

Bishop David Brown School
Sheerwater
Woking
Surrey
Phase 1A

Archaeological Watching Brief



for:
Synergy LLP

on behalf of:
Thamesway Developments

CA Project: AN0057
CA Report: AN0057_1

September 2020



Bishop David Brown School Sheerwater Woking Surrey Phase 1

Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: AN0057
CA Report: AN0057_1

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A	15.09.2020	Jeremy Clutterbuck	Ray Kennedy	Internal review	General Edit	Richard Greatorex

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<p>Cirencester Building 11 Kemble Enterprise Park Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6BQ t. 01285 771 022</p>	<p>Milton Keynes Unit 8, The IO Centre Fingle Drive Stonebridge Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK13 0AT t. 01908 564 660</p>	<p>Andover Stanley House Walworth Road Andover Hampshire SP10 5LH t. 01264 347 630</p>	<p>Suffolk Unit 5, Plot 11 Maitland Road Lion Barn Industrial Estate Needham Market Suffolk IP6 8NZ t. 01449 900 120</p>
e. enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk			

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	2
SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	7
4. METHODOLOGY.....	7
5. RESULTS.....	8
6. DISCUSSION.....	9
7. CA PROJECT TEAM.....	9
8. REFERENCES.....	9
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS.....	10
APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM.....	11

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1	Site location plan (1:25,000)
Figure 2	Plan of working areas
Figure 3	Trench location plan
Figure 4	Trench 1: photograph
Figure 5	Trench 2: photograph
Figure 6	Trench 6F: photograph

SUMMARY

Project name:	Bishop David Brown School, Sheerwater
Location:	Woking, Surrey
NGR:	502886 160667
Type:	Watching brief
Date:	22 July 2019 – 29 May 2020
Planning reference:	PLAN/2018/0337
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with appropriate Museum when depository becomes available
Site Code:	BDBS 19

Between July 2019 and May 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundwork associated with a mixed development at Bishop David Brown School, Sheerwater, Woking, Surrey.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Between July 2019 and May 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Bishop David Brown School, Sheerwater, Woking, Surrey centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 502886 160667 (see Figure 1), hereafter referred to as 'the site'. This watching brief was undertaken for Synergy LLP on behalf of Thamesway Developments.
- 1.2. The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil Condition 32 attached to a planning consent for a hybrid planning application (part outline, part full planning application, ref: PLAN/2018/0337) for the demolition of 573 residential units and existing non-residential buildings and redevelopment of the site to be implemented in phases to provide a mixed-use development comprising of 869 residents units (Class C3), 134 specialist residential units (Class C3/C2), 904m² community centre (Class D1), 929m² nursery/children's centre (Class D1), 312m² health centre (Class D1), 290m² additional classrooms (Class D1), 1,728m² of retail (flexible use within Class A1 and/or A2 and/or A3 and/or A4 and/or A5), 117m² management office (flexible use within Class A1 and/or A2 and/or A3 and/or A4 and/or A5 and/or B1a and/or SG), and 132m² dentist (flexible use within Class A1 and/or A2 and/or A3 and/or A4 and/or A5 and/or class D1), a new energy centre, formation of a new car park for Broadmere Primary school, formation of an extended car park for Bishop David Brown School and the Leisure Centre, including a bus/coach drop off area, formation of a new community car park to serve community hub, hard and soft landscaping and open space with a kiosk, a multi-use games area (MUGA) and a skate park, reconfigured and new vehicular and pedestrian access and works to the public highway and associated works; including full planning application for the detailed phases set out in the WSI.
- 1.3. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2018, 2019) and approved by Alex Egginton.
- 1.4. The watching brief was also in line with *Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014; updated June 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

The site

- 1.5. The wider proposed development area encloses a total area of approximately 5.04ha. The site is naturally very wet and has been known to flood, with the site being lower than the adjoining canal. It comprises sport pitches in the northern half of the site and car parking next to the Bishop David Brown School in the south. It is bordered to the north by the Basingstoke Canal, and to the south by Albert Drive and Devonshire Avenue. The site is part of the Sheerwater Re-generation.
- 1.6. Phase 1a currently comprises sports pitches, and buildings that are to be demolished as part of the wider Sheerwater redevelopment. The site slopes slightly down from north to south, between approximately 30m and 25m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.7. The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as sand of the Bagshot Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 48 to 56 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period in a local environment previously dominated by shallow seas. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2019). This is consistent with the geology encountered during the watching brief, although patches of sandy gravel were also noted.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The archaeological background given below is a succinct summary of an archaeological Desk Based Assessment and subsequent auger survey by Oxford Archaeology (2014, 2015).

Bronze Age (2400 BC – 700 BC)

- 2.2. The earliest features of Prehistoric date within the vicinity of the site come in the form of a number of Bronze Age Barrows. Up to eight barrows were marked on a 17th century map of the site but all occupied higher ground (OA 2014). An archaeological investigation was undertaken within the site in 1952, on a mound believed to have been Bronze Age in date, but the excavation found no evidence to suggest anything other than a modern date. While the waterlogged and/or marshy nature of the site may have precluded occupation, it could have facilitated exploitation of the resources within the marsh such as game.

Roman – Medieval (AD 43 - 1539)

- 2.3. There is no known evidence for the exploitation of the site from the Roman to the medieval period, with the marshy nature of the site probably excluding occupation.

Post-Medieval (1540 - 1800)

- 2.4. The earliest map of the site from the 16th century shows the site as low lying ground south of a stream called the Sherewater (sic), with the stream likely acting as an estate boundary. A roadway is depicted to the north of the site, and ponds are depicted to the west and east of the site in Senex's 1720 Map of Surrey (OA 2014), with suggestions that some of the ponds may have been man-made, with the water coming from the damming of the Sherewater. The damming of the stream may also have exacerbated flooding within the site.
- 2.5. The Basingstoke Canal was built to the north of the site between 1787 and 1794, apparently following the earlier roadway to avoid the Sheerwater. The construction of the canal seems to have alleviated flooding within the site, and resulted in the drainage of the ponds, which were subsequently planted with trees.

Modern (1801 - Present)

- 2.6. By the 1960's the southern half of the site had been developed in a layout similar to that seen today.

Recent Work

- 2.7. In February 2015 Oxford Archaeology (OA 2015) undertook geo-archaeological auger survey on the Site. A total of 20 locations were hand augered across the northern the area currently occupied by a recreation ground and school playing fields. No archaeological features or finds of significance were located during the work.
- 2.8. The purpose of the survey was to provide baseline data on the nature of the sedimentary sequences across the site. Specifically the survey aimed to confirm (or not) the presence of occasional peat pockets. No substantial depths of peat were identified during the auger survey. The general sequence of deposits showed evidence of localised landscaping in several locations across the area. A radiocarbon date on waterlogged birch wood in the western part of the Site, suggested a post-medieval to modern date. Organic deposits at the base of the sequence adjacent to the site, produced a Middle Bronze Age date of 1500-1320

cal. BC. The presence of charcoal may be indicative of human activity in the immediate vicinity during this period as indicated above.

2.9. The auger survey confirmed that the effects of landscaping associated with ground levelling has resulted in some localised truncation and disturbance occurring apparently at random across the Site, but particularly in the area of the running track and adjacent to the school buildings. If archaeological features are present, the deeper features may survive intact, but shallower features and artefact scatters may have been disturbed.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. The objectives of the archaeological mitigation were to:

- 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

3.2. The specific aims of the work were to:

- record any evidence of past settlement or other land use, specifically any that might be associated with posited possible Bronze Age activity on the site
- recover artefactual evidence to date any evidence of past settlement that may be identified
- sample and analyse environmental remains to create a better understanding of past land use and economy

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2019). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the excavation of service trenches, drainage, a borrow pit, general landscaping and ground reduction.

4.2. There was a change in methodology from the overarching WSI for the entire site (CA 2018) which required a Strip, Map, Record within the site due to the client changing the methodology for the development of the sports pitches. The new

methodology required no intrusive excavation, but rather building up for the sports pitches. However should there be additional works within this area, this will be reported separately.

- 4.3. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.4. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential and no deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.5. CA will make arrangements with the recipient museum once a depository is found, for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated June 2020).
- 4.6. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A.
- 5.2. The natural geological substrate comprised white, light yellow and brown silty sand (**101/204/401/504/601**) predominantly, but chalk (**203/601**) and gravel (**101**) were also revealed. The natural geology was revealed at an average depth of 0.7m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by mid greyish blue alluvial clay in **Trenches 3**, and **5 (301/503)**, averaging 0.28m in thickness, which was sealed in turn by 0.62m of black silt/sand, a buried soil (**502**), but only in **Trench 5**. Furthermore, made ground (**200/201/202/501/600**) overlay this buried soil in **Trench 5**, but also the natural geology in **Trenches 2** and **6** with an average depth of 0.56m. Lastly, dark grey/brown sand/silt/clay topsoil (**100/300/400/500**) overlay all deposits except in **Trenches 2**, and **6**.
- 5.3. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see *Archaeological background*, above), the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that, particularly where made ground was present in **Trenches 2, 5, and 6**, archaeology had either been truncated or was sparser than originally thought.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Sam Wilson, Adam Howard and Pawel Jablonski. This report was written by Sam Wilson and Jeremy Clutterbuck. The report illustrations were prepared by Ryan Wilson. The project archive has been compiled by Richard Paxford, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.

8. REFERENCES

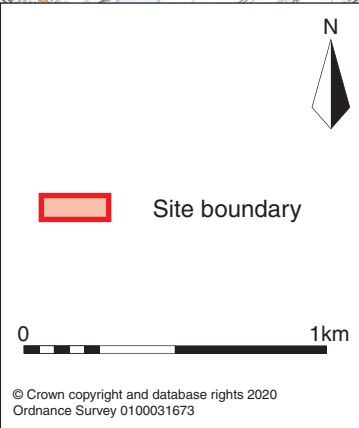
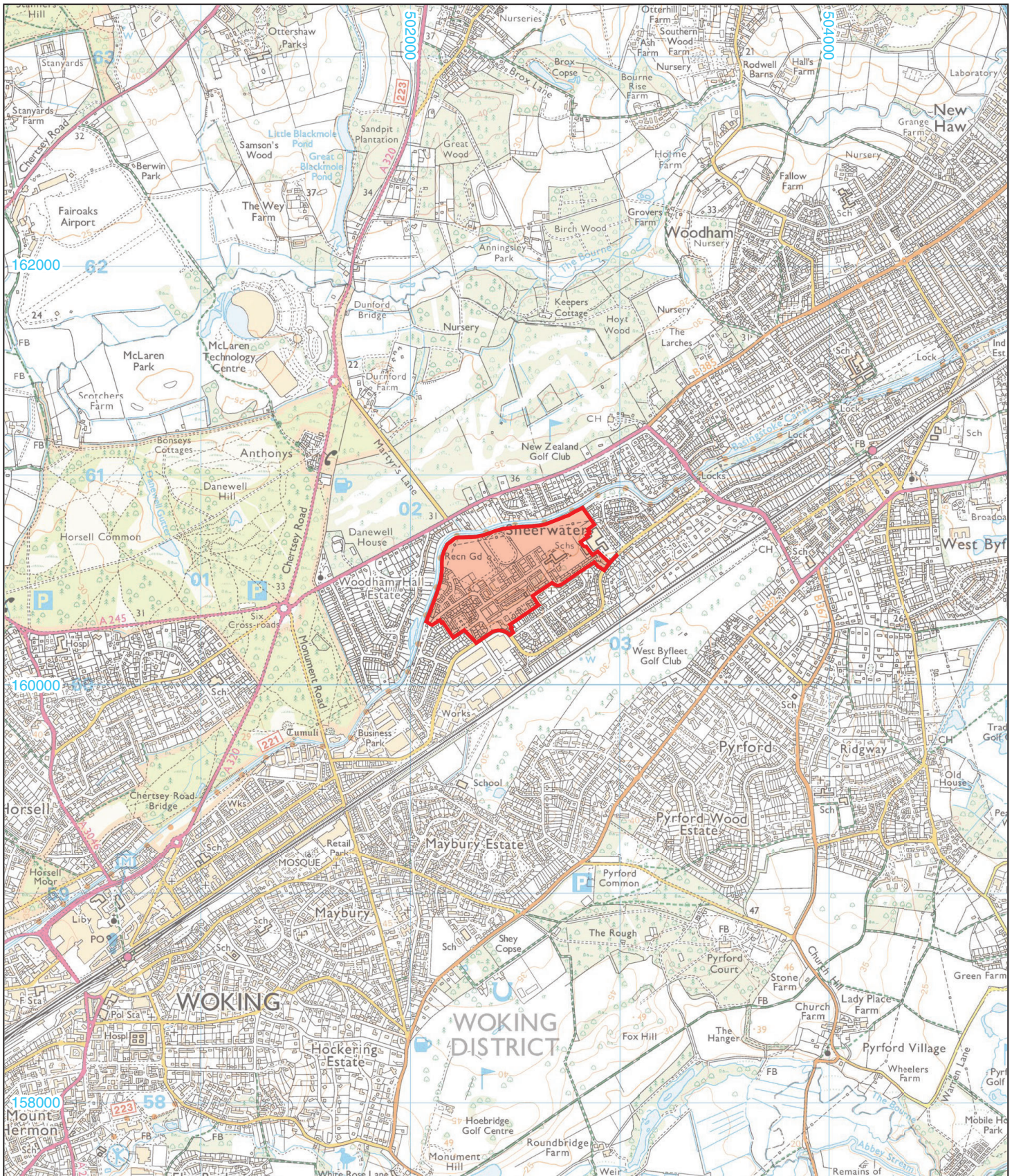
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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy silt with rare flint gravel	-	-	0-0.6
1	101	Layer		Natural	Mottled and mixed mid yellowish orange, light whitish grey and light yellowish green sands and flint gravels	-	-	0.6-1.7+
2	200	Layer		Modern surface	Concrete and tarmac	-	-	0-0.11
2	201	Layer		Demolition deposit	Brick rubble	-	-	0.11-0.35
2	202	Layer		Made ground	Mid grey silty clay	-	-	0.35-0.78
2	203	Layer		Natural	White chalk	-	-	0.78+
2	204	Layer		Natural	Fine mottled yellow and black sand	-	-	0.5-0.78+
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid blackish grey sandy clay	-	-	0-0.2
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Mid brownish grey sandy clay	-	-	0.2-0.5+
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown silty sand and flint gravel	-	-	0-0.5
4	401	Layer		Natural	Mottled mid yellowish orange and light whitish grey sand	-	-	0.5-0.6+
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey sandy silt	-	-	0-0.11
5	501	Layer		Made ground	Mid brownish yellow silty sand and gravel	-	-	0.11-0.32
5	502	Layer		Buried soil	Mid black silty sand	-	-	0.32-0.94
5	503	Layer		Alluvial clay	Mid greyish blue silty clay	-	-	0.94-1.2
5	504	Layer		Natural	Light white and yellowish brown silty sand	-	-	1.2-1.3+
6	600	Layer		Made ground	Crushed concrete and brick	-	-	0-0.68
6	601	Layer		Natural	White chalk y sand and light yellowish green silty clay	-	-	0.68-0.8+

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Bishop David Brown School, Sheerwater	
Short description	Between July 2019 and May 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with mixed development at Bishop David Brown School, Sheerwater, Woking, Surrey. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.	
Project dates	22 July 2019 – 29 May 2020	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Oxford Archaeology (OA), 2014, Archaeological Desk Based Assessment Oxford Archaeology (OA), 2015, Geoarchaeological Auger Survey Report	
Future work	Further phases of Watching Brief	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Bishop David Brown School, Sheerwater, Woking, Surrey. GU12 5QD	
Study area (m ² /ha)	5.04ha	
Site co-ordinates	502886 160667	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Alex Egginton (Archaeological Officer of Surrey County Council)	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy	
Project Supervisor	Sam Wilson, Adam Howard, Pawel Jablonski	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		None
Paper		Context sheets, matrices etc
Digital		Database, digital photos etc
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2020. <i>Bishop David Brown School, Sheerwater, Woking, Surrey: Archaeological Watching Brief Phase 1A</i> CA typescript report AN0057_1		



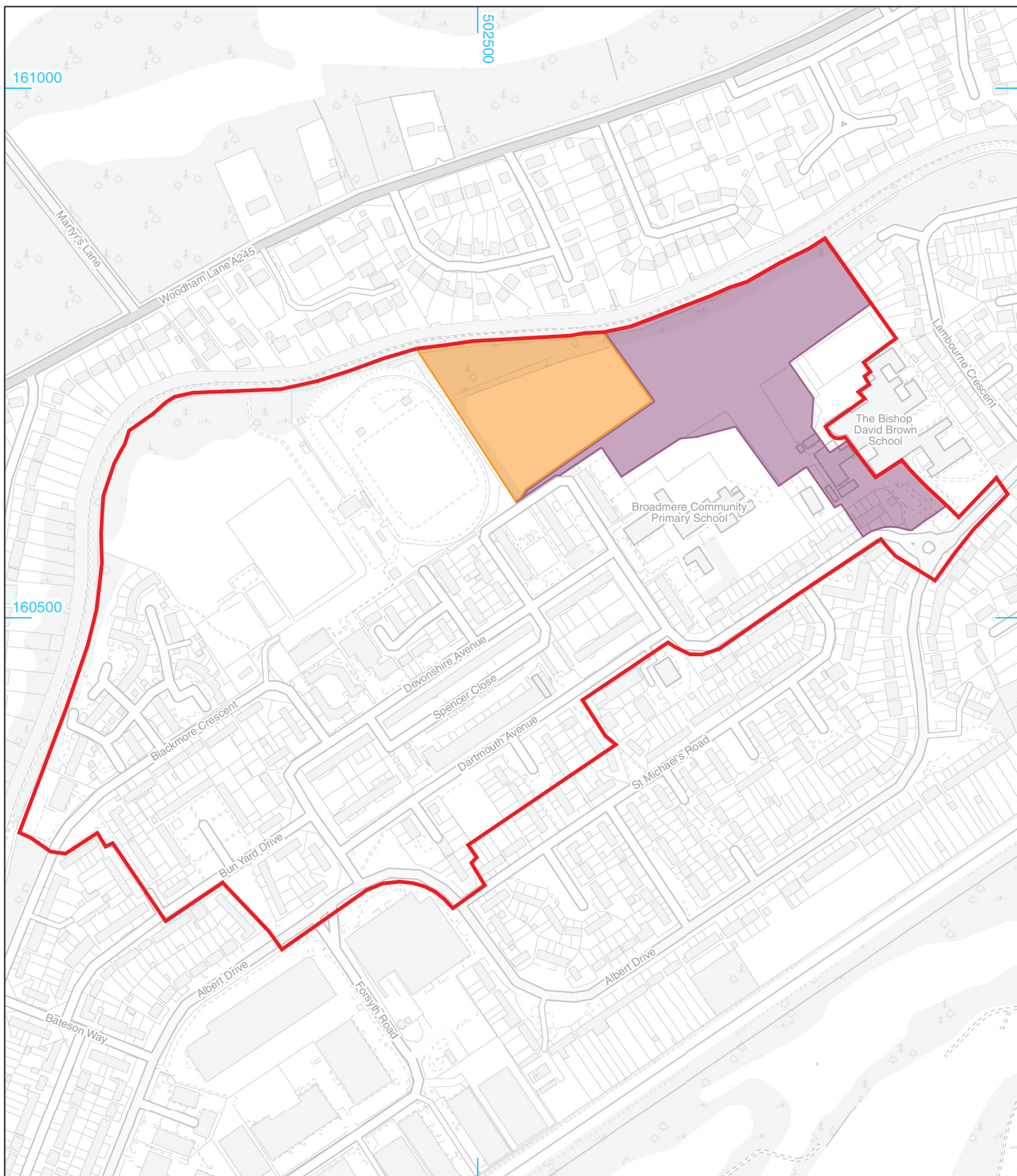

Cotswold Archaeology
 Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 573970
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Bishop David Brown School, Sheerwater, Woking, Surrey

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

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CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	14/09/2020	
APPROVED BY	JC	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	1

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- Site boundary
- Phase 1A
- Copper Phase



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 Cirencester 01285 771022
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enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

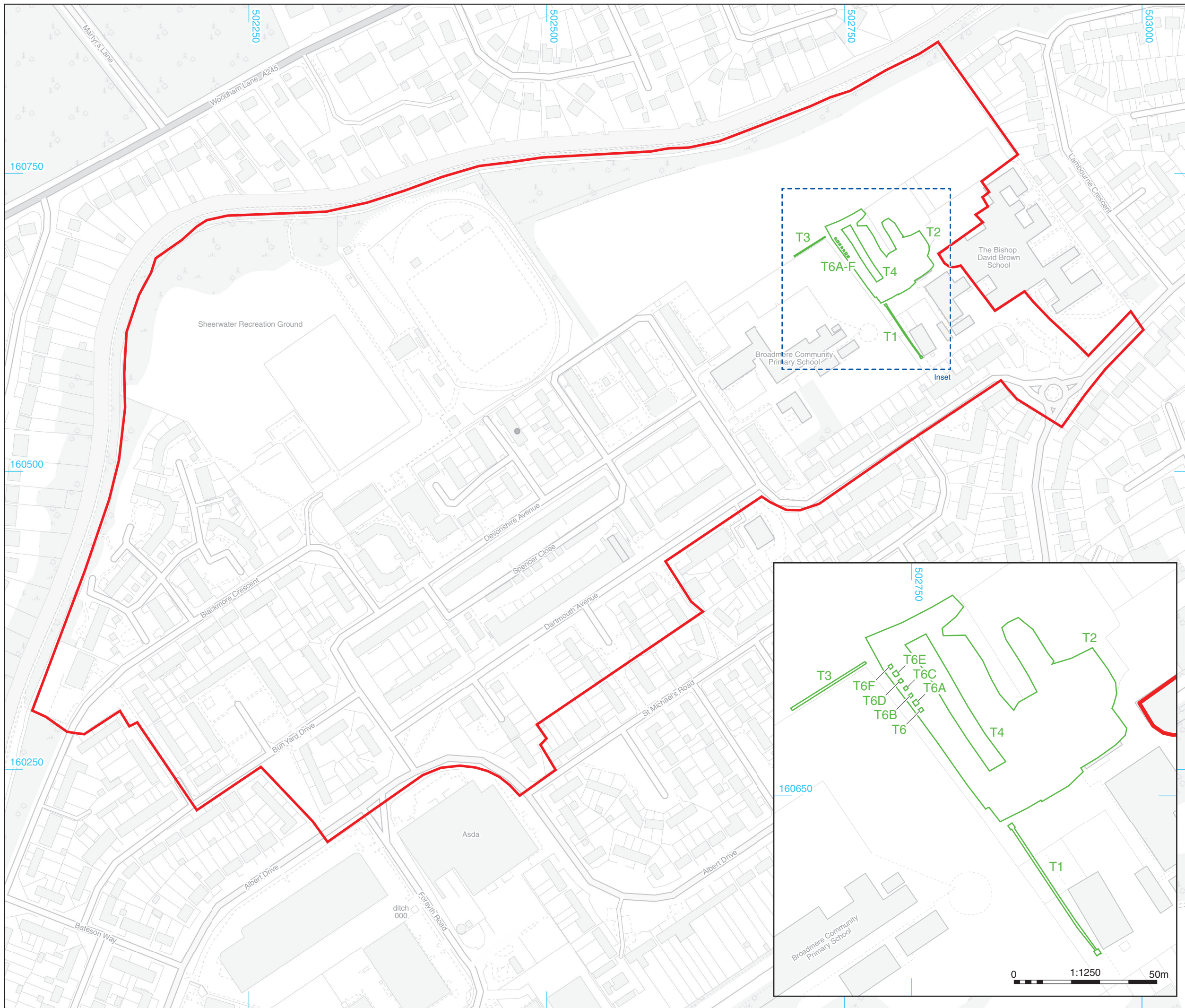
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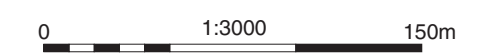
FIGURE TITLE

Plan of working areas

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- Site boundary
- Excavation trench



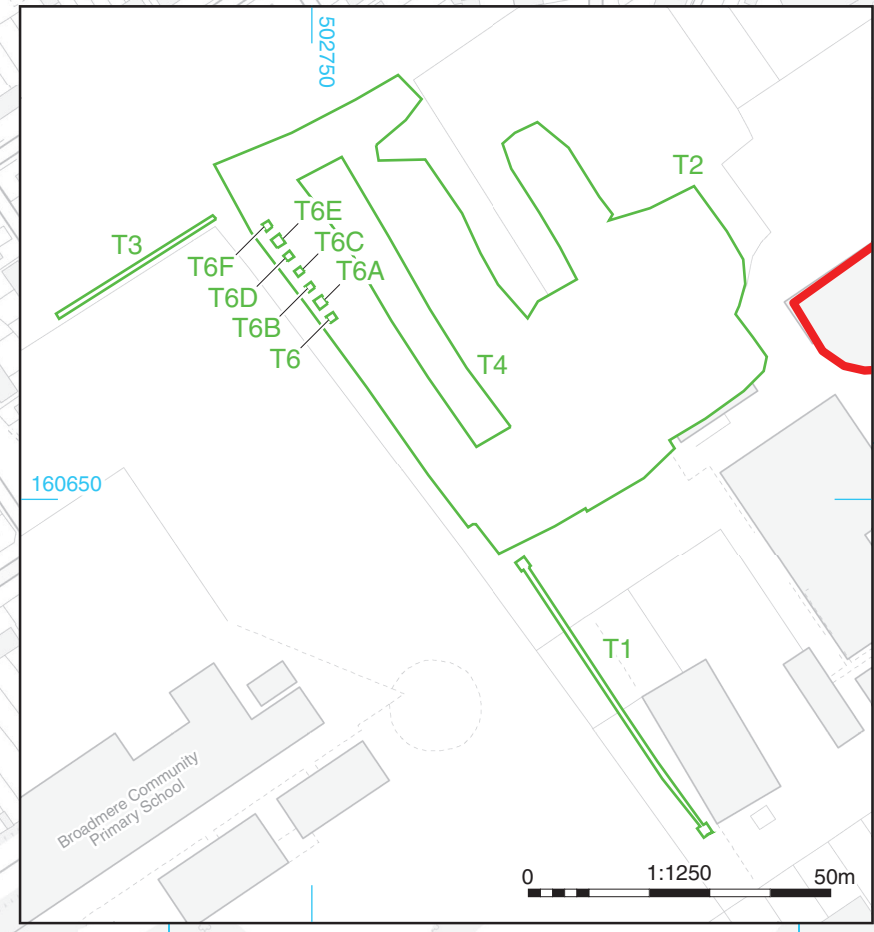
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[Andover 01264 347630](tel:01264347630)
[Cirencester 01285 771022](tel:01285771022)
[Exeter 01392 573970](tel:01392573970)
[Milton Keynes 01908 564660](tel:01908564660)
[Suffolk 01449 900120](tel:01449900120)
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Bishop David Brown School, Sheerwater,
 Woking, Surrey

FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan

DRAWN BY RW	PROJECT NO. AN0057	FIGURE NO.
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APPROVED BY JC	SCALE@A3 1:3000, 1:1250	





Trench 1, post-excavation, looking south-east (1m scale)



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 573970
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

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 Woking, Surrey

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 1: photograph

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Trench 2 working shot, looking south-east



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 573970
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 2: photograph

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Trench 6F, post-excitation, looking north-east (1m scale)



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Cirencester 01285 771022
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Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 6F: photograph

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FIGURE NO.

6

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Kemble Enterprise Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Exeter Office

Unit 1, Clyst Units
Cofton Road
Marsh Barton
Exeter
EX2 8QW

t: 01392 573970

Milton Keynes Office

Unit 8 - The IO Centre
Fingle Drive, Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

Suffolk Office

Unit 5, Plot 11, Maitland Road
Lion Barn Industrial Estate
Needham Market
Suffolk
IP6 8NZ

t: 01449 900120

e: enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

