

**LAND AT LONG REACH,
HARWELL,
OXFORDSHIRE.**

NGR: 450501.189445 (centred)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

December 2019
Report No. 1341



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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SUMMARY

On the 10th and 11th December 2019 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation on land at Long Reach, Harwell, Oxfordshire (NGR: 450501.189445 - centred). The project was commissioned by Clare Draper of Jadit Ltd.

The works comprised the excavation of six archaeological evaluation trenches, within an area of proposed development.

The evaluation identified natural clay marl substrates overlaid by a clay silt subsoil, which was in turn sealed by a clay silt topsoil. A total of four furrows were present in the southern part of the site. No other archaeological features or finds were present within the evaluation trenches and, therefore, the site is considered to be of low archaeological potential.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between AD 1066 and AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms, this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43, traditionally sub-divided into; *Palaeolithic* – c. 500,000 BC to c. 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – c. 12,000 BC to c. 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – c. 2,000 BC to c. 800 BC; *Iron Age* – c. 800 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology on the 10th and 11th December 2019, on land at Long Reach, Harwell, Oxfordshire (NGR: 450501.189445 - centred). The project was commissioned by Clare Draper of Jadit Ltd.
- 1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2019) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2014).
- 1.3 The CIfA code of conduct was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Outline planning permission has been granted for the demolition of an existing house, followed by the construction of up to 19 dwellings, with associated car parking, turning, public open space, landscaping and access arrangements (Planning Ref: **P17/V0348/O**). The planning permission was subject to conditions requiring an archaeological evaluation and possible mitigation.
- 2.2 The site is bounded to the north by Didcot Road (B4493), to the northeast and southeast by a new residential development and to the southwest by an agricultural field. It is situated on generally flat land, between approximately 77 – 80m AOD, which, at the time of the fieldwork, comprised the grounds associated with the existing house. The underlying geology is recorded as *Upper Greensand Formation* - calcareous sandstone and siltstone (BGS Online Viewer).
- 2.3 The proposed development is located within the Upper Thames Valley, which is an area of known archaeological potential. Archaeological investigations in 2002 by Cotswold Archaeology, to the north and east of the site for the Great Western Park development, uncovered archaeological features in the form of ditches, pits and postholes, as well as occasional buried soil horizons, dating to the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval/Post-medieval periods. Directly north of Zulu Farm, approximately 150m northwest of the site, the work uncovered a Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British settlement/industrial site. This represented the closest significant archaeology to the study area.
- 2.4 Further archaeological excavation by TVAS in 2016, approximately 800m to the west of the site, at Kilnwood, revealed a number of archaeological features dating to the Roman period, along with four inhumations of Middle Saxon date, as well as a few Prehistoric struck flints.
- 2.5 The site therefore contained the potential for archaeological features and deposits, predominately dating to the Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods. This did not prejudice the works against evidence relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits, in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn, this would allow reasonable planning/mitigation decisions to be taken, regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the development.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) to attempt to characterize the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
 - iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;
 - iv) to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable that archaeological implications of the proposed development to be assessed;
 - v) to inform formulation of a strategy to avoid, or mitigate, impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 A total of six evaluation trenches were excavated within the site, as shown in Figure 2. Trench 1 was proposed to be 30m in length, however, due to the presence of a gas pipe, as well as on-site space constraints, it was only possible to excavate the trench to a length of 18m. Trench 3 was slightly shorter than proposed due to space constraints. The trenches, as dug, represented just under 3% of the proposed development area.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of archaeological remains or the underlying natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a 360° tracked mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Features and spoil tips were visually scanned for finds.
- 4.3 Where potential archaeological features were present, these were subjected to appropriate levels of investigation. All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the approved WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

4.3.1 Furrows were manually investigated and recorded in plan only.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1 (18m long by 1.6m wide)

5.1.1 The natural substrates, which consisted of light grey beige clay marl, were present at an average depth of 0.61m (average 79.25m AOD) below the Modern ground surface. These were sealed by a grey brown soft clay silt subsoil (102), average 0.37m thick, which was, in turn, overlaid by a dark brown soft clay silt topsoil (101), average 0.24m thick. There were no archaeological features or finds present within the evaluation trench.

5.2 Trench 2 (11m long by 1.6m wide)

5.2.1 The natural deposits, which comprised light grey beige clay marl, were present at an average depth of 0.70m (average 79.03m AOD) below the Modern ground surface. These were sealed by a grey brown soft clay silt subsoil (202), average 0.40m thick, which was, in turn, overlaid by a dark brown soft clay silt topsoil (201), average 0.30m thick. There were no archaeological features or finds present within the evaluation trench.

5.3 Trench 3 (27m long by 1.6m wide)

5.3.1 The natural substrates, which consisted of light grey beige clay marl, were present at an average depth of 0.48m (average 77.95m AOD) below the Modern ground surface. These were sealed by a grey brown soft clay silt subsoil (302), average 0.29m thick, which was, in turn, overlaid by a dark brown soft clay silt topsoil (301), average 0.19m thick. There were no significant archaeological features or finds present within the evaluation trench.

5.3.2 A single northwest – southeast aligned furrow was present at the base of the trench, cut into the top of the natural deposits.

5.4 Trench 4 (20.5m long by 1.6m wide)

5.4.1 The natural substrates, which consisted of light grey beige clay marl, were present at an average depth of 0.58m (average 77.84m AOD) below the Modern ground surface. These were sealed by a grey brown soft clay silt subsoil (402), average 0.40m thick, which was, in turn, overlaid by a dark brown soft clay silt topsoil (401), average 0.18m thick. There were no archaeological features or finds present within the evaluation trench.

5.5 Trench 5 (32m long by 1.6m wide)

5.5.1 The natural deposits, which comprised light grey beige clay marl, were present at an average depth of 0.56m (average 77.34m AOD) below the Modern

ground surface. These were sealed by a grey brown soft clay silt subsoil (502), average 0.36m thick, which was, in turn, overlaid by a dark brown soft clay silt topsoil (501), average 0.20m thick. There were no significant archaeological features or finds present within the evaluation trench.

- 5.5.2 A total of two northwest – southeast aligned furrows were present at the base of the trench, cut into the top of the natural deposits. A small amount of Post-medieval/Modern CBM was recovered from one of the furrow fills.

5.6 Trench 6 (31m long by 1.6m wide)

- 5.6.1 The natural substrates, which consisted of light grey beige clay marl, were present at an average depth of 0.43m (average 77.26m AOD) below the Modern ground surface. These were intermittently overlaid by a grey brown soft clay silt subsoil (602), average 0.20m thick, which was, in turn, overlaid by a dark brown soft clay silt topsoil (601), average 0.23m thick. There were no significant archaeological features or finds present within the evaluation trench.

- 5.6.2 A single northwest – southeast aligned furrow was present at the base of the trench, cut into the top of the natural deposits.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The stratigraphic sequence was relatively uniform across the site, with natural clay marl substrates overlaid by a clay silt subsoil, which was in turn sealed by a clay silt topsoil. Former ploughing was attested to in the southern part of the site by the present of four furrows. There was no evidence for any other significant disturbance within the trenches.

- 6.2 The lack of archaeological features within the evaluation trenches, along with a complete absence of pre-Post-medieval/Modern artefacts, indicated that the site contains a low potential for archaeological remains to be present.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The evaluation has indicated that the site has a low archaeological potential.
- 7.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology but will be deposited in due course with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service, under Accession Number OXCMS:2019.144. A digital report/archive will also be submitted to OASIS/ADS. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal.

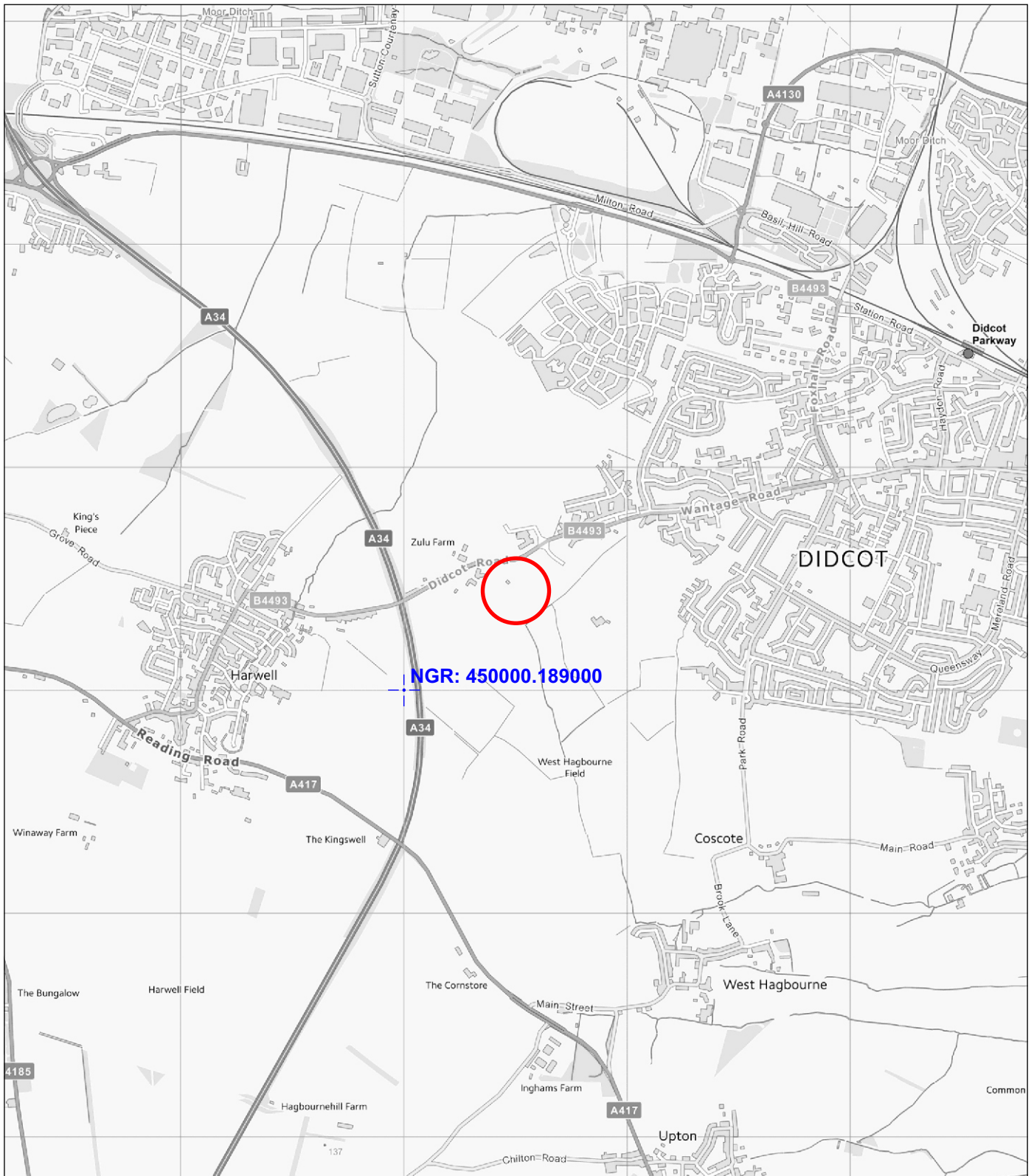
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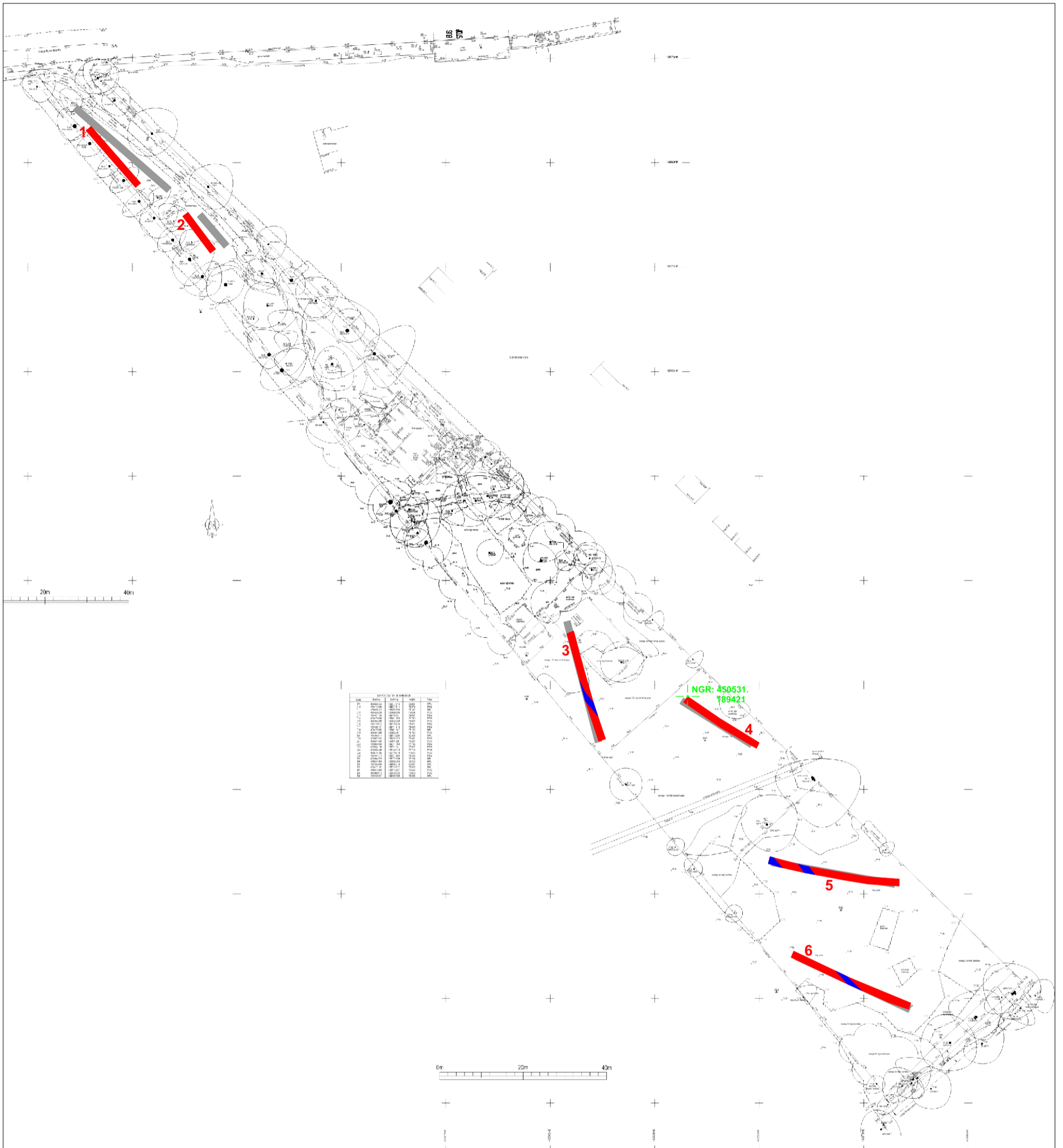
9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Ordnance Survey Licence 100015722
Site Code: LHO19
Accession Code: OXCMS:2019.144

FIGURE 1: Site Location



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N



0m 40m

— = PROPOSED TRENCH LOCATION
 — = TRENCH AS DUG
 — = FURROW

FIGURE 2: Site Plan