

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Wolverton Cemetery extension, off Woburn Avenue,
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Anne-Michelle Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse

**Site Code: WCMK 18-89
HER Event Code: EMK1632**

(SP 8094 4040)

Wolverton Cemetery extension, off Woburn Avenue, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for RSK ADAS Limited

by Anne-Michelle Huvig and Pierre-Damien Manisse

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WCMK 18/89

August 2018

Summary

Site name: Wolverton Cemetery extension, off Woburn Avenue, Milton Keynes

Grid reference: NGR SP 8095 4040

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 30th July to 1st August 2018

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Pierre-Damien Manisse

Site code: WCMK 18/89

Area of site: c. 0.45 ha

Summary of results: Due to ecological constraints, trenches had to be moved or split. In total, fifteen trenches were excavated. No evidence for an extension of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery lying to the west was found, nor any other archaeological features or finds. The site is considered to have negligible archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 08.08.18
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Report 18/89

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Wolverton Cemetery, off Woburn Avenue, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SP 80959 4040) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr James McNicoll-Norbury of RSK ADAS Limited, 11D Park House, Milton Keynes, Abingdon, OX14 4RS.

An application for planning consent (14/02842/MKCOD3) for the extension of the existing cemetery was submitted to Milton Keynes Council in 2014 however it was withdrawn in 2015 under advice from the Milton Keynes Senior Archaeological Officer. This was in light of the discovery of an Anglo-Saxon burial ground to the north-west of the site which extended up to the edge of the site. It was advised that archaeological work should take place to inform any new application.

This was in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification (Dalby 2018) approved by Mr Nick Crank, Senior Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Pierre Manisse and Anne Huvig, between 30th July and 1st August 2018. The site code is WCMK 18/89. The archive is presently held at TVAS EastMidlands, Wellingborough and will be deposited at Milton Keynes Museum or the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is a roughly rectangular area of former allotments, located to the south-west edge of the existing Wolverton Cemetery, off Woburn Avenue, in north-western Milton Keynes. It covered approximately 0.8ha centred on NGR SP 8095 4040 (Figs 1 and 2). To the south-west the site is bordered by Great Monks Street and to the north-east by the existing Wolverton Cemetery. To the south-east of the site is Greenleys Junior School and to the north-west are residential areas. At the time of the fieldwork, the site was overgrown, filled with bushes, thorns and trees since its abandonment as allotment gardens. Excess spoil from grave digging in the

adjacent cemetery had sometimes been dumped here. Those modern dumps apart, the site is relatively flat and lies at an elevation of *c.* 90m above Ordnance Datum. The recorded geology (BGS 2018) is Oxford Clay Formation with superficial deposits being Oadby Member.

Archaeological background

The archaeological background has been detailed in the written scheme of investigation (Dalby 2018). In summary, very little of archaeological interest was recorded within 500m of the site. To the north-west, some flint flakes of imprecise prehistoric date (Neolithic to Bronze Age) were found in an evaluation and a 17th-century token is recorded to the north. Within the site, a well of unknown date and (uncertain position) was recorded. Previous archaeological work to the north-west of the site between 2007 and 2008 revealed a small number of pits and postholes and a possible early Roman enclosure ditch, but more significantly, seventy-eight graves containing eighty-three inhumations and two urned cremations of Middle Saxon origin (Zeevat 2015). The excavation indicated that the graves extended up to the boundary of the allotment (the present site), prompting the requirement for the current investigation.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of evaluation is generally to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits or artefactual evidence within the area of proposed development. The purpose of evaluation was ‘intended to ensure that any archaeological features/deposits exposed during ground works associated with the development were identified, recorded and interpretedto inform a strategy to avoid or mitigate the impacts of the proposed development on any surviving archaeological remains identified.’

The more specific aim of the evaluation was to identify and record any unknown buried archaeological remains, artefacts or earthworks associated with the Anglo-Saxon cemetery adjacent to the site.

On a regional level, this contributes to the goals of the Solent-Thames Research Framework (Hey and Hind 2015).

It was intended to excavate 18 trenches totalling 300m in length and 1.6m width, targeted over areas of archaeological potential within the site and distributed to evaluate all accessible areas which are not covered by existing trees. A prerequisite was the clearance of brush and unwanted trees to ensure sufficient access corridors and room to manoeuvre. All trench excavation was to be by mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision. Spoil heaps were to be checked for finds.

Results

Due to ecological and other access constraints, the trenches could not all be located as intended (Fig. 3). Two trenches were only 1.25m wide. The trenches were of various lengths, from 6.20m to 26.50m. Depth also varied greatly, from 0.32m to 0.70m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and geology is given in Appendix 1.

The stratigraphy of the site differed little from trench to trench and generally consisted of a topsoil, not exceeding 0.44m deep, directly overlying the geology. The topsoil was a dark brownish grey loamy silt with frequent roots. There was no subsoil but a progressive transition towards a light brown or yellowish brown silty clay/clay with rare to occasional chalk flecks, pebbles and small stones that matches the recorded geology.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned ESE–WNW, was 10.20m long, 1.25m wide and up to 0.56m deep. Topsoil 0.27m deep overlay the natural geology of light brown silty clay, occasional chalk flecks and pebbles. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was essentially a continuation of Trench 1, aligned ESE–WNW, 18.80m long, 1.25m wide and up to 0.38m deep. Topsoil 0.35m deep overlay the natural geology. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned south to north, was 23.20m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.5m deep. Topsoil 0.40m deep overlay the natural geology, which was excavated to a depth of 0.10m to check this interpretation (Fig. 4). No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned SW–NE, was 6.20m long, 1.60m wide and up to 0.40m deep. Topsoil 0.38m deep overlay the natural geology. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was aligned ESE–WNW, was 9.20m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.46m deep. Topsoil 0.44m deep overlay the natural geology. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 6 (Pl. 1)

Trench 6 was aligned SW–NE, was 13m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.32m deep. Topsoil overlay the natural geology. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was the most southerly trench, aligned SW–NE, was 13m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.35m deep. As elsewhere, topsoil directly overlay the natural geology and no archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 8

Trench 8 was aligned SE–NW, was 15.40m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.35m deep. Topsoil 0.34m deep overlay the natural geology of light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 9 (Pl. 2)

Trench 9 was aligned SW–NE, was 22.30m long, 1.25m wide and up to 0.45m deep. A 20th-century rubble dump (dated by a bottle of Bovril extract, not retained) was noted above the topsoil. Topsoil 0.43m deep overlay the natural geology of light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded. A capped well, presumably that noted in the WSI but expected to be much further east, was located just to the south-west of this trench.

Trench 10 (Fig. 4)

Trench 10 was aligned SE–NW, was 26.50m long, 1.6m wide and 0.32m deep. Topsoil 0.32m deep overlay the natural geology. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 11

Trench 11 was aligned SE–NW, was 13.0m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.36m deep. Topsoil 0.35m deep overlay the natural geology. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 12 (Pl. 3)

Trench 12 was aligned SW–NE, was 13.50m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.45m deep. Topsoil 0.243m deep overlay the natural geology of light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 13

Trench 13 was aligned ESE–WNW, was 18.0m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.71m deep. The topsoil was partially covered by an overburden layer (up to 0.54m deep) that probably consisted of a dump of surplus spoil from the grave digging at the cemetery. Then topsoil 0.17m deep overlay the natural geology of light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded. A recent geotechnical test pit was observed in 13.4m from the ESE end of the trench, which appeared to have been dug by a 0.60m wide machine bucket, and was 2.20m long.

Trench 14 (Pl. 4)

Trench 14 was aligned SE–NW, was 16.0m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.80m deep. As in Trench 13, 0.50m of grave spoil dump overlay topsoil 0.20m deep which then overlay the natural geology of light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Trench 15

Trench 15 was aligned SSE–NNW, was 15.0m long, 1.6m wide and up to 0.42m deep. Topsoil 0.27m deep overlay the natural geology. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Conclusion

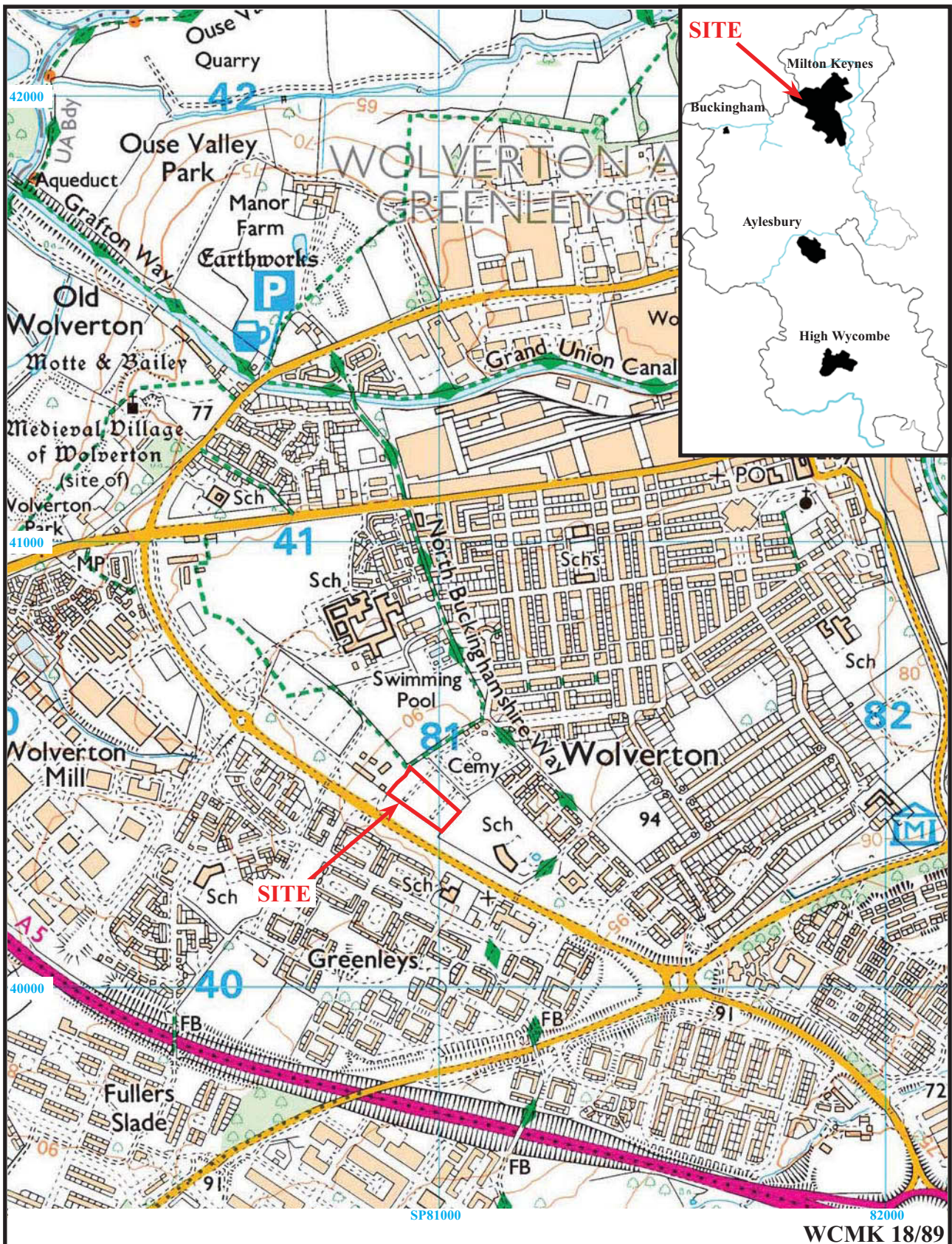
The evaluation trial trenching as initially planned had to be altered because of the ecological constraints, but the trenches excavated nevertheless provided good coverage of the entire available area. Regardless, no archaeological feature nor finds were observed. Only modern overburden was noted in two trenches. There was no evidence for an extension of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery excavated in 2008. The site is considered to have a very low archaeological potential.

References

- BGS (2018), *British Geological Society - Geology of Britain Viewer* (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>; accessed on 29/07/2018).
- Dalby, S, 2018, 'Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Trial Trenching Wolverton Cemetery extension, Milton Keynes', RSK ADAS, Abingdon
- NPPF (2012), National Planning Policy Framework, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London.
- Zeepvat, B, 2015, 'Summary Excavation Report and Publication Proposals: Site 2, Radcliffe School, Wolverton, Milton Keynes', BHS/0019/WRS/1

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.2	1.25	0.56	0–0.27m topsoil , 0.27m+ light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology.
2	18.8	1.25	0.38	0–0.35m topsoil, 0.35m+ light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology.
3	23.2	1.60	0.50	0–0.40m topsoil, 0.40m+ light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology
4	6.2	1.60	0.40	0–0.38m topsoil, 0.38m+ light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology.
5	9.2	1.60	0.46	0–0.44m topsoil, 0.44m+ light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology.
6	13	1.60	0.32	0–0.30m topsoil , 0.30m+ light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology. [Pl. 1]
7	13	1.60	0.40	0–0.38m topsoil , 0.38m+ light yellowish brown clay with rare pebbles/small stones natural geology.
8	15.4	1.60	0.35	0–0.34m topsoil , 0.34m+ light yellowish brown clay with rare pebbles/small stones natural geology.
9	22.3	1.60	0.45	0–0.43m topsoil , 0.43m+ light yellowish brown clay with rare pebbles/small stones natural geology. [Pl. 2]
10	26.5	1.60	0.32	0–0.30m topsoil , 0.30m+ light yellowish brown clay with rare pebbles natural geology.
11	13	1.60	0.36	0–0.35m topsoil , 0.35m+ light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology.
12	13.5	1.60	0.45	0–0.43.m topsoil , 0.43m + light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology. [Pl. 3]
13	18	1.60	0.70	0–0.54m overburden, 0.54m-0.71m topsoil, 0.71m+ light brown silty clay occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology.
14	16	1.60	0.40-0.80	0–0.50m overburden, 0.50m-0.70m topsoil, 0.70m+ light brown silty clay with occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology. [Pl. 4]
15	15	1.60	0.42	0–0.40m topsoil , 0.40m+ light brown silty clay with occasional chalk flecks and pebbles/small stones natural geology.



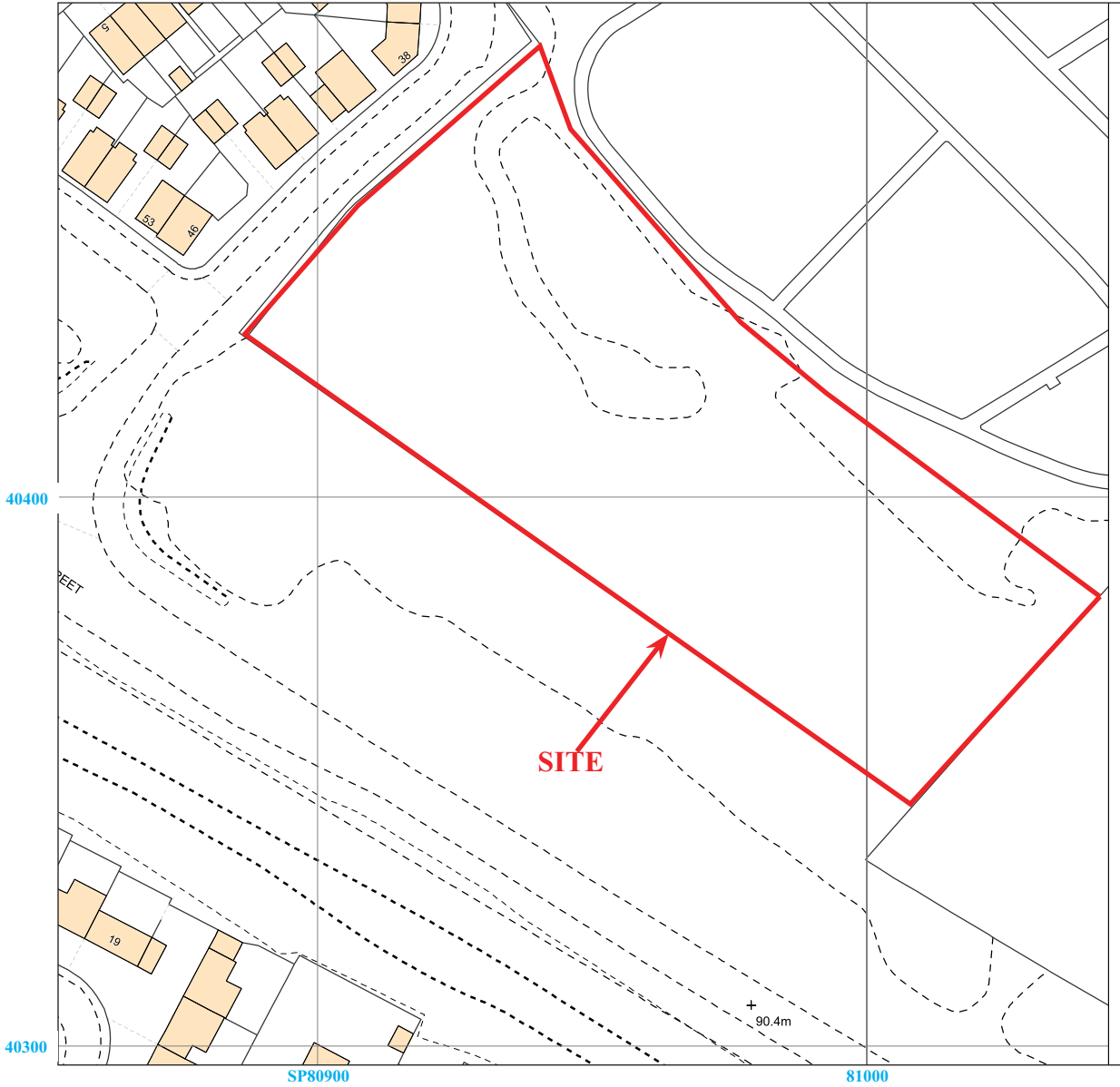
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wolverton, Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire.

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WCMK 18/89





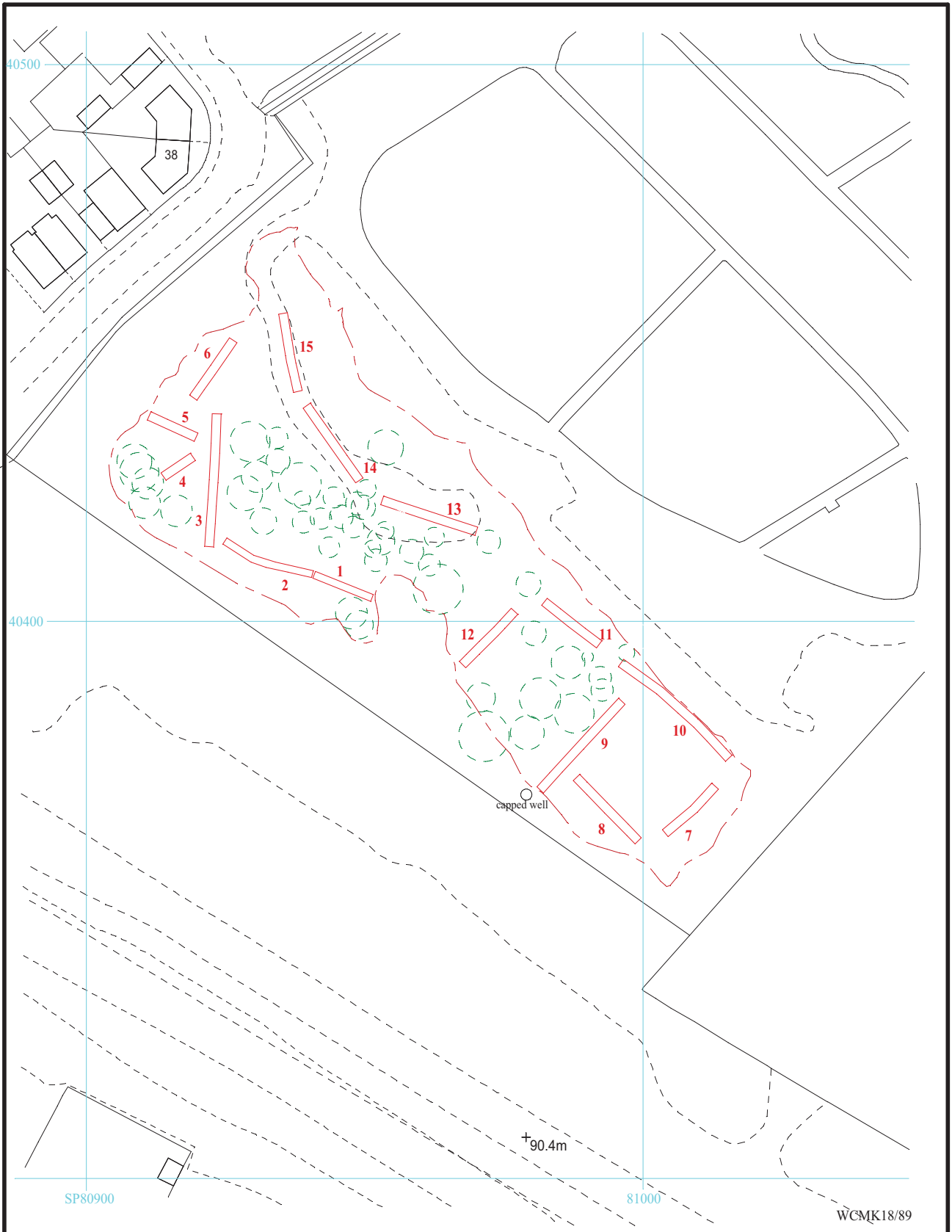
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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WCMK18/89 1 1 Evaluation Buckinghamshire, 2018 trees.



Trench 3

NW _____ SE 90.84maOD

Dark brown grey sandy silt, very rooty (Topsoil)

Ligh brown silty clay with chalk fleck and occasional pebbles (natural geology)

Trench 10

NW _____ SE 90.87m

Topsoil

Natural

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Figure 4. Representative sections.





Plate 1. Trench 6, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 9, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**





Plate 3. Trench 12, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 14, looking north west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 3 and 4.**

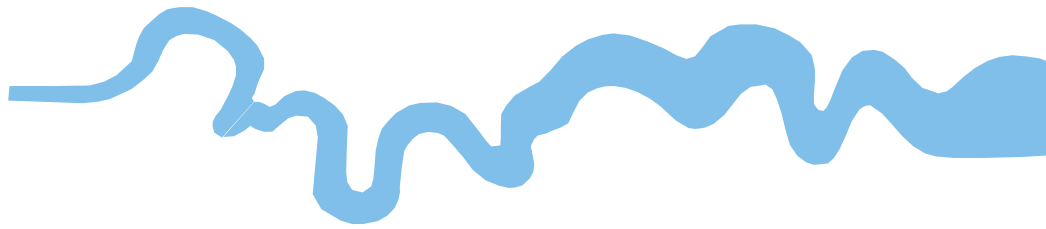
T V A S

EAST MIDLANDS

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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





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