague reduced the number of houses to 44 with only four parish churches (as opposed to 11 in the early 13th century) (The Conservation Studio 2012).

- 5.6.2 Not surprisingly the majority of the previously recorded finds and features dating to the medieval period have been located inside the town defences. Very few finds of medieval date have been recovered from the immediate vicinity of the site with only four sherds of medieval pottery recovered during field walking to the southeast of the site (Preston 2009).
- 5.6.3 While a number of the test pits in the southern portion of the Winterbrook site yielded individual pottery sherds of medieval date the only feature which could be attributed to this period was a ditch within the central to northern portion of the site (Lewis 2009).
- 5.6.4 Bradford's Brook, which flows east-west immediately south of the site, was perhaps dug during the medieval period as a flood alleviation ditch. The first mention of the stream under the name Bradford's Brook occurred in the 16th century though it is thought that it was known as Winterditch prior to this time. Winterditch was first mentioned in a land grant thought to date to 1250 (Grayson 2004).

## **5.7 Post-Medieval**

- 5.7.1 During the mid-17th century Wallingford experienced a brief period of prosperity as the castle became an important Royalist stronghold during the Civil War. After the surrender of the town to Parliamentary forces Cromwell ordered the castle completely destroyed. Over the next decades the town centre was much altered with the market place being enclosed and St. Mary's church and the new town hall constructed. The market continued to be an important part of the town's economy until the 18th century when industries such as milling, brewing, leather production and manufacturing started to take over (The Conservation Studio 2012).

## 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

6.1 Four evaluation trenches were excavated over a period of two consecutive weekends in November and December, 2012.

**Table 1: Trench Details**

Trench No	Proposed Dimensions at GL	Alignment	Achieved Dimensions at GL
Trench 1	20m x 1.5m	approx N-S	21.23m x 1.8m
Trench 2	20m x 1.5m	approx NE-SW	19.64m x 1.8m
Trench 3	20m x 1.5m	approx E-W	19.14m x 1.8m
Trench 4	20m x 1.5m	approx N-S	21.10m x 1.8m

6.2 Before the start of the fieldwork the landowner/tenant was provided with drawings showing the proposed trench locations and the size and location of the clearance area required in order to safely excavate the trenches and store the spoil. Prior to arrival on site the requested clearance zones were cleared by the landowner/tenant.

6.3 Because the yard needed to remain operational during the week the archaeological work was carried out over two consecutive weekends with the first two trenches being excavated and subsequently backfilled the first weekend and the remaining trenches the following weekend.

6.4 Prior to excavation the trenches were scanned using a cable avoidance tool and signal generator (CAT and Gennie) by a trained and competent operative. After this each trench was excavated in 100mm spits with a HYMAC-type 360 excavator fitted with a 1.80m wide toothless grading bucket.

6.5 When archaeologically significant features were encountered machine excavation ceased, and further investigation was by hand. The WSI proposed that features would be appropriately sampled by excavation; in light, however, of the lack of artefactual evidence which was forthcoming from the features the methodology was revised so that all of the features exposed within the trenches were full excavated, in order to try and obtain secure dating.

6.6 Following excavation relevant faces of the trench were cleaned and a representative section drawn on polyester based drawing film at a scale of 1:10. Archaeological features and trench outlines were recorded using a Leica Rover GPRS.

6.7 The site archive was organised as to be compatible with the other archaeological archives produced in the County. Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and exposed were entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets which include the same fields of entry as are found on the recording sheets of the Museum of London. Sample recording sheets, sample registers, finds recording sheets, accession catalogues, and the photography record cards also followed the Museum of London equivalents.

6.8 All site records and finds were identified using a unique site code allocated to the project by PCA: OLUP12.

6.9 Digital photographs were taken of each of the excavated trenches and close up photographs

were taken of each of the encountered archaeological feature. Overview photographs showing the existing conditions in the vicinity of each trench were also taken prior to excavation and following their backfilling.

## 7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

### 7.1 Phase 1: Natural

7.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered was a naturally deposit comprising chalky marl with moderately frequent pockets of moderately firm mid-reddish brown sandy gravel. This was observed in all four trenches and there was little variance throughout the site in the level at which it was first encountered. At the highest point in the southeast portion of the site the natural deposit was recorded at 46.74m OD. From here it sloped gently down to 46.59m OD in the western portion. The deposit was assigned a separate context number for each trench and was thus variably recorded as [19], [16], [7] and [25] in Trenches 1-4 respectively.

### 7.2 Phase 2: Undated

7.2.1 The archaeological remains in Phase 2 were characterised by a series of undated features, including ditches, pits and a posthole.

#### *Linears*

7.2.2 Towards the northeast end of Trench 2 and cut into the natural chalky marl [16], was a north-south aligned linear feature [13]. It extended both north and south beyond the limits of the trench and as such only a 2.10m long segment of the overall feature was seen and recorded. Its width was relatively consistent, varying only between 0.55m and 0.60m, and the depth varied between 0.20m to the north and 0.24m to the south. It is probable that the changes in depth between the north and south are due to the base sloping from 46.35m OD in the north to 46.31m OD in the south; the ditch had been cut from a surface level of 46.55m OD. Both sides of the feature were moderately steep with a sharp break of slope at both the top and base of the cut (see Figure 4). Filling the feature was a friable, homogenous dark brown deposit of organic sandy silt, [12], containing moderately frequent sub-angular inclusions.

7.2.3 In the western part of Trench 3 was another linear feature [4], cut into the chalky marl [7]. This was aligned northwest-southeast and extended beyond the western and southern limits of the trench leaving only a 3.80m long section visible within the trench. At the widest point the feature measured 0.60m in width though it was slightly narrower at the eastern end where it measured only 0.38m in width. Both sides of the cut sloped moderately steeply with a sharp break of slope at the top and a slightly more gradual transition at the base. The base sloped very gently towards the northwest, though the gradient was almost imperceptible and the basal level varied only from 46.46m OD in the southeast to 46.44m OD in the northwest. Filling the feature was a 0.20m thick soft mid-brownish grey sandy silt [3], containing moderately frequent charcoal flecks and occasional sub-angular and angular pebbles. The top of the cut was first observed at 46.66m OD. Excavation of the fill yielded a small fragment of pottery which could only be said to post-date AD 43 (Appendix 5).

7.2.4 A third linear feature [21] was cut into the natural deposit [25] in Trench 4. This feature was

aligned east-west and extended beyond the boundaries of the trench. The portion of the feature within the confines of the trench measured 1.80m east-west by 1.10m north-south by 0.30m deep. Both sides were concave with a sharp break of slope at the top and a gradual break at the base (see Figure 4). The base sloped from 46.34m OD in the east to 46.26m OD in the west, whilst the feature was cut from a surface level of 46.70m OD. Its fill was a moderately stiff mid- to dark brown organic silty clay [20], with frequent sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles.

### **Pits and Posthole**

- 7.2.5 In Trench 2, to the west of the linear feature were a pit [11] and a possible posthole [9], both cut into the natural deposit and sub-circular in plan. Feature [9] measured approximately 0.50m in diameter by 0.14m in depth. Its sides were vertical with a sharp break of slope at the top and base, which sloped slightly towards the northeast. Filling the feature was a loosely compacted greyish brown deposit of homogenous moderately organic silty sand [8], with moderately frequent sub-angular pebbles and small cobbles. The feature was observed at a maximum height of 46.39m OD.
- 7.2.6 The other feature, pit [11], was 0.90m in diameter, 0.27m deep and was recorded at an upper height of 46.58m OD. Its sides were concave, breaking sharply at the top and with a gradual transition into a slightly concave base. Filling it was a loosely compacted mid-greyish brown silty sand deposit [10] containing moderately frequent sub-angular pebbles and small cobbles as well as frequent chalk flecks.
- 7.2.7 Cut into the natural deposit [7] in the northeast corner of Trench 3 was a partially revealed pit [2]. While the full dimensions of the pit could not be determined it is estimated that the portion of the feature within the trench represented approximately 25% of the overall size. The exposed portion of the feature measured 1.40m east-west by 0.80m north-south, by 0.45m deep and it was recorded at a maximum height of 46.65m OD. It had moderately steep sides with a sharp break of slope at the top and breaking gradually at the foot of the slope into a concave base (see Figure 4). Filling it was a moderately compact deposit of mid-greyish brown silty sand [1], with moderately frequent sub-angular and angular pebble inclusions.
- 7.2.8 Approximately 1.50m south of the linear feature [21] in Trench 4 was a small sub-rounded pit [23], also cut into the natural chalky marl [25]. The pit had moderately steep, concave sides with a sharp break of slope at the top and the foot gradually transitioning into a concave base. It measured c. 0.80m in diameter by 0.27m in depth and was recorded at an upper height of 46.60m OD. The pit was filled by [22], which comprised moderately compact mid-reddish brown silty sand with frequent rounded and sub-angular pebble inclusions and occasional flecks of charcoal.

### **7.3 Phase 3: Subsoil**

- 7.3.1 Sealing the natural chalky marl [19] in Trench 1 and the archaeological features in Trenches



2-4 was a subsoil horizon comprising soft- to moderately firm mid-reddish brown sandy clay with frequent angular and sub-angular pebbles. It was recorded as [18], [15], [6] and [24] in Trenches 1-4 respectively, and measured up to 0.60m in thickness. The layer was recorded at heights ranging from 47.22m OD (Trench 3) to 46.89m OD (Trench 2).

#### **7.4 Phase 4: Post-Medieval to Modern**

7.4.1 Sealing the subsoil horizon was a topsoil horizon in Trenches 1-3 ([17], [14] and [5] respectively) measuring up to 0.45m thick. It comprised firmly compacted dark greyish brown silty sand with frequent gravel pockets and brick fragments. It was recorded at upper levels between 47.50m OD (Trench 3) and 47.29m OD (Trench 1). The layer revealed pottery, clay tobacco pipe and ceramic building material suggesting a deposition date after the 19th century (Appendix 5).

7.4.2 In Trench 4 the subsoil was overlain directly by a deposit of crushed compacted brick rubble [+]. This was also seen in the remaining trenches though it was most prominent in Trenches 1 and 4 which were both positioned within the compacted road surfaces of the yard. Ground level at the surface of the trenches ranged from 47.59m OD at Trench 1 to 47.30m OD at Trench 2.

## **8 INTERPRETATION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **8.1 Interpretation**

8.1.1 The evaluation recorded a number of archaeological features which can be divided into two categories: linears and pits/postholes. Of these, only one feature, the linear feature [4] in Trench 3, yielded datable material in the form of a single small fragment of pottery. This could only be said to post date AD 43 (see Appendix 5) – the remaining features continue to be undated.

8.1.2 While the vast majority of the features remain undated it is possible to offer a suggestion of their original function. The shallow nature and general paucity of finds could suggest that the linear features represent field boundaries within or at the edge of an agricultural setting. Such ditches were seen during the Winterbrook evaluation to the southeast and interpreted as field boundaries and/or paddock type enclosures. The pits may represent peripheral activity within the agricultural landscape.

### **8.2 Original Research Objectives and Questions**

#### ***Primary Research Objectives***

8.2.1 To determine the natural topography of the site.

The evaluation recorded what appeared to be untruncated natural chalky marl in each of the excavated trenches. There appears to be little variance in the natural topography across the site. At the highest point (in Trench 4) the top of the natural deposits were recorded at 46.74m OD and from here there was a slight slope towards the west where it was (in Trench 1) recorded at 46.59m OD. During the Winterbrook evaluation to the southeast the natural deposits were encountered at 47.34m OD in the trench closest to the current site. From that point the natural topography seems to have risen to the south (Lewis 2009). It seems then that the current site is located approximately 0.6m further downslope from the early Iron Age occupation activity observed in the northwest corner of the Winterbrook site.

8.2.2 To establish the presence or absence of prehistoric activity.

While archaeological features were recorded and excavated during the current work, these yielded virtually no temporally diagnostic material. As such it is impossible to identify any of the features as belonging to this period. Considering the close proximity to areas of known prehistoric activity it is perhaps not unreasonable to suggest that at least some of the features observed may be prehistoric in date. However, without artefactual evidence to support this any such theory would be entirely speculative.

8.2.3 To establish the presence or absence of Roman activity.

The recovery of a sherd of pottery which could only be said to post-date AD 43 from the linear feature in Trench 3 could suggest that at least this feature is of Roman or later date. However, the small size of the pottery fragment makes it very difficult to assign concrete hypotheses.

- 8.2.4 To establish the presence or absence of early medieval and later medieval activity.

None of the archaeological features excavated yielded finds of this period. However, with the exception of the aforementioned pottery fragment the evaluation did not yield any datable material. The lack of finds from this period then does not eliminate the possibility that the features uncovered may be medieval in date.

- 8.2.5 To establish the presence or absence of post-medieval activity at the site.

Post medieval pottery was recovered from the topsoil horizon only. None of the features excavated yielded any post-medieval finds. However, as the vast majority of features did not yield any finds whatsoever it cannot be said with any certainty that these are or are not post-medieval in date.

- 8.2.6 To establish the nature, date and survival of activity relating to any archaeological periods at the site.

The evaluation has shown that archaeological remains do survive intact below the subsoil horizon. However, due to the lack of temporally diagnostic material it is impossible to date these features with any certainty.

A total of three shallow linear features were found during the evaluation. It is possible that these represent field boundaries or shallow drainage ditches. A number of pits and a possible posthole were also observed. It is possible that these represent ancillary activity within the wider managed landscape.

- 8.2.7 To establish the extent of all past post-depositional impacts on the archaeological resource.

Within the area covered by the present evaluation little impact seems to have occurred to the buried archaeological features. The uncovered features were all sealed by a subsoil horizon, which seemed to also have suffered little impact since its deposition.

### ***Primary Research Questions***

- 8.2.8 Can the natural deposits be shown to conform to the expected deposit model and profile suggested by the geotechnical study?

A geotechnical carried out on site prior to the evaluation had recorded superficial deposits of

natural sand and natural sand and gravels occurring between 0.70m and 1.60m below the current surface. This was fairly consistent with the findings of the archaeological evaluation, although here the top of the natural sandy gravels ranged between 0.66m and 1.05m below the current surface. In addition the natural deposits were seen to consist of variations of sand, sandy gravel and chalky marl whereas the geotechnical borehole profiles recorded only natural sand and gravels.

- 8.2.9 Is there any evidence for Iron Age and Roman activity and settlement such as was recorded at the Winterbrook site to the SE? If not, can any evidence be seen or conjectured for its absence, or an extent to that settlement?

The main zone of Iron Age and Roman activity within the Winterbrook site was the northwest quadrant of the site. An analysis of the natural topography across the Winterbrook site shows this area to have occupied an elevated position within the landscape. Immediately south of the occupation zone the natural landscape appears to start to slope steeply down towards the south. Slightly gentler slopes appear to spread downward towards the east and west from the other edges of the activity areas. The natural topography within the current site is approximately 0.60m below the northwestern most point of the Winterbrook site. It is possible that the slightly lower position occupied by the present site made it undesirable for occupation during the Iron Age and Roman periods and relegated the area to agricultural use. The linear features observed during the evaluation may represent part of the field system on the periphery of the settlement located on the crest of the landform.

- 8.2.10 If settlement evidence is found, does it conform to the nature and date of archaeological remains from the nearby site?

No direct settlement evidence was found during the evaluation. However, shallow linear features suggest the use of the area as agricultural land, which was perhaps associated with the settlement recorded on the Winterbrook site to the southeast. The features recorded within the present site appear similar to many of the features described as field divisions on the Winterbrook site. Like many of the linear features on the Winterbrook site the features on the present site remain undated.

- 8.2.11 To establish whether any evidence is present for Saxon or early medieval activity, or whether this area lay as marginal land at those times.

The current evaluation did not yield any Saxon or early medieval material, although it yielded virtually no datable finds in general. Of the features observed most appear to be associated with agricultural use of the land, so even if these were to be Saxon or early medieval in date they would point to marginal use of the land during those times.

- 8.2.12 To establish whether the site was located within agricultural land through the later medieval and post-medieval periods, or whether any evidence survives for different types of land-use.

Based on the lack of finds and definite features from this period it is likely that the area was in use as agricultural land. Cartographic evidence also shows the site and its vicinity remained in use as agricultural land from at least 1751 until at least 1960.

### **8.3 Potential of the Archaeology**

- 8.3.1 Although the majority of the features excavated could not be dated the recorded field boundary ditches have the potential to further the understanding of the development of the agricultural landscape surrounding either Wallingford or the Iron Age and/or Roman settlement which was recorded during the Winterbrook evaluation to the southeast of the present site. Additionally, the lack of structural features associated with the Iron Age and/or Roman settlement could suggest that the site lies outside the boundaries of the settlement. This would help better define the northern boundary of the occupation zone as this was not defined by the Winterbrook evaluation.

### **8.4 Confidence**

- 8.4.1 PCA considers that the archaeological evaluation was completed in accordance with all relevant guidelines, best-practice documents and the approved Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 8.4.2 The work was undertaken in reasonable weather conditions.
- 8.4.3 We consider that the results detailed in this report are reliable, and are confident that the evaluation represents an accurate reflection of the archaeological potential of the site.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Peacock and Smith for commissioning the project on behalf of Optimisation Developments Ltd, who kindly funded it. We also thank Richard Oram for monitoring the project on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council.
- 9.2 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited also thanks the staff of G Stow PLC for accommodating the archaeological team during the evaluation.
- 9.3 The author would like to thank John Joyce and Tom Moskal for their hard work on site, Chris Mayo for his project management, Rik Archer for processing the survey data, Mark Roughley for the preparation of illustrative material and Chris Jarrett for identifying and dating the artefactual material.

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October 2012

**11 APPENDIX 1: PLATES**



**Plate 1: Overview of Trench 1, View to the South**



**Plate 2: Overview of Trench 2, View to the Southwest**





**Plate 3: Overview of Trench 3, View to the West**



**Plate 4: Overview of Trench 4, View to the South**

## 12 APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX

Trench 1	Trench 2	Trench 3	Trench 4	
+	+	+	+	Phase 4: Post-medieval to Modern
17 Topsoil	14 Topsoil	5 Topsoil		
18 Subsoil	15 Subsoil	6 Subsoil	24 Subsoil	Phase 3: Subsoil
Fill of [9] 8	Fill of [11] 10	Fill of [2] 1	Fill of [21] 20	Phase 2: Undated
Posthole 9	pit 11	Pit 2	Pit 21	
	Fill of [13] 12	3 Fill of [4]	22 Fill of [23]	
	Ditch 13	4 Ditch	23 Ditch	
19 Natural	16 Natural	7 Natural	25 Natural	Phase 1: Natural
NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	

### 13 APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context No.	Trench	Plan	Section	Type	Description	Findings	Context Date	Phase	E-W	N-S	Depth	Highest	Lowest
OLUP 12	1	TR 3		S.1	Fill	Fill of [2]	None	Undated	2	1.40	0.80	0.45	46.65	46.60
OLUP 12	2	TR 3	Survey	S.1	Cut	Pit	-	Undated	2	1.40	0.80	0.45	46.65	46.20
OLUP 12	3	TR 3			Fill	Fill of [4]	Pottery fragment, post AD 43	Undated	2	3.80	0.60	0.20	46.66	46.64
OLUP 12	4	TR 3	Survey		Cut	Ditch	-	Undated	2	3.80	0.60	0.20	46.66	46.46
OLUP 12	5	TR 3		S.1	Layer	Topsoil	None	Post-Med	4	20.00	1.80	0.15	47.50	47.30
OLUP 12	6	TR 3		S.1	Layer	Subsoil	None	Undated	3	20.00	1.80	0.60	47.22	47.30
OLUP 12	7	TR 3		S.1	Layer	Natural	None	Natural	1	20.00	1.80	*	46.66	46.56
OLUP 12	8	TR 2			Fill	Fill of [9]	None	Undated	2	0.45	0.50	0.14	46.39	46.38
OLUP 12	9	TR 2	Survey		Cut	Posthole	-	Undated	2	0.45	0.50	0.14	46.39	46.21
OLUP 12	10	TR 2			Fill	Fill of [11]	None	Undated	2	0.90	0.84	0.27	46.58	46.45
OLUP 12	11	TR 2	Survey		Cut	Pit	-	Undated	2	0.90	0.84	0.27	46.58	46.30
OLUP 12	12	TR 2		S.4	Fill	Fill of [13]	None	Undated	2	2.10	0.60	0.25	46.55	46.54
OLUP 12	13	TR 2	Survey	S.4	Cut	Ditch	-	Undated	2	2.10	0.60	0.25	46.55	46.31
OLUP 12	14	TR 2		S.4	Layer	Topsoil	None	Post-Med	4	1.80	20.00	0.45	47.34	47.18
OLUP 12	15	TR 2		S.4	Layer	Subsoil	None	Undated	3	1.80	20.00	0.24	46.89	46.60
OLUP 12	16	TR 2		S.4	Layer	Natural	None	Natural	1	1.80	20.00	*	46.68	46.35
OLUP 12	17	TR 1		S.2	Layer	Topsoil	Pottery, CBM, CTP - C19	Post-Med	4	1.80	20.00	0.24	47.29	47.19
OLUP 12	18	TR 1		S.2	Layer	Subsoil	None	Undated	3	1.80	20.00	0.60	47.05	46.99
OLUP 12	19	TR 1		S.2	Layer	Natural	None	Natural	1	1.80	20.00	*	46.65	46.59
OLUP 12	20	TR 4		S.3	Fill	Fill of [21]	None	Undated	2	1.80	1.10	0.44	46.70	46.65
OLUP 12	21	TR 4	Survey	S.3	Cut	Ditch	-	Undated	2	1.80	1.10	0.44	46.70	46.26
OLUP 12	22	TR 4			Fill	Fill of [23]	None	Undated	2	0.80	0.80	0.27	46.60	46.56
OLUP 12	23	TR 4	Survey		Cut	Pit	-	Undated	2	0.80	0.80	0.27	46.60	46.33
OLUP 12	24	TR 4		S.3	Layer	Subsoil	None	Undated	3	1.80	20.00	0.35	47.02	46.98
OLUP 12	25	TR 4		S.3	Layer	Natural	None	Natural	1	1.80	20.00	*	46.74	46.69

## 14 APPENDIX 4: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-138831**

### Project details

Project name	Hithercroft Estate, Lupton Road, Wallingford, OX10 9WA: Archaeological Evaluation
Short description of the project	Four evaluation trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed building as a pre-determination exercise to assess the archaeological potential of the site. The evaluation identified a number of field boundary ditches and pits. However, due to the lack of temporally diagnostic material the features remain undated. Previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity has identified similar field boundaries dating predominantly to the early Iron Age and it is possible that the ditches recorded during the current evaluation form an extension of this field system.
Project dates	Start: 24-11-2012 End: 03-12-2012
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	OLUP12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	DITCHES Uncertain
Monument type	PITS Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CTP Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	OXFORDSHIRE SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE WALLINGFORD Hithercroft Estate, Lupton Road
Postcode	OX10 9WA
Study area	19703.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 5992 8905 51 -1 51 35 47 N 001 08 05 W Point

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Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 46.59m Max: 46.74m

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Chris Mayo
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Paw Jorgensen
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Optimisation Developments Ltd

#### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Oxfordshire County Museum and Archive Store
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Oxfordshire County Museum and Archive Store
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Oxfordshire County Museum and Archive Store
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Matrices","Plan","Report","Section"

#### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Hithercroft Estate, Lupton Road, Wallingford, OX10 9WA: An Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Jorgensen, P.
Other bibliographic details	R11349
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	Unpublished client report, A4 document with blue covers

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Entered by	Chris Mayo (cmayo@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	19 December 2012

## 15 APPENDIX 5: FINDS ASSESSMENT

By Berni Sudds, Chris Jarrett and Kevin Rielly, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

### 15.1 Introduction

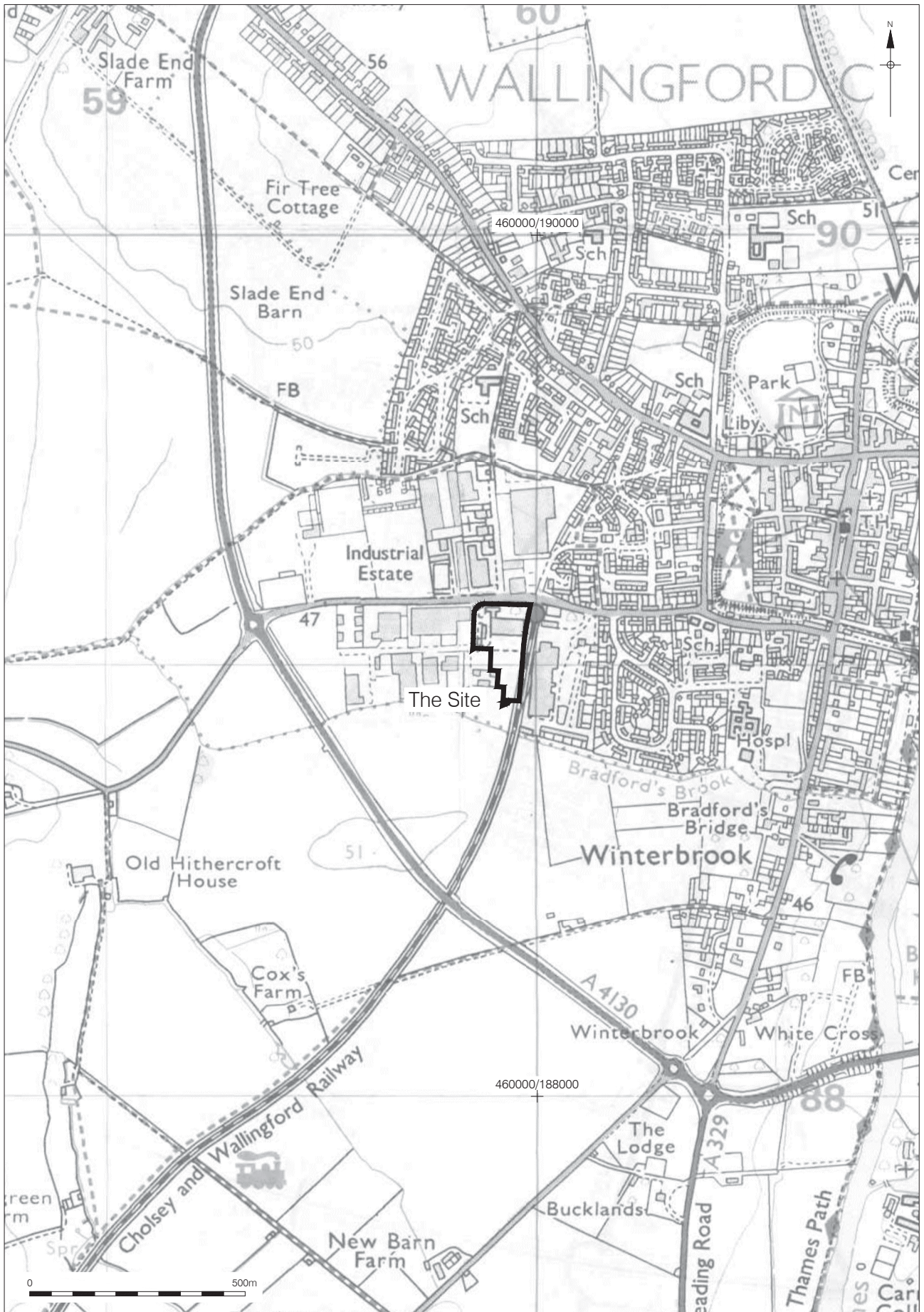
15.1.1 The evaluation at the Hithercroft Estate produced a small assemblage of finds, tabulated below. Some of the fragments are too small to be identified or dated with certainty.

Context	Find Type	Description	Context Date	
3	Pottery	1x very small fine hard oxidised base sherd. Too small to securely identify to type. AD 43+	AD 43 +	
	Animal bone	4x fragments from a single bone. The bone is a cattle metatarsus shaft fragment from a juvenile individual, possibly a veal calf. It has been severely dog chewed at the proximal end but is otherwise in a good state of preservation. No cut marks were noticed.		
17	Burnt flint	1 fragment (pre-historic?)	Late 19 <sup>th</sup> century – 20 <sup>th</sup> century	
	Ceramic building material	1x peg-type roofing tile with coarse moulding sand (medieval).		
	Clay tobacco pipe	1x clay tobacco pipe stem (mid-18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> century)		
	Pottery			2x bone china vessels (one with the edge of a nearly completely faded armorial)
				1x bone china figurine fragment?
				1x refined white earthenware base
		1x transfer-printed ware plate rim (late 19 <sup>th</sup> century +)		

### 15.2 Discussion

15.2.1 The sherd of pottery from fill [3] is too small to firmly identify but may represent part of the base of a Roman fineware vessel.

15.2.2 The topsoil [17] produced finds of possible prehistoric, medieval and modern date. The fragment of burnt flint may derive from the well documented prehistoric activity within the vicinity. Similarly, other finds of medieval date have been made in the locality (Preston 2009; Lewis 2009).

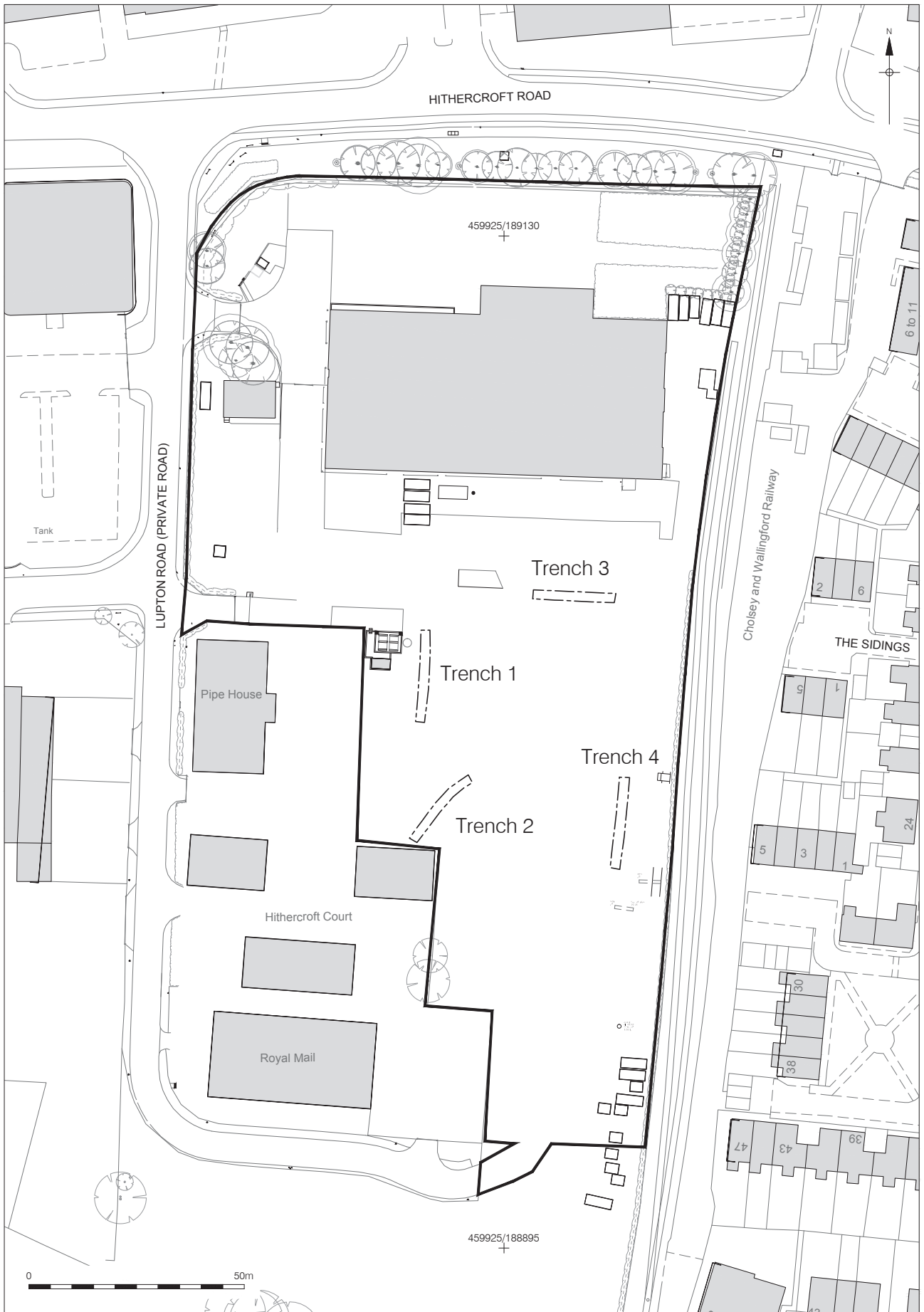


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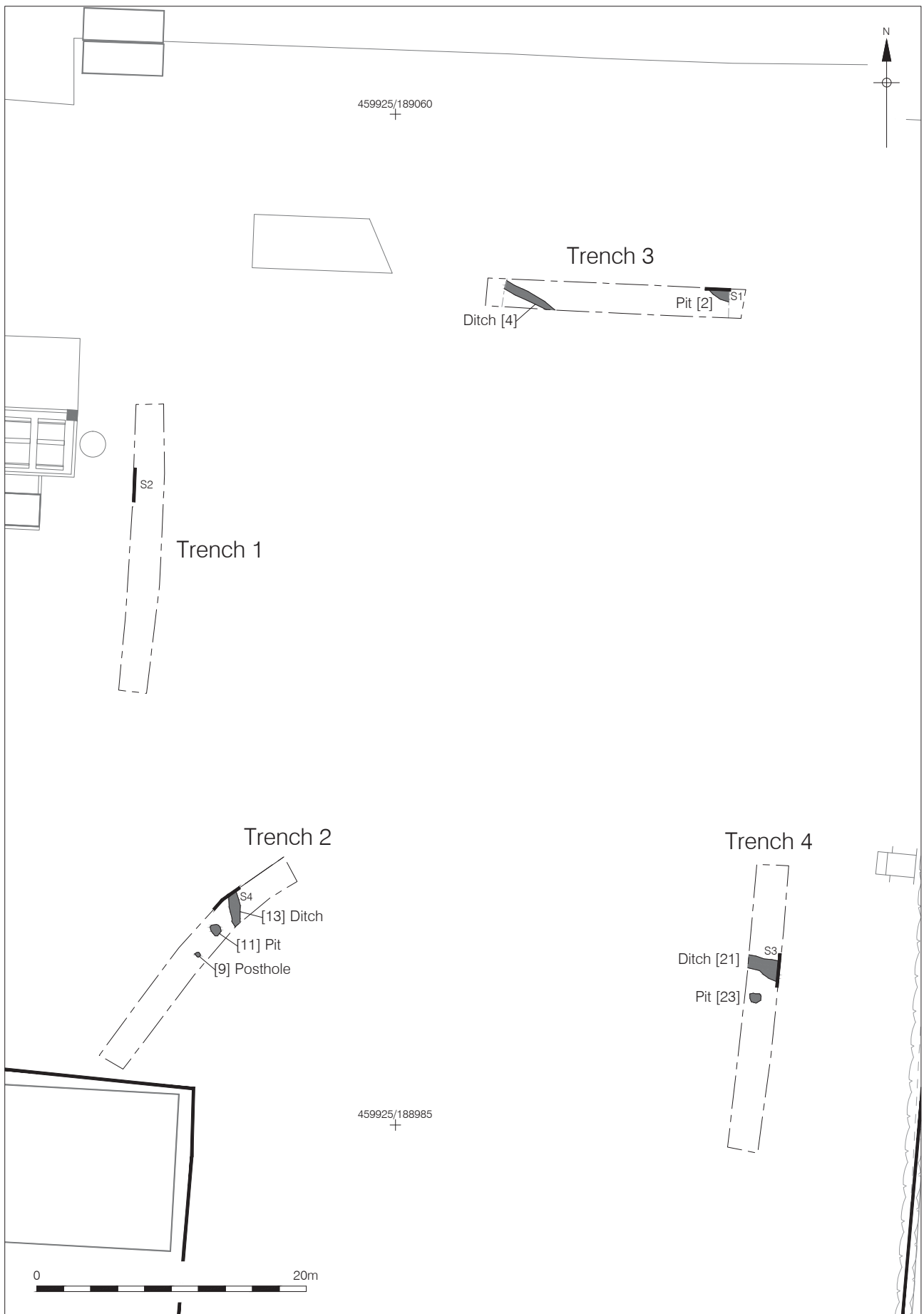
Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:1,250 at A4



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 12/12/12 MR

Figure 2  
 Detailed Site and Trench Location  
 1:1,250 at A4



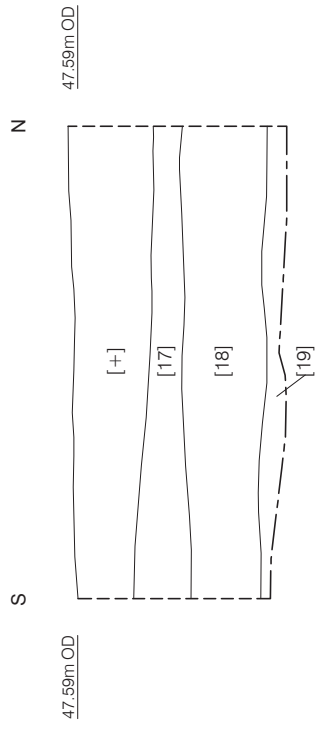


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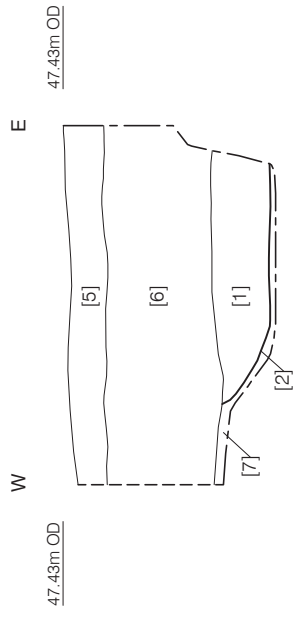
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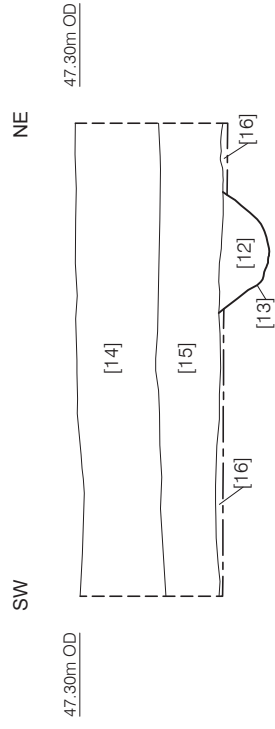
Figure 3  
Plans of Trenches 1 to 4  
1:400 at A4



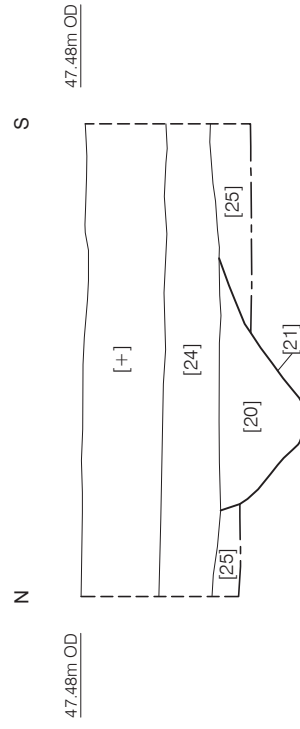
Section 2  
Trench 1  
East Facing



Section 1  
Trench 3  
South Facing



Section 4  
Trench 2  
Southeast Facing



Section 3  
Trench 4  
West Facing



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