

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

LAND SOUTH OF HEATH LANE
CODICOTE
HERTFORDSHIRE

ASE Project No: 1604221
Site Code: COD17

ASE Report No: 2017182



April 2017

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on
Land South of Heath Lane, Codicote
Hertfordshire**

NGR: TL 21200 17900

Planning Ref: Pre-Application

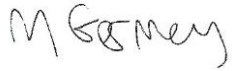

**ASE Project No: 160421
Site Code: COD17**

**ASE Report No: 2017182
OASIS id: archaeol6-282347**

Three Rivers Museum, Rickmansworth

By Mark Germany

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Date of Issue:	April 2017		
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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief, commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, and carried out by Archaeology South-East from 27th to 31st March 2017.

The archaeological work monitored the machine excavation of thirty-six geotechnical test pits within 11.3ha of grazing land west and south-west of Codicote, Hertfordshire. Its purpose was to record the site's underlying near-surface deposit sequence for possible presence of sub-surface archaeological remains.

All thirty-six test pits revealed a c.0.25 to 0.3m thick layer of topsoil. The topsoil directly overlay natural geology and there was no intervening layer of subsoil. The monitoring found no archaeological features, deposits or finds.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to carry out archaeological monitoring of 36 geotechnical test pits within a series of adjoining pasture fields (A1 and A3-A5; Fig. 1), west and south-west of the village of Codicote in central Hertfordshire.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The superficial geology of the site comprises glacial deposits of sand and gravel in the west and boulder clay in the east, overlying Upper Chalk solid geology (bgs.ac.uk).

1.2.2 The site is currently used as open pasture. Rolling hills define the local topography with a high point of 111m OD in the centre of the site, dropping to approximately 80m OD to the south and southwest and 100m OD to the north and northwest. The River Mimram, a tributary of the Thames, flows south-west of the site.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 There are proposals for a residentially led development on the site. The current archaeological work was carried out prior to the submission of a planning application.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The general aims of the watching brief, as stated in the project's Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2017) were:

- To define, insofar as possible, the date, character, form and function of any archaeological features observed on site
- To determine the survival, extent and minimum, depth below modern ground level of any such remains
- To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits

1.4.2 The specific aims of the watching brief were:

- To establish the presence and nature of any prehistoric remains
- To establish the presence and nature of any Roman remains

1.4.3 Further specific research aims have been compiled with reference to the East Anglian research framework:

- The development Bronze and Iron Age field systems (Medleycott 2011, 20)
- Patterns of burial practice need further exploration. This should include the relationship between settlement sites and burial (Medleycott 2011, 20).
- Understanding both the continuity of Iron Age into Roman settlement and the 2nd century 'Romanisation' (Medleycott 2011, 47).

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report presents and interprets the findings of archaeological monitoring of 36 geotechnical test pits, within fields west and south-west of Codicote, Hertfordshire. The work was undertaken by Mark Germany (Senior Archaeologist) and Rob Cullum (Archaeologist) on the 27th-31st March 2017. The figures were prepared by Andrew Lewsey and Justin Russell. The fieldwork was managed by Andy Leonard and the post-excavation process by Jim Stevenson.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The following background information mainly is summarised from a Desk-Based Assessment, produced by CgMs Consulting Ltd (CgMs 2017), which focused on a study area within a 1km radius of the current site.

2.2 Prehistoric

2.2.1 A tranchet axe recorded from NGR TL2100 1800 (HER ref 1132) represents the only Mesolithic evidence from the locality of the site.

2.2.2 Archaeological excavation at Codicote Heath to the north-west in 1956 revealed Neolithic pottery and flintwork underlying a later Bronze Age barrow which contained a cremation burial (Fig. 1). Traces of a Bronze Age hut circle were also noted at the site (HER Ref 246,248-249; TL2058 1834).

2.2.3 The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) has recorded a find of a Bronze Age copper-alloy chisel to the west at Rooks Wood (BH-8CD6C4; Fig. 1).

2.2.4 Late Iron Age pottery has been found at Rooks Wood (HER ref 1134, TL2100 1800). To the southwest of the site, an Iron Age gold coin of c.45-25BC has been identified by the PAS (ref PUBLIC-ED9E23; Fig 1), together with another coin recorded within the bounds of the site itself (PAS ref CCI-940404).

2.2.5 A series of cropmarks at Ayot St Lawrence, to south-west of Codicote are also thought to represent remnants of a prehistoric settlement of uncertain date.

2.3 Roman

2.3.1 Although no relevant records relating to the Roman period appear on the HER from within a 1km radius of the site, PAS data suggests a fairly large concentration of Roman artefacts, including coins, bracelets and brooches in the area to the south-west of the site. One of these artefacts, a brooch (BH-CFC0D3) is located very close the site boundary.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

2.4.1 A coin of King Ecgbeort (800-837) recorded from NGR TL2100 1800 (HER ref 1044) is the sole piece of archaeological evidence of Saxon date from the vicinity of the site

2.4.2 The village core of Codicote developed around the High Street to the east of site. It is recorded in the Domesday Book as part of the estate of St Alban's Abbey with a population of 16 villagers, four slaves, three cottagers and one Frenchman. The church of St Giles dates to the early twelfth century; the village expanded during the thirteenth century with the grant of a market (HER refs 4302, TL2186 1874; 1807, TL2153 1830).

2.4.3 The current site lay well outside the settlement during this period though it was likely exploited as agricultural land.

2.4.4 PAS finds to the southwest of the site boundary have included a medieval belt mount (ref PUBLIC-E5FEE7), and a coin of Edward I, found close to the River Mimram (ref BH-3D8297).

2.5 Post-Medieval

2.5.1 Historic maps dating from 1766 onwards show that fields A1 to A5 were formerly part of open land to the south and west of Codicote (CgMs 2017, figs 4-10). Since the first detailed survey, the Tithe Map of 1842, some earlier field boundaries have been removed but the landscape appears to have remained fairly unchanged to the present day.

2.6 Recent Archaeological Survey

2.6.1 A geophysical survey preceded the current archaeological watching brief (SUMO 2017; Fig. 3). It identified probable field-systems or enclosures and pit-like anomalies, suggesting that part of a prehistoric or Roman farm is present in fields A2 to A4. Other pit-like anomalies were noted in field A1. Although these might be of archaeological origin, it was suggested that they could also represent natural magnetic gravels or features of more recent origin, such as chalk quarry pits.

2.6.2 A LIDAR survey was undertaken by the Environment Agency in 2015. The data pertaining to the area of the current site was obtained and reviewed as part of the desk-based assessment (CgMs 2017; Fig. 4). The linear features depicted on the LIDAR survey do not correlate well with the possible prehistoric or Roman landscape revealed by the geophysical survey. Instead they mainly seem to represent former post-medieval/modern field boundaries.

2.6.3 A number of circular or ring-like depressions were also identified by the LIDAR survey, predominantly in fields A2 to A4. The largest of these is located close to the north-western boundary of field A3. This was interpreted as a probable former pond or quarry pit (ibid). Interestingly this feature is not visible as a geophysical anomaly; however, several other circular or ring-like features of c.8-10m in diameter do appear to correlate on both surveys.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 A methodology for the current watching brief was set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2017). The fieldwork comprised the monitoring of 36 test pits, excavated in fields A1, A3, A4 and A5 as part of a geotechnical survey of the site (Fig. 2). Each test pit was dug by a mechanical excavator equipped with a 0.6m wide toothed bucket. The test pits measured 0.6m wide by c.2m long. They were dug to a depth of c.2m for the purposes of geotechnical recording.

3.1.2 ASE closely monitored the mechanical excavation down to the level of natural geology. Notes were made on the depth of overburden deposits and all spoil heaps and sections were visually inspected for possible archaeological finds and features.

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

3.2.1 There were no fieldwork restraints.

3.3 Site Archive

3.3.1 The site archive, which is quantified in Table 1, is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited in due course at the Three Rivers Museum, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire.

Number of Contexts	0
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	9
Permatrace sheets	0
Trench Record Forms	7

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Geotechnical test pits

4.1.1 Monitoring of the geotechnical pits revealed c.0.25m to 0.30m of topsoil above natural sand, gravel and clay, observed to a depth of c. 2m. This sequence was consistent across all 36 pits. There were no archaeological deposits, features or finds.

4.1.2 The depth of archaeological deposits is detailed in Table 2.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness (m)
TP1/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.30
TP1/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.70
TP2/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.31
TP2/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.69
TP3/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.29
TP3/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.71
TP4/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.30
TP4/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.70
TP5/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.29
TP5/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.71
TP6/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.27
TP6/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.73
TP7/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.29
TP7/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.71
TP8/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.28
TP8/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.72
TP9/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.29
TP9/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.71
TP10/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.29
TP10/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.71
TP11/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.25
TP11/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.75
TP12/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.26
TP12/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.74
TP13/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.27
TP13/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.73
TP14/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.26
TP14/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.74
TP15/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.26
TP15/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.74
TP16/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.24
TP16/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.76
TP17/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.31
TP17/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.69
TP18/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.28
TP18/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.72
TP19/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.25
TP19/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.75
TP20/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.25
TP20/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.75
TP21/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.28

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness (m)
TP21/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.72
TP22/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.29
TP22/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.71
TP23/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.31
TP23/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.69
TP24/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.32
TP24/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.68
TP25/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.25
TP25/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.75
TP26/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.24
TP26/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.76
TP27/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.26
TP27/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.74
TP28/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.26
TP28/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.74
TP29/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.26
TP29/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.74
TP30/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.28
TP30/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.72
TP31/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.31
TP31/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.69
TP32/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.28
TP32/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.72
TP33/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.27
TP33/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.73
TP34/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.29
TP34/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.71
TP35/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.28
TP35/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.72
TP36/001	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.29
TP36/002	Layer	Natural geology	Trench	Trench	>1.71

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

5.0 FINDS

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 The geotechnical test pits revealed no archaeological artefacts.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

5.1.1 Each of the 36 test pits showed a simple stratigraphic sequence with a moderately thick layer of topsoil (c.0.25-0.3m) overlying the natural glacial geology. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present.

5.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

5.2.1 The current watching brief demonstrates that topsoil directly overlies the natural geology in fields A1, A3, A4 and A5. The absence of surviving subsoil means that it is likely that any surviving archaeological features or deposits on the site may have undergone some degree of horizontal truncation as a result of ploughing. No other truncation or modern disturbance was observed.

5.3 Consideration of research aims

5.3.1 A programme of geophysical survey (SUMO 2017) has determined the presence of a probable prehistoric or Roman field system, and possibly associated large pits or small ring-ditches, within fields A2, A3 and A4. Large pit-like features of uncertain date are also present in field A1. Both the geophysical survey and a separate programme of LIDAR (ibid; CgMs 2017) indicate that probable post medieval features are distributed in all five fields, including field boundaries and land drains, or potential evidence of ridge and furrow. Some of the aforementioned large circular features may also represent post-medieval ponds or quarries.

5.3.2 While the results of the archaeological watching brief contribute only negative evidence to the site specific and regional research aims and objectives outlined in section 1.4., the results of the geophysical survey confirm the likely presence of archaeological remains.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology South-East would like to thank CgMs Consulting Ltd for commissioning the monitoring programme and for its help and assistance. CgMs commissioned the work on behalf of their clients, Ashill and the landowners. The geotechnical work was carried out by RSK.

HER Summary

Site name/Address: Land south of Heath Lane, Codicote, Hertfordshire	
Parish: Codicote	District: North Hertfordshire
NGR: TL 21200 17900	Site Code: No site code
Type of Work: Watching brief	Site Director/Group: Archaeology South-East
Date of Work: 27/3/17 to 31/3/17	Size of Area Investigated: 11.3ha
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Rickmansworth	Funding source: CgMs Consulting
Further Seasons Anticipated?: Not known	Related HER No's:
Final Report: Oasis	OASIS No: archaeol6-182347
Periods Represented: None	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, and carried out by Archaeology South-East from 27th to 31st March 2017.	
The archaeological work monitored the machine excavation of thirty-six geotechnical test pits within 11.3ha of grazing land west and south-west of Codicote, Hertfordshire. Its purpose was to record the site's underlying near-surface deposit sequence for possible presence of sub-surface archaeological remains.	
All thirty-six test pits revealed a c.0.25 to 0.3m thick layer of topsoil. The topsoil directly overlay natural geology and there was no intervening layer of subsoil. The monitoring found no archaeological features, deposits or finds.	
.	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: Mark Germany	Date of Summary: March 2017

Finds summary

Find type	Material	Period	Quantity
None			

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeo16-282347

Project details

Project name Land south of Heath Lane, Codicote, Hertfordshire
An archaeological watching brief, was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd, and carried out by Archaeology South-East from 27th to 31st March 2017.

Short description of the project The archaeological work monitored the machine excavation of thirty-six geotechnical test pits within 11.3ha of grazing land west and south-west of Codicote, Hertfordshire. Its purpose was to record the site's underlying near-surface deposit sequence for possible presence of sub-surface archaeological remains.

All thirty-six test pits revealed a c.0.25 to 0.3m thick layer of topsoil. The topsoil directly overlay natural geology and there was no intervening layer of subsoil. The monitoring found no archaeological features, deposits or finds.

Project dates Start: 27-03-2017 End: 31-03-2017

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes 160421 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Grassland Heathland 4 - Regularly improved

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques "Test Pits"

Development type Not recorded

Prompt Voluntary/self-interest

Position in the planning process Pre-application

Project location

Country England

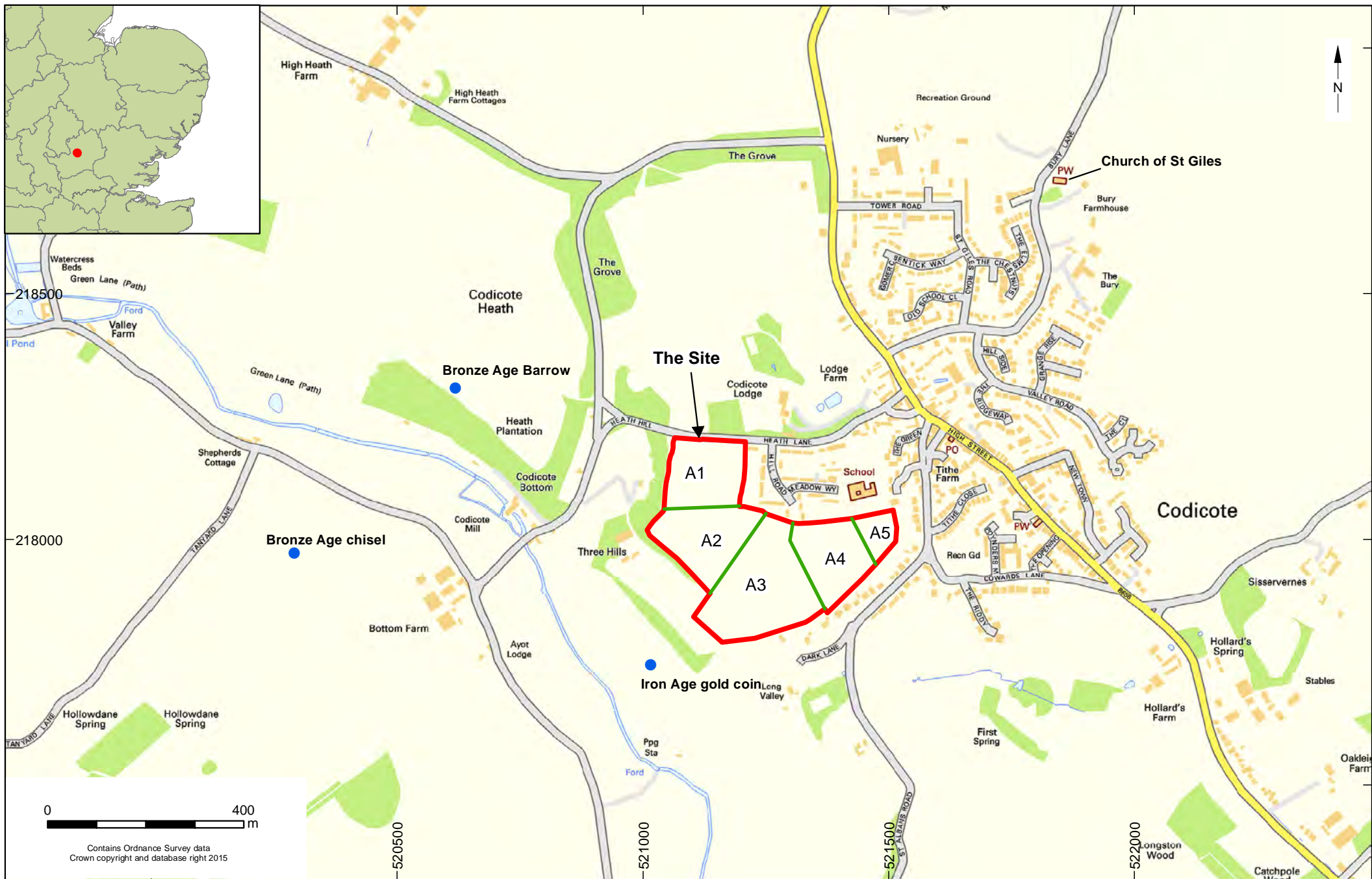
Site location HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE CODICOTE
Land at Heath Lane, Codicote, Hertfordshire

Study area 11.3 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 21200 17900 51.84607074779 -0.240330044323 51 50 45
N 000 14 25 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
Project brief originator	No brief
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Mark Germany
Type of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Rickmansworth
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Rickmansworth
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","none"
Paper Media available	"Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological watching brief. Land south of Heath Lane, Codicote, Hertfordshire. Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Germany, M.
Other bibliographic details	2017182
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Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
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Description	A4.16 pages of text. 3 illustrations
Entered by	M. Germany (m.germany@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	11 April 2017



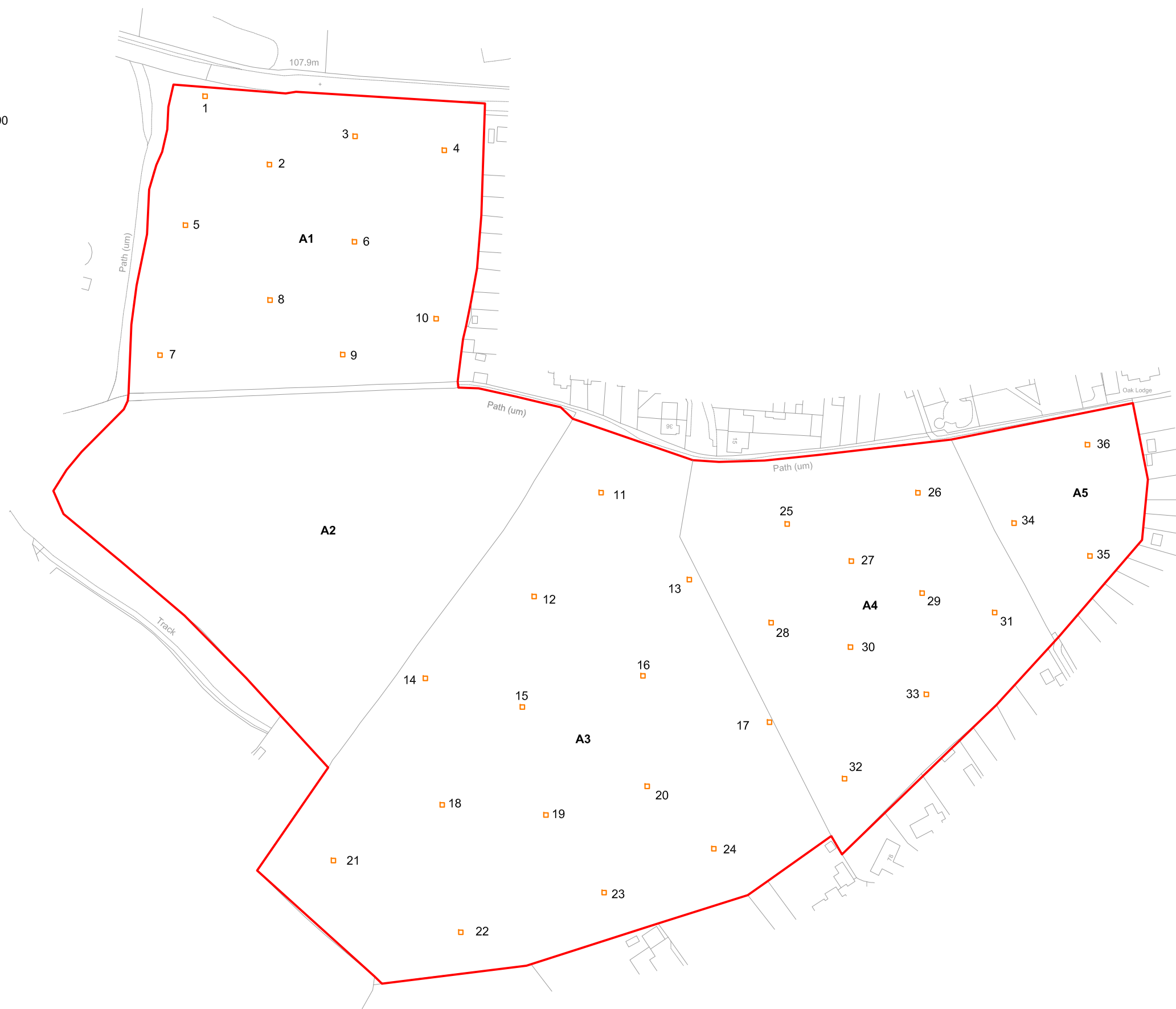
Contains Ordnance Survey data
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© Archaeology South-East		Land south of Heath Lane, Codicote		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160421	Apr 2017	Site location		
Report No: 2017182	Drawn by: APL			



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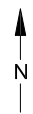


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□ Test pit

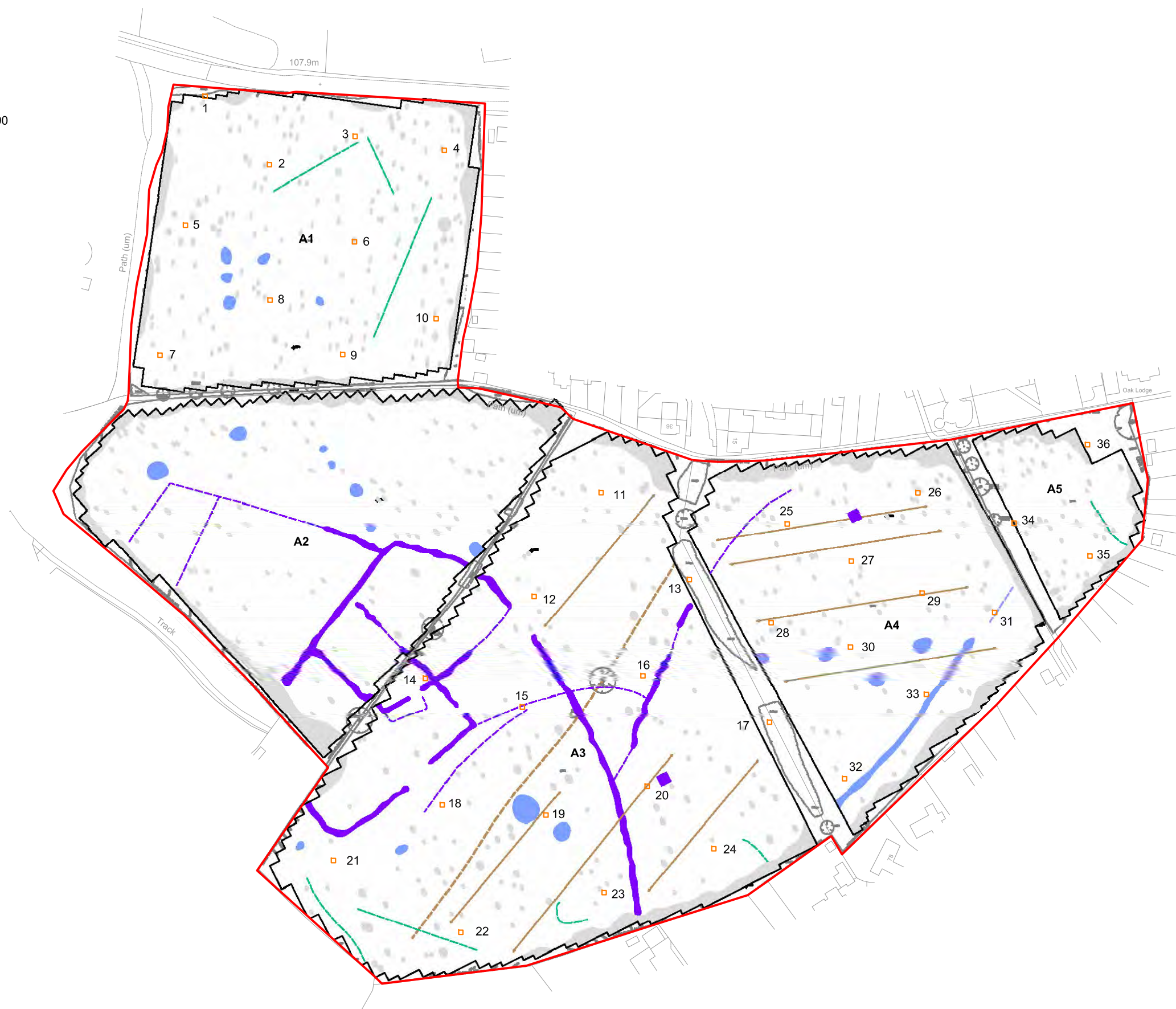
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© Archaeology South-East		Land south of Heath Lane, Codicote	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 160421	Apr 2017	Test-pit locations	
Report Ref: 2017182	Drawn by: APL		



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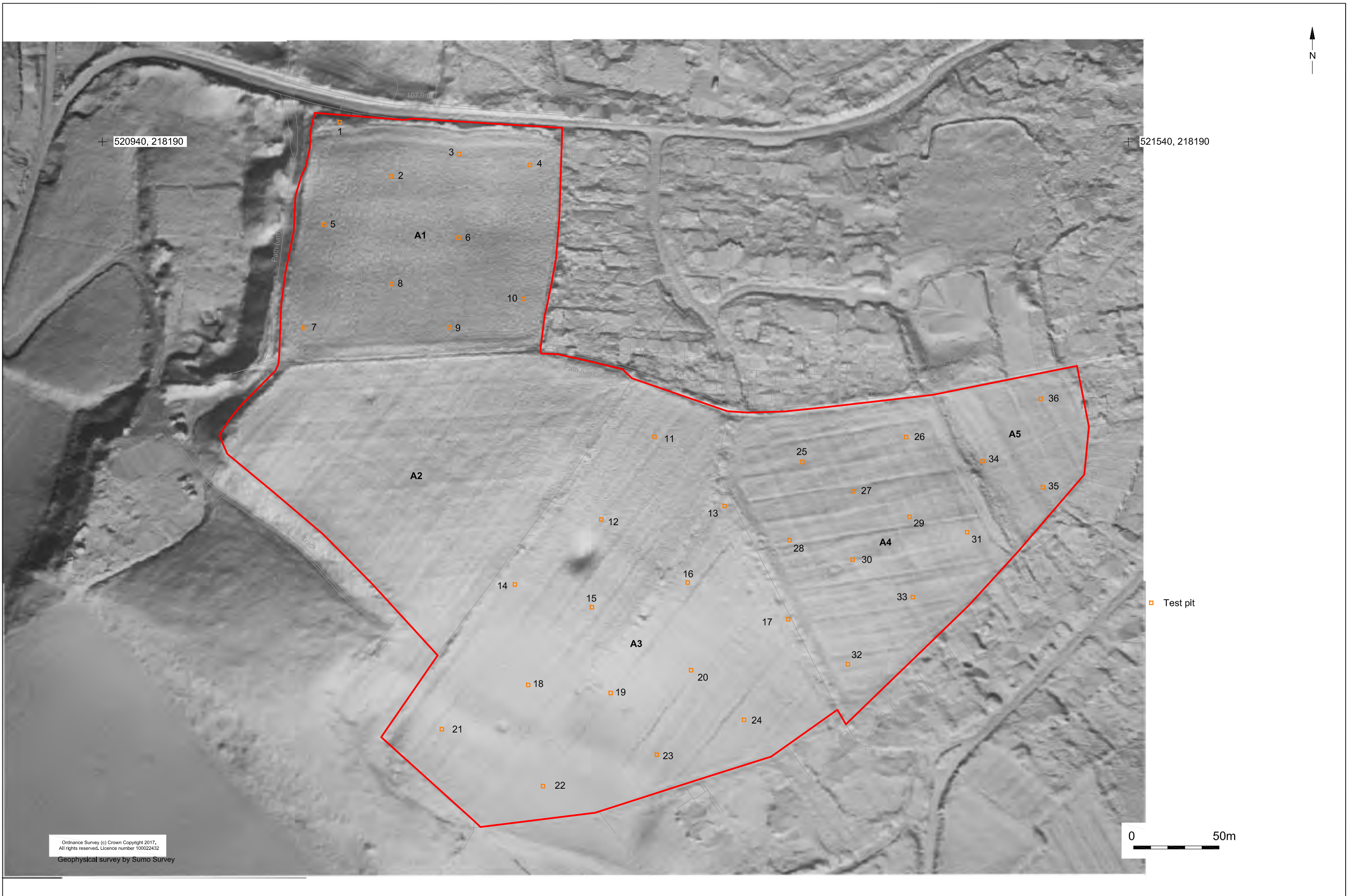


- Test pit
- ▨ Probable Archaeology (positive / trend)
- ▨ Possible Archaeology (positive / trend)
- Former field boundary (corroborated)
- Ridge and Furrow / Plough
- ▨ Uncertain Origin (trend)
- Ferrous

0 50m

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Geophysical survey by Sumo Survey

© Archaeology South-East		Land south of Heath Lane, Codicote	Fig.3
Project Ref: 160421	Apr 2017	Test-pit locations with geophysical survey	
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© Archaeology South-East		Land south of Heath Lane, Codicote	Fig.4
Project Ref: 160421	Apr 2017	Test-pit locations with LIDAR survey	
Report Ref: 2017182	Drawn by: APL		

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