

Land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre Bamfurlong Gloucestershire

Archaeological Evaluation



for:
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner

CA Project: CR0515
CA Report: CR0515_1

December 2020



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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	11 December 2020	Liam Wilson	Steven Sheldon	Draft	–	Richard Young

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SUMMARY

Project name:	Land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre
Location:	Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire
NGR:	389912 221466
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	18 - 19 November 2020
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with The Wilson – Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Site Code:	CABAMF20

In November 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre at Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire. A total of three trenches were excavated.

Evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural activity, comprising the ploughed-out remains of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, was identified in the eastern part of the site.

No further finds or features of archaeological interest were identified during the course of the evaluation.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In November 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre, Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire (centred at NGR: 389912 221466; Fig. 1). This evaluation was undertaken for the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 1.2. The evaluation was undertaken to inform a planning application for development of the site for new police training facilities, which will be made to Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC).
- 1.3. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2020) and approved by Toby Catchpole, Heritage Team Leader, Gloucestershire County Council, the archaeological advisor to CBC. The evaluation was also in line with local standards/guidance documents, *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014; updated October 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

- 1.4. The proposed development area is approximately 4ha in extent and lies to the south of Bamfurlong and to the west of Cheltenham. The site is currently occupied by the existing facilities of the Gloucestershire Constabulary depot and attached areas of grassland. It bounded to the north and north-east by Elm Garden Drive, to the south and south-east by the A40 dual-carriageway and to the west by a Highways England depot, with the M5 motorway beyond. The site lies at approximately 35m AOD and is broadly flat.
- 1.5. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped in the western half of the site as interbedded mudstone and limestone of the Rugby Limestone Member and mudstone of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation in the eastern half of site, both of the Jurassic Period (BGS 2020). The natural substrate, comprising compact mid grey-blue and yellow-orange clay with occasional patches of yellow-brown gravel, was identified in all of the excavated trenches.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The site has previously been subject to Desk-Based Assessment (DBA; CA 2018a) and geophysical survey (MS 2018). A further DBA was also compiled for a site directly to the north (CA 2018b). The following is a summary of these reports.
- 2.2. Known prehistoric activity in the wider area includes evidence of Iron Age agricultural and settlement enclosures recovered at Arle Court (c. 1km east of the site; Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record (GHER) ref: 20430) and in Area C of the Mitcheldean Mains Reinforcement Scheme (c. 1km to the north-west; GHER 45009).
- 2.3. Examination of a 1979 aerial photograph of the site has identified a circular feature of c. 19m in diameter, which has been interpreted as a potential ring ditch type feature (CA 2018a; see Fig. 2 of this report for location). Two discrete circular cropmarks to the south-east have also been interpreted as potential pits. The feature appears to be isolated and lacks a discernible entrance, suggesting that it may represent the remains of a ploughed out Bronze Age round barrow rather than a settlement enclosure. It is also possible that this cropmark represents the unrecorded remains of a Second World War anti-aircraft emplacement (*ibid.*). A linear cropmark of possible archaeological origin is also visible in the south-east corner of the survey area. Other cropmarks at the eastern end of the site are likely the result of natural features, or possibly represent the remnants of tree throws.
- 2.4. No evidence of Roman activity is recorded within the immediate vicinity of the site, with the closest large Roman settlement located at Gloucester (*Glevum*) c. 7km to the south-west, with no known Roman roads within 1km of the current site (CA 2018a and 2018b).
- 2.5. There is no known evidence of Saxon activity within the vicinity of the site, although the nearby settlements of Cheltenham and Badgeworth are recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and (in the case of Badgeworth) in medieval charters dating to the late 9th century. The settlement of Shurdington was established in the parish of Badgeworth during the medieval period (*ibid.*).
- 2.6. Medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow has been identified within the site and its environs by previous investigation, although LiDAR imagery shows no extant earthworks within the site (*ibid.*). The 1838 Tithe map shows the site as agricultural

fields and by time of the production of the 1888 First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map, the eastern end of the site had been turned over to orchards. This remained unchanged until the 1970s with the construction of the first buildings of the current Operations Centre.

- 2.7. The geophysical survey undertaken by Magnitude Surveys in 2018 (MS 2018) within the eastern fields of the site recorded no anomalies of potential archaeological origin and no evidence for the feature previously recorded as a cropmark (see *paragraph 2.3* above) was identified. The geophysical survey results primarily reflected historic ploughing and field boundaries, and the construction of a bank adjacently south of the Operations Centre (*ibid.*). A number of further anomalies were identified across the centre and east of the survey area, the origins of which cannot be confidently determined based on their shape, alignment or magnetic signal; these may be the result of natural variation in soils or geology or may be agricultural in origin (*ibid.*).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The objective of the evaluation was to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information will enable CBC to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise conflict between heritage asset conservation and the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2019). A further objective of the project is to compile a stable, ordered, accessible project archive.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of three trenches, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Trenches 1 and 2 measured 30m in length and 1.8m in width and Trench 3 measured 10m in width and 1.8m in width. Trench 3 was shortened and moved slightly from its original position, as set out in the WSI, due to the presence of underground services, with the approval of Mr. Catchpole.

-
- 4.2. The trenches were located to test geophysical anomalies and to provide a representative sample of the parts of the site that are to be affected by the proposed development groundworks (and are not currently occupied by structures or hard-standing).
 - 4.3. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, which was the level at which archaeological features were first encountered.
 - 4.4. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual. Records were maintained in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual.
 - 4.5. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. No deposits were identified that required sampling.
 - 4.6. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
 - 4.7. CA will make arrangements with The Wilson – Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum guidelines for the deposition of the project archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection. 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 October 2020).
 - 4.8. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendix B.
- 5.2. The natural substrate, comprising compact mid grey-blue and yellow-orange clay with occasional patches of yellow-brown gravel, was encountered in all of the excavated trenches at an average depth of 0.5m below present ground level (bpgl). In Trenches 1 and 2 the subsoil was cut by a series of broadly north-east/south-west aligned furrows, the majority of which correlate to linear anomalies depicted by the preceding geophysical survey (MS 2018). Two sherds of modern (19th to 20th-century) were recovered from the fill of furrow 204, identified in Trench 2. The fills of the identified furrows were subsequently sealed by between 0.22m and 0.35m thickness of topsoil.
- 5.3. No further finds or features of archaeological interest were uncovered during the course of the evaluation.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1. Artefactual material, dating to the modern period, was hand-recovered from one furrow fill. Quantities of the artefact types are given in Appendix B and the pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric. Fabric codes (in parenthesis in the text) are equated, where possible, to the online Gloucester pottery type series (<http://glospot.potsherd.net/table/med>).

Pottery

- 6.2. Fill 203 of furrow 204 produced two sherds (44g), both of which are dateable to the 19th to 20th centuries. The fabrics represented are yellow ware (TF55) and modern porcelain (POR).

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1. Despite the archaeological potential of the proposed development area (see *archaeological background* above) no archaeological features, excepting the ploughed-out remains of medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow agriculture, were identified during the evaluation. Furthermore, no evidence of features associated

with the previously identified feature recorded as a cropmark (see *paragraph 2.3* above) were identified.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 8.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Liam Wilson, assisted by Hazel O'Neill. This report was written by Liam Wilson. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The report illustrations were prepared by Rosanna Price. The project archive has been compiled by Liam Wilson, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Steven Sheldon.

9. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2020 *Geology of Britain*

Viewer <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/> Accessed 4 December 2020

Cotswold Archaeology (CA) 2020 *Land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre, Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2018a Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre, Bamfurlong, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire: Heritage Desk-Based Assessment, CA ref: **18306**

CA 2018b *Land at Bamfurlong Lane, Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire: Heritage Desk-Based Assessment*, CA ref: **18542**

GCC (Gloucestershire County Council) 2018 *Gloucestershire Archaeological Archive Standards*

MS (Magnitude Surveys) 2018 *Geophysical Survey Report of Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre, Bamfurlong, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire*, MS ref: **MSSO318**

<http://glospot.potsherd.net/table/med> Viewed 26 November 2020

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

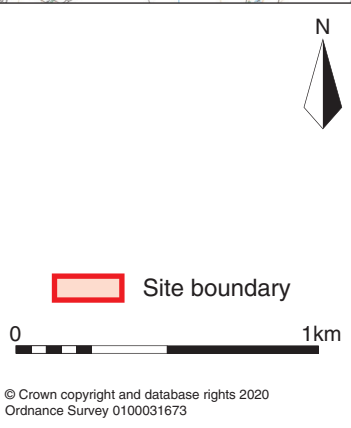
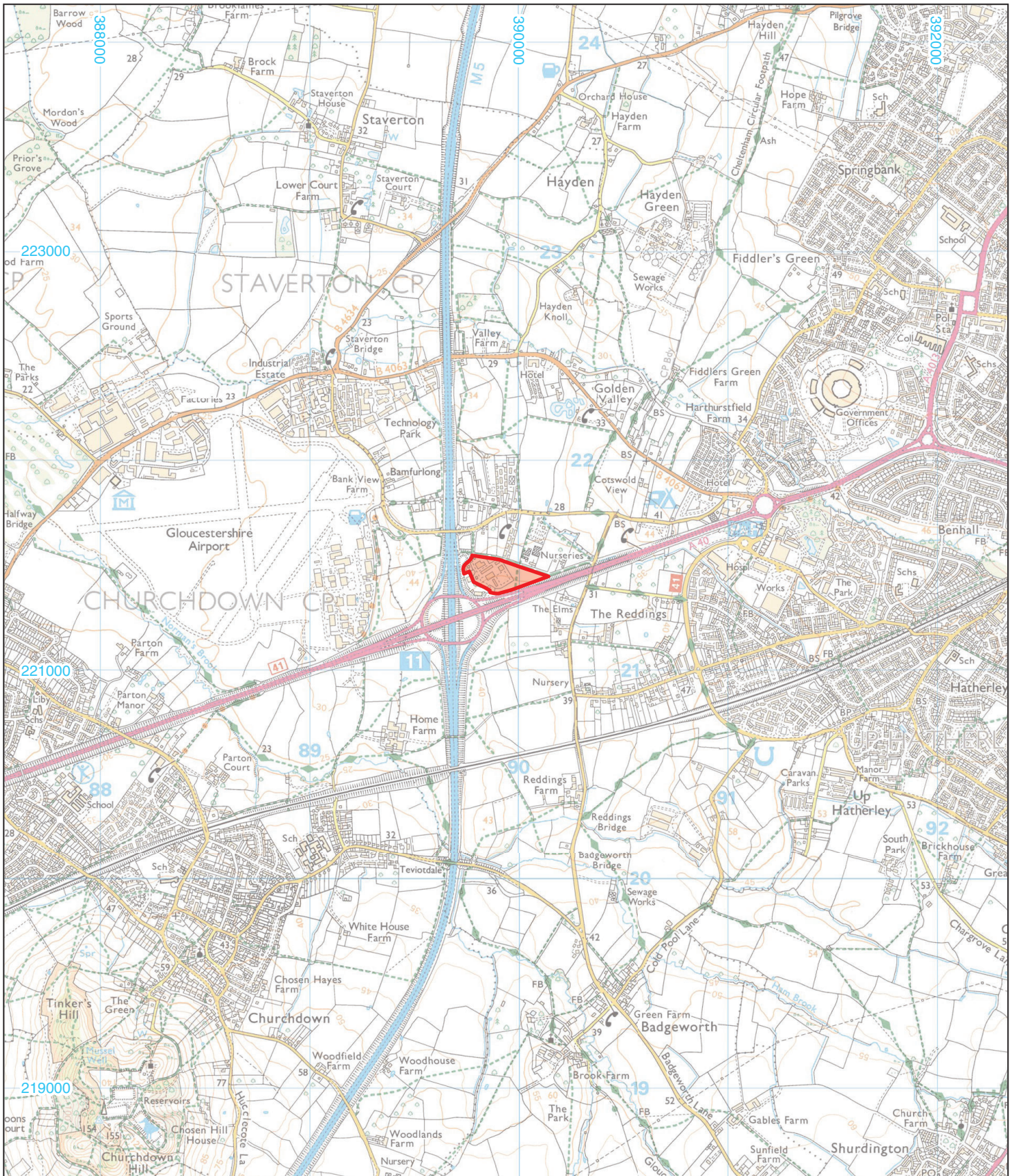
Trench	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty clay	>30	>1.8	0.3
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Light brown yellow silty clay	>30	>1.8	0.35
1	102	Layer		Natural substrate	Compact mid grey-blue and yellow-orange clay with occasional patches of yellow-brown gravel	>30	>1.8	>0.01
1	103	Fill		Fill	Single fill of furrow 104. Mid brown clay silt	>1.8	1.8	>0.01
1	104	Cut		Cut	SE/NW aligned furrow	>1.8	1.8	>0.01
		Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty clay	>30	>1.8	0.3
1	103	Layer		Subsoil	Light brown yellow silty clay	>30	>1.8	0.35
1	104	Layer		Natural substrate	Compact mid grey-blue and yellow-orange clay with occasional patches of yellow-brown gravel	>30	>1.8	>0.01
1	105	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty clay	>10	>1.8	0.14
1	106	Layer		Subsoil	Light brown yellow silty clay	>10	>1.8	0.22
1	107	Layer		Natural substrate	Compact mid grey-blue and yellow-orange clay with occasional patches of yellow-brown gravel	>10	>1.8	>0.01

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Category	Description	Fabric Code	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
203	Modern pottery	Yellow ware	TF55	1	41	C19-C20
	Modern pottery	Modern porcelain	POR	1	3	

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre, Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire	
Short description		
Project dates	18 - 19 November 2020	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	Geophysical Survey (MS 2018) DBA (CA 2018a and CA 2018b)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre, Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire	
Study area (m ² /ha)	4ha	
Site co-ordinates	389912 221466	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Steven Sheldon	
Project Supervisor	Liam Wilson	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive:	Content:
Physical	The Wilson – Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum	Pottery
Paper	The Wilson – Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum	Trench recording forms, photographic registers
Digital	The Wilson – Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum	Digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2020 <i>Land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre, Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report CR0515_1		



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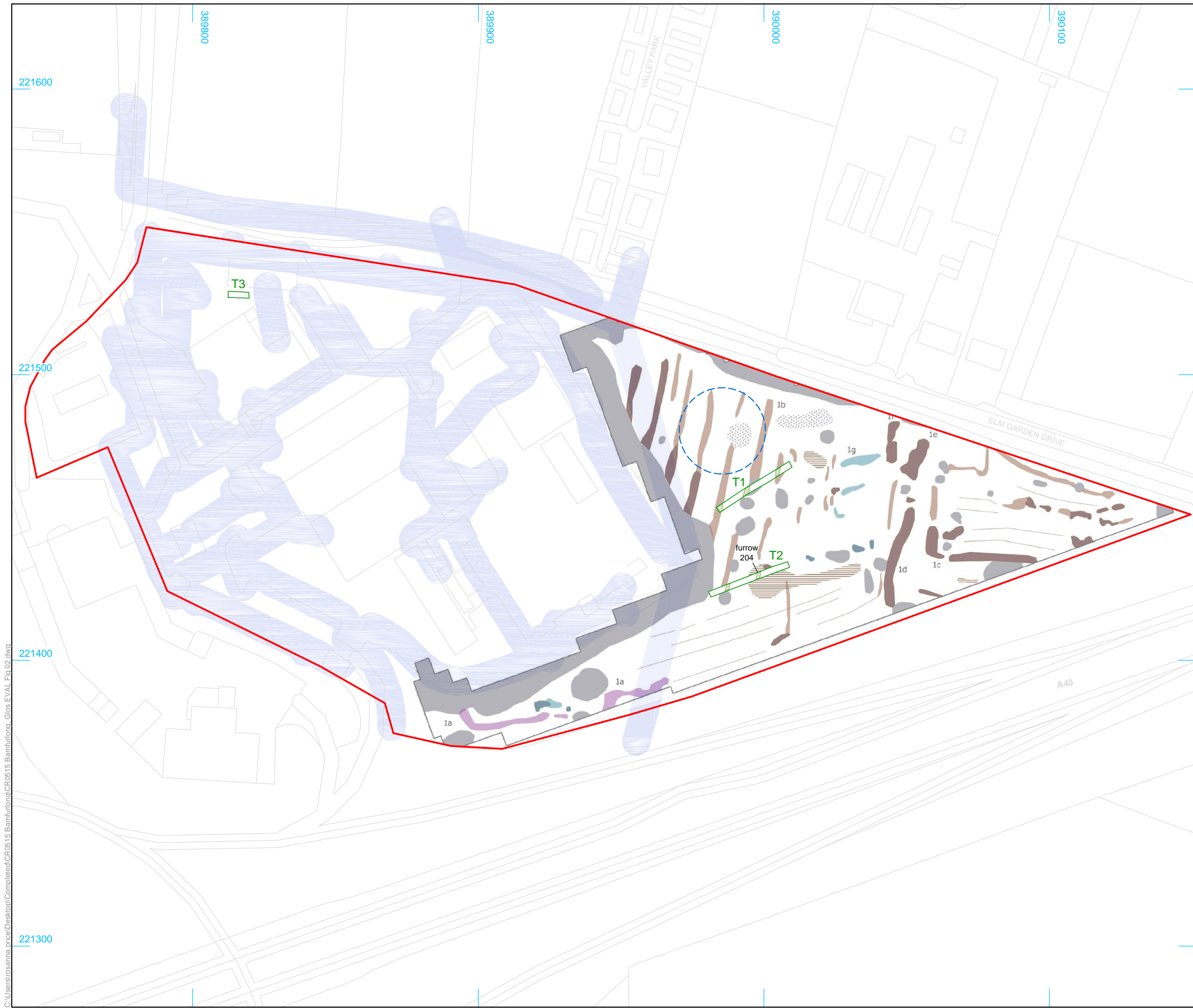
Andover 01264 347630
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PROJECT TITLE
 Land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre, Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	CR0515	FIGURE NO.	1
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	26/11/20		
APPROVED BY	SS	SCALE	@A4 1:25,000		

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- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Previously identified cropmark
- Furrow
- Constraint

**Geophysics Key
(Magnitude Surveys)**

- Agricultural (trend)
- Agricultural (spread)
- Agricultural (strong)
- Agricultural (weak)
- Ferrous (dipolar)
- Ferrous (spread)
- Undetermined (strong)
- Undetermined (weak)
- Modern



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PROJECT TITLE
Land at the Gloucestershire Constabulary Operations Centre, Bamfurlong, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan showing geophysical survey results, and archaeological features

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	CR0515	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	26.11.20	2
APPROVED BY	SS	SCALE@A3	1:1250	

C:\Users\rosanna.price\Desktop\Completed\CR0515 Bamfurlong\CR0515 Bamfurlong_Glos EVAL_Fig 02.dwg



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



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



Trench 3, looking east (scales 1m)



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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
Photographs

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	CR0515	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	08.12.20	3 - 5
APPROVED BY	SS	SCALE@A3	NA	

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