



# Thames Valley Science Park Car Park University of Reading

Strip, Map and Sample Report



Planning Ref: tbc  
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March 2017



**Thames Valley Science Park Car Park  
University of Reading**

**Strip, Map and Sample Report**

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**WA ref no. 107623.03**



## Quality Assurance

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<b>Planning Application Ref.</b>		<b>Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)</b>	473680 169140		

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\* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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# Thames Valley Science Park Car Park University of Reading

## Strip, Map and Sample Report

### Contents

Summary .....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Project background .....	1
1.2 The Site.....	1
<b>2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3 AIMS &amp; OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1 General .....	2
<b>4 METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>2</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	2
4.2 Methodology.....	3
<b>5 RESULTS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
5.1 Strip, Map and Sample.....	3
5.2 Watching Brief.....	3
<b>6 DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7 STORAGE AND CURATION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
7.1 Museum .....	4
7.2 Archive.....	4
7.3 Discard policy.....	4
7.4 Security Copy.....	4
7.5 Copyright.....	5
<b>8 REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>9 APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
9.1 OASIS form.....	7

### Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan

### Plates

Plate 1: General view of site, view from south-west

Plate 2: General view of site, view from south-west



- Plate 3: SSE facing representative section showing formation levels
- Plate 4: SSE facing representative section, Test Pit 1
- Plate 5: South-west facing representative section, Test Pit 6
- Plate 6: North-west facing representative section, Test Pit 13
- Plate 7: South-east facing representative section, Test Pit 20



# Thames Valley Science Park Car Park University of Reading

## Strip, Map and Sample Report

### Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff on behalf of the University of Reading to undertake Strip, Map and Sample on land north-east of the village of Shinfield, Berkshire. The Site has been proposed for the construction of a new research and development known as the Thames Valley Science Park. Archaeological investigation was required in advance of the construction of a car park located on the north-western edge of the development. The fieldwork was undertaken intermittently between 25 October and 16 December 2016.

Due to communication issues, the approved methodology of Strip, Map and Record was not adhered to. Prior to the initial visit of a monitoring archaeologist, much of the topsoil had been removed from site by a bulldozer. A total of 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> were then stripped to the agreed methodology. The investigation revealed that the area had been previously stripped and truncated with the overlying stratigraphic sequence being made up of a considerable thickness of made ground. The natural gravel deposits were observed to be heavily truncated across the site.

A further phase of archaeological monitoring was undertaken on the eastern side of the site, consisting of topsoil stripping and the excavation of 17 test pits to determine the extent of the disturbance. An identical sequence of substantial made ground deposits over truncated in situ gravel was observed throughout, with made ground observed in all of the test pits. The level of disturbance was such that there can be confidence that no archaeological features or deposits were lost due to the alteration to the methodology.



# **Thames Valley Science Park Car Park University of Reading**

## **Strip, Map and Sample Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Paul McAteer of WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff for commissioning the work, on behalf of the University of Reading, and his assistance and guidance during the course of the project is gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also extended to Ellie Leary, Archaeology Officer of Berkshire Archaeology, who approved the WSI and monitored the project on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Darryl Freer and Rachel Williams. This report was compiled by Rachel Williams and Gareth Chaffey. Report illustrations were prepared by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Andy Crockett.



# Thames Valley Science Park Car Park University of Reading

## Strip, Map and Sample Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff on behalf of the University of Reading (hereafter the 'Client') to undertake Strip, Map and Sample on land north-east of the village of Shinfield, Berkshire, National Grid Reference (NGR) 473680 169140 (hereafter the 'Site') (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The Site has been proposed for the construction of a new research and development space known as the Thames Valley Science Park (**Figure 1**). This stage forms part of the proposed University of Reading Science and Innovation Park. The overarching development plan is to be phased over a 20-25-year period and will ultimately encompass approximately 20 ha between Cutbush Lane and the M4 and will be serviced by and intersect with the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road (planning ref: F/2010/1428). Specifically, this phase of work covered ground clearance and/or spoil management operations in advance of construction of the TVSP car park, located on the north-west edge of the development, adjacent to the M4 motorway.

1.1.3 Berkshire Archaeology, acting as an archaeological advisor to Wokingham Borough Council, requested that a programme of Strip, Map and Sample be undertaken in order to mitigate the impact of the car park construction on any buried archaeological remains.

1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (WA 2016) outlining the methodologies and standards employed by WA in order to undertake the archaeological Strip, Map and Sample was submitted to, and approved by, the Client and the Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology prior to fieldwork commencing. The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard Guidance for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014).

1.1.5 The fieldwork was undertaken intermittently between 25 October and 16 December 2016.

#### 1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site is located north-east of the village of Shinfield in Berkshire and between it and the M4 where it skirts the southern edge of Reading. The Site consists of arable fields north-east of the lane between Cutbush House and Lane End Farm. Directly to the south lies an existing water reservoir. The north-west extent of the site borders with the M4 motorway.

1.2.2 The topography of the Site slopes down south east from the M4 towards the floodplain of the River Lodden. The western end of the Site lies at approximately 65 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) sloping to approximately 46 m aOD at the eastern extent.





- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the Site is London Clay Formation Clay, Silt and Sand with overlying River Terrace Sand and Gravel deposits to the north-west and south-east of the Site (British Geological Survey).

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1.1 An archaeological Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2008) has been undertaken for the Site and a geophysical gradiometer survey (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2008) was carried out along the part of the proposed access route to the development located to the south west of the Site. The assessment and the survey did not identify any features or sites of archaeological importance within the Site.
- 2.1.2 In 2015, WA carried out further geophysical survey (WA 2015a) of land immediately to the south and south east of the proposed car park, followed by a trial trench evaluation (WA 2015b) to test both geophysical anomalies (of seemingly limited potential) and apparent blank areas. The evaluation revealed no archaeological remains of significance.
- 2.1.3 In 2016, to inform a detailed planning application for the second phase development of the site as a Science and Innovation Park, WA were commissioned to produce a Heritage Assessment for the site (WA 2016). The Heritage Assessment concluded that there is an archaeological interest within the site. This was defined as the potential for the presence of buried archaeological remains, in particular relating to Romano-British, post-medieval and medieval activity.

## **3 AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

### **3.1 General**

- 3.1.1 As defined in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; WA 2016), the general aims and objectives of the archaeological works were to:
- *clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains;*
  - *identify, within the constraints of the investigation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site;*
  - *investigate, sample and record buried remains in sufficient detail to achieve preservation by record; and*
  - *produce a report which will present the results of the fieldwork.*

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

- 4.1.1 The approved WSI detailed the methodology to be adhered to during site clearance and/or spoil management operations associated with the proposed car park at TVSP, as part of the Phase 2 development of the Site.
- 4.1.2 However, due to communication issues involving all parties concerned, the approved methodology was not adhered to. Upon the first monitoring visit of the attending archaeologist, it was noted that much of the Site had already undergone extensive topsoil stripping without the presence of an observing archaeologist. Furthermore, much of the stripping had been undertaken by a bulldozer rather than the tracked excavator employing a toothless ditching bucket, as specified in the WSI (WA 2016).



4.1.3 As a result, the methodology of Strip, Map and Sample for the entire Site was reduced to archaeological monitoring. Some areas with remnant topsoil remained, allowing for the partial Strip, Map and Sample to the methodology specified in the WSI (WA 2016).

4.1.4 Subsequent phases of archaeological monitoring were also required on the eastern side of the Site during a second phase.

## 4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Upon the arrival of an attending archaeologist, the archaeological work commenced in the south-western corner of the Site with continuous archaeological monitoring during topsoil stripping and overburden removal. Stripping was undertaken using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless blade bucket. From this point, all machining was supervised by WA in order to achieve the required levels and quality of strip at which archaeological features or deposits may be expected to be revealed. Stripping was carried out in a manner so as to prevent the loss (or the potential loss) of archaeology through adverse conditions (primarily by rutting and compaction).

4.2.2 All archaeological deposits were recorded using WA's *pro forma* recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated archaeological features and deposits will be compiled. This will include both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections), and with reference to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels will be calculated and plans/sections will be annotated with OD heights.

4.2.3 Archaeological features and deposits will be surveyed using GPS and tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum (Newlyn).

4.2.4 A photographic record will be maintained during the archaeological investigations using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images will be subject to managed quality control and curation processes which will embed appropriate metadata within the image and ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

## 5 RESULTS

### 5.1 Strip, Map and Sample

5.1.1 A total of two areas were stripped on the western side of the Site under the Strip, Map and Sample methodology (**Figure 1**), totalling 1,200 m<sup>2</sup>. The work showed that the area had previously been extensively stripped, to a depth which truncated the natural gravel deposits. The overlying stratigraphic sequence was recorded to be similar in both areas, namely a considerable thickness of made ground approximately 0.80 m in depth. Modern debris was found to be impressed into the upper surface of the surviving in situ gravel.

5.1.2 No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

### 5.2 Watching Brief

5.2.1 An archaeological watching brief of a topsoil strip was undertaken on the eastern side of the Site (**Figure 1**), specifically a 'L'-shaped area measuring 74 m by 62 m. The purpose of the strip was to accommodate surplus topsoil derived from a neighbouring development. The monitoring was deemed necessary due to plant movement over an area of archaeological potential. Following the topsoil strip, a methodology was devised to excavate a total of 17 test pits across the area to define to levels of surviving subsoil and/ or surviving archaeological deposits.



5.2.2 The test pits suggested that the Site had been previously stripped, to a depth which had truncated the natural gravel deposits. Beneath the modern ploughsoils, made ground deposits were identified across the area to a depth of up to 0.73 m and contained redeposited clays and gravels.

5.2.3 No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

6.1.1 Modern made ground was recorded covering all areas which were archaeologically investigated. Significant truncation was also noted and given the location of the M4 motorway to the north, was possibly associated with the construction of the motorway, whether to create an easement, for the construction of a compound or even as a borrow pit.

6.1.2 Despite the initial alteration to methodology as per the WSI (WA 2016), the levels of truncation recorded suggested that the potential for the recording of undisturbed archaeological features or deposits was very low.

## **7 STORAGE AND CURATION**

### **7.1 Museum**

7.1.1 No appropriate museum has as yet been identified to accept the resulting project archive. The archive will therefore be curated at the offices of WA in Salisbury under the WA Project Number **107623** or subsequent numbers as issued to the phased excavations, until such time as the situation is resolved. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

### **7.2 Archive**

7.2.1 On completion of the report a cross-referenced and internally consistent archive will be produced. The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; Brown 2011; ADS 2013; ClfA 2014d).

7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared.

### **7.3 Discard policy**

7.3.1 WA follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

7.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2011).

### **7.4 Security Copy**

7.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



## 7.5 Copyright

- 7.5.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by WA under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.

## 8 REFERENCES

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**9 APPENDICES**

**9.1 OASIS form**

# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

## Printable version

OASIS ID: wessexar1-277280

### Project details

Project name	Thames Valley Science Park Car Park
Short description of the project	Strip, Map and Sample, followed by archaeological watching brief, associated with the construction of the new TVSP car park.
Project dates	Start: 25-10-2016 End: 16-12-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	107623 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 2 - Operations to a depth less than 0.25m
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Open-area excavation","Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	BERKSHIRE WOKINGHAM SHINFIELD Thames Valley Science Park Car Park
Postcode	RG29BS
Study area	1200 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 73662 69103 51.415658383851 -0.940621579351 51 24 56 N 000 56 26 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 45m Max: 64m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Berkshire Archaeology
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	A Crockett
Project supervisor	Darryl Freer
Type of sponsor/funding body	University
Name of sponsor/funding body	University of Reading

## Project archives

Physical Contents	"other"
Digital Archive recipient	Berkshire Archaeology HER
Digital Archive ID	107623
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"GIS", "Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Berkshire Archaeology HER
Paper Archive ID	107623
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Diary", "Drawing", "Plan", "Report"

## Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Thames Valley Science Park car park, University of Reading: Strip, Map and Sample Report
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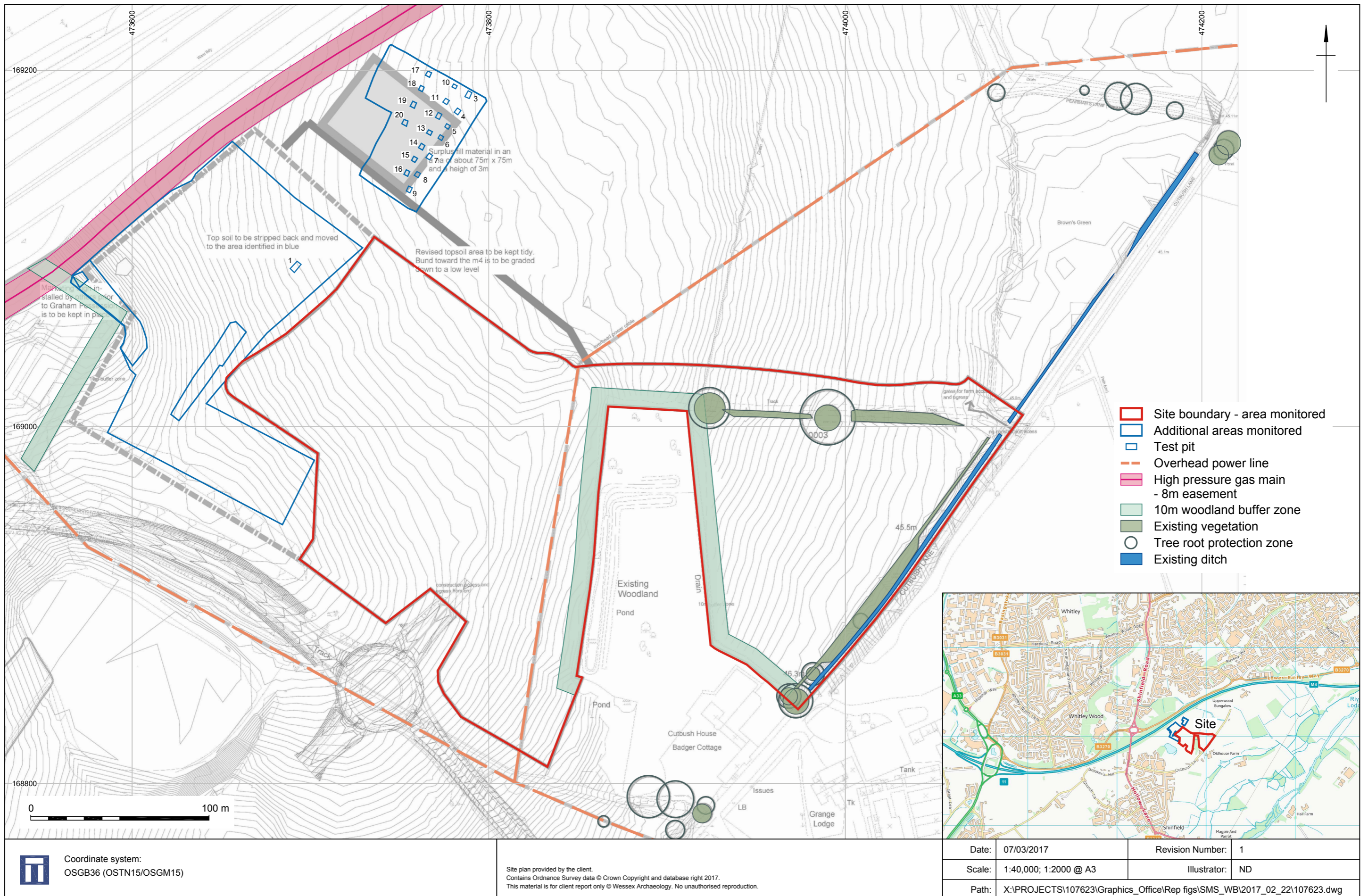
# OASIS:

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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: General view of site, view from south-west



Plate 2: General view of site, view from south-west


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Plate 3: South-south-east facing representative section showing formation levels



Plate 4: South-south-east facing representative section, Test Pit 1


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Plate 5: South-west facing representative section, Test Pit 6



Plate 6: North-west facing representative section, Test Pit 13



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Plate 7: South-east facing representative section, Test Pit 20

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