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RUSSELL ARMER LTD

LAND ADJACENT TO THE SHEILING, ARKHOLME, LANCASHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

February 2015



DATE ISSUED: February 2015
JOB NUMBER: CP11249
SITE CODE: ARK-A
OASIS REFERENCE: Wardella2-202972
GRID REFERENCE: SD 5818 7200
REPORT NUMBER: RPT-001

LAND ADJACENT TO THE SHEILING, ARKHOLME, LANCASHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

FEBRUARY 2015

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SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology was commissioned by Richard Wood of Russell Armer Ltd to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on land adjacent to 'The Sheiling', Arkholme, Lancashire (centred on NGR SD 5818 7200), in advance of a proposed residential development on the site. The proposed development site is situated within an area of archaeological potential as a Roman road from the fort at Lancaster to the fort at Burrow is thought to pass through Arkholme, and there is Medieval activity close by. As a result of this archaeological potential, Lancashire County Council's Historic Environment Service requested a programme of archaeological evaluation in order to improve the information on the archaeological potential of the proposed development site.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken on 5th February 2015 and involved the excavation of a single trench, at the northern end of the proposed development area.

Although archaeological remains of both prehistoric and Roman date have been found within the general vicinity of the Arkholme, and Medieval activity is well documented, no significant archaeological remains were observed during the present investigation. Therefore, the potential survival of significant archaeological remains within the proposed development site is considered to be low.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (WAA) thank Richard Wood of Russell Armer Ltd for commissioning the project, and for all assistance throughout the work. Wardell Armstrong Archaeology also thank Doug Moir of Lancashire County Council's Historic Environment Service for his help and advice.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Sue Thompson and James Hodgson. The report was written by Sue Thompson and the figures were produced by Adrian Bailey. The report was edited by Richard Newman, Post-Excavation Manager for WAA. The project was managed by Frank Giecco, Technical Director for WAA.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Circumstances of the Project

- 1.1.1 In January 2015 WAA were invited by Richard Wood of Russell Armer Ltd to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on Land adjacent to the Sheiling, Arkhome, Lancashire (centered on NGR SD 5818 7200; Figure 1), in advance of a proposed residential development at the site.
- 1.1.2 The potential for the survival of archaeological remains within the proposed development area led Doug Moir of Lancashire County Council's Historic Environment Service, to request a programme of archaeological investigation in order to better define the archaeological potential of the proposed development site. This is in line with government advice as set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012).
- 1.1.3 This report outlines the evaluation works undertaken on-site, the subsequent programme of post-fieldwork analysis, and the results of this scheme of archaeological works.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A Project Design (PD) was submitted by WAA (Giecco 2014) in response to a request from Richard Wood of Russell Armer Ltd for an archaeological evaluation of the study area. Following acceptance of the WSI by Doug Moir of Lancashire County Council's Historic Environment Service, Wardell Armstrong Archaeology was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. The Project Design was adhered to in full and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 The Field Evaluation

2.2.1 The evaluation consisted of the excavation of a single trench located to the northern end of the proposed development site. The purpose of the evaluation was to establish the nature and extent of below ground archaeological remains within the vicinity. All work was conducted according to the recommendations of the Institute for Archaeologists.

2.2.2 In summary, the main objectives of the field evaluation were:

- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they were observed;
- to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- to recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.

2.2.3 Turf and topsoil was removed by mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. The trial trenches were subsequently cleaned by hand and all features were investigated and recording according to the Wardell Armstrong Archaeology standard procedure as set out in the Excavation Manual (Giecco 2012).

2.2.4 The fieldwork programme was followed by an assessment of the data as set out in 3.4 – 3.6 of the IfA's Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (November 2013).

2.3 The Archive

- 2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the specification, and according to the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011). The archive will be deposited within the Carlisle Archives Centre, with copies of the report sent to the Lancashire Historic Environment Record at Preston, available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier **WAA15, ARK-A, CP 11249**.
- 2.3.2 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology supports the **Online Access** to the **Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS)** project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology as a part of this national project.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location and Geological Context

- 3.1.1 The site is situated to the south west of the historic settlement of Arkholme which lies along Main Street. The land is currently in agricultural use as pasture.
- 3.1.2 The study area is situated on the northern side of the Lune valley and is comprised of rolling farm land dominated by pasture. The study area lies within National Character Area 20: Morecambe Bay Limestones. This is characterised as a lowland landscape with steep sided hills of Lower Carboniferous Limestone, supporting a mixed pastoral and woodland landscape (Natural England 2013, 7).
- 3.1.3 The sedimentary geology consists of rocks of the Millstone Grit Group, mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, formed approximately 313 to 326 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).
- 3.1.4 The drift geology consists primarily of glacial till (Natural England 2013, 11). These deposits were formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

3.2 Historical Context

- 3.2.1 **Introduction:** this is intended only as a brief history of the immediate area around the site based on the Desk Based Assessment previously undertaken for the site (Newman 2015).
- 3.2.2 **Prehistoric:** Evidence of prehistoric activity within the area is limited. An unfinished axe-hammer and a possible net sinker, both of Bronze Age date have been found in the general vicinity of Arkholme (PRN 2888; asset 14).
- 3.2.3 **Roman:** The course of the Roman road from the fort at Lancaster to the fort at Burrow, via Whittington, is considered to pass through Arkholme (PRN 26151; asset 17) but there is no evidence of other Romano-British activity in the near vicinity of the study area.
- 3.2.4 **Early Medieval:** evidence for a settlement of some form during this period is indicated by reference to the place name of *Ergune* in 1086, recorded in the Domesday Book. The prefix is derived from *erghi* meaning a shieling and the suffix from *tun* meaning a place or settlement. Consequently, Arkholme simply means 'shieling place' (Newman 2015).

- 3.2.5 **Medieval:** Although the township was in existence by the late 11th century, there is no definitive evidence to confirm that the settlement was in its current location. Arkholme as a village has the form of a two row medieval settlement. This extends along Main Street from the Bay Horse Inn crossroads to the River Lune, where a motte and bailey castle was positioned in the late 11th or early 12th century (Farrer and Brownbill 1908, 204). Map evidence indicates that enclosures formed from former common field consolidated strips on the north east of the settlement. It is likely that a similar common townfield lay to the south-west, incorporating the site, but the evidence of field shape and pattern is not suggestive of this.
- 3.2.6 **Post-medieval:** Arkholme was a primarily agricultural settlement throughout the post-medieval period, though it seems to have enjoyed a period of wealth in the later 17th century when many of the village buildings were rebuilt, as indicated by relatively numerous buildings of late 17th and 18th century date with dated and initialled doorways. This is reflected in the large number of listed buildings in the village (Newman 2015).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken on 5th February 2015 and involved the excavation of a single trench, located at the northern end of the proposed development area (Figure 2).

4.1.2 The trench was excavated to the level of the natural substrate by a mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. The trench was subsequently cleaned by hand and recorded fully.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 **Evaluation Trench:** The evaluation trench was located towards the northeast corner of the site and aligned northwest to southeast. The trench measured 1.50m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.55m, revealing a firm yellow/ orange clay natural (**101**) containing frequent rounded cobbles, below 0.2m of grey silty clay subsoil (**102**) which was overlaid by 0.25m of dark grey brown silty topsoil (**100**).

4.2.2 The trench was not continuous but divided at the southern end (Figure 2) because of the presence of a disused gas pipeline which has been reused as a fibre-optic cable duct. A total of 30m in length was excavated (Plate 1). The trench was also located to take account of a sewer running east-west across the site associated with the septic tank belonging to The Sheiling.

4.2.3 The north eastern area of the field is the lowest point, and drainage is poor both because of the lie of the land, and as a consequence disruption to the field drainage system after the residential development of land immediately to the east.

4.2.4 The line of a possible field wall was seen mid trench, located just below the topsoil. This comprised of poorly sorted sandstone cobbles and fragments up to 0.20m, and also included lumps of concrete an average of 0.30m. Local residents reported that during earlier ground investigations, large stones were left near the surface causing damage to a ride on grass cutter, and it is possible that these stones were dumped at this time.



Plate 1: Trench looking North West



Plate 2: Possible wall base looking west

4.3 Discussion

- 4.3.1 An evaluation trench was excavated in the north eastern corner of the proposed development area. The trench was located in the lowest point of the field, which was

also consequently the wettest point of the field; standing water was observed during the excavation of the trench. Land drains were at both ends of the trench, and the northwest portion of trench filled with water quickly after excavation. A possible wall base was seen mid trench containing modern concrete lumps, and was located just below the turf.

4.3.2 With the exception of land drains, no other features were observed within the evaluation trench. No archaeological remains were encountered during the evaluation.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the 5th February 2015 and involved the excavation of a single trench, located to the northeast of the proposed development area. A possible wall base dates to the post-medieval to modern period.
- 5.1.2 Although the route of the Roman road from Lancaster to Burrow is considered to run through Arkholme, no trace of this, or any other Roman activity was revealed during the evaluation. No significant archaeological remains were observed during the present investigation. Therefore, the potential survival of significant archaeological remains within the proposed development site is considered to be low.

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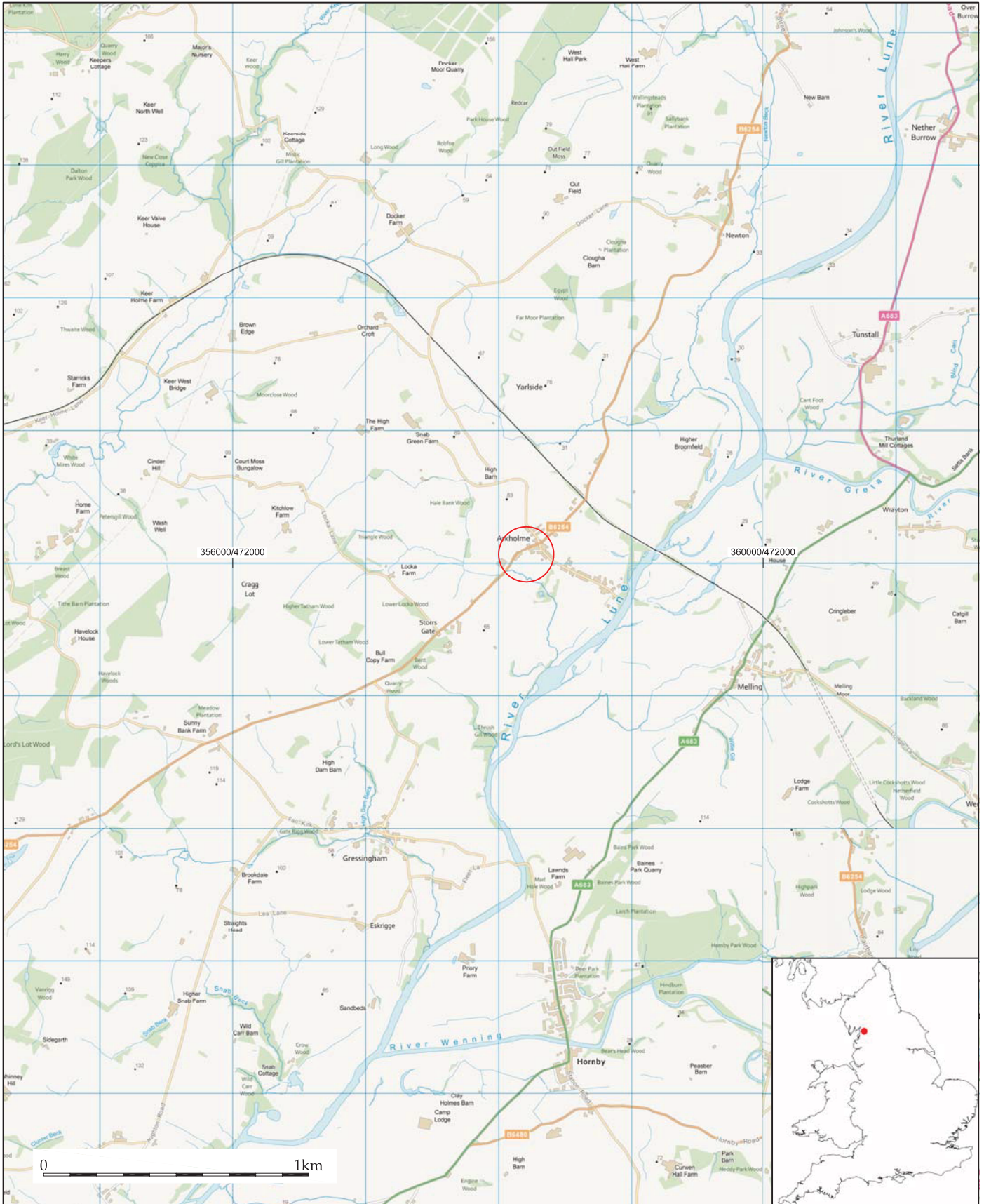
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<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

APPENDIX 1: FIGURES






 <p>Wardell Armstrong Archaeology 2015</p>	<p>PROJECT: Land adjacent to the Shieling, Arkholme, Lancashire</p> <p>SCALE: 1:40,000 at A4</p> <p>REPORT No: CP11249</p> <p>CLIENT: Russell Armer Ltd</p> <p>DRAWN BY: AB</p> <p>DATE: February 2015</p> <p>FIGURE: 1</p>	<p>KEY:</p> <p> Site location</p>	 <p>Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100019512</p>
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Figure 1: Site location.

PROJECT:

Land adjacent to the Shieling,
Arkholme, Lancashire

CLIENT:

Russell Armer Ltd

SCALE: 1:500 at A4

DRAWN BY: AB

DATE: February 2015

KEY:

Site boundary
 Evaluation trench

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REPORT No:

CP11249

FIGURE:

2

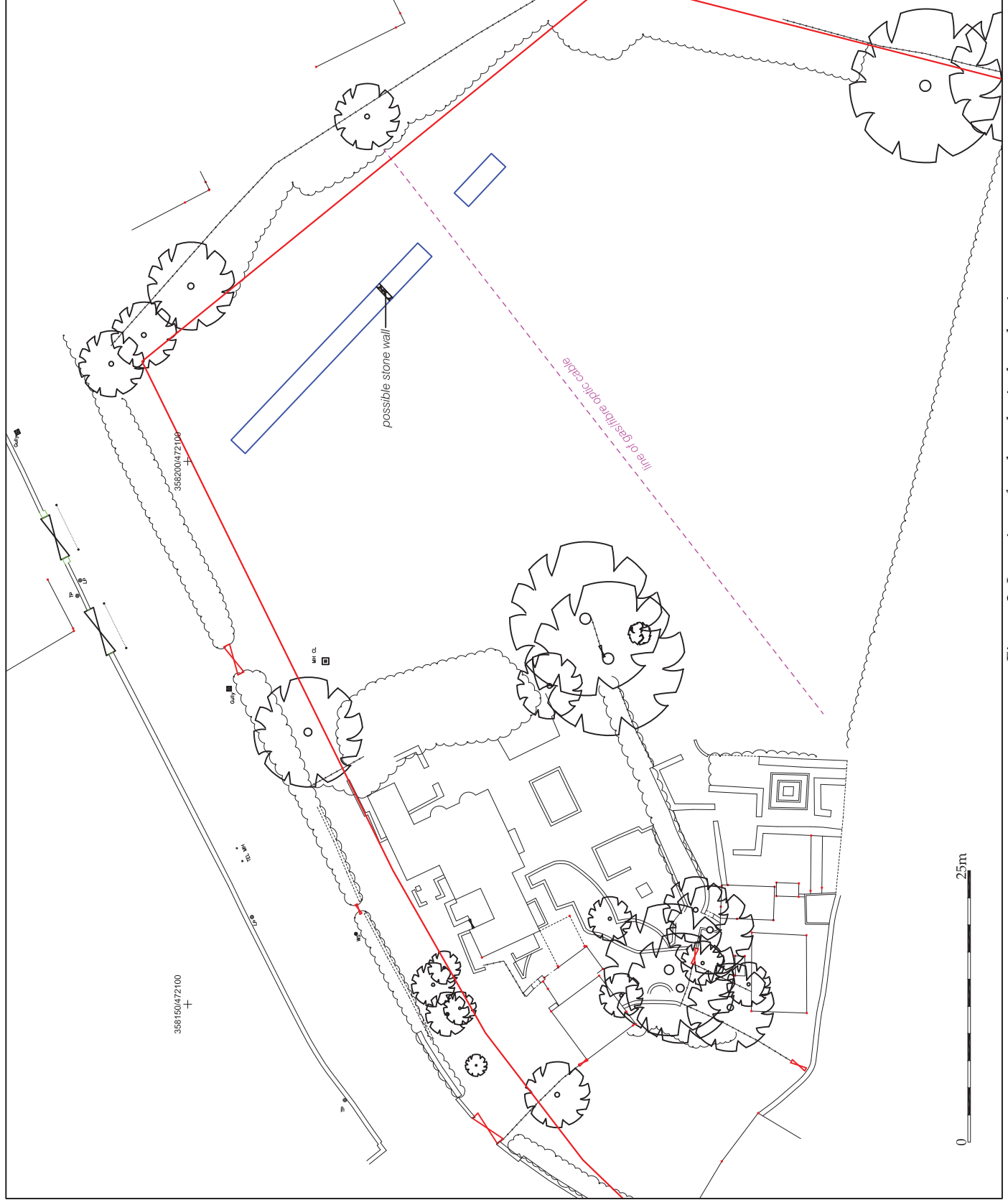


Figure 2: Location of archaeological evaluation.

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