
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

POUNDFIELD ESTATE, MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: SU 87975 82885 SU 87870 82870	Report No: 4152
District: Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	Site Code: AS 1530
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 4858
Signed:	Date: September 2012

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Poundfield Estate, Maidenhead, Berkshire</i>		
<p><i>In September 2012 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at the Poundfield Estate, Maidenhead, Berkshire (NGR SU 87975 82885 and 87870 82870). The evaluation was commissioned by Bugler Developments Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction two pairs of new 3-bed semi-detached dwellings on a play area between Nos. 16 and Fawley Close and 79 Gardner Road and between Nos. 36 and 38 Switchback Road South.</i></p> <p><i>The site is situated to the north of Maidenhead within the residential estate of Poundfield. It comprises two small plots of land located c.100m apart. The site had a potential for prehistoric archaeological remains, in particular for the presence of Palaeolithic flint artefacts and bones, and Bronze Age remains.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed an undated archaeological feature, possibly a gully.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>25-26/09/2012</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>4858</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1530</i>
Type of project	<i>An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Playground and car park</i>		
Planned development	<i>Construction of 2 pairs of semi-detached dwellings</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Undated gully</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Berkshire</i>	<i>Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead</i>	<i>Maidenhead</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Berkshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 600m²</i>		
NGR	<i>SU 87975 82885 and 87870 82870</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>38/40m</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Advice from Berkshire Archaeology</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Bugler Developments Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>Poundfield Estate, Maidenhead, Berkshire: An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4152</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>September 2012</i>		

POUNDFIELD ESTATE, MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In September 2012 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at the Poundfield Estate, Maidenhead, Berkshire (NGR SU 87975 82885 and 87870 82870). The evaluation was commissioned by Bugler Developments Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction two pairs of new 3-bed semi-detached dwellings on a play area between Nos. 16 Fawley Close and 79 Gardner Road and between Nos. 36 and 38 Switchback Road South.

The site is situated to the north of Maidenhead within residential estate of Poundfield. It comprises two small plots of land located c. 100m apart. The site had a potential for prehistoric archaeological remains, in particular for the presence of Palaeolithic flint artefacts and bones, and Bronze Age remains.

In the event the evaluation revealed an undated archaeological feature, possibly a gully.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September 2012 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at the Poundfield Estate, Maidenhead, Berkshire (NGR SU 87975 82885 and 87870 82870; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Bugler Developments Ltd and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction two pairs of new 3-bed semi-detached dwellings on a former children's play area between Nos. 16 Fawley Close and 70 Gardner Road and between Nos. 36 and 38 Switchback Road South (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Planning Refs. 11/03520 & 12/00072).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance to an advice from Berkshire Archaeology (BA; archaeological advisors to RBWM Council) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 16/05/2012) and approved by BA and RBWM. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008), as well as the Berkshire Archaeology document *General Standards for Fieldwork Projects* (2008).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present and to provide information on the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.

Planning policy context

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The site lies on the Poundfield Estate, Furze Platt, Maidenhead in Berkshire (Fig. 1). The area lies to the north of the town and comprises a residential estate located to the north of Gardner Road.

2.2 The area of investigation consists of two rectangular sites not occupied by any standing structures (Fig. 2). One site lies on the southern side of Fawley Close between Nos. 16 Fawley Close and 79 Gardner Road and comprises a former existing children play area (NGR SU 87975 82885; Plots 1 & 2). The other site lies close by to the west, fronting Switchback Road South between Nos. 36 and 38 and comprising an area of concrete hardstanding used for parking (NGR SU 87870 82870; Plots 5 & 6). The both sites are located c. 100m apart.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site is situated on land gently sloping towards the south and south-east at c. 38-40m AOD on high ground above the loop of the river Thames.

3.2 The solid geology of the area is Upper Cretaceous Chalk of White Chalk Subgroup overlain by deposits of Taplow Gravels (British Geological Survey 1978). Soils of the area are unsurveyed although those present to the north of estate are soils of the Sonning 1 association described mostly as well drained flinty coarse loamy and sandy soils, mainly over gravel (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The gravel landscape that the site is situated upon has been a prolific source for prehistoric archaeological remains, particularly Palaeolithic flint artefacts and bones from gravel extraction pits, and for Bronze Age barrows and cremations known mainly from cropmarks.

4.2 The former Cannoncourt and Coopers gravel pits, located in the area of the modern Kinghorn Park and Switchback Road c. 200m to the north-west of the site, comprise one of the most prolific sites for Palaeolithic remains in Britain (HER 00634.00, 00634.02, 00634.03). The gravel pits were works in the late 19th to early 20th centuries with 'vast quantities' of palaeoliths recovered, especially between 1909-1931, Archaeological investigations of the pits were conducted in 1896, 1940, 1953, 1978 and 1987-1989, which recovered hand axes predominantly of Acheulian type and small fragments of bone including a piece of giant antler deer. These investigations also allowed the detailed palaeogene stratigraphy of the horizontally bedded medium coarse gravels to be reconstructed in 1991. Solifluction features were also identified in the underlying chalk. In addition the these gravel pits, the Upper Furze gravel pit c. 350m to the south-west of the site also contained Lower Palaeolithic finds in its extensive but shallow workings (HER 00632.00)

4.3 Evidence for Neolithic activity in the vicinity is sparse, but includes a ground axe found in gravel c. 500m to the south of the site (HER 00593.00), while an archaeological evaluation recovered a small group of flint flakes from c. 300m to the west (HER RW15525).

4.4 The Bronze Age landscape surrounding the site has largely been defined by cropmarks visible on aerial photographs. A possible barrow cemetery has been identified c. 500m to the north-east (HER 00622.01), while two further ring ditches have been identified c. 300m to the north-east (HER 00622.01.2 & 00622.01.3). An urn with charred wood was recorded c.500m to the south-west of the site (HER 00590), although there are contradictory accounts over whether this vessel was of Bronze Age or Iron Age. Two Iron Age urn bases have also been recorded in the area but their exact provenance is unknown (HER 02614).

4.5 Evidence for Roman occupation in the vicinity of the site is absent. In the medieval period, the area remained in the agricultural hinterland between Maidenhead and Cookham, including the manor at Spencer's Farm c. 1km to the east, where a medieval well, walls and artifacts have been recorded. Post-medieval finds are similarly limited to a single coin of George III dated 1774 (HER MRM16380). Furze Platt was created a new hamlet in the early 20th century, acknowledged by the opening of Furze Platt Halt station on the Great Western railway in 1937, to cater for the growing population around Maidenhead.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Two trenches were excavated using a mechanical 180° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The concrete hardstanding was removed using a mechanical breaker attached to the excavator. The trenches locations were approved by BA and were situated within plots to be developed as new dwellings (Trench 1: Plots 1 & 2, Trench 2: Plots 5 & 6). The trenches measured 15 x 1.60m.

5.2 Topsoil and undifferentiated overburden were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for finds and the trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Trench 1 (Fig. 3, DP 1-2)

<i>Sample section 1A (DP 3): north end, west facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 39.75m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.14m	L1000	Topsoil. Light to mid grey, soft and friable, silty sand.
0.14 – 0.43m	L1001	Modern made ground. Light brown, loose, sand with frequent flint gravel, moderate CBM fragments and debris.
0.43 – 0.59m	L1002	Light brown, compact, silty sand with frequent flint gravel and occasional chalk.
0.59m +	L1003	Natural dark orangey yellow, loose, sandy gravel with frequent flint and moderate chalk.

<i>Sample section 1B (DP 4): south end, west facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 38.87m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.16m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.16 – 0.36m	L1001	Made ground. As above.
0.36 – 0.53m	L1002	As above.

0.53m +	L1003	Natural gravel. As above.
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Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2, DP 5-6)

<i>Sample section 2A (DP 7): north-west end, north-east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.87m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	M1007	Concrete hardstanding. Modern light grey concrete.
0.18 – 0.28m	L1008	Modern made ground. Mid grey, friable, clayey silt with yellow clayey silt and frequent CBM fragments.
0.28 – 0.40m	L1009	Dark grey, compact, clayey silt with occasional CBM fragments and gravel.
0.40 – 0.55m	L1010	Mid greyish brown, compact, silty sand with occasional charcoal, chalk and CBM fragments.
0.55m +	L1011	Natural brickearth. Mid to dark yellow, compact, clayey silt with occasional flint and chalk.

<i>Sample section 2B (DP 8): south-east end, north-east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.49m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.17m	M1007	Concrete hardstanding. As above.
0.17 – 0.35m	L1012	Modern made ground. Mid to dark grey, loose, sandy silt with frequent flint gravel and occasional CBM fragments and debris.
0.35 – 0.44m	L1013	Light green, compact, silty sand.
0.44 – 0.63m	L1010	As above.
0.63m +	L1011	Natural brickearth. As above.

Description: One archaeological feature, possible gully, was present.

F1004 was a linear feature located in the central part of Trench 2 (DP 9). It was aligned north/south and measured 2.10+ x 0.40/0.80 x 0.20m. It was wider in its northern part. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It contained two fills. The upper fill, L1005, was a mid to dark grey, compact, sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks and small stones. The lower fill, L1006, was a mid yellow, compact, clayey silt with occasional charcoal flecks, and was present along the southern side of the feature. No finds were present in either of the deposits. F1004 may have been a gully.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The area fronting Fawley Close (Plots 1 & 2, Trench 1) was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1000, a light to mid grey, soft and friable, silty sand (0.14 – 0.18m thick). It overlay modern Made Ground L1001 and a layer of silty sand L1002 (0.35 – 0.40m thick in total). The natural gravel was present at 0.50 – 0.60m below existing ground level and consisted of dark orangey yellow, loose, sandy gravel with frequent flint and moderate chalk chunks.

8.2 The site of Plots 5 & 6 located between Nos. 36 and 38 Switchback Road South (Trench 2) was covered by concrete hardstanding (M1007; 0.60 – 0.20m thick) which was present within communal areas of the estate. Below the concrete was modern Made Ground L1008 (0.15 – 0.20m thick). Two layers present below, L1009 and L1010, had also likely the modern provenience and were 0.25 – 0.30m thick. The natural deposits of this area was brickearth L1011, a mid to dark yellow, compact, clayey silt with occasional flint and chalk.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for prehistoric archaeology. Palaeolithic flint artefacts and bones have been amongst numerous finds were recovered from gravel pits located nearby. It also had a potential for Bronze Age remains.

9.2 In the event only one archaeological feature was revealed. It was located in Trench 2 off Switchback Road South. The possible gully did not contain finds and therefore is undated. Possibly it was a boundary feature. No residual finds were recovered.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Reading Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Bugler Developments Ltd for funding the project and for their assistance (in particular Mr Dave Culliton for his assistance).

AS would like to thank the Berkshire Historic Environment Record staff for providing background information.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Fiona MacDonald of Berkshire Archaeology.

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Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW), 1983, *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales*. SSEW, Harpenden

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Trench 1. Looking south-south-east.



DP 2. Trench 1. Looking north.



DP 3. Trench 1, north end. Sample section 1A. Looking east.



DP 4. Trench 1, south end. Sample section 1B. Looking east.



DP 5. Trench 2. Looking south-south-east.



DP 6. Trench 2. Looking north-west.



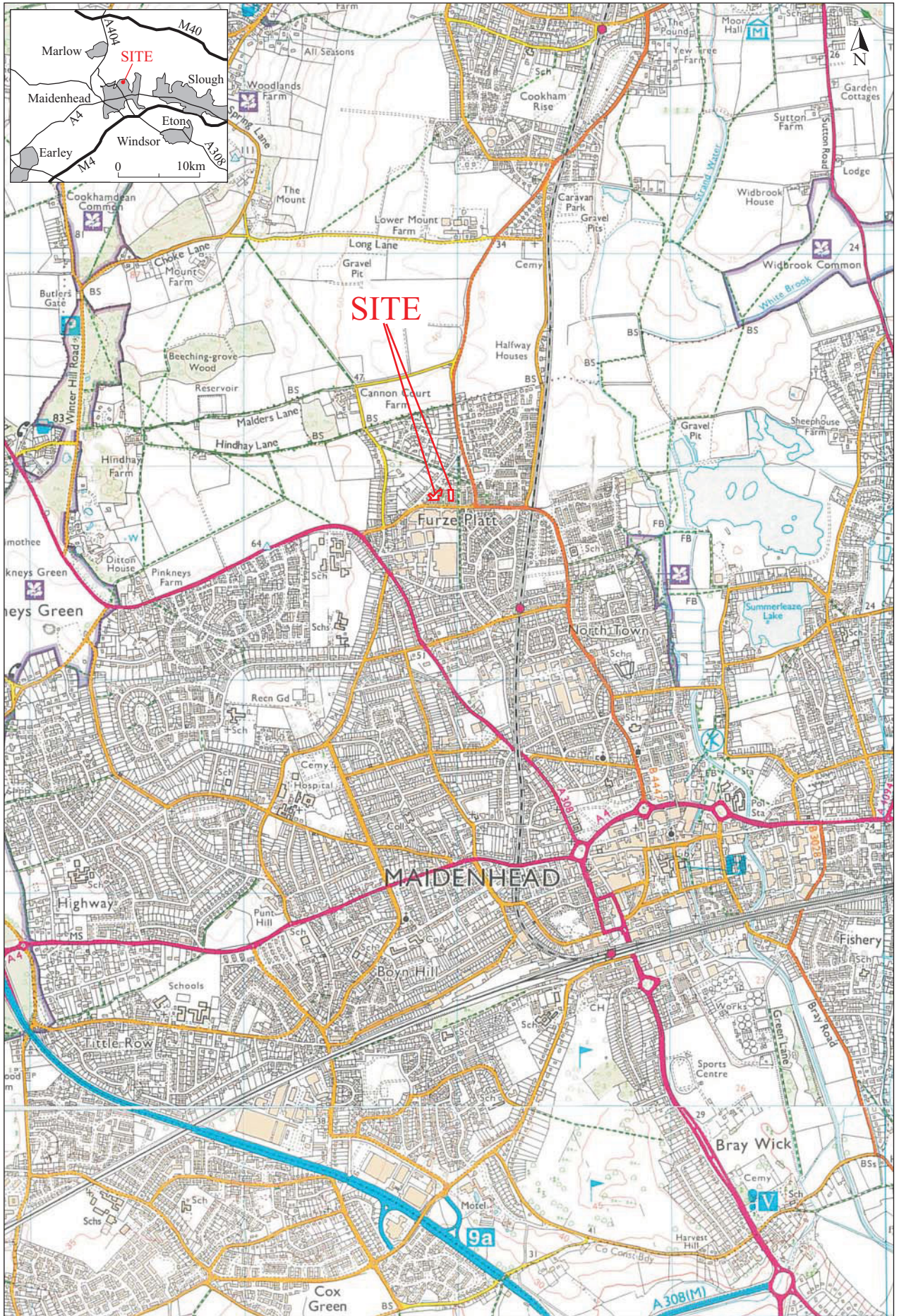
DP 7. Trench 2, north-west end. Sample section 2A. Looking south-west.



DP 8. Trench 2, south-east end. Sample section 2A. Looking south-west.

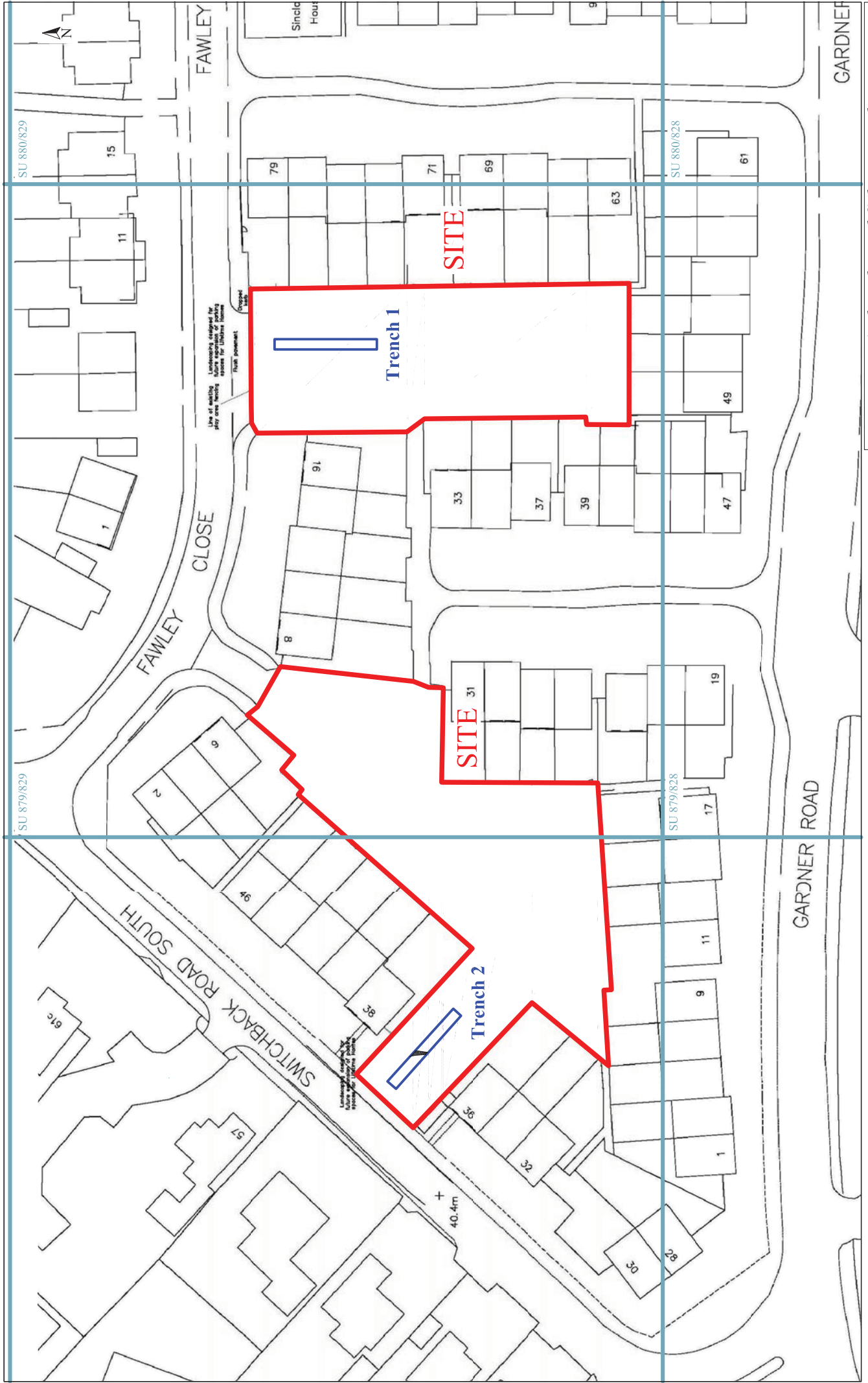


DP 9. Trench 2. Gully F1004. Looking north.



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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4

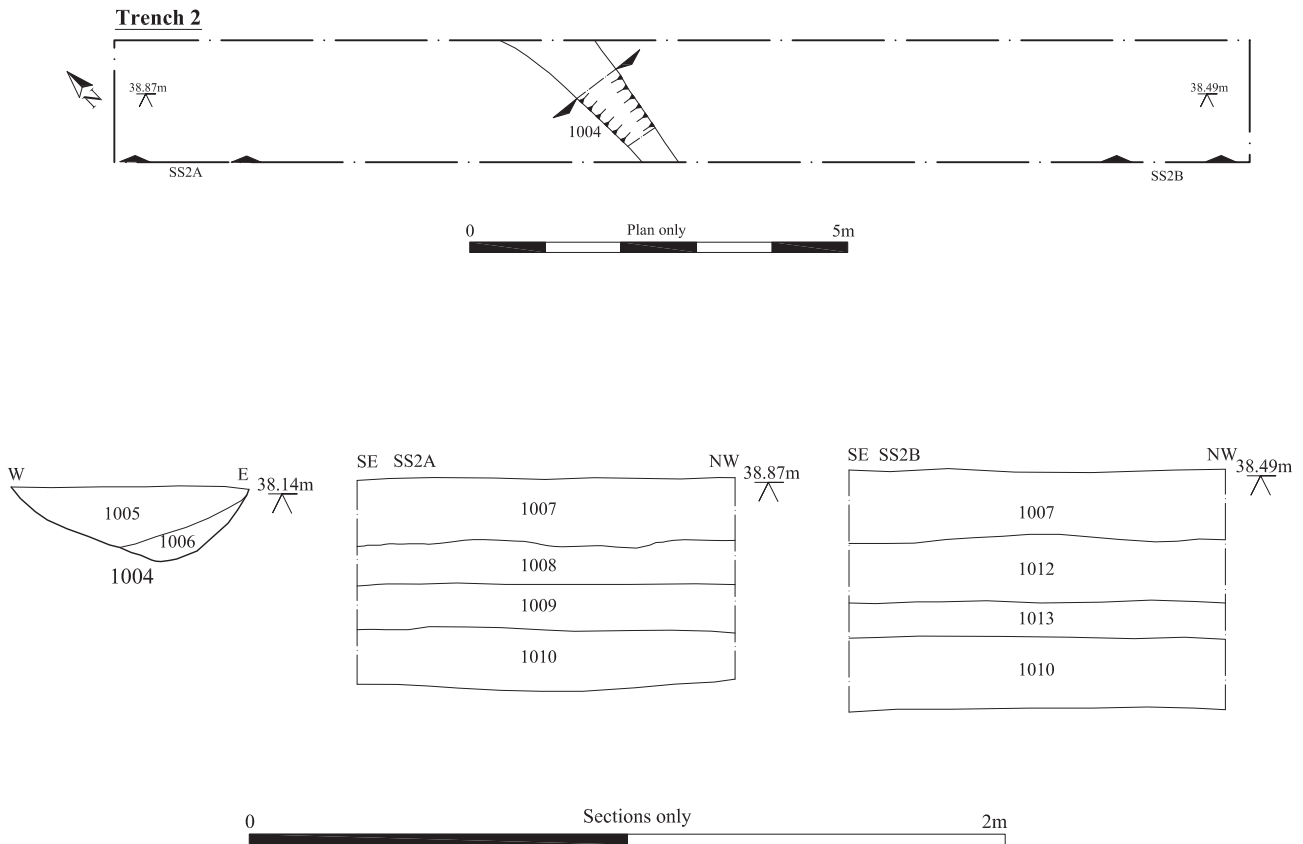


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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan

Scale 1:750 at A4

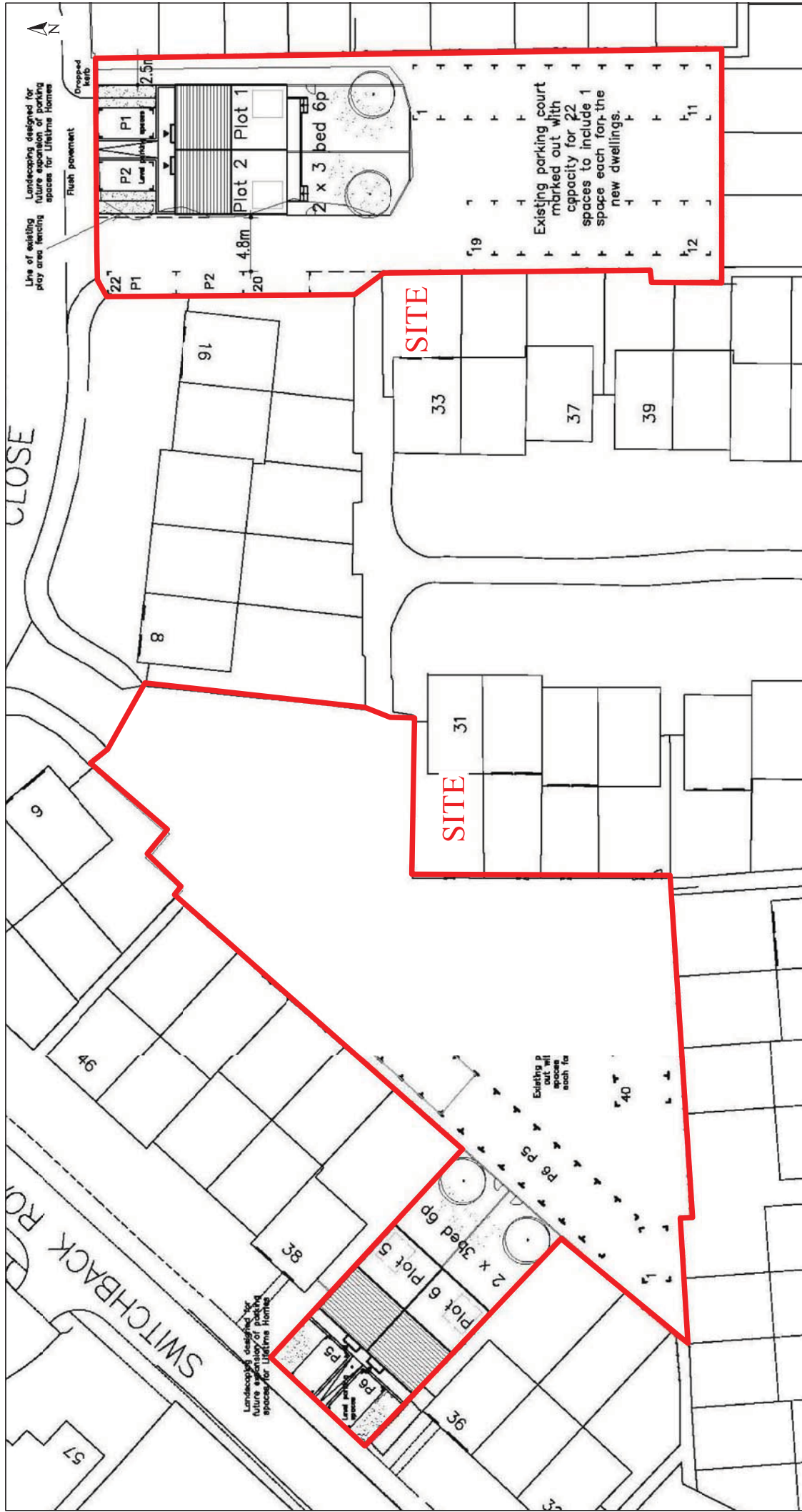




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Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections

Scale plans at 1:100 and sections at 1:20 at A4



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Fig. 4 Proposed development plan

Scale 1:500 at A4