

**Land off A420  
Faringdon  
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation



*for*  
**The Environmental Development Partnership**  
*acting on behalf of*

**Edenstone HomesLtd**


CA Project: 3936  
CA Report: 12279

September 2012

Land off A420  
Faringdon  
Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 3936  
CA Report: 12279

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date	19 September 2012
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signed	
date	28 September 2012
issue	01

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**CONTENTS**

SUMMARY ..... 4

1. INTRODUCTION ..... 5

2. RESULTS (FIG. 2) ..... 7

3. DISCUSSION..... 7

4. CA PROJECT TEAM ..... 8

5. REFERENCES ..... 8

**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS..... 9**

**APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM ..... 11**

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

- Fig. 1 Site location plan 1:25,000
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan, showing features 1:500

## SUMMARY

**Project name:** Land off A420  
**Location:** Faringdon, Oxfordshire  
**NGR:** SU 2824 9439  
**Type:** Evaluation  
**Date:** 28-31 August 2012  
**Site code:** FLO 12

In August 2012, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of an area of land off the A420 (Coxwell Road), Faringdon, Oxfordshire. The evaluation comprised the excavation of five trial trenches.

The evaluation recorded no archaeological features or deposits, and there was no evidence for the continuation of an Iron Age/Romano-British settlement recorded previously to the west of Coxwell Street.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August 2012, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation of an area of land off the A420 (Coxwell Road), Faringdon, Oxfordshire (site centred on NGR: SU 2824 9439; Fig. 1). The evaluation comprised the excavation of five trial trenches. It was undertaken at the request of the Environment Development Partnership, acting on behalf of Edenstone Homes Ltd.
- 1.2 The Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) has granted planning permission for residential development of the site (ref: GFA/19649/1-x), with a condition (Condition 5) requiring an archaeological watching brief. It was agreed with Hugh Coddington, Principal Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), that an archaeological trial trench evaluation prior to development would be an appropriate way to assess the archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.3 The evaluation was undertaken in line with a brief (OCC 2012) issued by Hugh Coddington, archaeological advisor to VWHDC, and a subsequent Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2012) and approved by Mr Coddington. Fieldwork also followed the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008), and the English Heritage procedural documents *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006). The fieldwork was monitored by Hugh Coddington, with a site visit being made on 30 August 2012.

### **The site**

- 1.4 The proposed development site encloses an area of approximately 1ha and lies at approximately 124m OAD (above Ordnance Datum). The site is presently under rough pasture. It is bounded to the north and east by the rear gardens of adjacent residences, to the west by Coxwell Road (the A420) and further residential properties, and to the south by farmland.
- 1.5 The area's bedrock geology is mapped as interbedded sandstone and conglomerate of the Lower Greensand Group, with no superficial deposits being recorded (BGS 2012).

- 1.6 Archaeological interest in the site arose from a previous archaeological investigation undertaken on the western side of Coxwell Road (Cook, J et al 2004; Weaver and Ford, 2004). This revealed an extensive Iron Age and Romano-British settlement, the eastern extent of which was not defined.

### **Archaeological objectives**

- 1.7 As outlined in the WSI (CA 2012), the objectives of the evaluation were:
- to ascertain whether the Iron Age/Romano-British activity recorded to the west of Coxwell Road extended into the proposed development site, and if possible, to determine the eastward extent of this activity;
  - to establish the quality, date and extent of any other archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site.
- 1.8 The results of this evaluation will assist VWHDC in making an informed judgement on the significance of the archaeological resource of the site and the likely impact of the proposed development on that significance, and will form the basis of any proposals for appropriate further action.

### **Methodology**

- 1.9 The evaluation comprised the excavation of five trial trenches, each of which was 30m long and 1.5m wide. The layout of these trenches was largely as specified in the WSI, although topographic constraints made it necessary to relocate Trench 2 southwards. The revised trench layout is shown on Fig. 2.
- 1.10 The trenches were surveyed using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS, in accordance with CA's *Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual* (CA 2009).
- 1.11 The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision. As no significant archaeological horizons were encountered, the trenches were machine-excavated to the top of the natural substrate. Trenches were recorded in accordance with CA's *Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual* (CA 2007). Deposits were assessed for palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *Technical Manual 2 The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*

(CA 2003), but as no significant archaeological deposits were identified no samples were taken.

- 1.12 The evaluation archive is currently held by CA at their offices in Milton Keynes. CA will make arrangements for the archive to be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museums Service. A summary of information from this project will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## **2. RESULTS (FIG. 2)**

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts, can be found in Appendix A. In general, the sandy gravel natural substrate was found in varying depths of between 0.5m and 0.97m, overlain by sandy clay subsoils and modern topsoil. Trench 1 contained a modern rubble deposit overlying the subsoil and sealed by the topsoil. No archaeological features were identified in any of the trenches.

### **Trench 5**

- 2.2 Natural substrate 502 comprised yellow sand with sandy clay lenses and was exposed at 0.7m below present ground level (BPGL). It was disturbed by a number of tree-boles. These were sealed by 0.4m of sandy clay subsoil 501, in turn overlain by 0.3m of modern topsoil 500.

### **The finds and palaeoenvironmental evidence**

- 2.3 No artefactual material was recovered from the site, and no palaeoenvironmental samples were taken.

## **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 The evaluation recorded no archaeological features or deposits. There was no evidence for the continuation of the Iron Age/Romano-British settlement recorded to the west of Coxwell Street, slightly to the north-west of the proposed development site. Levels on the site do not appear to have been altered significantly in the recent past, with the presence of a reasonably thick subsoil indicating that this activity simply did not extend as far south-east as the proposed development site. Previous evaluation by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS) suggested that the main area of Iron Age settlement and a Roman Shrine lay approximately 80-100m

further to the north-west of the presently proposed development area, and subsequent excavations were focused on that area, with archaeological activity appearing to drop away in trenches excavated further to the south and south-east (Weaver and Ford 2004).

#### **4. CA PROJECT TEAM**

- 4.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Vasilis Tsamis, assisted by Jeremy Mordue and Paulo Clemente. The report was written by Derek Evans, and the illustrations were prepared by Ian Atkins. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Vasilis Tsamis. The project was managed for CA by Simon Cox.

#### **5. REFERENCES**

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2012. Geology of Britain viewer, 1:50 000 scale [online] available from <http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer/> [accessed 6/9/2012].

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2012 *Land of A420, Faringdon, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

Weaver, S. D. G. and Ford, S. 2004 *An Early Iron Age Occupation Site, a Roman Shrine and Other Prehistoric Activity at Coxwell Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire*. *Oxoniensia* **LXIX**, 119-180

Cook, J et al. 2004 *Excavations of an Iron Age Site at Coxwell Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire*. *Oxoniensia* **LXIX**, 181-286



**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS****Trench 1**

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	-	-	0.18m	Modern
101	Deposit	Building rubble in a brown sandy clay matrix	-	-	0.16m	Modern
102	Deposit	Dark grey sandy clay	-	-	0.3m	-
103	Natural	Red-yellow sandy gravel	-	-	-	-

**Trench 2**

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy silt	-	-	0.12m	-
201	Deposit	Light brown sandy silt with frequent gravels	-	-	0.11m	-
202	Deposit	Greyish brown sandy silt	-	-	0.14m	-
203	Deposit	Greyish brown sandy silt with occasional gravels	-	-	0.14m	-
204	Deposit	Mid brown sandy silt with moderate gravels	-	-	0.07m	-
205	Natural	Orange-brown sand with occasional gravels	-	-	0.49m	-
206	Natural	Grey-brown sand with occasional gravels	-	-	-	-

**Trench 3**

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
300	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	-	-	0.38m	-
301	Deposit	Yellow-brown sandy clay with reddish brown mottling	-	-	0.59m	-
302	Natural	Mid brown sandy clay	-	-	0.88m	-
303	Natural	Yellow sandy gravel	-	-	-	-

**Trench 4**

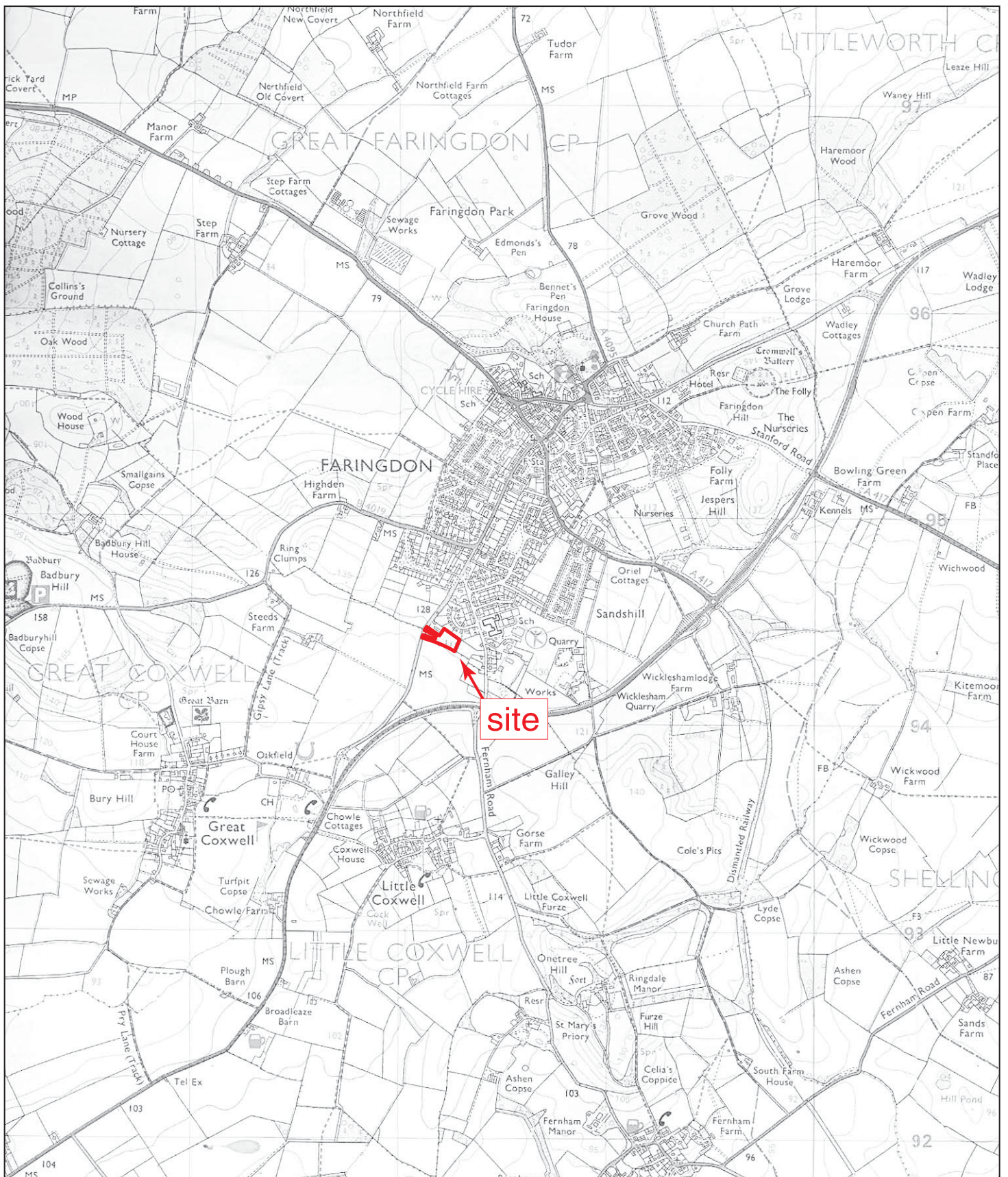
No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
400	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	-	-	0.27m	-
401	Deposit	Yellow-brown sandy clay	-	-	0.23m	-
402	Natural	Yellow-brown gravelly sand	-	-	-	-

**Trench 5**

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
500	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy clay	-	-	0.3m	-
501	Deposit	Yellow-brown sandy clay	-	-	0.4m	-
502	Natural	Mottled yellow sand/brown sandy clay	-	-	-	-
503	Cut	Tree-bole	3m	1.4m	-	-
504	Deposit	Fill of 503	3m	1.4m	-	-
505	Cut	Tree-bole	2.1m	1.2m	-	-
506	Deposit	Fill of 505	2.1m	1.2m	-	-
507	Cut	Tree-bole	2m	1.4m	-	-
508	Deposit	Fill of 507	2m	1.4m	-	-
509	Cut	Tree-bole	1m	0.9m	-	-
510	Deposit	Fill of 509	1m	0.9m	-	-
511	Cut	Tree-bole	0.9m	0.8m	-	-
512	Deposit	Fill of 511	0.9m	0.8m	-	-

**APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Land off A420 Faringdon	
Short description	<p>In August 2012, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of an area of land off the A420 (Coxwell Road), Faringdon, Oxfordshire. The evaluation comprised the excavation of five trial trenches.</p> <p>The evaluation recorded no archaeological features or deposits, and there was no evidence for the continuation of an Iron Age/Romano-British settlement recorded previously to the west of Coxwell Street.</p>	
Project dates	28-31 August 2012	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type	None	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Coxwell Road, Faringdon, Oxfordshire	
Study area	1ha	
Site co-ordinates	SU 2824 9439	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology (CA)	
Project Brief originator	Oxfordshire County Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Simon Cox (CA)	
Project Supervisor	Vasilis Tsamis (CA)	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		
	Accession no: n/a	Content
Physical		
Paper		Site records
Digital		Report, digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2012 <i>Land off A420, Faringdon, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report <b>12279</b>		



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**PROJECT TITLE**

Land off A420, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

**FIGURE TITLE**

Site location plan



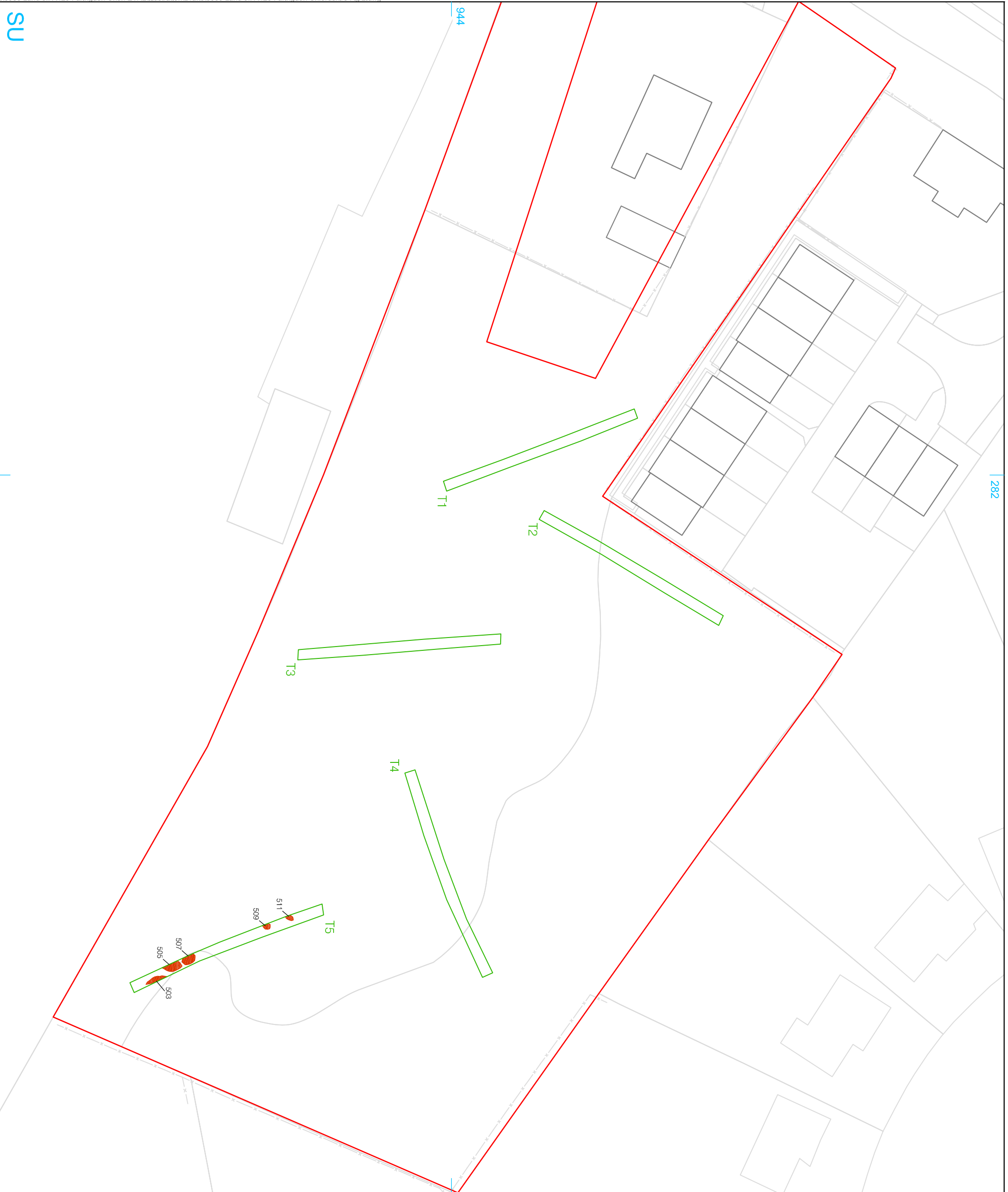
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PROJECT NO. 3936 DATE 28-09-2012  
 DRAWN BY IA REVISION 00  
 APPROVED BY PJM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1





282

944



- site
- evaluation trench
- tree-bole



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Land off A420, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench location plan, showing features

PROJECT NO.	3936	DATE	28-09-2012	FIGURE NO.	2
DRAWN BY	IA	REVISION	00		
APPROVED BY	PJM	SCALE	A3 1:500		