

**73 Harts Hill Rd,
Thatcham,
West Berkshire**
Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Eight2O

on behalf of
Thames Water

CA Project: 770774
CA Report: 18398

September 2018



73 Harts Hill Rd,
Thatcham,
West Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

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SUMMARY

Project Name: 73 Harts Hill Road
Location: Thatcham, West Berkshire
NGR: 452652 168171
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 18, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29 June; 2 July; 21 August 2018
Planning Reference: 16/0259/FUL
Location of Archive: West Berkshire Museum
Site Code: HHT17

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundwork associated with the development and installation of a Water Booster Station east of Harts Hill Road, Thatcham.

A single archaeological feature, gully **206**, was recorded running on a roughly east west alignment. No other archaeological finds, features or deposits were recorded/recovered, other than a residual shard of post-medieval pottery.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June and July 2018 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for the client Eight2O on behalf of Thames Water East of Harts Hill Road, Thatcham (centred at NGR: 452652 168171; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for the installation of a Water Booster Station comprising of modular Kiosk, a standby generator and a high voltage transformer pole (Planning ref: 16/0259/FUL).
- 1.3 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by the LPA acting on the advice of the Archaeological Advisor to West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014).

The site

- 1.4 The development area is approximately 0.13ha in size and comprises farmland. The site is surrounded by farmland to the north, east, and south with an existing hedgerow marking the western limits of the development running adjacent to Harts Hill Rd. The land slopes down from height from the north east to the south west, with the area of interest lay 100-105m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as London Clay Formation-clay, silt and sand with no superficial deposits recorded.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following is a succinct summary of the known archaeological information taken from the WSI (CA 2016), prior to the watching brief.
- 2.2 The earliest evidence of activity in Thatcham was the recovery of two Palaeolithic hand axes recovered from the Lower way gravel works located approximately 2km to the south west of the site.

- 2.3 A Mesolithic occupation site was located at the Lower way Sewage works 2km to the south west. This location has witnessed multiple excavations from Peake and Crawford, 1920; Wymer, 1958-1961 and Wessex Archaeology, 1992, with evidence of multiple flint industries being present. This Mesolithic site fits into a broader area of activity in the Kennet Valley and has been suggested that a semi sedentary occupation (Bradley 1978, 89; *cf.* Healy *et al.* 1992) was being observed.
- 2.4 Approximately 400m north of the site, an excavation by Cotswold Archaeology (CA 2003-4) identified Late Bronze Age (c.10th century BC) and an Early Iron Age (c. 5th century BC) settlement. The settlement included a large ditched enclosure, three post alignments, three roundhouses and a single urned cremation as well as numerous other pits and post holes. It has been suggested that the Late Bronze Age settlement was only short lived lasting no longer than 50 years, with the dwelling house being subject to a closure 'ritual,' which involved burning and selective deposition of pottery vessels within the roundhouse postholes.
- 2.5 During the 2003-4 excavations, Roman and Medieval features were recorded, along with field walking around the vicinity of the site recovering more evidence of Roman activity.
- 2.6 Thatcham as it is named today is believed to have originated from a Saxon chief named Tace (Tace's ham), written record of Thatcham was recorded in the Domesday book as Taceham further undergoing several changes until the settlement was named Thatcham.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
- 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.
 - To ascertain whether further Late Bronze Age and Romano-British activity maybe present on the site and if so what the nature of that activity might be.

- 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 2016). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks for the booster kiosk, access road and all temporary work which involved disturbance of the subsoil deposits (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 evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Andover. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner, the artefacts will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project set out within Appendix C - rename if other appendices not required, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGURES 2-3)

- 5.1 This section provided an overview of the watching brief results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and the finds are contained within **Appendices A, B, and C** respectively.
- 5.2 The underlying bedrock geology of the site was mapped as London Clay formation consisting of clays, silts and sands with no superficial deposits recorded, which was confirmed during the watching brief. A sequence of a topsoil of brown/grey silt/clay overlying mid-grey/brown clay/silt subsoil was identified throughout the site; with the exception of the northeast and central areas where a colluvium deposit of mid-grey brown clay/silt was also present.

- 5.3 Seven areas (**Trenches 1–7**) were machine excavated within the site, with archaeological features being identified in only one of them; **Trench 2** (see **Figure 2**).
- 5.4 No Archaeological features or deposits were found during the watching brief within six trenches; **Trenches 1; 3; 4; 5; 6** and **7**.
- 5.5 A total of three tree-bowls with similar fills were identified within two trenches; **Trenches 1** and **2**.

Trench 2 (Figure 2)

- 5.6 **Trench 2** was located to the northeast within the site and contained a single archaeological feature, gully, **206**.
- 5.7 Gully **206** was broadly linear in plan, orientated east/west alignment and measured 0.39m wide and with a depth of 0.1m. The gully had gently sloping sides and a concave base and contained a single light grey/yellow sand/clay fill (**207**). The gully shows signs of truncation, with evidence of the feature petering out before being cut by tree-throw **204** cutting the gully. There is no evidence of the gully continuing past the tree-throw and is assumed that the feature has been completely truncated or the feature terminates underneath the tree throw, which equally there is no evidence of due to complete truncation.

6 THE FINDS

- 6.1 Artefacts recovered from the evaluation are listed in Appendix B and discussed further below. All finds have been cleaned, quantified by material type in each context and recorded to an Excel spreadsheet.

Pottery

- 6.2 A single item of pottery, a glazed earthenware rimsherd of a probable bowl, recovered from topsoil deposit **200**, dateable from the mid 16th to 18th centuries. The sherd is small and abraded, consistent with having been found within a topsoil deposit.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 Despite the general archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above); the watching brief identified only a single undated archaeological feature within the area of observed groundworks. The relative absence of archaeological deposits may indicate the low lying area of land observed during the watching brief, was not favourable to settlement and associated activity, preferring higher ground such as to the north-east. The heavily truncated nature of the gully is evidence of agricultural ploughing, which would limit the overall survivability of any features near the area observed.
- 7.2 A colluvial deposit was located in the northeast and central locations of the site, with areas exceeding 1m in depth, suggesting some of the site might be of sufficient depth to have undisturbed archaeological deposits, however none were observed.
- 7.3 Adjacent to the site boundary to the north-west in **Trench 1** the natural geology has been reduced which represented levelling from the construction of the current road and services running adjacent to it. This reduction would have disturbed any archaeological deposits located in this area, with only bioturbation identified during the current works.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Leonard and Steven Bush. The report was written by Steven Bush. The illustrations were prepared by Charlotte Patman. The archive has been compiled by Zoe Emery, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.

9. REFERENCES

- BGS (British Geological Survey), 2018, *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 10 September 2018



CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2003, *Hartshill Copse, Upper Buckleberry, West Berkshire, Post Excavation Assessment and Updated Project design*. Cotswold Archaeology Report No. 03096

CA, 2004, *Excavation of a 10th and 5th-century BC settlement at Hartshill Copse, Upper Buckleberry, Berkshire, 2003* Cotswold Archaeology Report No. 04049

CA, 2016, 73 Harts Hill Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation

Healy, F., Heaton, M, Lobb, S.j., Allen, M.J., Fenwick, I.M., Grace, R. and Scaife, R.G., 1992, *Excavations of a Mesolithic Site at Thatcham, Berkshire*. Proceedings of the Prehistory Society, 58, pp41-76



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No	Context	Type	Fill of	Context Interpretation	Context Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	thickness (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown clayey silt. No inclusions. Located below hedge row.			0-0.26 (0.26)
1	101	Layer		Buried Topsoil	Dark brown grey clayey silt, Rare sub angular gravel inclusions, same as or less than 50x20mm. Signs of rooting.			0.26-0.72 (0.46)
1	102	Layer		Subsoil	Light orange brown clayey silt, no inclusions. Signs of rooting throughout.			0.72-0.82 (0.1)
1	103	Layer		Colluvium	Mid orange grey clayey silt, rare sub-angular gravel inclusions, same as or less than 10x10mm.			0.82-1.1 (0.28M)
1	104	Layer		Natural	Light yellow brown silty clay. No inclusions. Signs of rooting present throughout.			>1.1 (>0.3)
1	105	Layer		Made ground	Mid yellow brown silty clay with poorly sorted gravels same as or less than 50x15mm. Located around services and adjacent to the Harts Hill Rd.			0-0.3 (0.3)
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown grey clayey silt. Loose. Common sub-angular gravel inclusions, same as or less than 50x10mm. Signs of rooting throughout.			0-0.38 (0.38)
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey brown clayey silt, loose. Rare sub angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 20x30mm. Signs of rooting throughout.			0.38-0.78 (0.4)
2	202	Layer		Colluvium	Mid brown grey clayey silt, solid. Very rare sub angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 20x30mm. Signs of rooting present.			0.78-1.25 (0.47)
2	203	Layer		Natural	Light brown grey silty clay with patches of light brown clayey sand and poorly sorted gravel same as or less than 20x50mm.			>1.25 (>0.45)
2	204	Cut		Tree throw	Uneven base, sides and shape in plan, signs of rooting present throughout.	>4	4.4	0.22
2	205	Fill	204	Back fill of tree throw	Dark brown grey clayey silt, Rare sub angular gravel inclusions, same as or	>4	4.4	0.22

					less than 50x20mm. Signs of rooting.			
2	206	Cut		Gulley	Gentle sides with concave profile. Very heavily truncated.	>10	0.39	0.1
2	207	Fill	206	Secondary fill	Light grey yellow sandy clay, loose.	>10	0.39	0.1
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown grey clayey silt, friable. Rare sub- angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 50x20mm. Signs of rooting throughout.	7.3	1	0-0.25 (0.25)
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow brown clayey silt, solid. Common sub-angular gravel inclusions, same as or less than 30x30mm. Signs of rooting present throughout.	7.3	1	0.25-0.5 (0.25)
3	302	Layer		Natural	Mid yellow brown very silty clay, solid. Patches of clayey silt. Common sub angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 30x40mm. Signs of rooting present.	7.3	1	>0.5 (>0.15)
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown grey clayey silt, friable. Rare sub- angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 50x20mm. Signs of rooting throughout.	7.3	1	0-0.24 (0.24)
4	401	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow brown clayey silt, solid. Common sub-angular gravel inclusions, same as or less than 30x30mm. Signs of rooting present throughout.	7.3	1	0.24-0.46 (0.22)
4	402	Layer		Natural	Mid yellow brown very silty clay, solid. Patches of clayey silt. Common sub angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 30x40mm. Signs of rooting present.	7.3	1	>0.46 (>0.14)
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown grey clayey silt, friable. Rare sub- angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 50x20mm. Signs of rooting throughout.	7.3	1	0-0.26 (0.26)
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow brown clayey silt, solid. Common sub-angular gravel inclusions, same as or less than 30x30mm. Signs of rooting present throughout.	7.3	1	0.26-0.46 (0.2)

5	502	Layer		Natural	Mid yellow brown very silty clay, solid. Patches of clayey silt. Common sub angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 30x40mm. Signs of rooting present.	7.3	1	>0.46 (>0.17)
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown grey clayey silt, friable. Rare sub-angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 50x20mm. Signs of rooting throughout.	7.3	0.75	0-0.14
6	601	Layer		Subsoil	Mid yellow brown clayey silt, solid. Common sub-angular gravel inclusions, same as or less than 30x30mm. Signs of rooting present throughout.	7.3	0.75	0.14-0.38 (0.24)
6	602	Layer		Natural	Mid yellow brown very silty clay, solid. Patches of clayey silt. Common sub angular gravel inclusions same as or less than 30x40mm. Signs of rooting present.	7.3	0.75	>0.38 (>0.14)

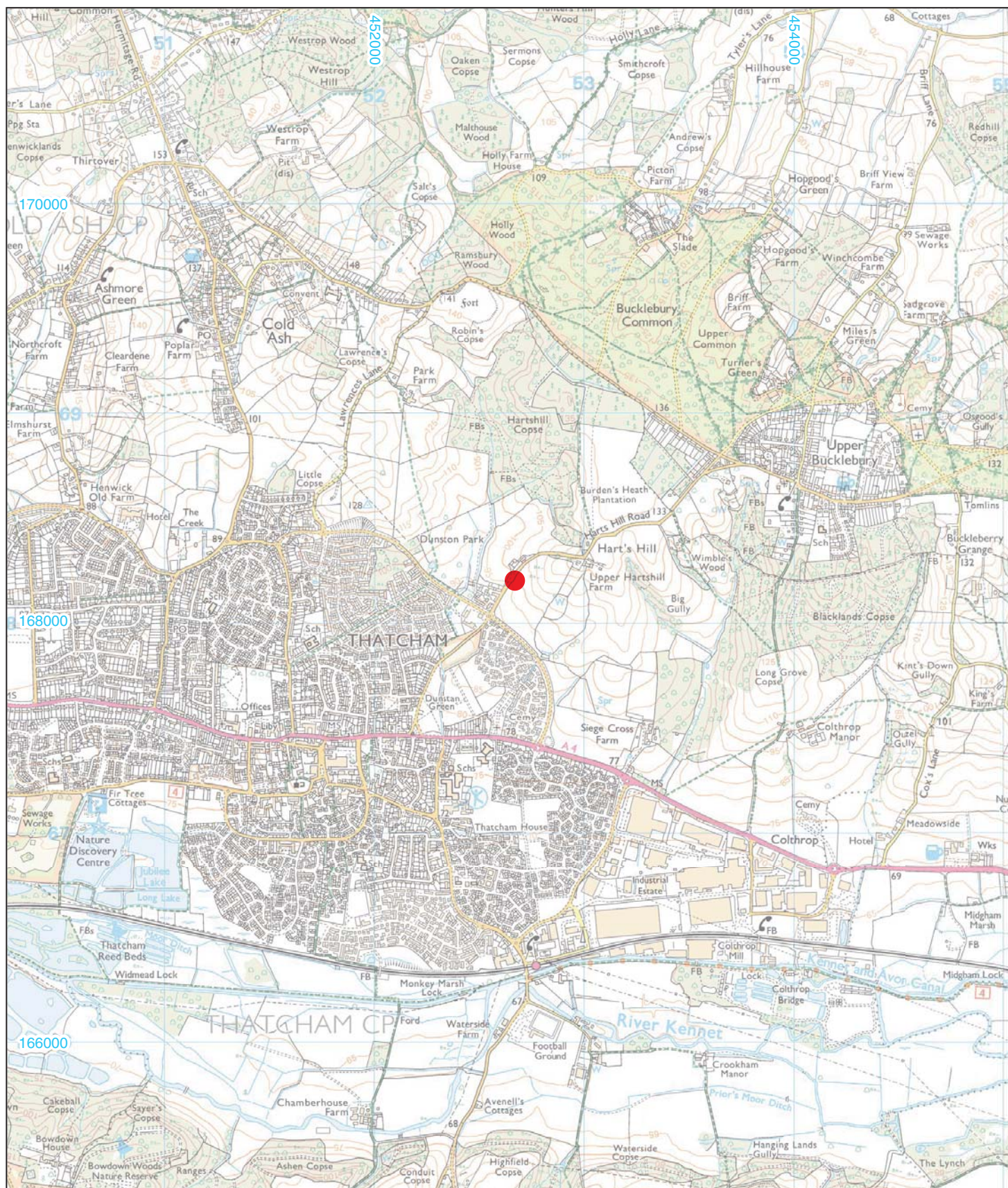
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Class	Description	Fabric Code	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Spot-date
200	Pottery	Glazed earthenware; bowl rim	GEW	1	9	MC16-C18

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	73 Harts Hill Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the development and installation of a Water Booster Station east of Harts Hill Road, Thatcham.</p> <p>A single archaeological feature, gully 206, was recorded running on a roughly east west alignment. No other finds, features or archaeological deposits were recorded, other than a residual shard of post-medieval pottery.</p>	
Project dates		
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Not known.	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	73 Harts Hill Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	SU 4526 1681	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	N/A	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy	
Project Supervisor	Steven Bush, Chris Leonard	
MONUMENT TYPE	Gully	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	Pottery	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.) West Berkshire Museum	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc) Indicate the contents of each archive box
Physical		For example ceramics, animal bone etc
Paper		Context sheets, matrices etc
Digital		Database, digital photos etc
BIBLIOGRAPHY		

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2018 *73 Harts Hill Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief*. CA typescript report 18398



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PROJECT TITLE
 73 Harts Hill Road, Thatcham, West
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FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

0 1km

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 Ordnance Survey 0100031673

DRAWN BY CP
 CHECKED BY DJB
 APPROVED BY RK
 PROJECT NO. 770774
 DATE 08/08/2018
 SCALE @A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.
 1



- Proposed development area
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature (excavated/unexcavated)
- Field drain
- Treethrow
- Section location

0 1:500 25m

Mapping source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN and the GIS User Community

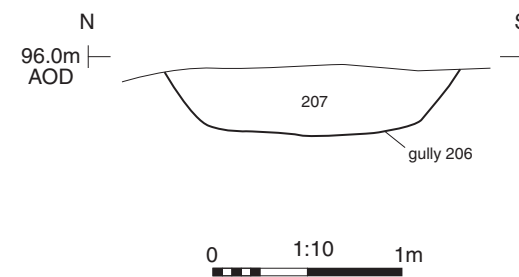
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PROJECT TITLE
73 Harts Hill Road, Thatcham, West Berkshire

FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan

DRAWN BY	CP	PROJECT NO.	770774	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	08/08/2018	2
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE @A3	1:500	

Section AA



Gully 206, looking east (scale 0.4m)



Gully 206, looking south-west (scales 1m)

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