

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Central M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury,  
Northamptonshire**

**Archaeological Recording Action**

**by Daniel Bray**

**Site Code: ORB14/172**

**(SP 4750 4055)**

# **Central M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Northamptonshire**

**An Archaeological Recording Action  
for Barwood Developments Ltd**

by Daniel Bray

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code ORB 14/172

**December 2014**

## Summary

**Site name:** Central M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Northamptonshire

**Grid reference:** SP 4750 4055

**Site activity:** Recording Action

**Date and duration of project:** 8th – 10th December 2014

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Daniel Bray

**Site code:** ORB 14/172

**Area of site:** 0.37ha

**Summary of results:** No deposits relating to the use of the site for the early 20<sup>th</sup> century munitions works were revealed nor were any deposits of archaeological interest. An area of modern truncation corresponds with the course of a railway siding which served the munition works. This modern truncation, which presumably represented demolition works prior to construction of the M40 contained modern domestic and industrial material which is likely to relate to the use of the former works.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at a Northamptonshire archive store in due course.

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:  
[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 23.12.14 Steve Preston✓ 23.12.14
---

# Central M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Northamptonshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by Daniel Bray

Report 14/172b

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Central M40 business park, Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Northamptonshire (SP 4750 4055) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tim Webster of Barwood Developments Ltd, Green Park Court, Roman Way, Northampton.

Planning permission has been gained from Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire District Councils (apps 14/00180/OUT and S/2014/0302/MAO) for the construction of a new industrial/warehouse unit on land south of Overthorpe Road and west of the M40 at Banbury, Oxfordshire. The latter consent is subject to a condition (7) relating to archaeology. Following the results of an archaeological field evaluation (McNicoll-Norbury 2014) and the possibility of damage to archaeological deposits a recording action has been requested.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Liz Mordue of Northamptonshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray between 8th and 10th December 2014 with the site code ORB 14/172. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Northamptonshire Archives in due course once opened.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located in a parcel of land *c.*0.88ha in size to the south of Overthorpe Road and to the west of the M40 near Junction 11 on the eastern side of Banbury (Fig. 1). The overall site covered areas in both Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire but the recording action was confined to the latter. The general topography of the site is uneven and covered with short crops and grass. The underlying geology is described as Lower Lias Clay (BGS 1982) which was observed on site. The site lies at 90.66m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the environs of the site within Oxfordshire to the west has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Ford 2004) followed by a field evaluation (Ford 2008). In summary, the site lies beyond the historic core of Banbury but within the general area where a medieval hospital once stood. The extensive trenching of the site (112 trenches) revealed very little of archaeological interest. A few undated or post-medieval field boundaries were revealed along with a few sherds of medieval pottery and a single sherd of Roman pottery.

There is also a possibility that the remains of a First World War munitions factory (NFF no 9 Banbury, Warkworth, Northamptonshire), in use from 1916 through to 1924, are present on the site, with the bulk of the factory lying to the east of the M40. The part of the site lying east of the M40 is a Scheduled Monument. The works were a filling factory and were constructed during winter 1916 and began operating in the spring of that year (Cocroft 1999, 170ff). A plan of the works based on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922 suggests that part of the works lay on the eastern boundary of the proposal site with the presence of an empty shell store and railway line (Fig. 4). According to this map the proposal site was not otherwise occupied by any other structures (Cocroft 1999, fig. 6.21). An evaluation on the current site revealed nothing of archaeological interest other than a concrete culvert and an area of 20th-century truncation (McNicoll-Norbury 2014).

## **The Excavation**

The area of the recording action comprised around 0.37ha (Fig. 3) and was stripped of topsoil and subsoil using a 360<sup>o</sup>-type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. This area was specifically targeted with the aim of determining the extent and perhaps the origin of the modern truncation on the eastern side of the site revealed during the evaluation. The recording action revealed further evidence of truncation. No other cut features were revealed.

### *Modern truncation 10 (Fig. 3; Pls 1 and 2)*

The western edge of a modern truncation (10) cutting the subsoil was revealed but not deeply investigated. It was backfilled with a loose dark deposit (60) and had a large drainage pipe along its length. The backfill contained 20th-century domestic items such as tea pots, glass bottles, metal colanders and industrial material such as metal buckets and barrels. A number of bullets were also found, some still in the magazine.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Danielle Milbank

Two small stoneware ink pots were recovered, which are of late 19th century or very early 20th century date.

### *Glass* by Danielle Milbank

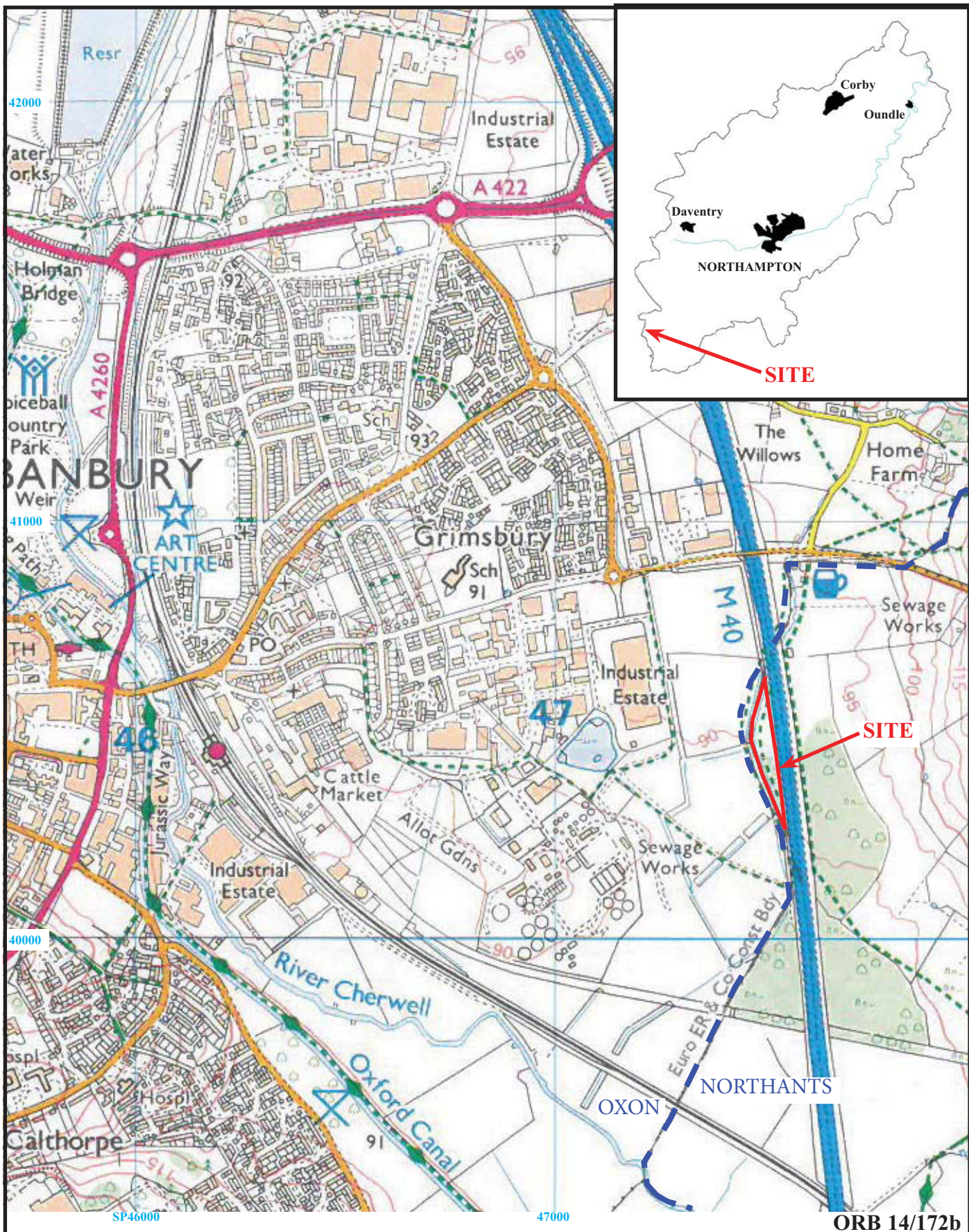
Glass bottles were recovered from a single context (10, deposit 60) encountered during the recording action. These included one clear cylindrical bottle with a short neck and flat base, with no maker's mark. A second clear cylindrical bottle with a longer neck and flat base from this context was made by H W Carter and Co. The company was started in 1872 and moved from Bristol in 1947, and the type of bottle is more typical of the early 20th century. A green glass cylindrical bottle of similar date was recovered, which was produced by Hunt Edmunds and Co. This company originated in Banbury and produced mineral water and other drinks in the late 19th and early 20th century. The cork stopper might suggest it pre-dates 1903, when crown caps typically replaced corks. A further clear glass bottle was recovered, which has an orange-peel texture moulded in the surface and the letters 'CWF' on the flat base.

## **Conclusion**

The fieldwork confirmed the presence of the modern truncation revealed during the evaluation stage of the project. The modern back-fill of the truncation contained both domestic and industrial waste. Bullets were revealed, some still within magazines, which might suggest that the truncation relates to the nearby munitions factory although the material could also have been displaced during the construction of the M40. The area of truncation seems to correspond loosely with the former railway lines accessing the western side of the 'empty shell store' of the former munitions works (Cocroft 1999, fig 6.21). No archaeological deposits pre-20th century were revealed.

## **References**

- BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 201, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Cocroft, W D, 1999, *Dangerous Energy, The archaeology of gunpowder and military explosives manufacture*, English Heritage, Swindon
- Ford, S, 2004, 'Land at Spital Farm, Banbury, Oxfordshire: an archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **04/60**, Reading
- Ford, S, 2008, 'Land at Spital Farm, Banbury, Oxfordshire: an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **04/60b**, Reading
- McNicol-Norbury, J, 2014, 'M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Northamptonshire: an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report **14/172**, Reading
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London



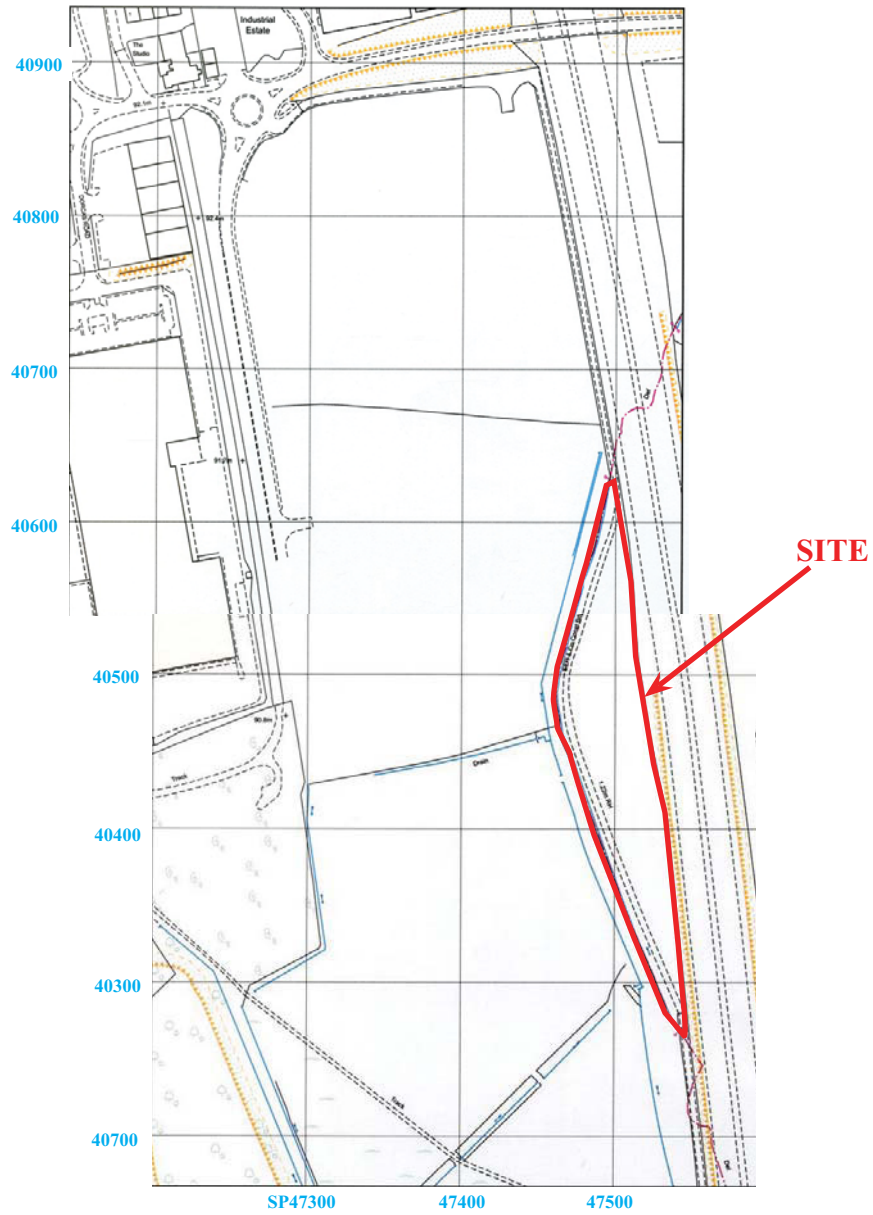
**M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury,  
Northamptonshire, 2014**

**Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Banbury, Oxfordshire

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 191 at 1:12500  
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



ORB 14/172b

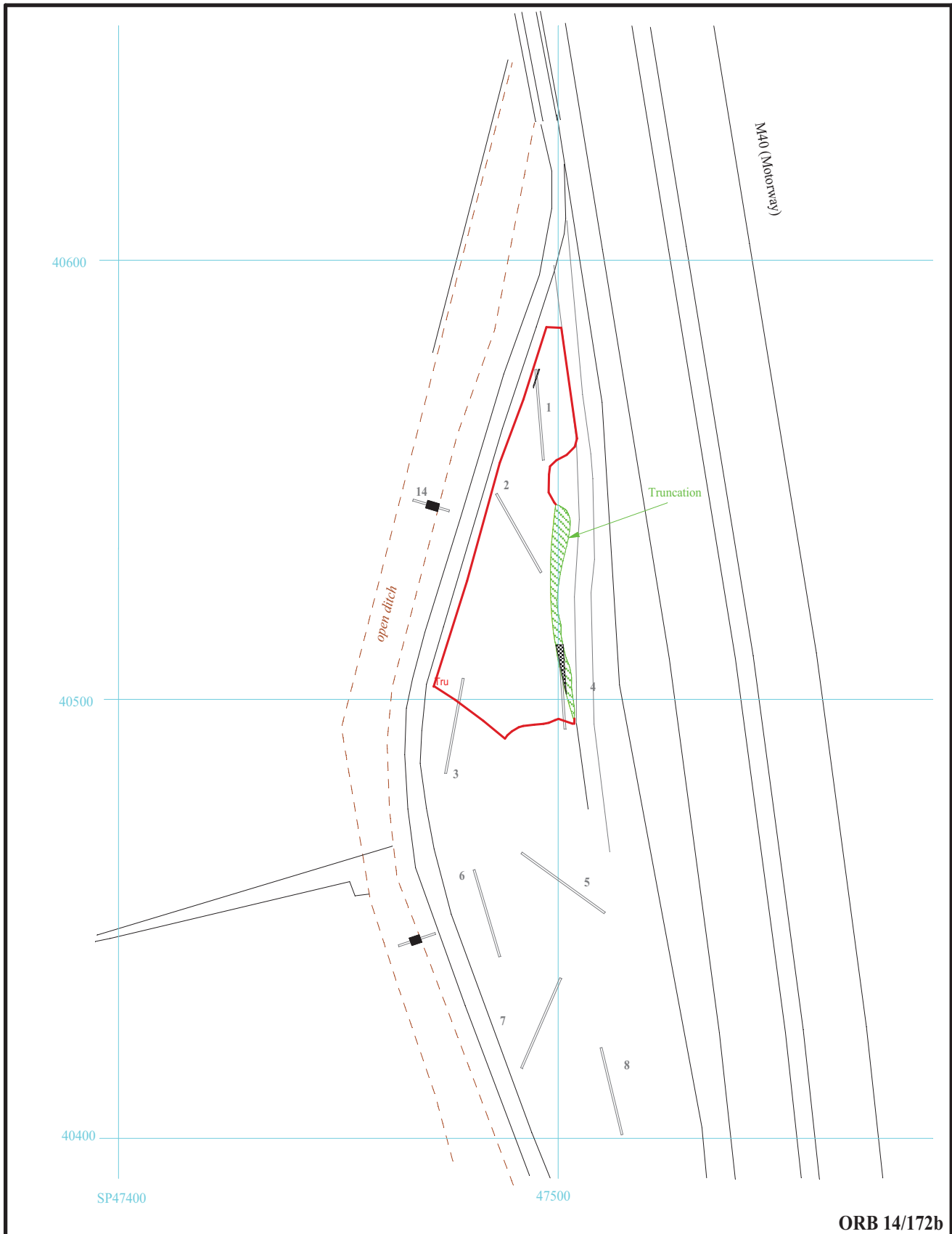


**M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury,  
Northamptonshire, 2014  
Archaeological Recording Action  
Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.  
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:5000

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES





ORB 14/172b

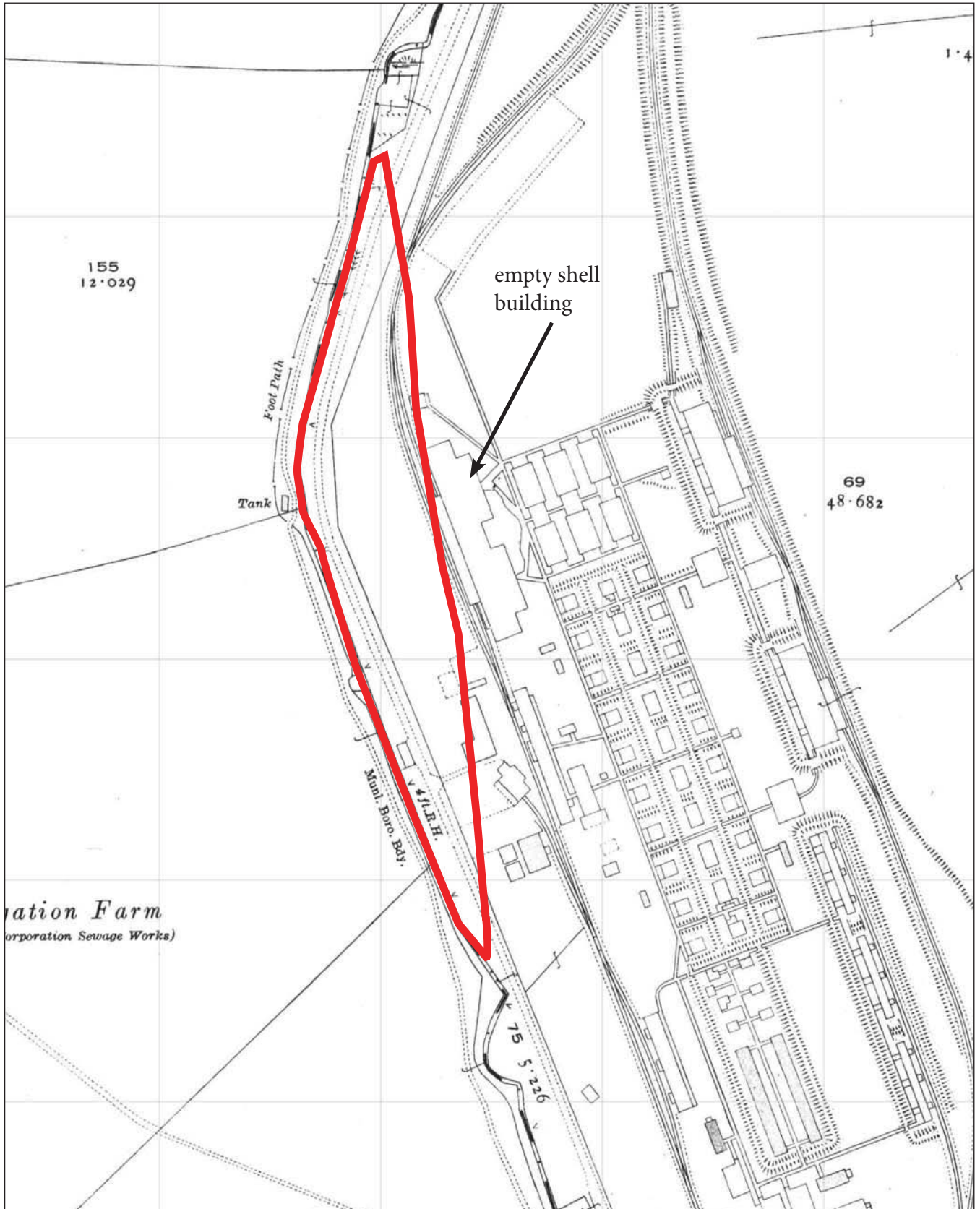


**M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury,  
Northamptonshire, 2014  
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 3. Location of watching brief area and previous evaluation trenches



THAMES VALLEY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
 SERVICES



ORB 14/172b



**M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, Banbury,  
Northamptonshire, 2014  
Archaeological Recording Action**

Figure 4. Ordnance Survey map of 1922 showing part of munitions works near the site.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.  
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:5000

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES



Plate 1. Site strip, looking north, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Modern truncation along east boundary of site, looking south.

ORB 14/172b

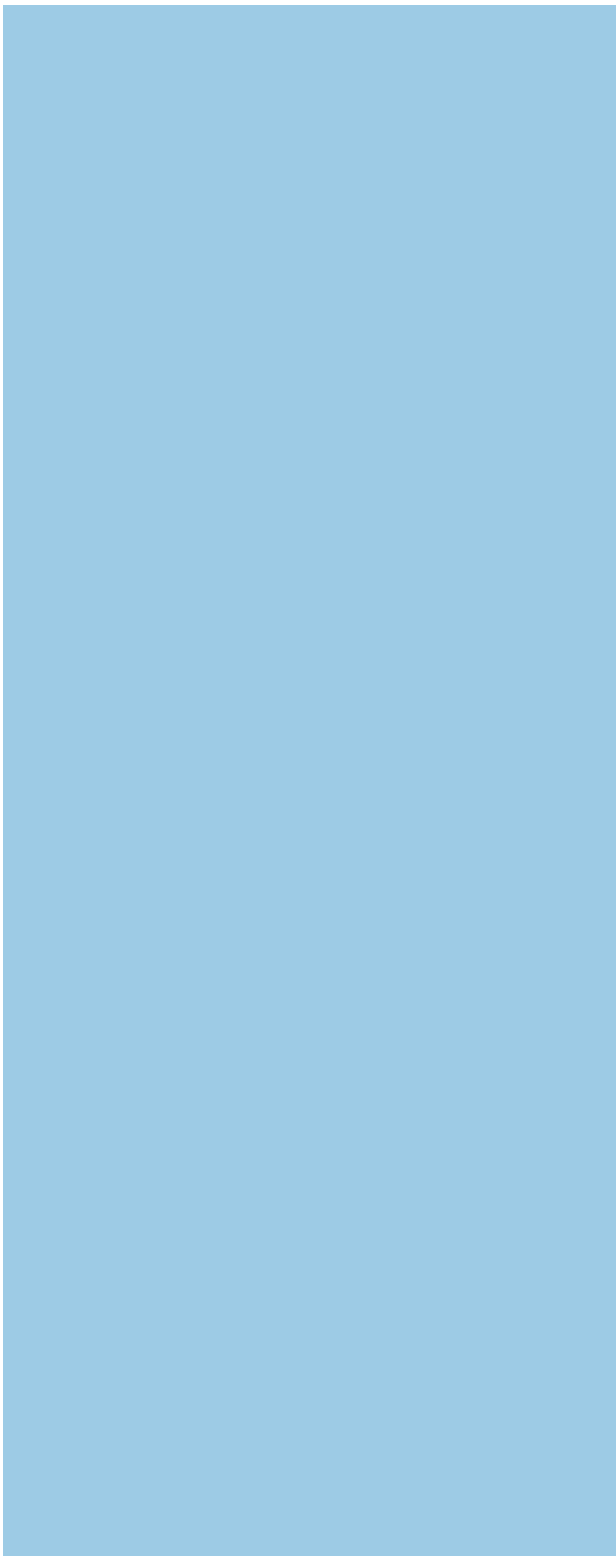
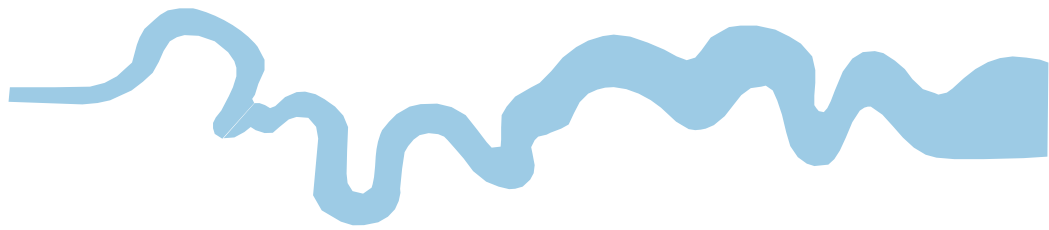
**M40, Land at Overthorpe Road, near Banbury,  
Northamptonshire, 2014  
Archaeological Recording Action  
Plates 1 - 2.**

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,  
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,  
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552  
Fax: 0118 9260553  
Email: [tvas@tvas.co.uk](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**