

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of
Bellway Homes Ltd

Sniperley Park
Framwellgate Moor
Durham

archaeological evaluation

report 5643
November 2021

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1. Summary

The project

1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation conducted in advance of a proposed development at Sniperley Park, Durham. The works comprised the excavation of 55 trial trenches.

1.2 The works were commissioned by Bellway Homes Ltd and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

Results

1.3 No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified during the works.

Recommendations

1.4 No further scheme of archaeological works is recommended in relation to this development.

2. Project background

Location (Figure 1)

- 2.1 The proposed development area (PDA) was located at Sniperley Park, Framwellgate Moor, Durham (NGR centre: NZ 2555 4457). To the north and north-east was farmland, to the north-west was Lanchester Road Hospital, to the south was Durham Fire Service HQ and Sniperley Park and Ride, to the south-west was the A691 road, and to the west was Sniperley Hall.

Development proposal

- 2.2 The area is proposed for residential development.

Objectives

- 2.3 The objectives were to:
- record where feasible the depth, extent, character and date of archaeological features or deposits encountered.
 - provide information about the archaeological resource within the area of the site (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality).
 - create a record of the archaeological resource which will be impacted upon as a result of the proposed development.
 - interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional and national archaeological context.

Research Objectives

- 2.4 The regional research framework (Petts & Gerrard 2006) contains an agenda for archaeological research in the region. The scheme of works was designed to address agenda items MDi: Later medieval settlement and MDii: Later medieval landscape.

Specification

- 2.5 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation provided by Pegasus Group and approved by the planning authority.

Dates

- 2.6 Fieldwork was undertaken between 11th October and 11th November 2021. This report was prepared for November 2021.

Personnel

- 2.7 Fieldwork was conducted by Daniel Adamson, Mark Randerson, Meghan McCarthy, Jeffrey Lowrey and Hannah Woodrow (supervisor). This report was prepared by Hannah Woodrow, with illustrations by David Graham. The Project Manager was Matthew Claydon.

Archive/OASIS

- 2.8 The site code is DSP21, for Durham Sniperley Park 2021. The archive is currently held by Archaeological Services Durham University and will be transferred to the Museum of Archaeology Collections Resource Centre in due course. Archaeological Services Durham University is registered with the Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations project (OASIS). The OASIS ID number for this project is archaeol3-502886.

3. Landuse, topography and geology

- 3.1 At the time of this evaluation, the proposed development area comprised of five arable fields of crop.
- 3.2 The area undulated gently from approximately 120m OD in the centre to 114m OD in the north-west and 111m OD in the south-east and south-west.
- 3.3 The underlying solid geology of the area comprises Carboniferous mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation, which are overlain by Devensian till.

4. Historical and archaeological background

Previous archaeological works

- 4.1 An Environmental Statement is being prepared for this application which will include a chapter on Cultural Heritage, supported by a technical baseline report (Pegasus Group, forthcoming).
- 4.2 A detailed desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and subsequent trial-trench evaluation was conducted for the fire station development (immediately south-west of the PDA in 2013/14 (PCA 2013a; 2013b; Archaeological Services 2014). The geophysical survey identified anomalies related to agricultural practices and a small number of possible archaeological features. Subsequent trial trench evaluation recorded field drains and no features of archaeological interest.
- 4.3 Cartographic and other historical sources have been consulted, along with records of previous archaeological interventions and the Historic Environment Record (HER). HER references are given in brackets in the text below. There is no evidence of any development within the fields of the PDA, with the exception of Sniperley Farm. Sometime between the 1896 and 1920 Ordnance Survey (OS) editions a quarry was dug and subsequently abandoned in the eastern corner of the PDA. The only other change evident within the PDA on map regression is the removal of a field boundary across Areas 1 and 2 and a former copse of trees in the centre of Area 2.
- 4.4 The entirety of the PDA lies within parkland associated with Sniperley Hall, which is included in the forthcoming list of Historic Parks, Gardens and Designed Landscapes of Local Interest compiled by Durham County Council. Sniperley Hall itself dates to the 19th century.
- 4.5 There is no evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity within the PDA. Aerial photographs have identified a cropmark (H2934) approximately 500m to the north of the PDA. A rich organic black soil, unusual for the area (H60686), was also uncovered during archaeological evaluation of the Durham Western Bypass. Though the dates of these are unknown, it is possible that they could be prehistoric. This may indicate that the wider area was exploited in later prehistory and the Romano-British period; certainly there is evidence for this across County Durham. A resource relating to this period may therefore survive within the PDA.
- 4.6 The PDA lies beyond the edges of the medieval settlements around Durham City and it is probable that the area was utilised as agricultural land in the medieval and post-medieval periods. Sniperley Farm (H49039) is not shown on an 1809 plan of

Sniperley Hall, but is shown on the 1839 title map of Whitton Gilbert. Further evidence of the agricultural exploitation of the PDA is provided in the form of aerial photographic evidence of ridge and furrow (H68492; H68493), noted during the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) survey of County Durham.

5. The evaluation trenches

Introduction

- 5.1 A total of 55 trenches (42 x 50m; 13 x 30m) were excavated across the site. The 50m trenches were to sample blank areas of the geophysical survey, the 30m trenches were to target specific features detected in the survey. All the trenches were excavated using a machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Context data is summarised in Table 1.1, with trench data in Table 1.2. Trenches where features or deposits were identified are summarised below.

Trench 5

- 5.2 This trench (Photo 1) was located in the north of the site and overlay a known former field boundary. Natural subsoil, an orange-yellow sandy clay [3], was identified at a depth of 0.3m (116.7m OD). At the south-west end of the trench the former field boundary ditch (0.7m wide) was cut into this, filled with a brown silty loam. Four field drains were also identified, including one cut along the boundary ditch. These were overlain by subsoil [2: 0.15m deep], a dark brown sandy silty clay loam. Over this was a very dark brown clay loam topsoil [1: 0.15m deep].

Trench 17

- 5.3 This trench (Photo 2) was located over a geomagnetic anomaly, and the former field boundary recorded in trench 5. Natural subsoil, an orange-yellow sandy clay [3], was identified at a depth of 0.3m to 0.5m (119.7m-120.5m OD). The former field boundary was recorded towards the east end of the trench. A field drain was also identified aligned north-east/south-west at the east end. Above these was subsoil [2: 0.15m to 0.3m deep], which thickened at the west end, corresponding with the detected anomaly. Over the subsoil was topsoil [1: 0.15m to 0.2m deep].

Trench 24

- 5.4 This trench (Photo 3) was also located over the former field boundary. Natural subsoil, a yellow sandy clay [3], was identified at a depth of 0.45m to 0.5m (117.5m OD). The field boundary and three land drains were also identified. Overlying these was subsoil [2: 0.1m to 0.2m deep], above which was topsoil [1: 0.2m to 0.3m deep].

Trench 40 (Figure 3)

- 5.5 This trench (Photo 5) was located over a geomagnetic anomaly. The natural subsoil was identified at a depth of 0.5m to 0.6m (112.2m-112.3m OD). The geomagnetic anomaly was identified as a spread of greyish-brown sandy loam, an accumulated hillwash [4: up to 0.3m deep]. Three drains and part of a furrow was also identified. Overlying these was subsoil [2: 0.15m to 0.2m deep], above which was topsoil [1: 0.35m to 0.4m deep].

Trench 42 (Figure 3, photo 6)

- 5.6 Natural subsoil [3] was identified at a depth of 0.45m to 0.6m (117.8m-118.3m OD). This was cut by 5 irregularly-spaced furrows 0.6m-1.2m wide and aligned roughly

north-east/south-west. Three drains were also recorded cutting the natural. Overlying these was subsoil [2: 0.15m to 0.2m deep], above which was topsoil [1: 0.35m to 0.4m deep].

6. The artefacts

6.1 No artefacts were recovered.

7. The palaeoenvironmental evidence

7.1 No material suitable for palaeoenvironmental assessment was identified.

8. The archaeological resource

8.1 No features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified.

9. Impact assessment

9.1 Development of the site is unlikely to impact on any significant archaeological resource.

10. Recommendations

10.1 No further scheme of archaeological works is recommended in relation to this development.

11. Sources

Archaeological Services 2014 *Sniperley Farm, Framwellgate Moore, Durham: archaeological evaluation*. Archaeological Services Durham University report 3393

Archaeological Services 2021 *Sniperley Farm, Framwellgate Moore, Durham: geophysical survey*. Archaeological Services Durham University report 5480

PCA 2013a *Land adjacent to Sniperley Farm, Sniperley, Framwellgate Moor, Durham: Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment*. Unpublished report

PCA 2013b *Land adjacent to Sniperley Farm, Sniperley, Framwellgate Moor, Durham: Geophysical Survey Report*. Unpublished report

Petts, D, & Gerrard, C, 2006 *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment*. Durham

Appendix 1: Data tables

Table 1.1: Context data

No	Area	Description
1	All	Topsoil
2	All	Subsoil
3	All	Natural
4	TR.40	Hillwash

Table 1.2: Trench data

Trench	Length (m)	Depth (m)	Glacial Geology	Subsoil	Furrows				Field Drains- number and orientation	Features
					Number	Spacing (m)	Orientation	Width (m)		
1	50	0.3-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	4; NW-SE 4; NE-SW	0
2	50	0.3-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	4; NE-SW 6; NW-SE	0
3	30	0.3-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	4; NE-SW	0
4	50	0.3-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	4; NE-SW 4; NW-SE	0
5	50	0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; E-W 3; NE-SW	1-Field boundary
6	50	0.2-0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	3; NE-SW	0
7	30	0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	3; NE-SW	0
8	30	0.3-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	3; NE-SW	0
9	50	0.3-0.5	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	3; N-S 4; NE-SW	0
10	50	0.25-0.35	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	2; N-S	0
11	50	0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; E-W 3; N-S	0
12	50	0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NE-SW 3; NW-SE	0
13	30	0.3-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NE-SW 2; N-S	0

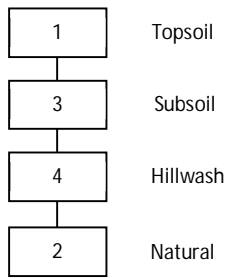
Trench	Length (m)	Depth (m)	Glacial Geology	Subsoil	Furrows				Field Drains- number and orientation	Features
					Number	Spacing (m)	Orientation	Width (m)		
14	50	0.3-0.35	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	2; N-S	0
15	50	0.25-0.45	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	5; E-W	0
16	50	0.3-0.5	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	2; E-W	0
17	50	0.3-0.5	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NE-SW	1-Field boundary
18	50	0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	3; NE-SW	0
19	50	0.22-0.34	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NE-SW 4; NW-SE	0
20	50	0.3-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	2; NE-SW	0
21	50	0.3-0.32	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; N-S 1; NW-SE	0
22	50	0.4-0.5	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; E-W	0
23	50	0.3-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NE-SW 6; E-W	0
24	50	0.45-0.5	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NE-SW 2; SE-NW	1-Field boundary
25	50	0.3-0.4	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NE-SW	0
26	30	0.35-0.5	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	3; E-W	0

Trench	Length (m)	Depth (m)	Glacial Geology	Subsoil	Furrows				Field Drains- number and orientation	Features
					Number	Spacing (m)	Orientation	Width (m)		
27	50	0.35-0.4	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	4; NE-SW	0
28	50	0.3-0.4	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NW-SE	0
29	50	0.25-0.35	Orangey sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NW-SE 2; E-W	0
30	50	0.25-0.45	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	4; NE-SW 4; NW-SE	0
31	30	0.3-0.45	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NE-SW 1; NW-SE	0
32	30	0.3-0.4	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NE-SW 1; NW-SE	0
33	30	0.35-0.5	yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; E-W	0
34	50	0.25-0.35	Orangey sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; N-S 2; E-W	0
35	50	0.25-0.35	Orangey sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	2; NW-SE	0
36	50	0.3-0.35	Orangey sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	5; E-W	0
37	30	0.2-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; N-S	0
38	50	0.3-0.4	Orangey sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
39	50	0.2-0.3	Orangey sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	2; E-W	0

Trench	Length (m)	Depth (m)	Glacial Geology	Subsoil	Furrows				Field Drains- number and orientation	Features
					Number	Spacing (m)	Orientation	Width (m)		
40	30	0.5-0.6	Light yellowish-brown silty clay loam	Dark greyish-brown sandy silty loam	1		N-S		1; E-W 1; N-S	Hillwash
41	50	0.4-0.6	Orange-brown/light yellowish-brown sandysilt/sandy clay loam	Very dark orange-brown sandy loam	0	0	N/A	0	2; NW-SE 4; NE-SW	0
42	50	0.45-0.6	Mid yellowish brown sandy clay loam	Dark brown sandy silt loam	5	Irregular	NE-SW	0.6-1.5	4; NE-SW	0
43	50	0.2-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NW-SE	0
44	30	0.22-0.32	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
45	30	0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay with patches of gravel	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
46	50	0.25-0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
47	50	0.2-0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
48	50	0.38-0.5	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	6; NW-SE	0
49	50	0.3-0.4	Orange/ yellow sandy gravel	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	3; NW-SE	0
50	30	0.25-0.3	Orange/ yellow sandy gravel	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NW-SE	0
51	50	0.4-0.5	Orange/ yellow sandy-clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; SW-NE 6; E-W	0
52	50	0.3-0.52	Orange/yellow clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	5; NW-SE	0

Trench	Length (m)	Depth (m)	Glacial Geology	Subsoil	Furrows				Field Drains- number and orientation	Features
					Number	Spacing (m)	Orientation	Width (m)		
53	50	0.3-0.5	Orange/yellow clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	1; NW-SE	0
54	50	0.35-0.5	Orange/yellow clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	0	0
55	50	0.4-0.5	Orange/yellow clay	Dark brown sandy silty clay loam	0	0	N/A	0	2; NE-SW	0

Appendix 2: Stratigraphic matrix





Photograph 1: Trench 5, looking south



Photograph 2: Trench 17, looking east



Photograph 3: Trench 24, looking east



Photograph 4: Trench 30, looking north



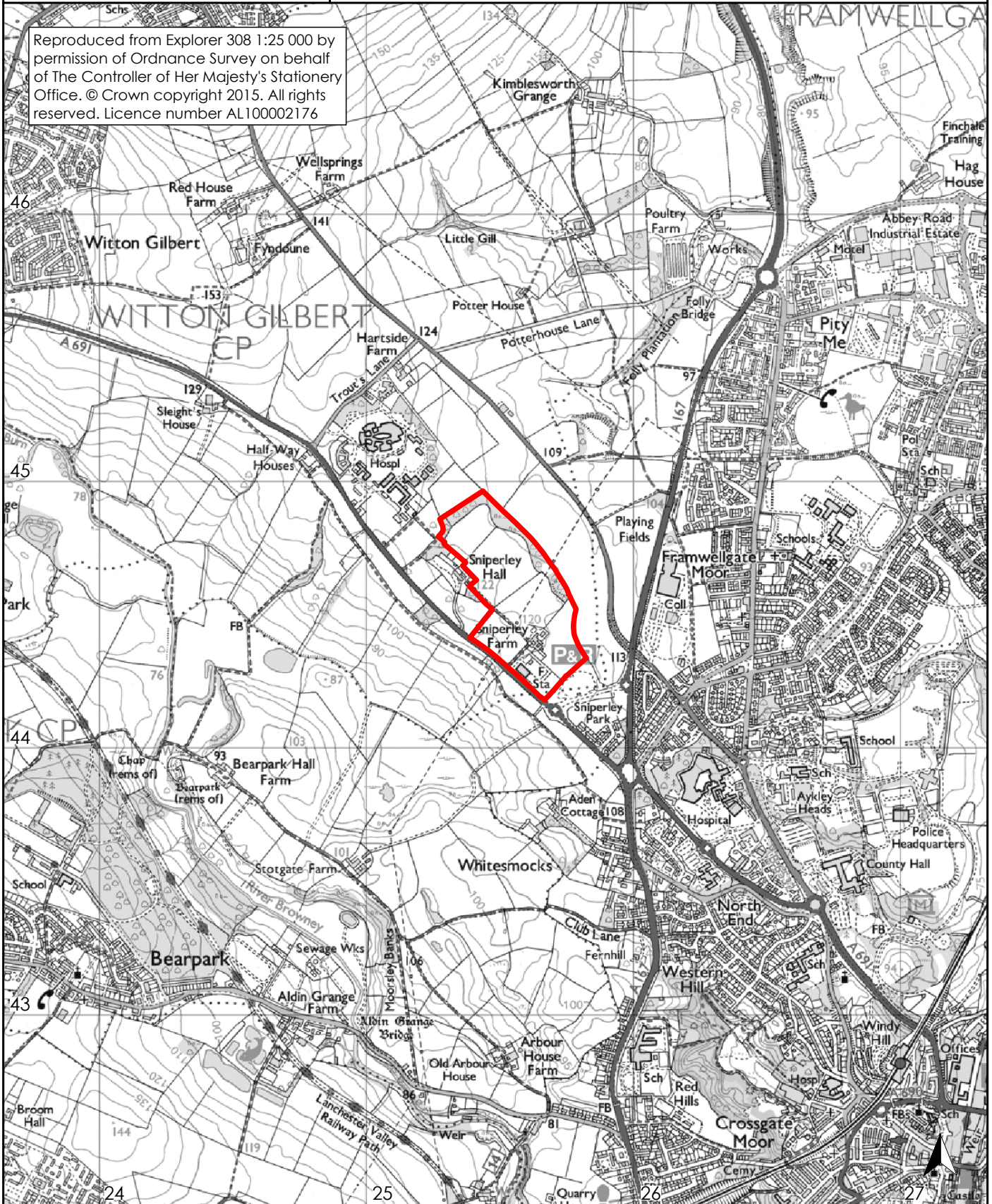
Photograph 5: Trench 40, looking south-west



Photograph 6: Trench 54, looking west

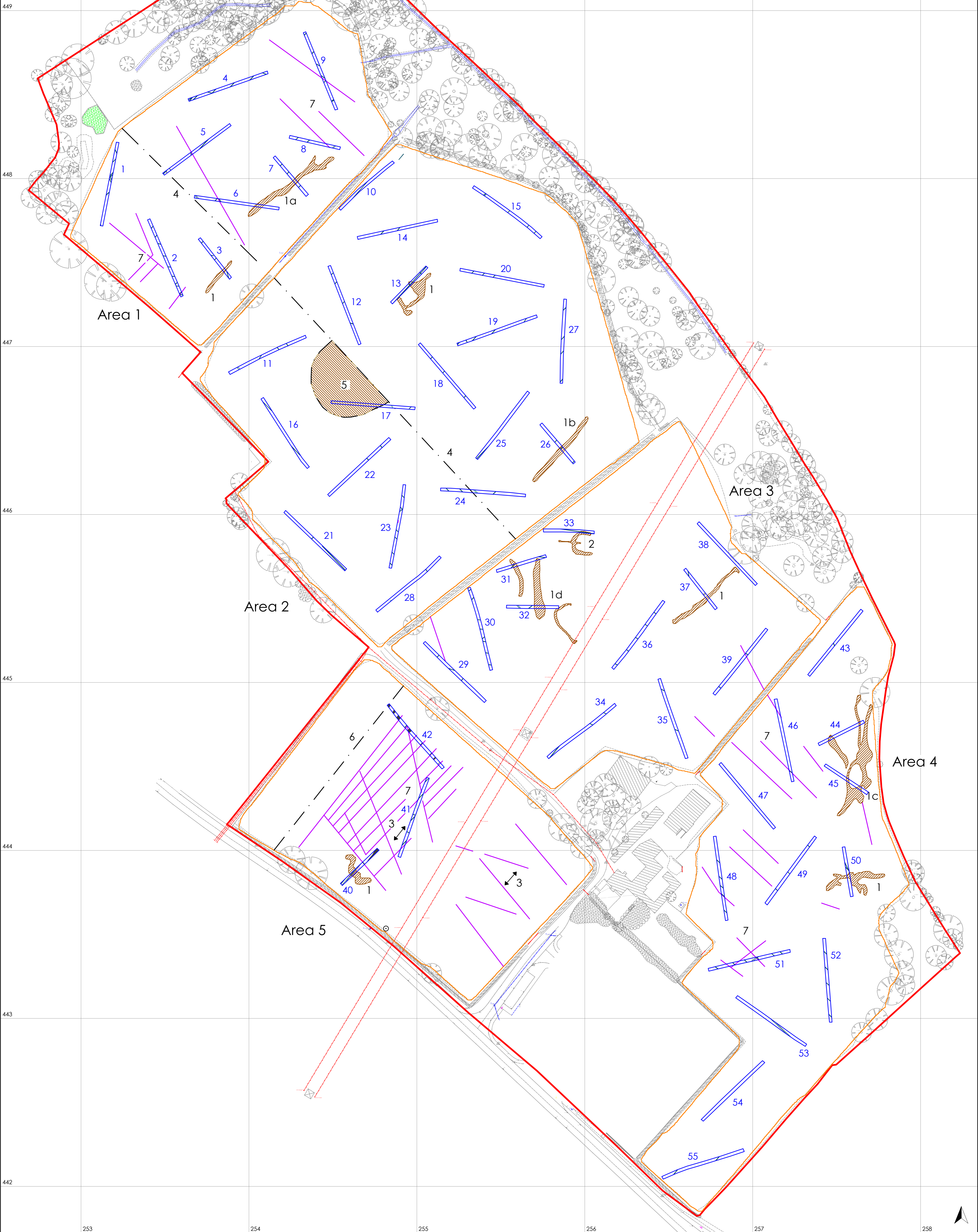
Figure 1: Site location

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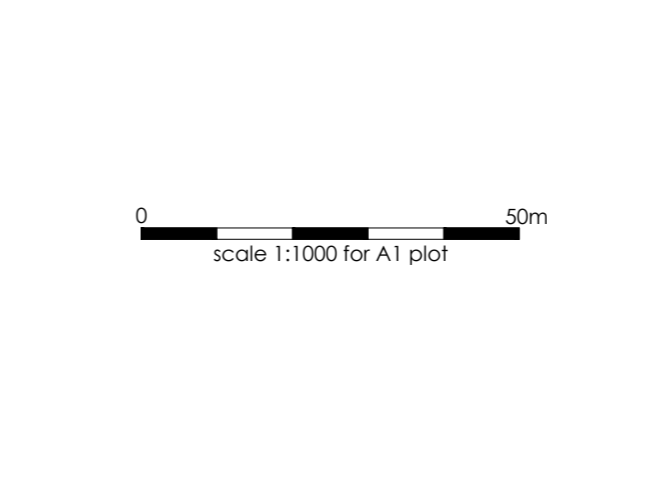


 site boundary

0 1km
scale 1:20 000 for A4 plot

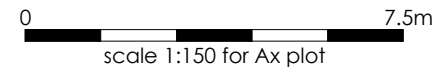
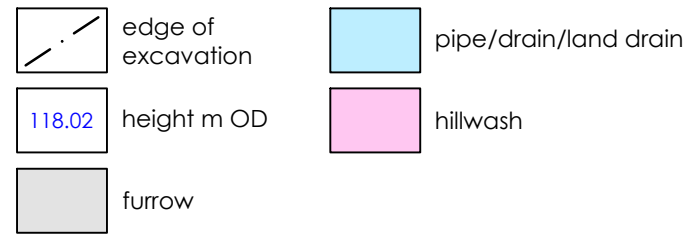


site boundary	metal sign	trench	coal deposit
disturbed area	ridge and furrow	furrow	hillwash
former field boundary	possible soil-filled feature	pipe/drain/land drain	
land drain		modern	



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Figure 2: Trench locations

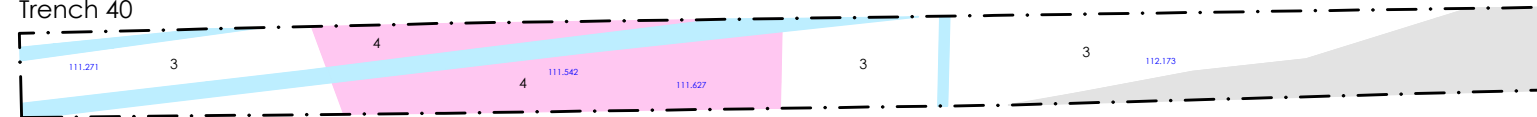


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Figure 3: Trench 40 and 42, plans

Trench 40



Trench 42

