

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Grove Business Park, Grove,  
Wantage, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by David Sanchez**

**Site Code: GWO16/48**

**(SU 3853 8959)**

# **Grove Business Park, Grove, Wantage, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
For Grove Business Park Limited**

by David Sanchez

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code GWO 16-48

**April 2020**

## Summary

**Site name:** Grove Business Park, Grove, Wantage, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 3853 8959

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 19<sup>th</sup> September to 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018

**Project coordinator:** Danielle Milbank

**Site supervisor:** David Sanchez

**Site code:** GWO 16/48

**Area of site:** c. 12ha

**Summary of results:** The watching brief observed overburden stripping of an extensive area of the proposal site as well as the digging of service trenches. However, no finds nor features of archaeological interest were uncovered

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course, with an accession code to be assigned in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 28.04.20 Steve Preston ✓ 28.04.20
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# Grove Business Park, Grove, Wantage, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by David Sanchez

**Report 16/48c**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at NGR SU 3853 8959 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Lyall of Triscombe Properties Limited, 7 Connelly Drive, Wedmore, Somerset, BS28 4AZ on behalf of Grove Business Park Limited, Orchard House, Strawberry How Road, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 9XQ.

Planning permission (P16/V1721/FUL) has been gained from Vale of White Horse District Council for commercial development on parts of the site totalling *c.* 4.5ha. The consent is subject to two conditions (14 and 15) relating to archaeology requiring a phased programme of archaeological work on the site to comprise evaluation and watching brief. The evaluation examined the majority of the proposed new development area finding noting of interest, but one zone, to be redeveloped as three new buildings could not be evaluated at the same time. It is this area which is the subject of the watching brief.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the districts policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr. Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, the archaeological adviser to Vale of White Horse District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by David Sanchez, dates and the site code is GWO16/48.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Services in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located to the south-west of the village of Grove, north-west of Wantage in the Vale of White Horse in south-west Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). It is set in what is mostly a flat lowland agricultural landscape. The sites geology is mapped as 2nd terrace gravel overlying Gault Clay (BGS 1971), however only Gault Clay with a few small stones was observed during a previous archaeological evaluation (Ford 2018). The site is located at a height of 83 m above ordnance datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The site is located in area of moderate archaeological potential due the presence of Roman and prehistoric sites to the east and southeast as summarised in the brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (Coddington 2018) drawing on a desk-based assessment for the site (Baljkas 2016). In summary, the site was used in the mid 20th century as an ancillary part of the 2nd World War Grove airfield, then as a research facility and most recently as a business park. Previous archaeological fieldwork comprised the digging of a single evaluation trench prior to the construction of a new building on the site but which detected nothing of archaeological relevance (OA 2012). A further much large archaeological evaluation at the northern end of the site comprising 24 trenches was carried out in 2018 (Ford 2018) which revealed high levels of disturbance and truncation of the natural geology prior to the dumping of made ground (Fig. 3). No archaeological deposits nor artefacts were detected.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by groundworks in the south western part of the site following demolition of existing structures. This area was not accessible to the prior evaluation trenching. This was to involve monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and include observation of surface stripping, the excavating of foundations and service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive works as necessary.

## **Results**

The fieldwork comprised two components.

### *Ground reduction*

A zone of approximately 1500sq m towards the centre of the site intended for a car park was stripped of overburden using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket to expose the natural clay geology (Fig. 4, Pls. 1 and 3). Typically between 0,15 and 0.4m of modern made ground was removed. The natural geology had been cut by numerous modern features- foundations, service runs, etc, but no deposits of archaeological interest were revealed.

### *Drainage trenches*

Three service trenches dug for drainage were observed (Fig. 4). Trench 1 skirted the western edge of the site, while trench 2 was dug to the north of proposed building A. Trench 3 lay to the south of proposed building A.

Trench 1 was between 0.9 to 1.20m wide, approximately 90m long and 1.3 to 1.8m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0-0.35m of topsoil, 0.35-0.70m of mixed made ground, separate dumps of yellow sand and light brown sand and gravel. Frequent modern brick/tile fragments were present and there were frequent modern truncations including dead services and concrete surfaces. The natural geology was observed at a depth of 0.7m.

Trench 2 was between 0.7 to 0.9m wide, approximately 19m long and 1.1 to 1.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of c. 0.24m of topsoil, 0.28m of made ground (demolition rubble) with the the natural geology below. Several areas of modern disturbance were noted.

Trench 32 was between 0.6 to 0.8m wide, approximately 35m long and 0.7-1.05m deep The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15-0.2m of topsoil, above c. 0.4m of made ground (demolition rubble) with the the natural geology below. Several areas of modern disturbance and former services were noted but no deposits of archaeological interest (Pl. 2).

### **Finds**

No artefacts of archaeological interest were observed or recovered during the groundworks.

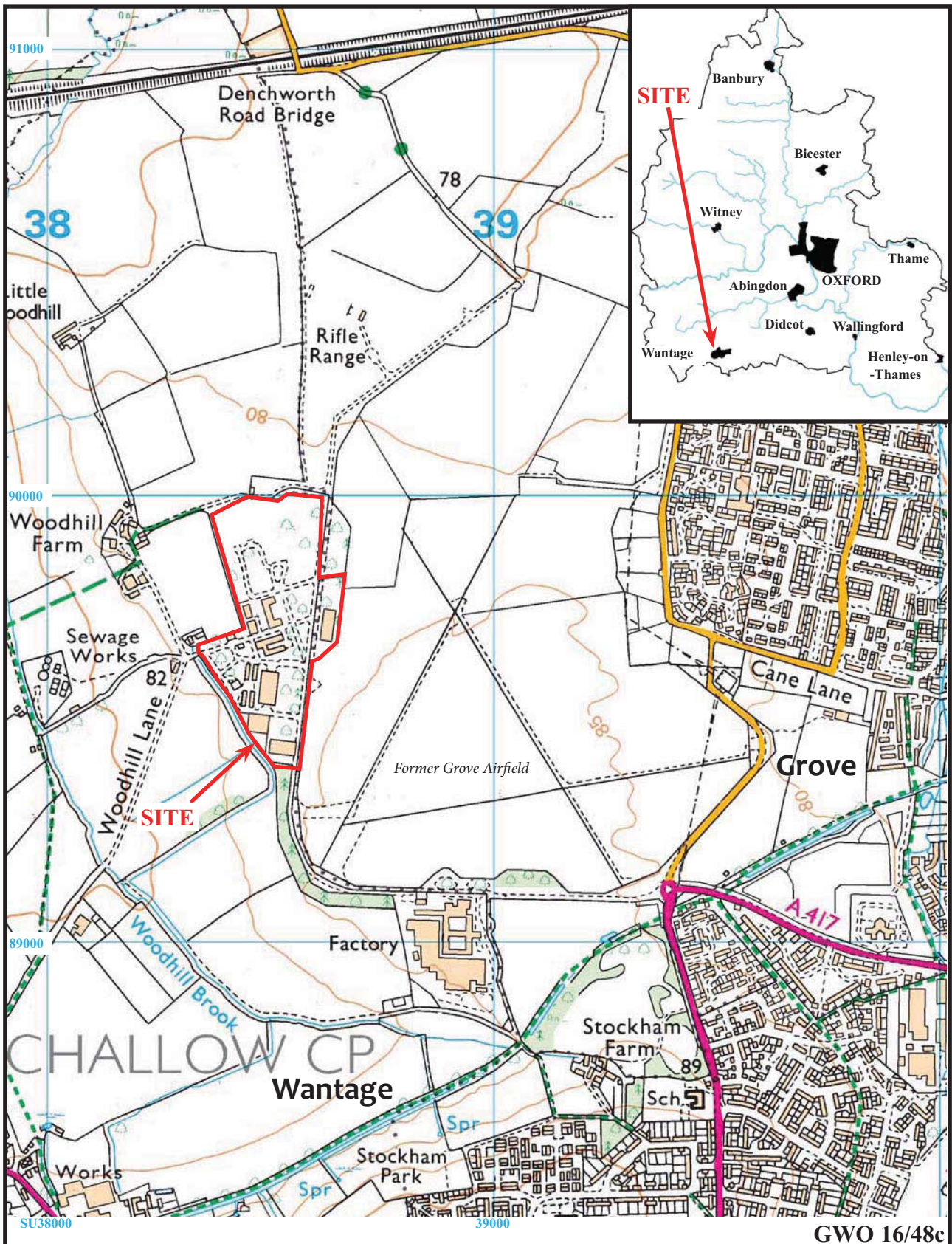
### **Conclusion**

Monitoring of groundworks associated the redevelopment of a parcel of land at the business park revealed areas stripped of overburden as well as trenches dug for services. Numerous features cutting the natural geology were observed but none were of archaeological interest.

### **References**

- Baljkas, G , 2015, Land Grove Business Park, Wantage, Oxfordshire, archaeological desk-based assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 16/48, Reading
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- Coddington, H, 2016, Grove Business Park, Downsvie Road, Wantage, a design brief, Oxford
- Ford, S, 2018, Grove Business Park, Grove, Wantage, Oxfordshire, an archaeological evaluation, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 16/48b, Reading
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

OA, 2012, 'Proposed Police Facility Grove Technology Park, Archaeological Evaluation', Oxford Archaeology, unpubl rep 5246, Oxford



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Oxfordshire, 2018**

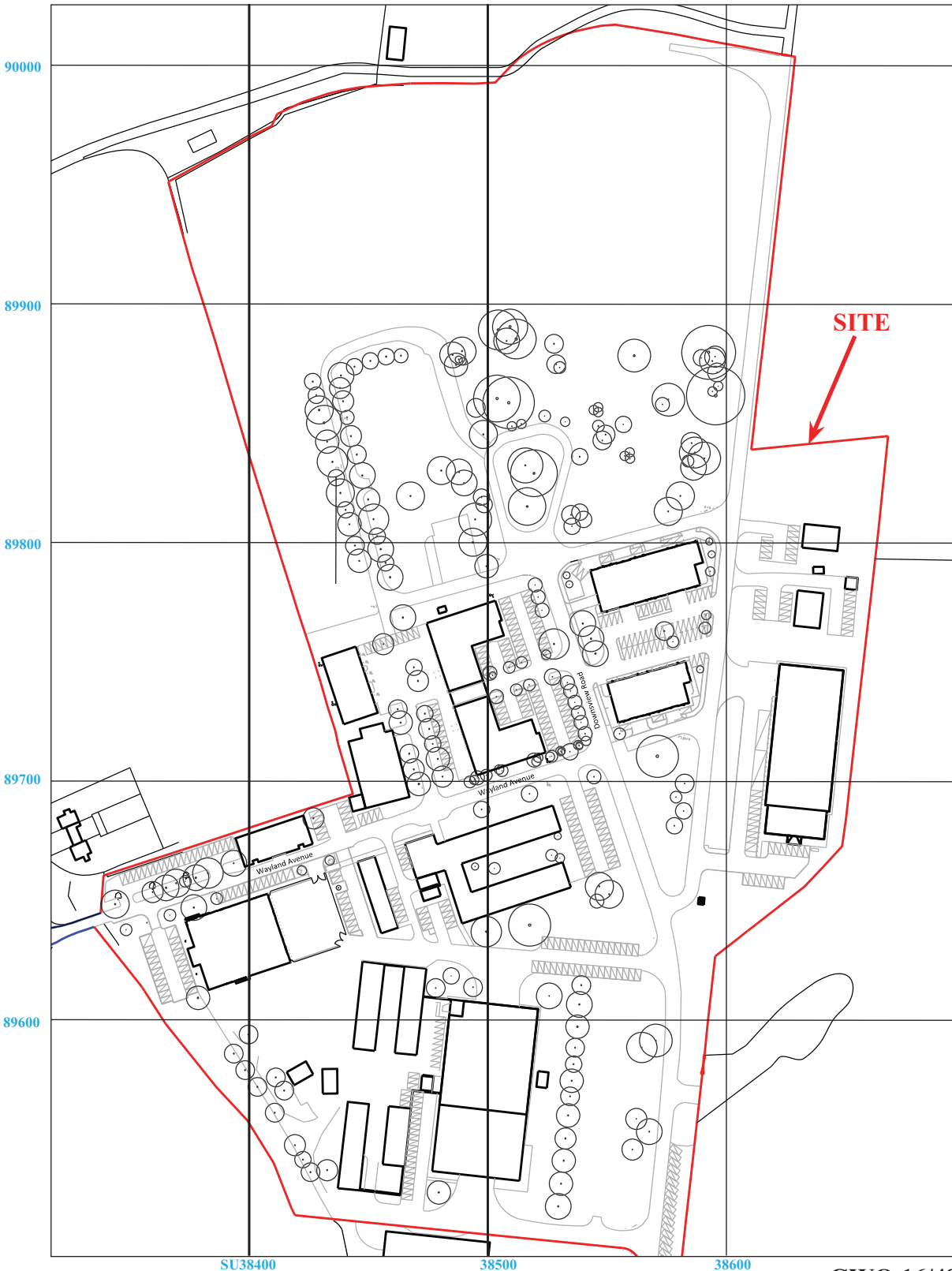
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Figure 1. Location of site in Oxfordshire and to the west of Grove, north of Wantage and adjacent to the former airfield.

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**SITE**

SU38400

38500

38600

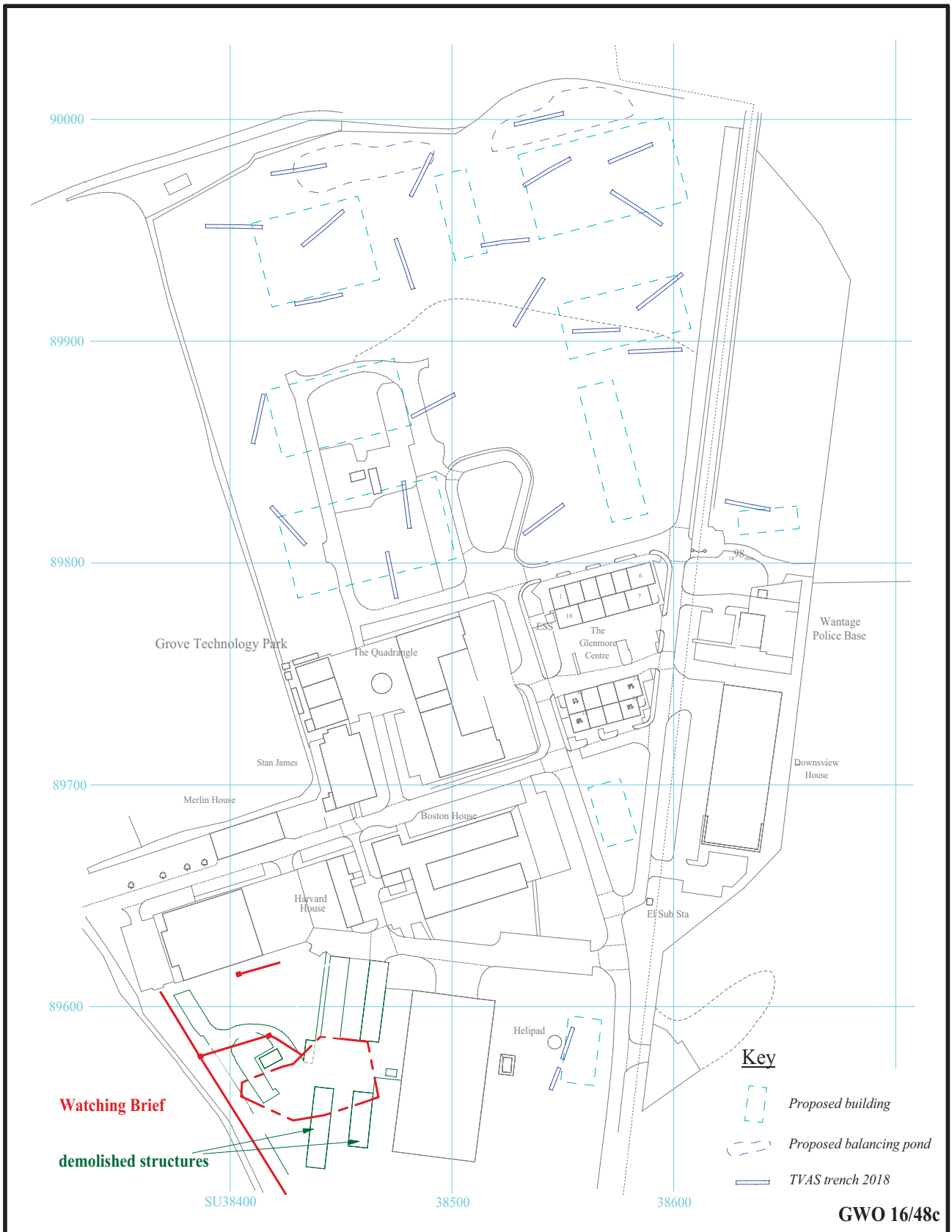
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Figure 2. Current layout location of site.

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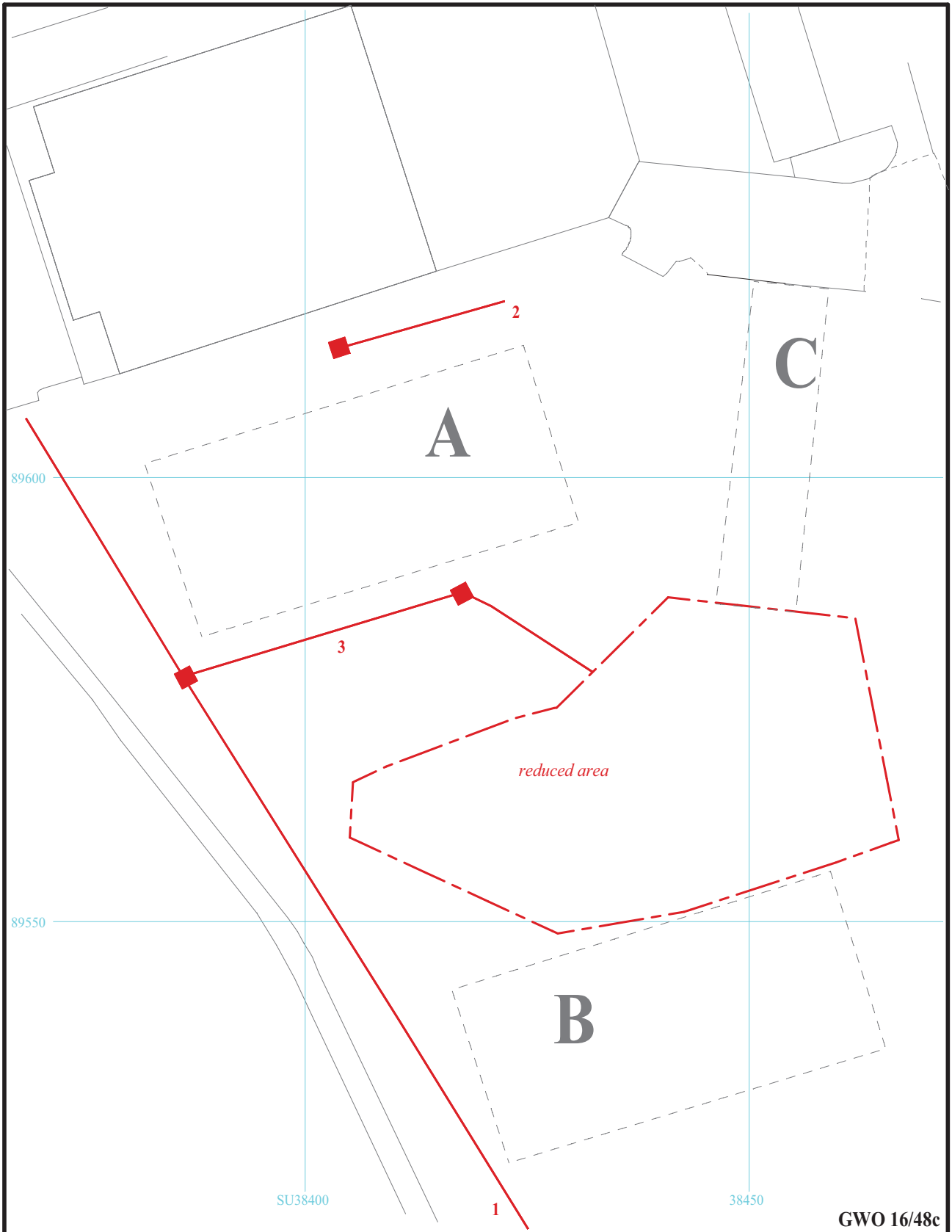




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Figure 3. Location of observed areas in red; and previous evaluation of 2018 (blue).





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Figure 4. Location of watching brief area.



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Plate 1. Area of site, looking north east.



Plate 2. Service trench 3, looking south east, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Car park, general shot over reduced area, looking north north east, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Service trench 1, looking south west, Scales: 1m.

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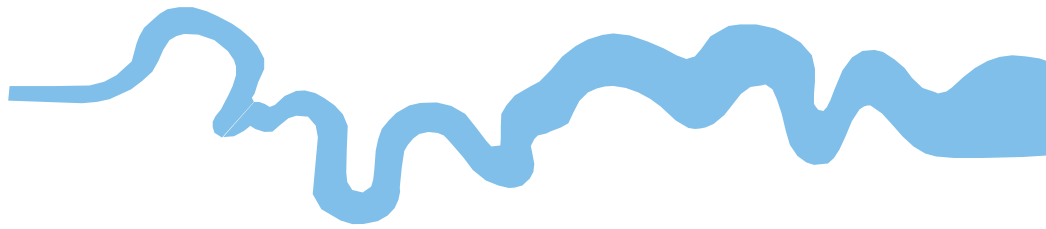
**Grove Business Park,  
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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## 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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