

**An Archaeological Watching Brief during
Geotechnical Investigations at Aylesford, Kent**

Planning ref: Permitted Development

**NGR 573342 159460
(TQ 73342 59460)**

**Project No: 4306
Site Code: ASI 10**

**ASE Report No: 2010038
OASIS id: archaeol6-75817**



**By
Andrew Margetts BA (Hons)**

April 2010

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during geotechnical investigations in preparation of a new flood alleviation scheme at Aylesford, Kent.

Works included the archaeological monitoring of 11 geotechnical pits and 2 boreholes. The trial pits measured c.3m x c.0.4m with a maximum monitored depth of 4.5m. Site visits were made on the 30th of March to the 1st of April 2010.

Excavations encountered limited archaeological remains. No features were encountered however two fragments of cattle sized long bone were collected from the upper layers of a periglacial deposit.

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Historical and Archaeological Background**
- 3 Archaeological Methodology**
- 4 Archaeological Results**
- 5 The Finds**
- 6 Discussion**
- 7 Conclusion**

Bibliography
Acknowledgements

HER Summary Sheet
Oasis Record Sheet

Figures

- Figure 1: Site location plan and selected HER data
Figure 2: Test Pit locations

List of Tables

- Table 1: HER data
Table 2: Quantification of site archive
Table 3: Finds quantification

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), were commissioned by Halcrow Group Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during geotechnical investigations at Aylesford, Kent, henceforth referred to as 'the site' (NGR 573342 159460; Fig. 1).

1.1.3 Geotechnical Investigations were proposed in preparation for a new flood alleviation scheme. The site has archaeological potential (see below) and the Kent County Council Senior Archaeologist (KCCH) recommended that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during test pitting and bore-holing associated with the scheme.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site lies within the existing bounds of the Cemex quarry site and within adjacent farmland (currently pasture) and gardens. The underlying geology at the site according to the Ordnance Survey geological survey of Great Britain, scale 1:50,000 (Sheet 288 - Maidstone), comprises a mix of geologies including Folkestone Beds, River Terrace Gravels, Gault Clay, Alluvium and nearby Head deposits.

1.2.2 The site is located on the edge of Aylesford approximately 1.5km from the foot of the North Downs, some 3km from the centre of Maidstone.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 The general aim of the archaeological work was to ensure that any features, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest that were affected by the groundworks were recorded and interpreted to appropriate standards.

1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This report aims to outline the findings of the archaeological watching brief.

1.4.2 The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Margetts from the 30th of March to the 1st of April 2010. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation Manager).

2.0 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has potential for archaeological finds/deposits from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. It is situated in an area of mixed geologies with deposits of 2nd Terrace River Gravels holding the potential for Palaeolithic remains, however, no Holocene archaeology was likely to survive within the quarry working itself.
- 2.2 The site lies in an area well known for historical and archaeological activity and a search of The Historic Environment Register (HER) within a 1km radius of the site produced 198 pages of results. The most relevant are summarised in Table 1 and shown on Figure 1.

Table 1: HER data

No	HER No.	NGR (TR)	Description
1	TQ 75 NW 82 - MKE2099	TQ 7318 5944	Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British occupation at Tottington Farm, Aylesford
2	TQ 75 NW 337 - MKE36793	TQ 7336 5936	The Old Mill, Aylesford
3	TQ 75 NW 260 - MKE36019	TQ 7396 5997	Listed Barn, Tottington Farm
4	TQ 76 SW 421 - MKE36347	TQ 7397 6002	Anchor Oast, Tottington Farm
5	TQ 75 NW 175 - Mke39826	TQ 7300 5900	Medway Valley Palaeolithic Project

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** All test pit excavations undertaken were monitored at all times by an archaeologist until/unless it became clear that no archaeological remains were present. All excavations were undertaken by JCB and comprised six monitored test pits (c. 3m long, c. 0.4m wide excavated to a maximum of 4.5m deep) and in addition associated borehole logs were also made available.
- 3.2** Test pits located within the quarry site (Test Pits, 3-7 and Boreholes 2-3) comprised reworked natural strata and as such archaeological monitoring was not required (Fig 2).
- 3.3** In the event that new excavations revealed archaeological remains, excavation by contractor's staff ceased. Where groundworks threatened archaeological deposits, these were to be hand excavated and recorded to archaeological standards by the archaeologist in attendance. Exposures were hand cleaned by the archaeologist as necessary to clarify the presence/absence and nature of features. Adequate time was made available for appropriate archaeological excavation by hand to identify and record the remains as far as possible within the limits of the works in order to extract archaeological and environmental information, as this proved necessary.
- 3.4** This enabled any archaeological deposits and features, disturbed during the proposed works, to be adequately recorded in line with the advice given in PPG16 (the Government's advice on *Archaeology and Planning*).
- 3.5** The spoil from the excavations was inspected to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. A metal detector was used at regular intervals to scan spoil derived from the excavations.
- 3.6** The Kent County Council Archaeological Officer was kept informed of progress so that she could monitor the archaeological work from the outset of ground works.
- 3.7** All archaeological features were recorded according to standard UCLCAA practice. Where practicable, all features were planned at 1:20 and section drawings were at 1:10, unless this is impractical in which case an alternative would be agreed with the KCC Archaeologist. Drawings were made on plastic draughting film. Features and deposits were described on standard pro-forma recording sheets used by ASE. All remains were levelled with respect to Ordnance Survey datum wherever practicable. A photographic record was made in digital format, monochrome and colour transparency.

Number of Contexts	22
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	0
Bulk Samples	0
Photograph	c.11 digital
Bulk finds	2
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	0

Table 2: Quantification of site archive

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS (Fig. 2)

4.1 Introduction and presentation of results

4.1.1 As discussed in section 3.1, above, only Test Pits 1, 2, 8, 9 and 10 required archaeological monitoring. Borehole 1 was replaced by a test pit which was designated Test Pit 11. All test pits measured c. 3m in length and were c. 0.4m wide

4.1.2 The sequence revealed in each test pit is tabulated in stratigraphic order (latest to earliest) below. Significant deposits are described in detail below each table.

4.2 Test Pit 1

4.2.1 Test Pit 1 was excavated to a maximum depth of c.0.7m at which point the water table was reached and excavation ceased.

Context Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness
1/001	Layer	Topsoil Firm, dark brown grey.	Tp.	Tp.	0.2m
1/002	Layer	Subsoil Firm, mid brown grey, sandy silt	Tp.	Tp.	0.1m
1/003	Deposit	Pond Silt Firm, light white grey, sandy silt	Tp.	Tp.	0.3m
1/004	Deposit	Periglacial deposit Firm, light white grey, clay and flint	Tp.	Tp.	0.1m

4.2.3 No archaeological features were encountered within the test pit, however, some bone fragments were collected from the upper levels of periglacial deposit [1/004] (see section 5.1.2). In addition a deposit of sandy silt was encountered [1/003] this is probably derived from a silted pond associated with the nearby post medieval corn mill.

4.3 Test Pit 2

4.3.1 Test Pit 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of c.4.5m at which point mechanical excavation ceased.

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness
2/001	Layer	Topsoil Firm, dark brown grey.	Tp.	Tp.	0.3m
2/002	Layer	Subsoil Firm, mid brown grey, sandy silt	Tp.	Tp.	0.2m
2/003	Layer	Colluvium	Tp.	Tp.	0.2m

		Firm, mid orange brown, sandy silt			
2/004	Deposit	Head Deposit Firm. mid orange brown, silty clay	Tp.	Tp.	0.8m
2/005	Deposit	Gault Clay Compact, grey blue clay	Tp.	Tp.	0.3m

4.3.2 No archaeological features or finds were encountered within the test pit.

4.4 Test Pit 8

4.4.1 Test Pit 8 was excavated to a maximum depth of c.3m at which point mechanical excavation ceased.

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness
8/001	Layer	Topsoil Firm, dark brown grey.	Tp.	Tp.	0.3m
8/002	Layer	Colluvium Firm, mid orange brown, sandy silt	Tp.	Tp.	0.2m
8/003	Deposit	Gault Clay Compact, grey blue clay	Tp.	Tp.	2.5m

4.4.2 No archaeological features or finds were encountered within the test pit.

4.5 Test Pit 9

4.5.1 Test Pit 9 was excavated to a maximum depth of c.3m at which point mechanical excavation ceased.

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness
9/001	Layer	Topsoil Firm, dark brown grey.	Tp.	Tp.	0.2m
9/002	Layer	Subsoil Firm, mid brown grey, sandy silt	Tp.	Tp.	0.2m
9/003	Deposit	Weathered Gault Clay Compact, mid yellow grey clay	Tp.	Tp.	2.6m

4.5.2 No archaeological features or finds were encountered within the test pit.

4.6 Test Pit 10

4.6.1 Test pit 10 was excavated to a maximum depth of c.3m at which point mechanical excavation ceased.

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness
10/001	Layer	Topsoil Firm, dark brown grey.	Tp.	Tp.	0.2m
10/002	Layer	Subsoil Firm, mid brown grey, sandy silt	Tp.	Tp.	0.4m
10/003	Deposit	Folkestone Beds Compact, mid brown yellow sand	Tp.	Tp.	2.4m

4.6.2 No archaeological features or finds were encountered within the test pit.

4.7 Test Pit 11

4.7.1 Test pit 11 was excavated to a maximum depth of c.4m at which point mechanical excavation ceased.

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Thickness
11/001	Layer	Top/Ploughsoil Firm, dark brown grey.	Tp.	Tp.	0.2m
11/002	Layer	Subsoil Firm, mid brown grey, sandy silt	Tp.	Tp.	0.2m
11/003	Deposit	Marling Deposit Firm, mid white grey, sandy silt	Tp.	Tp.	0.1m
11/004	Deposit	Gault Clay Compact, grey blue clay	Tp.	Tp.	0.1m

4.7.2 No archaeological features or finds were encountered within the test pit however a thin marling deposit, [11/003], containing frequent chalk fragments was situated above the natural horizon.

4.8 Boreholes

4.8.1 Three Boreholes were drilled on site by means of cable percussion (BH's 1, 2 and 3). Although unmonitored, the results of these investigations were made available. As mentioned in section 4.1.1 above BH1 was attempted and reached a depth of 7m before being replaced by a test pit. BH2 reached 10m and confirmed the presence of quarry infill to a depth of 4.5m. BH3 showed this infill to be even deeper at this location with a depth of 7.8m.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 The Finds

- 5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief (Table 2). Finds were recovered from the upper levels of periglacial deposit [1/004].

Context	Bone	wt (g)
[1/004]	2	72

Table 2. Finds quantification.

5.1.2 The Animal Bone by Gemma Ayton

Two fragments of animal bone weighing 72g were recovered from context [1/004]. Both fragments have been identified as cattle-sized long bone with one fragment having derived from the shaft of a femur. The surface of the bone shows some sign of weathering. There is no evidence of butchery, burning, gnawing or pathology on the bone.

- 5.1.3 The assemblage has no potential for further analysis.

6.0 DISCUSSION

- 6.1** The underlying geology encountered during the course of the test pitting was variable and comprised Head deposits, Gault Clay, Folkestone Beds and a Periglacial Deposit.
- 6.2** Two fragments of weathered cattle sized long bone were recovered from the upper levels of periglacial deposit [1/004]. The weathering shown on the surface of these bone fragments is consistent with their presence within this kind of deposit. Their recovery highlights the potential of this deposit to contain evidence of human activity as well as further faunal remains.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1** The Watching Brief succeeded in its general aim of recording and interpreting the archaeological remains affected by the test pitting. However archaeological remains at the test pit locations did prove to be limited. The only finds recovered were from periglacial deposit [1/004].
- 7.2** In conclusion the watching brief encountered limited archaeological remains. However, the periglacial deposit may potentially contain further evidence of ancient activity. The Borehole results served to confirm the large degree of truncation expected at the quarry site with made ground/quarry infill reaching depths of 7.8m.

Acknowledgements

ASE would like to thank Halcrow Group Ltd. for commissioning the work as well as Wendy Rogers (Archaeologist KCC) for her help and guidance throughout the project.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	ASI10					
Identification Name and Address	Geotechnical Investigations Aylesford Kent ME20 7DX					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent, Tonbridge and Malling					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR TQ 73342 59460					
Geology	Head, Folkestone Beds, Gault Clay, Periglacial deposits					
Arch. South-East Project Number	4306					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 30 th March – 1 st April 2010	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Halcrow Group Ltd.					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin and Louise Rayner					
Project Supervisor	Andrew Margetts					
Period Summary	Palaeo. ✓	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern ✓		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during geotechnical investigations in preparation of a new flood alleviation scheme at Aylesford, Kent. Works included the archaeological monitoring of 11 geotechnical pits and 2 boreholes. The trial pits measured c.3m x c.0.4m with a maximum monitored depth of 4.5m. Site visits were made on the 30th of March to the 1st of April 2010. Excavations encountered limited archaeological remains. No features were encountered however two fragments of cattle sized long bone were collected from the upper layers of a periglacial deposit.</p>						

OASIS ID: archaeol6-75817

Project details

Project name	Geotechnical Investigations, Aylesford, Kent
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during geotechnical investigations in preparation of a new flood alleviation scheme at Aylesford, Kent. Works included the archaeological monitoring of 11 geotechnical pits and 2 boreholes. The trial pits measured c.3m x c.0.4m with a maximum monitored depth of 4.5m. Site visits were made on the 30th of March to the 1st of April 2010. Excavations encountered limited archaeological remains. No features were encountered however two fragments of cattle sized long bone were collected from the upper layers of a periglacial deposit.
Project dates	Start: 30-03-2010 End: 01-04-2010
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ASI10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Current Land use	Other 7 - Mineral extraction
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation
Monument type	0 None
Significant Finds	FAUNAL REMAINS Palaeolithic
Investigation type	'Test-Pit Survey','Watching Brief'
Prompt	Water Act 1989 and subsequent code of practice

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT TONBRIDGE AND MALLING AYLESFORD Aylesford, Geotechnical Investigations
Postcode	ME20 7DX
Study area	1.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 73342 59460 51.3072696772 0.487202622551 51 18 26 N

000 29 13 E Point
Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South East
Project brief originator Archaeology South East
Project design originator Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager Neil Griffin
Project supervisor Andrew Margetts
Name of sponsor/funding body Halcrow Group Ltd.

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient local museum
Physical Contents 'Animal Bones'
Digital Archive Exists? No
Paper Archive recipient Local Museum
Paper Contents 'Animal Bones'
Paper Media available 'Report'

Project bibliography 1

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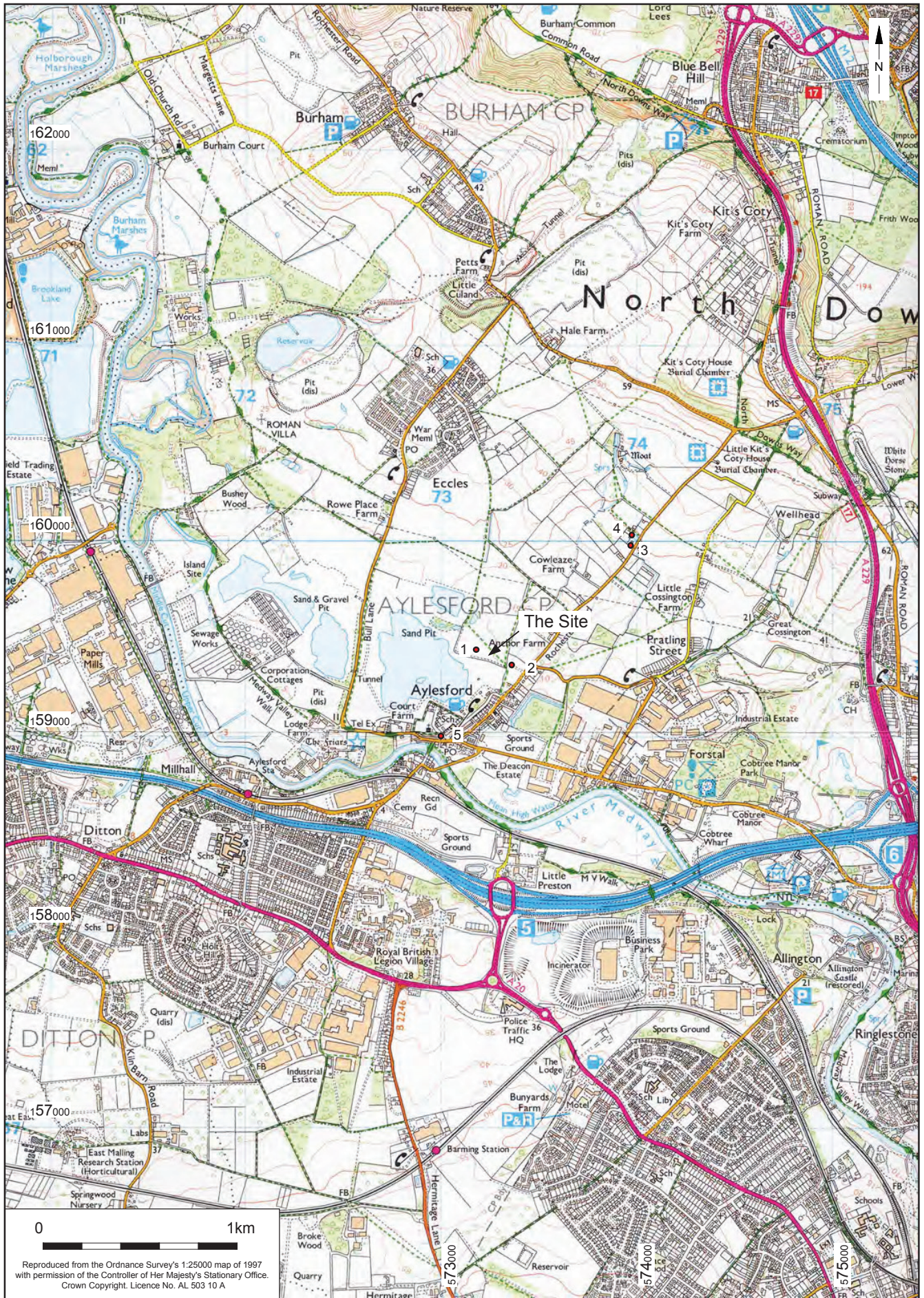
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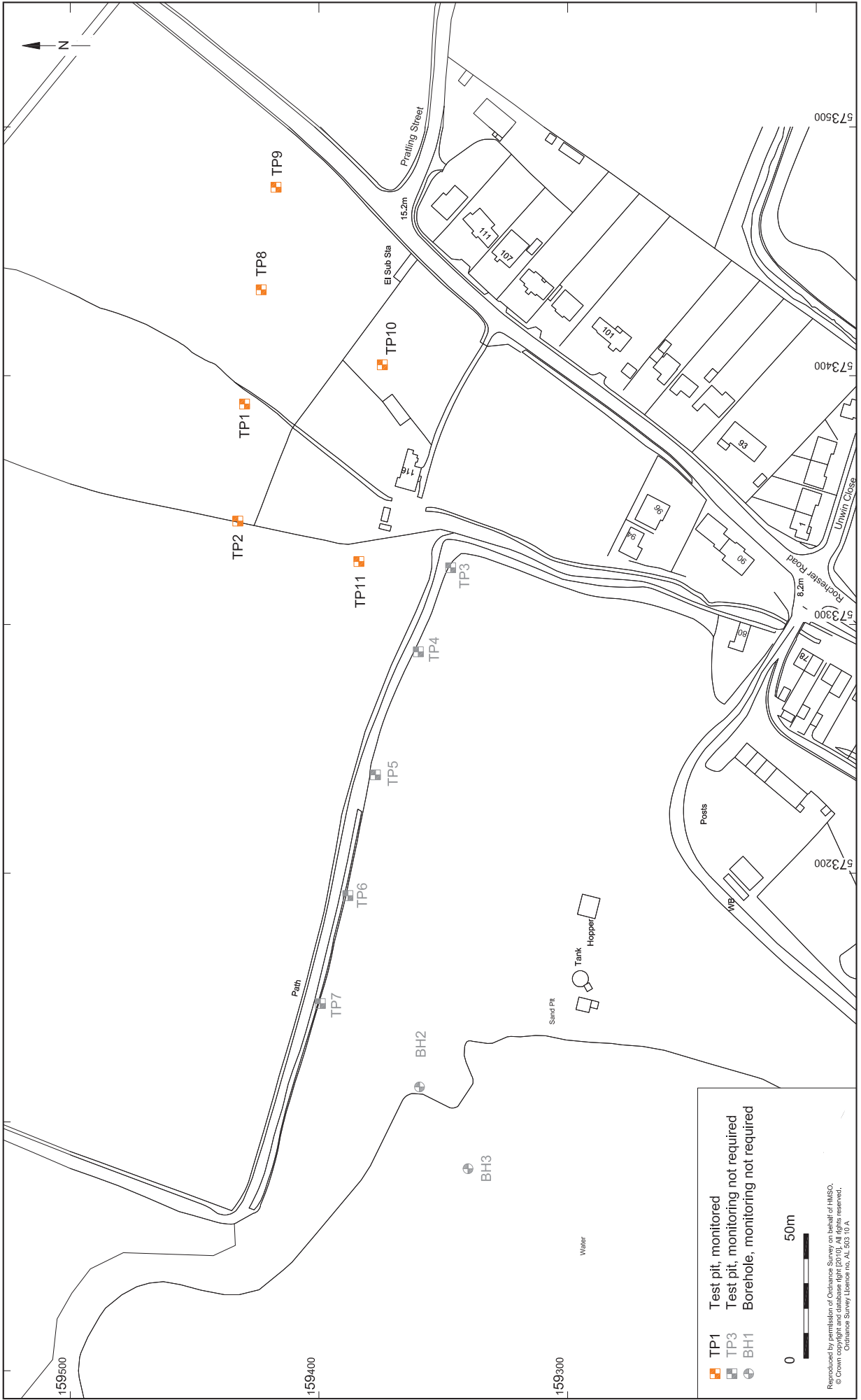
April 2010

Site location and selected HER data

Report Ref: 2010038

Drawn by: JLR

Fig. 1



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 Location of boreholes and test pits

Fig. 2

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