

Land off Grays Lane
Paulerspury
Northamptonshire

Archaeological Evaluation



for
Nicholas Arthur Developments Ltd

CA Project: 660883
Report no: 17284
Site Code: GRAY17
Event No: ENN108678

May 2017



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SUMMARY

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Project Name: | Land off Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northamptonshire |
| NGR: | SP 7255 4560 |
| Type: | Evaluation |
| Date: | 3rd May 2017 |
| Planning Reference: | South Northamptonshire District Council S/2015/2026/FUL |
| Location of Archive: | Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre |
| Site Code: | GRAY17 |
| Event no: | ENN108678 |

In May 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of a plot of land off Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northamptonshire. The work, which was commissioned by Nicholas Arthur Developments Ltd, was required in order to fulfil a condition that had been attached to planning consent by South Northamptonshire District Council for the residential development of the site.

The site lies immediately adjacent to fields where the remains of a probable Iron Age settlement have been identified by geophysical survey and medieval ditches have been investigated by an evaluation of land to the north of the site. Despite this potential, no archaeological remains were encountered by the evaluation and visual scanning of the spoil and the use of a metal detector did not recover any artefactual material.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May 2017, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation of a plot of land off Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northamptonshire (site centred on NGR: SP 7255 4560; Fig. 1). It was commissioned by Nicholas Arthur Developments Ltd and comprised the excavation of two 15m trial trenches to determine if archaeological remains were present within the site.
- 1.2 The evaluation was required in order to fulfil a condition that had been attached to planning consent by South Northamptonshire District Council for the residential development of the site (SNDC planning ref. S/2015/2026/FUL, Condition 9). The condition, requiring a programme of archaeological investigation to be undertaken, had been requested by Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council's Assistant Archaeological Advisor (NCCAAA), archaeological advisor to SNDC. The scope of the investigation was set out in a two-part *Brief* (NCCAAA 2017a and b) and the extent of trenching was agreed following consultation between CA and NCCAAA. The work was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) that was prepared by CA (2017) and approved by NCCAAA prior to the commencement of fieldwork.
- 1.3 The project was carried out in accordance with the WSI (*ibid.*) and abided by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (CIfA 2014), the Historic England (formerly English Heritage) procedural documents *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH1991) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (HE 2015).

2. SITE BACKGROUND

Site location, topography and geology

- 2.1 The site lies at the eastern edge of the village of Paulerspury, which is located immediately to the west of Watling Street (A5) and 4.5km south of Towcester town centre. It comprises two small plots of land (Areas 1 and 2), covering a total area of c. 0.09ha, on the south side of Grays Lane; both areas are currently gardens, with Area 2 containing a number of established trees. Locally the ground is generally flat and lies at c. 120m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). In its wider setting, the site is

situated near the crest of a ridge of high ground between the valleys of two small streams, tributaries of the River Tove.

- 2.2 The solid geology of the site comprises Jurassic rocks of the Blisworth Limestone Formation, with the underlying rocks of the Rutland Formation possibly outcropping in the northern corner of Area 2 (BGS 2017). The bedrock is overlain by extensive superficial deposits of the Oadby Member, comprising unstratified and poorly-sorted deposits of glacial till (diamicton).

Archaeological background

- 2.3 The site's archaeological potential is suggested by its proximity to the major Roman road of Watling Street (the modern A5) and its location at the eastern edge of the modern village of Paulerspury, which has its origins in the Saxon period. Reference to the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) has identified several archaeological sites within 100m of the development area (HER numbers in parenthesis); additional information has been gathered from online sources (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>).

Pre-Iron Age (pre-700 BC)

- 2.4 No prehistoric sites pre-dating the Iron Age are known of within the vicinity of the site, although a Mesolithic tranchet axe was found in Paulerspury in 1977 (VCH 2002, 245).

Iron Age (700 BC to AD 43)

- 2.5 Iron Age activity has been identified c. 0.4km to the east of the site, where the remains of a settlement were investigated at Homestead Farm, ahead of the construction of a solar farm (CA 2015). The remains of the settlement bordered Watling Street and comprised a complex of enclosures and ring ditches, with associated pits and postholes, in the southern part of the site's western field. A series of substantial, intercutting Iron Age ditches was also present in the northern part of the site.
- 2.6 In the fields immediately to the south and east of the site, geophysical survey has identified a D-shaped enclosure and other anomalies that may be the remains of further Iron Age settlement (MNN163003; NA 2013).

Roman (AD 43 to AD 410)

- 2.7 The site is located approximately 150m to the south-west of Watling Street, the major Roman road (MNN11430) between *Londinium* (London) with *Viriconium* (Wroxeter), which locally linked the Roman towns of *Lactodurum* (Towcester) and *Magiovinium* (Dropshort).
- 2.8 A large Roman villa lay approximately 1.2km south-east of the site, near Bradlem Pond, and it is possible that the site formed part of its agricultural estate. Roman pottery and a Roman gold coin have been found within the village and Roman settlement has been identified at other locations within the parish.
- 2.9 Cuttle Mill, which is located c. 1.1km to the north-west of the site, has been identified as the possible location of the final battle of the Boudiccan revolt in AD 61.

Anglo-Saxon (AD 410 to AD 1066)

- 2.10 Although no Anglo-Saxon settlement remains have been identified in the village, it is considered to have Anglo-Saxon origins (Hall 1974) and a c. 6th-century pennanular brooch is recorded as having been discovered close to Watling Street, to the east of the current site (VCH 2002). In addition, a possible Saxon cemetery has been identified at Pury End, approximately 1.7km west of the current site (VCH 2002, 245).

Medieval

- 2.11 At the time of the Norman Conquest the manor of Paulerspury was freely held by a woman named *Gitda*. Paulerspury was first documented as *Pirie* in the *Domesday Survey* of 1086, its name deriving from 'peartree' (Gover *et al.* 1933). By the 13th century the village was known as *Pirye Pavely* after the lords of the manor, the Peverils.
- 2.12 The village is polyfocal, the settlement clustering around five centres, with two at Paulerspury (known collectively as Church End) and one each at Pury End, Tew's End and Plumpton End. The centres, which may have originated as individual farmsteads, are connected by a complex network of narrow lanes, footpaths and hollow ways. The parish also includes the hamlet of Heathencote, located 2km to the north of Paulerspury.

- 2.13 The village was one of nine 'out-towns' of Whittlewood Forest and as such its residents were entitled to pasture horses and cattle in the forest between May and September each year. This use of the common pasture was traditionally claimed as recompense for the unhindered access deer were allowed to their own land.
- 2.14 Most of the land within the parish was common arable and meadow, which was inclosed under an Act of 1819. In 1540 until inclosure the manor of Paulerspury had three fields to the east of Watling Street, named as Toot Hill Field, Middle Field and Park Field (presumed to be Plumpton Park Field). More ancient inclosure adjacent to the village probably dates from the 15th century when a decrease in population released pressure on ploughland (Hall 1974). Remnants of ridge and furrow ploughing are recorded in fields to the north and south of Grays Lane (MNN142768).
- 2.15 On the north side of Grays Lane, directly opposite the site, there were formerly at least two houses separated from the ridge and furrow by a ditch; these have now been destroyed by modern housing (MNN24733).
- 2.16 An evaluation of land to the north of Grays Lane, undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in 2010, identified three medieval ditches dating from the 11th to the mid-late 13th centuries (NA 2010b). The ditches may have formed property boundaries for now-demolished buildings fronting onto Grays Lane. The ditches were demonstrably earlier than the denuded ridge and furrow earthworks present on site, which probably date to the 14th century.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (CA 2017), were to:
- Establish the location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
 - Determine the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.

This information will enable SNDC, as advised by NCCAAA, to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's



conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of two 15m trenches in the locations shown in Figure 2. The location of Trench 2 was moved from its intended location (as shown in the WSI) to avoid damage to the roots of a mature tree at the south-eastern boundary of the site.
- 4.2 Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with *Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual* (CA 2017). The trenches were excavated using a JCB 3CX mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the geological substrate, whichever was encountered first. Any features and deposits encountered in the trenches were investigated by hand excavation and recorded in accordance with *Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual* (CA 2007).
- 4.3 There were no finds in the excavated deposits and no deposits were encountered that were suitable for environmental sampling.
- 4.4 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Milton Keynes and will be deposited with the *Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre's* (NARC) when this facility opens. A summary of information from this project, as set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. EVALUATION RESULTS

- 5.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of two 15m trial trenches (Figs 2–6). No archaeological remains were encountered within the trenches and there were no finds in the excavated topsoil or subsoil.

- 5.2 The geological substrate, comprising slightly stony light to mid-yellowish brown clay (102 and 202), was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.55m below ground level; a patch of loose, rounded cobbles was encountered at the northern end of Trench 2. The overlying subsoil was c. 0.3m thick and consisted of mid-brownish grey silty clay (101 and 201); in Trench 1 it was c. 0.18m thick and formed a consistent layer, but in Trench 2 it was up to c. 0.3m thick and had been disturbed by the roots of vegetation and garden planting in the eastern half of the site. The topsoil, a well-developed garden soil (100 and 200), was 0.25m thick.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 A geophysical survey of the fields immediately to the south and east of the site had identified a D-shaped enclosure and other anomalies that were interpreted as the probable remains of an Iron Age settlement (NA 2013) and an evaluation of land to the north of Grays Lane had identified three medieval ditches dating from the 11th to the mid-late 13th centuries (NA 2010b). Given the proximity of the site to these remains and its position bordering Grays Lane, it was therefore considered to have the potential to contain archaeological remains of Iron Age or medieval date.
- 6.2 Despite this potential, no archaeological remains were encountered by the evaluation and visual scanning of the spoil and the use of a metal detector did not recover any artefactual material. Although the subsoil was disturbed in places by gardening activity (planting holes, planting beds etc.), it was largely undisturbed and had not been truncated by previous activity on the site.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Whelan. The report was written by Andy Whelan and the illustrations were prepared by Charlotte Patman. The archive has been compiled by Emily Evans and prepared for deposition by Jessica Cook. The project was managed for CA by Simon Carlyle.



8. REFERENCES

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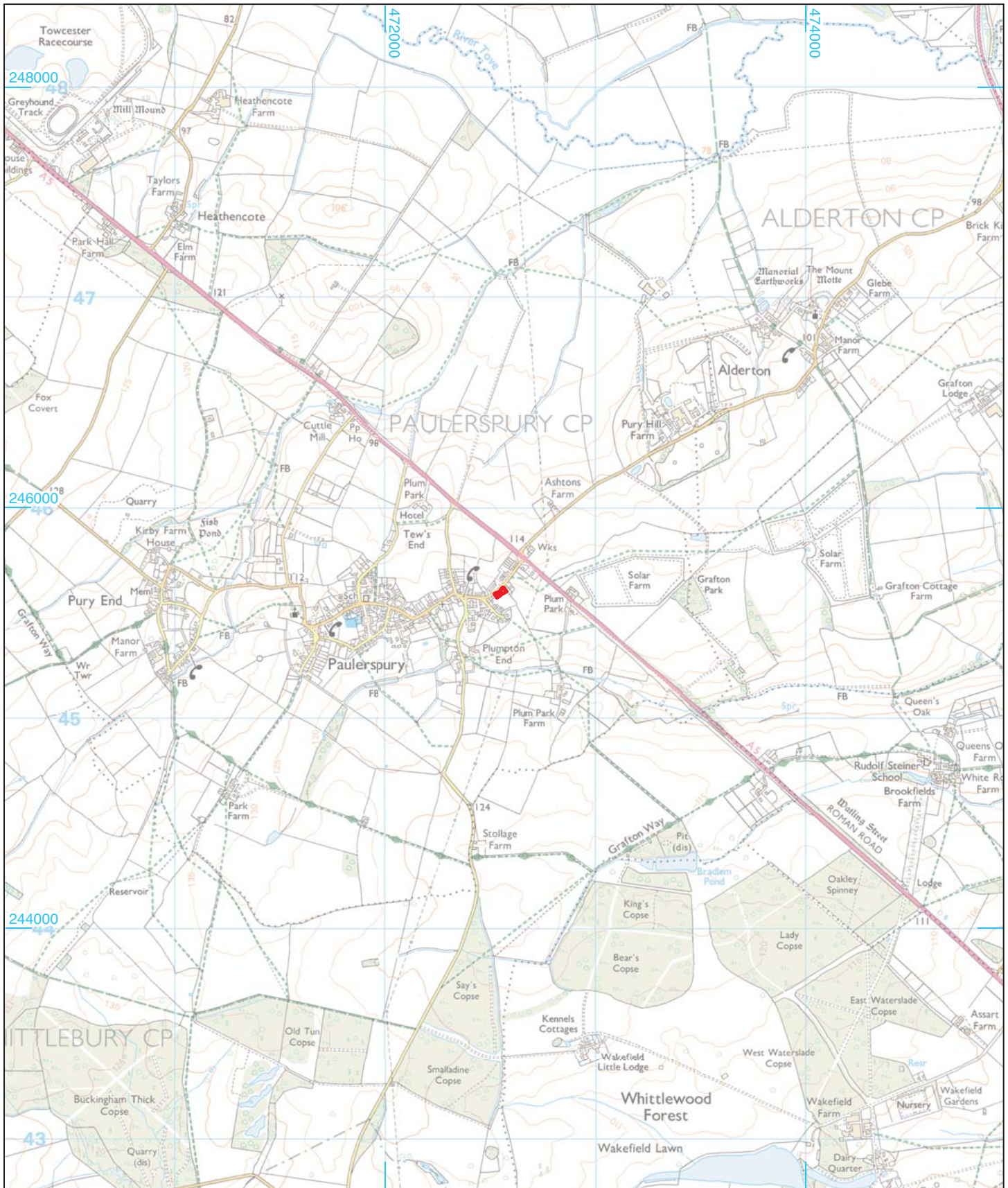


APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

| Context | Type | Context Interpretation | Context Description | L (m) | W (m) | D/T (m) |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Trench 1 | | | | | | |
| 100 | Layer | Topsoil | Soft dark greyish brown clayey silt | - | - | 0.38 |
| 101 | Layer | Subsoil | Soft mid brownish yellow clayey silt | - | - | 0.18 |
| 102 | Layer | Geology | Light yellowish grey clay with mod. fine to coarse limestone pebbles | - | - | - |
| Trench 2 | | | | | | |
| 200 | Layer | Topsoil | Soft dark greyish brown clayey silt | - | - | 0.25 |
| 201 | Layer | Subsoil | Soft mid brownish yellow clayey silt | - | - | 0.30 |
| 202 | Layer | Geology | Mid yellowish grey clay with mod. fine to coarse limestone pebbles | - | - | - |

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
|---|--|------------------------|
| Project name | Land off Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northamptonshire | |
| Short description | The site lies immediately adjacent to fields where the remains of a probable Iron Age settlement have been identified by geophysical survey and medieval ditches have been investigated by an evaluation of land to the north of the site. Despite this potential, no archaeological remains were encountered by the evaluation and visual scanning of the spoil and the use of a metal detector did not recover any artefactual material. | |
| Project dates | 3rd May 2017 | |
| Project type | Field evaluation | |
| Previous work | None | |
| Future work | Unknown | |
| Monument type | None | |
| Significant finds | None | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| Site location | Land off Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northamptonshire | |
| Study area | 0.09 ha | |
| Site co-ordinates | 47255 24560 | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Name of organisation | Cotswold Archaeology (CA) | |
| Project Brief originator | NCCAAA | |
| Project Design (WSI) originator | CA | |
| Project Manager | Simon Carlyle (CA) | |
| Project Supervisor | Andrew Whelan (CA) | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVE | | |
| | Event no. ENN108678 | Content |
| Physical | Northamptonshire Archaeological | None |
| Paper | Resource Centre | Site records |
| Digital | Northamptonshire HER | Report, digital photos |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | |
| CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017 <i>Land off Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northamptonshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> , report 17284 | | |



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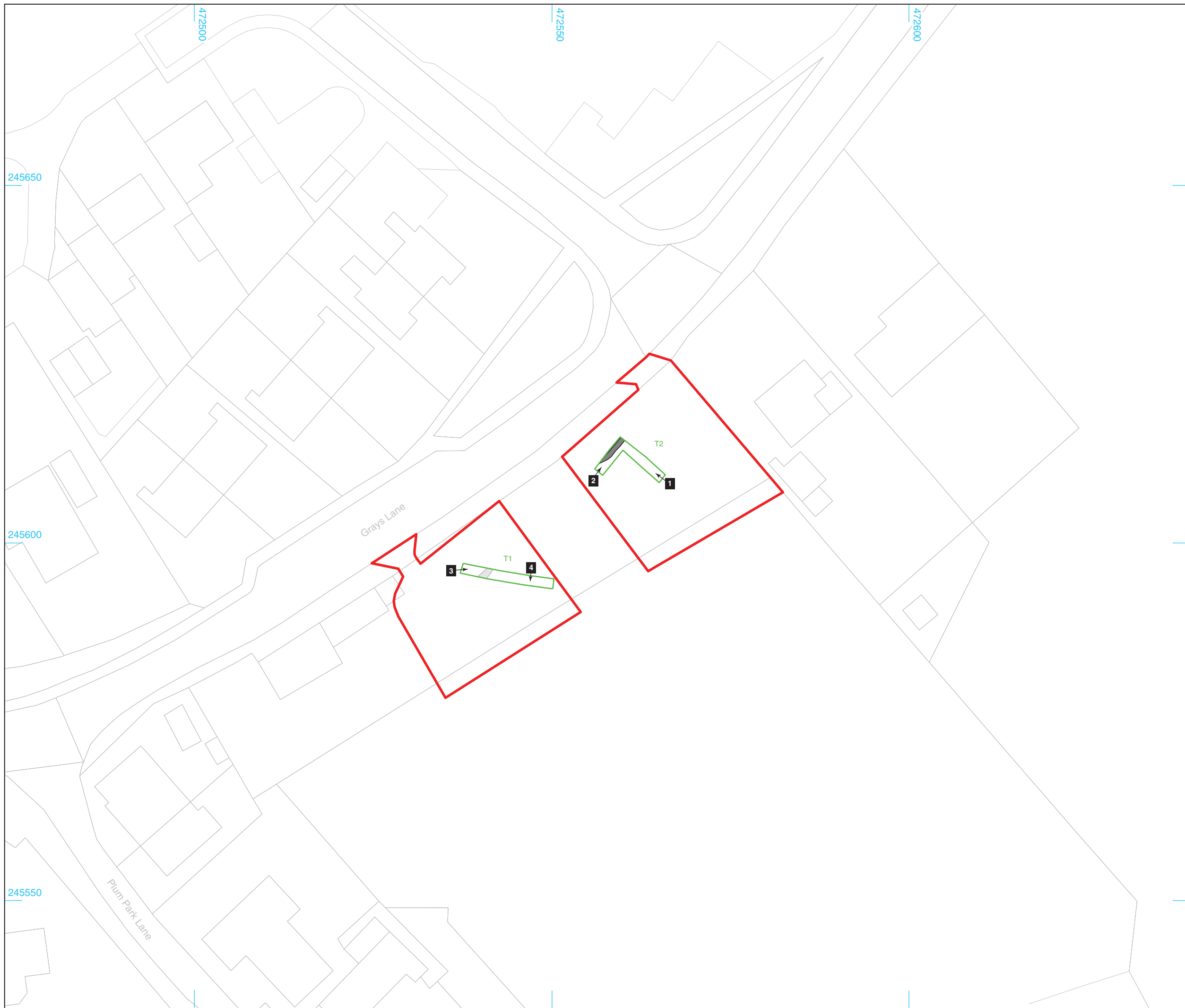
PROJECT TITLE
 11 Grays Lane, Paulerspury,
 Northamptonshire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

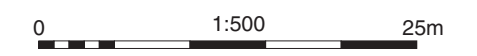


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- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- modern
- 7 ↑ photograph location



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PROJECT TITLE
 11 Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northants

FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan

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Trench 1, looking east (scales 1m)



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PROJECT TITLE

11 Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northants

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 1: looking east

| | | | | |
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| APPROVED BY | SC | SCALE@A4 | N/A | |



Trench 1, soil profile (scale 1m)



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PROJECT TITLE

11 Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northants

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 1: soil profile

| | | | | |
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| APPROVED BY | SC | SCALE@A4 | N/A | 4 |



Trench 2, looking north-west (scales 1m)



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 2: looking north-west

| | | | | |
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| APPROVED BY | SC | SCALE@A4 | N/A | 5 |



Trench 2, looking north-east (scales 1m)



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PROJECT TITLE

11 Grays Lane, Paulerspury, Northants

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 2: looking north-east

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FIGURE NO.

6

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