

Orchard Farm Sittingbourne Kent

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
OPDE UK Ltd.

CA Project: 770159
Report: 16565

November 2015



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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	16.11.15	Adam Howard	REG	Internal review	Edits	REG
B	10.10.16	Ray Kennedy	Damian De Rosa	Final	Edits	DDR

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Orchard Farm
Location:	Sittingbourne Kent
NGR:	TQ 87943 66845
Type:	Watching Brief
Date:	11 -12 November 2015
Planning Reference:	14/502072
Location of Archive:	CA Andover
Site Code:	OFSK15

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the development a solar farm at on Land at Orchard Farm, Sittingbourne, Kent.

The watching brief consisted of the observation of cable trenches and foundation excavation of junction boxes. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no finds material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for OPDE UK Ltd at Land at Orchard Farm, Sittingbourne, Kent (centred on NGR: TQ 87943 66845; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to planning consent for the construction of a solar farm (Planning ref: **14/502072**) granted by Swale Borough Council the local planning authority.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2014) and approved by Simon Mason of Kent County Council (KCC) the archaeological advisor to Swale Borough Council (SBC). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014), and the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

The site

- 1.4 The development which covers 10.06 hectares (24.87acres) area is bounded by High Oak Hill to the north-west, Stickfast Lane to the south-west, a hedged boundary to the south-east and a farm track and adjacent orchard to the north-east. The Site comprises two individual fields separated by a farm track way flanked by a mature hedgerow that runs from High Oak Hill to the south-eastern boundary.
- 1.4 The Site's topography slopes downhill from the south-west at 35m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 25m aOD in the south-east. A small pond is located in the northernmost field. The underlying solid geology is of the London Clay Formation comprising clay and silt.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This background information is a summary of the Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment report (URS 2014).
- 2.2 A find of a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age stone axe head was recovered during metal detecting on land to the west of Stickfast Lane south-east of the Site. Recent

archaeological investigations in the parishes of Iwade and Bobbing suggest that there was extensive activity in the area around the Site during the later prehistoric period. Roman burials are recorded at both Bobbing and Sittingbourne to the south-east and south of the Site respectively and the Roman road, Watling Street, passed through both these settlements. There is also evidence of Roman industrial activity in close proximity to the Site, including pottery manufacture and salt panning. At a site at Funton Creek (a tributary of the Medway Estuary) to the north of the Site a possible Roman pottery kiln was identified and briquette was dispersed along the estuary shore. Two medieval moated sites are recorded within the immediate environs of the Site. Moat Farm is located c.550m to the north-east of the Site and Great Norwood Farm located c.450m south-west of the Site.

- 2.3 In 2014 a geophysical survey was undertaken by GSB. No anomalies of archaeological interest were detected within the magnetic data despite the surrounding archaeological potential; it was considered possible however that the past land usage as orchards may have destroyed or masked the presence of any archaeological remains. A number of old field boundaries and a track were recorded, but these could be related to boundaries on old maps (GSB 2014). Field drains were recorded in both fields and ploughing trends were recorded in one of the fields. A number of anomalies were categorised as being of Uncertain Origin; these were considered however, to be associated with the former land usage as orchards.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- record the nature of the main stratigraphic units encountered
- assess the overall presence, survival and potential of structural and industrial remains
- assess the overall presence, survival, condition, and potential of artefactual and ecofactual remains
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;

- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2014). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the HV Cable Trenches and Junction Boxes 1 to 3 (**Figure 2**).
- 4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 The archive and artefacts from the Watching Brief are currently held by CA at their offices in Andover. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the archive will be deposited with Medway Museums. However they are currently not accepting archives. Until this is resolved or an alternative repository is identified the archive will be held at the offices of CA in Andover. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-7)

- 5.1 The general deposit sequence consisted of topsoil, subsoil and natural. The topsoil consisted of a dark black to grey compact silty clay. The Subsoil was a mid brown compact silty clay with occasional subrounded pebble and rare white tiny chalk flecks.
- 5.2 Several natural deposits were encountered along the length of **Trench 1**. **Trench 1** (**Figures 3** and **4**) contained **102** a dark greyish blue compact silty clay (0.19 to 0.71m thick). Below this was **103** a mid brown compact silty clay with frequent pockets of fine sandy gravel. Below this was **104** a light blue silty clay with no inclusions. Towards the south of **Trench 1** the natural similar to **103** also contained

pockets of mid brown blue silty clay **114**. The north end of **Trench 1** crossed a modern track way consisting of red brick foundations and a crushed concrete hard core surface 105 (**Figure 3**).

- 5.3 The natural substrate recorded in Junction Box 1, **Trench 2 (Figure 5)** was a mid greyish blue silty clay with occasional patches of fine to small gravel in brown sandy clay.
- 5.4 The natural substrate recorded in Junction Box 2, **Trench 3 (Figure 6)** was a mid greyish brown sandy clay with fine to small subangular to subrounded gravel.
- 5.5 The natural substrate recorded in Junction Box 3, **Trench 4 (Figure 7)** was a light greyish blue compact silty clay.
- 5.6 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

6. THE FINDS AND BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1 No finds or biological evidence were recovered.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. Due to the limited nature of the intrusion caused by the Cable Trenches and Junction Boxes observed no archaeology was recorded.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Adam Howard. The report was written by Adam Howard. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Tom Rowley. The project was managed for CA by Richard Greatorex.

10. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 10 November 2015

CA 2014. Orchard Farm, Sittingbourne, Kent. Written Scheme of Investigation for an
Archaeological Watching Brief. Project No. 770158

GSB 2014. Geophysical Survey Report G1476 – Proposed Solar Farm at Orchard
Farm, Iwade, Kent

URS 2014. Proposed Solar Farm at Orchard Farm, Iwade, Kent – Historic
Environment Desk-Based Assessment



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

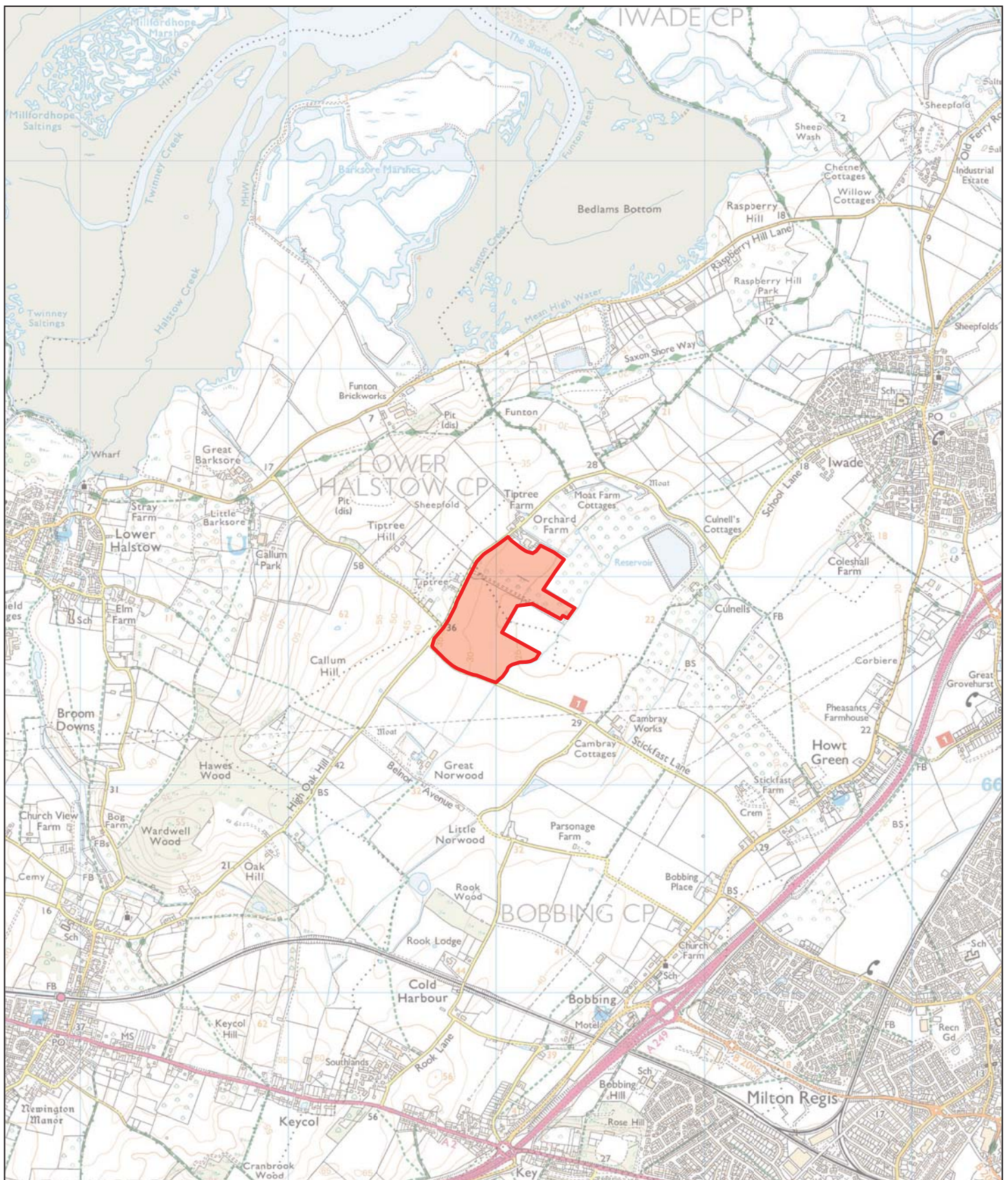
Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1b	100	Layer	Topsoil	Dark black compact silty clay	-	-	0 - 0.19
1b	101	Layer	Subsoil	Mid brown yellow silty clay occasional subrounded pebbles	-	-	0.19 – 0.71
1b	102	Layer	Natural	Dark greyish Blues silty clay compact	-	-	0.71 – 1.03
1b	103	Layer	Natural	Mid brown silty clay compact frequent pockets of fine sandy gravel			1.03 – 1.13
1b	104	Layer	Natural	Light blue silty clay firm			1.13 – 1.23
1a	105	Layer	Modern Trackway	Redbrick foundations with a crushed concrete hard core surface			0 – 0.52
1a	106	Layer	Natural	Mid yellowy brown silty clay compact occasional laminated blue inclusions			0.52 – 1.3
1c	107	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay compact			0 – 0.18
1c	108	Layer	Natural	Mid greyish blue clay silt compact			0.18 - 0.52
1c	109	Layer	Natural	Mid brown yellow silty clay compact			0.52 – 0.8
1c	110	Layer	Natural	Mid brown sandy silt firm abundant subrounded gravel pebbles			0.8 – 0.92
1c	111	Layer	Natural	Mid brown blue silty clay compact			0.92 – 1.3
1d	112	Layer	Topsoil	Dark grey silty clay compact			0 – 0.25
1d	113	Layer	Subsoil	Light yellowy brown silty clay			0.25 – 0.97
1d	114	Layer	Natural	Dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent angular to subrounded gravel in pockets of fine sand and patches of blueish grey silty clay			0.97 – 1.13
2	200	Layer	Topsoil	Dark grey silty clay compact			0 – 0.28
2	201	Layer	Subsoil	Mid greyish brown silty clay compact frequent tiny small subrounded gravel			0.28 – 0.43
2	202	Layer	Natural	Mid grey blue silty clay occasional gravel in brown sandy clay pockets			0.43 – 1.1
3	300	Layer	Topsoil	Dark grey silty clay compact			0 – 0.27
3	301	Layer	Natural	Light brown yellow silty clay with occasional pockets of coarse sand with subrounded flint and gravel			0.27 – 0.66
3	302	Layer	Natural	Mid grey brown sandy clay with subangular to subrounded gravel			0.66 – 0.88
4	400	Layer	Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay compact			0 – 0.28
4	401	Layer	Subsoil	Light yellowy brown silty clay compact occasional fine sandy gravel pockets			0.28 – 0.64
4	402	Layer	Natural	Light greyish blue silty clay compact			0.64 – 0.95

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Orchard Solar Farm Sittingbourne Kent	
Short description	No features or finds were identified during a watching brief associated with a solar farm.	
Project dates	11 – 12 November 2015	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	none	
Future work	none	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Orchard Solar Farm Sittingbourne Kent	
Study area (M ² /ha)	10.06	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	TQ 87943 66845	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Design (WSI) originator	CA type Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Greatorex	
Project Supervisor	Adam Howard	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	none	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	none	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	CA Andover	None
Paper	CA Andover	Trench Sheets
Digital	CA Andover	Photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 Orchard Farm, Sittingbourne, Kent: Archaeological Watching Brief CA typescript report 16565. Project No. 770159</p>		

APPENDIX C: HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site Code.	FRE15
Site identification and address	Orchard Farm Sittingbourne Kent ME9 8QG
County, district and / or borough	Kent, Swale Borough Council
O.S. grid ref.	TQ 87943 66845
Geology.	The underlying solid geology is of the London Clay Formation comprising clay and silt.
Project number.	770159
Fieldwork type.	Watching Brief
Site type.	Solar Farm
Date of fieldwork.	November 2014
Sponsor/client.	OPDE UK Ltd
Project manager.	Richard Greatorex
Project supervisor.	Adam Howard
Period summary	Modern
Project summary. (100 word max)	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the development a solar farm at on Land at Orchard Farm, Sittingbourne, Kent. The watching brief consisted of the observation of cable trenches and foundation excavation of junction boxes. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no finds material pre-dating the modern period was recovered



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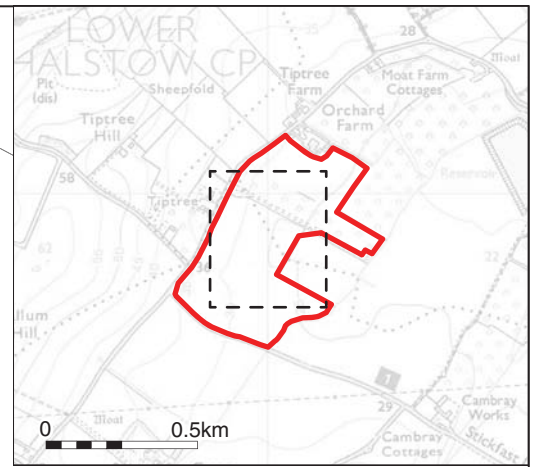
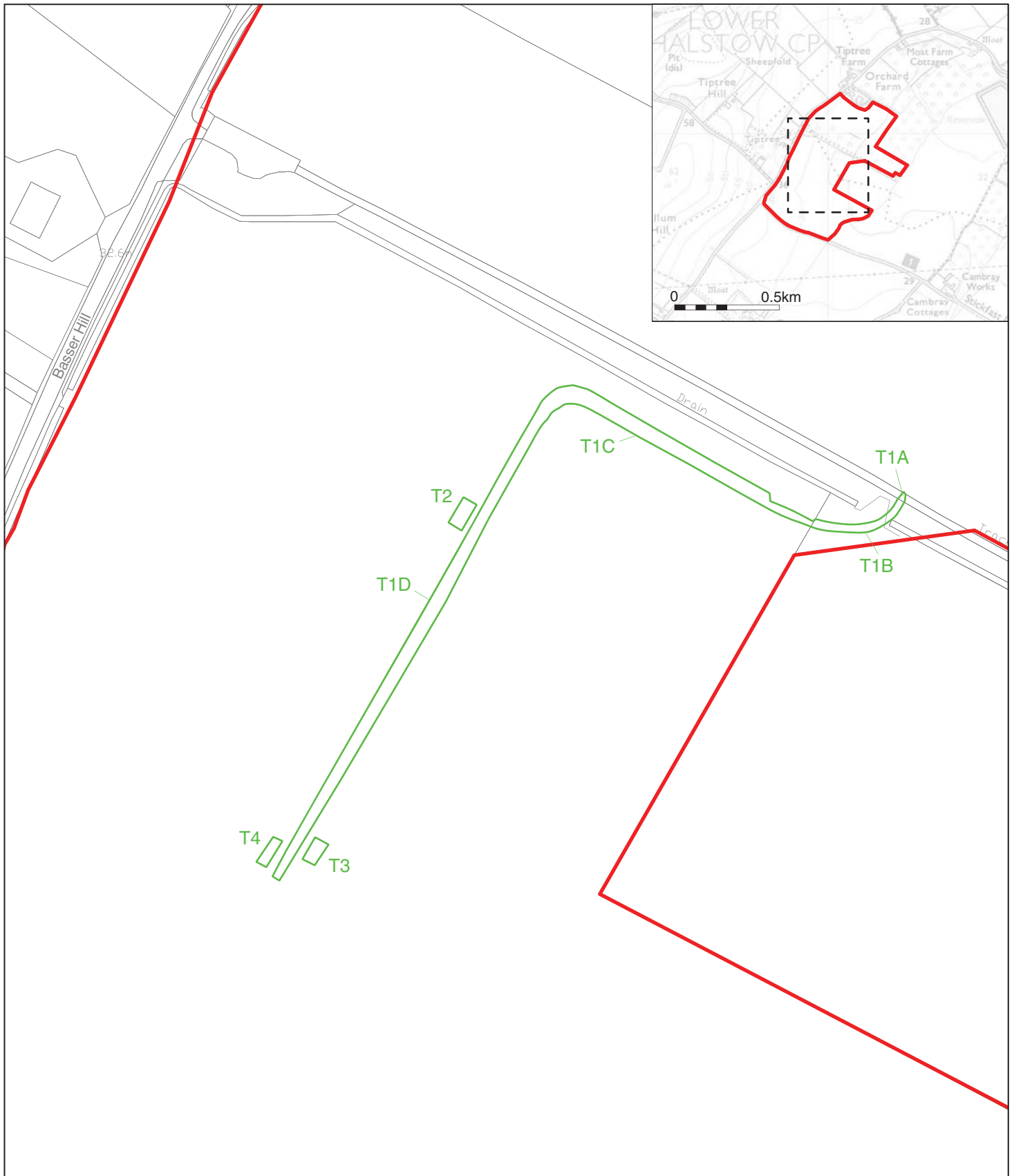
PROJECT TITLE
 Orchard Farm, Sittingbourne, Kent

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

0 1km

Reproduced from the 2015 Ordnance Survey Explorer map with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright Cotswold Archaeology Ltd 100002109

DRAWN BY LJH	PROJECT NO. 770159	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY DJB	DATE 17/11/15	
APPROVED BY RG	SCALE@A4 1:25,000	1



- site boundary
- observed groundworks



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PROJECT TITLE

Orchard Farm, Sittingbourne, Kent

FIGURE TITLE

Location of observed groundworks

<i>DRAWN BY</i>	LJH	<i>PROJECT NO.</i>	770159	<i>FIGURE NO.</i>	2
<i>CHECKED BY</i>	DJB	<i>DATE</i>	18/11/15		
<i>APPROVED BY</i>	RG	<i>SCALE@A4</i>	1:2000 & 1:25,000		





3



4



5

- 3 Trench 1A, west-facing section of modern trackway [105] (1m scale)
- 4 Trench 1D, west-facing section (1m scale)
- 5 Trench 2, south-facing section (1m scale)



6



7

6 Trench 3, north-west facing section (1m scale)

7 Trench 4, south-east facing section (1m scale)



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PROJECT TITLE

Orchard Farm, Sittingbourne, Kent

FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

DRAWN BY LJB PROJECT NO. 770159
 CHECKED BY DJB DATE 18/11/15
 APPROVED BY RG SCALE@A4 n/a

FIGURE NOS.

6 & 7

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