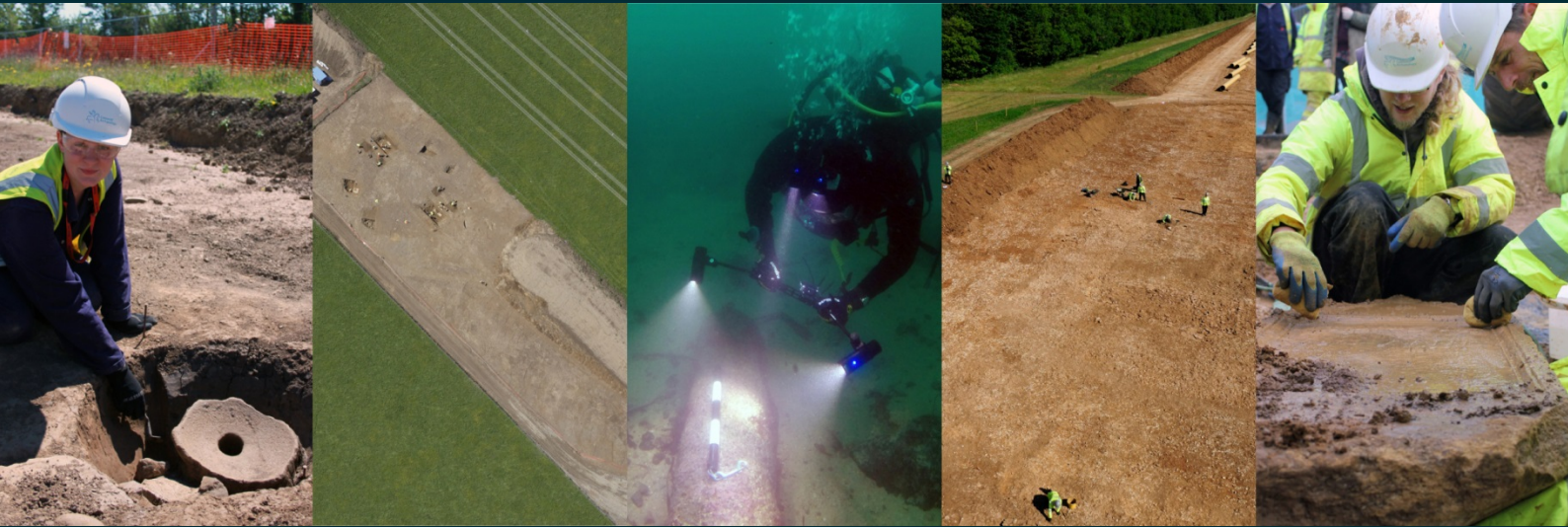


Ashridge Farm Wokingham Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation



for
Wokingham Borough Council

CA Project: 770861
CA Report: 18726

December 2018



Ashridge Farm Wokingham Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Ashridge Farm
Location:	Wokingham Berkshire
NGR:	481414,169872
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	4-12 December 2018
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with relevant Museum
Site Code:	ASHR18

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2018 at Ashridge Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire. Ten trenches were excavated.

Despite the archaeological potential of the wider environs of the site, all of the trenches were archaeologically sterile with no finds, features or deposits recovered. **Trench 8** noted over 1.2m of modern made ground, possibly associated with earthworks undertaken during construction of the sewer main which runs north-south across this field.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In December 2018 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Wokingham Borough Council at Ashridge Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 481414 169872 (see Figure 1). The evaluation was undertaken in advance of a new c 450m-long single carriageway road.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation produced by WSP (2018), and approved by the Archaeology Officer at Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological advisor to WBC. The fieldwork also followed Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation (ClfA 2014) and Berkshire Archaeology's Standards for the Historic Environment (BA 2016).

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development area is approximately 2.6ha, and comprises 5 pasture fields of Ashridge Farm. To the north-east, south and east, the site is bounded by agricultural fields belonging to Ashridge Farm. To the north-west, approximately half of the proposed scheme is bounded by an existing sewage treatment plant and a small residential development which lies along an unnamed road running east off Bell Foundry Lane. To the west, where the site extends north and south along Bell Foundry Lane, the site is bounded by Cantley Park Recreation Ground.
- 1.4 The topography of the site is relatively flat, with a slight incline from the south-west up to the north-east. The rise of the land increases close to the banks of the Ashridge Stream. Ground level varies between 49.0m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the west and 55.4m aOD in the east.
- 1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as London Clay Formation - Clay, Silt And Sand.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment produced by WSP (2018) provides a detailed archaeological and historical background, a succinct summary of which is given below
- 2.2 Two archaeological investigations have been carried out within the site. The eastern end of the site falls within the area covered by the East Berkshire Archaeological Survey in 1984 to 1986 (Ford, 1987), and an evaluation and excavation in 2017 by Cotswold Archaeology (CA, 2017a & b).
- 2.3 Finds recovered from fieldwalking by the EBAS to the north of the site consisted of two prehistoric flint flakes, and a sherd of medieval pottery. A prehistoric site was identified 300m north of the site and produced finds of a flint core and two flint flakes.
- 2.4 During the 2017 (CA 2017a) evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology within the eastern end of the site 61 trenches were excavated one of which, Trench 30, fell wholly within the eastern part of the site. Four features of late Iron Age/Roman date were recorded in Trench 30, which were thought to represent a small enclosed farmstead. Two ditches and one pit were found to contain late Iron Age/Roman pottery.
- 2.5 Following the evaluation an excavation (CA 2017b) took place targeting the features found in Trench 30. Five periods of activity were noted. Period 1 (prehistoric) comprised ten residual worked flints, which could only be dated as early prehistoric, although one flake suggested a Mesolithic date. Period 2 (late Iron Age/early Roman) remains appeared to represent surviving elements of a small ditched farmstead enclosure. Three ditches and two pits were recorded. Pottery of Late Iron Age/early Roman date and animal bones were found in the fill of some of these features. Period 3 (Roman phase I) features comprised an L-shaped ditch and six pits. Pottery found in the fills of these features was dated to the 2nd–3rd century. Animal bones and charred grain was also found in the fills. Period 3 was thought to represent a phase of early 2nd century change, replacing the earlier Period 2 curvilinear ditch with a rectilinear ditch. Period 4 (Roman phase II) features comprised a curvilinear ditch and a single pit. Pottery of 2nd—3rd century date was recorded in the fills of these features. Period 5 (medieval and post-medieval)

remains comprised flat tile fragments of probable medieval or post-medieval date possibly derived from manuring. A number of undated pits and postholes were also recorded.

- 2.10 The site had low potential to contain early medieval (Saxon) remains. No known sites or finds were recorded from this period. It is likely that the site at this time lay within a largely wooded landscape.
- 2.11 The site had moderate potential to contain later medieval remains. During this period the site lay within the 13th century Ashridge estate, at its southern end, some distance from the likely manor house. The estate incorporated a deer park in the 13th century, which would have been enclosed by a park pale (ditch, bank and wooden fence). A curvilinear boundary shown at the eastern end of the site on historic maps from the late 18th century probably presents the estate boundary and park pale. The remainder of the site is likely to have been woodland throughout this period.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation are to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable the WBC 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 10 trenches (1.9m wide x 12.8m to 36.2m long), in the locations shown on the attached plan (Figure 2). **Trenches 9 and 10** were moved to the south due to an existing Thames Water compound. **Trench 8** was moved to the west and realigned north-west/southeast to avoid a sewer main. **Trenches 7, 6 and 5** were moved due to existing hedge line and fencing. **Trench 4**

was moved to accommodate the new location of **Trench 5**. **Trench 3** was moved to the east and realigned north-west/south-east due to overhead electricity cables. This was done with the approval of the Archaeology Officer at Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological advisor to WBC. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.

- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 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* and, no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.4 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Andover. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive will be deposited with the relevant authority. Currently there is no museum or store receiving archaeological archives in the Wokingham Borough. In this instance, given the absence of any finds, the deposition of the archive in digital form with an appropriate repository, e.g. ADS, would be an appropriate alternative. 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 (FIGURES 2-5)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results including detailed summaries of the recorded contexts.
- 5.2 The underlying geology gradually changed across the site. In **Trenches 7, 9 and 10** it comprised a silt/clay matrix. **Trench 8** also comprised a silt/clay matrix but was

heavily truncated by modern overburden. In **Trenches 6** and **5** the natural bedrock comprised a sand/clay. In **Trench 4**, natural comprised of a clay rich sand deposit. **Trenches 1, 2** and **3** had a natural comprised of gravel, sand and clay. **Trenches 1, 7, 8, 9** and **10** had no subsoil. **Trenches 4, 5** and **6** contained between 0.11m and 0.29m of subsoil. All of the trenches were sealed by topsoil which was between 0.3 and 0.46m thick. All of the trenches were archaeological sterile. Two N/S orientated land drains were identified within **Trench 3**.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the wider environs of the site, all of the trenches were archaeologically sterile with no finds, features or deposits recovered. This is in common with much of the surrounding landscape which seems to be largely devoid of archaeological sites (see archaeological background above), and where sites do appear they tend to be isolated and of poor quality such as the Iron Age and Roman site identified at Kentwood immediately east of the site. The site is likely to have been heavily wooded in character for a substantial period of time which would account for the lack of archaeological features noted within the site.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Timothy Sperring, assisted by Adam Howard. The report was written by Adam Howard. The illustrations were prepared by Tom Brown. The archive has been compiled by Richard Paxford, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.

10. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2018 *Geology of Britain Viewer* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 12 December 2018

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017a Kentwood Farm, Phase 2, Wokingham, Berkshire: Archaeological Evaluation, CA Typescript report 17386.

CA, 2017b Kentwood Farm, Phase 2, Wokingham, Berkshire: Archaeological Excavation.
CA typescript report, Report No. 17711

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WSP, 2018a, North West Distributor Road (NWDR) Ashridge Farm: Historic Environment
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WPS, 2018b, North West Distributor Road (NWDR): Ashridge Farm Written Scheme of
Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation

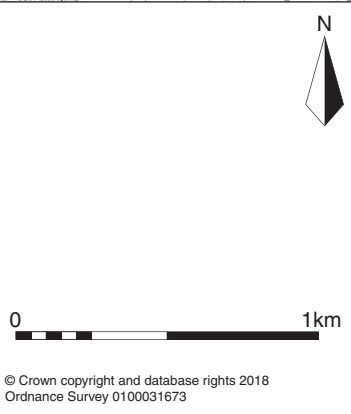


APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Context Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/ thickness (m)
100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown friable clayey silt	30.2	1.9	0.00-0.3
101	Layer		Natural	Mid orange brown gravel with orange grey gravel and patches of mid brown yellow clay , rare iron stone	30.2	1.9	0.3-+
200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey firm sandy clay, occ. Gravel	30.3	1.9	0-0.3
201	Layer		Sub soil	Mid brown firm sandy clay , gravel	30.3	1.9	0.3-0.5
202	Layer		Natural	Mid brown yellow , rare gravel	30.3	1.9	0.5+
300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey firm sandy clay, occ. Gravel	31.2	1.9	0.0-0.35
301	Layer		Subsoil	Mid brown firm sandy clay , gravel	31.2	1.9	0.35-0.48
302	Layer		Natural	Mid brown yellow , rare gravel	31.2	1.9	0.48-0.5
303	Cut		TT	TT sub-oval	1.6	1.7	1.6 NS
304	Fill	303	TT	Mid grey sandy clay	1.6	1.7	1.7EW
400	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown friable clayey silt	30.2	1.9	0.0-0.4
401	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown friable clayey silt, rare chert pebbles	30.2	1.9	0.4-0.65
402	Layer		Natural	Mid brown red friable clayey sand, rare gravel	30.2	1.9	0.65+
500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey firm sandy clay	36.2	1.9	0.0-0.41
501	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey brown sandy clay	36.2	1.9	0.41-0.69
502	Layer		Natural	Mid orange sandy clay , rare patches of dark brown sandy clay	36.2	1.9	0.69+
600	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey firm silty clay	31.2	1.9	0.0-0.38
601	Layer		Subsoil	Mid brown firm silty sandy clay	31.2	1.9	0.38-0.49
602	Layer		Natural	Light orange compact sandy clay with patches sandy gravel	31.2	1.9	0.49-0.56+
700	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey silty clay, occ rounded stone	29.8	1.9	0.0-0.46
701	Layer		Natural	Light yellow silty clay with mid brown blue sandy clay	29.8	1.9	0.46-0.52
800	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey form silty clay	12.3	1.9	0.0-0.31
801			Made ground	Mid orange brown silty clay, frequent bricks	12.3	1.9	0.31-1.2
802	Cut		Modern ditch	Linear . flat base, gradual sloping sides	12.3	1.9	0.31-1.2
803	Fill	802		Natural , mid orange compact silty clay , patches of blue grey sandy clay	12.3	1.9	1.2+
900	Layer		Top soil	Mid grey firm silty clay	26	1.9	0.0-0.3
901	Layer		Natural	Mid orange compact sandy clay with patches of silty clay	26	1.9	0.3-0.41
1000	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey firm clay silt	29.5	1.9	0.0-0.39
1001	Layer		Natural	Mid orange yellow silty clay , with sandy clayey patches and blue grey compact sandy clay	29.5	1.9	0.39-0.48

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project Name	Ashridge Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2018 at Ashridge Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire. Ten trenches were excavated. Despite the archaeological potential of the wider environs of the site, all of the trenches were archaeologically sterile with no finds, features or deposits recovered. Trench 8 noted over 1.2m of modern made ground, possibly associated with the levelling of the field during construction of the sewer main which runs north-south across this field.
Project dates	4-12 December 2018
Project type	Field evaluation
Previous work	CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017a Kentwood Farm, Phase 2, Wokingham, Berkshire: Archaeological Evaluation, CA Typescript report 17386. CA, 2017b Kentwood Farm, Phase 2, Wokingham, Berkshire: Archaeological Excavation. CA typescript report, Report No. 17711
Future work	Unknown
PROJECT LOCATION	
Site Location	Ashridge Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire
Study area (M ² /ha)	2.6ha
Site co-ordinates	481414,169872
PROJECT CREATORS	
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Brief originator	
Project Design (WSI) originator	WSP
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy
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)
Relevant Museum	
Physical	
Paper	Context sheets, matrices etc
Digital	Database, digital photos etc
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2018 <i>Ashridge Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 18726	



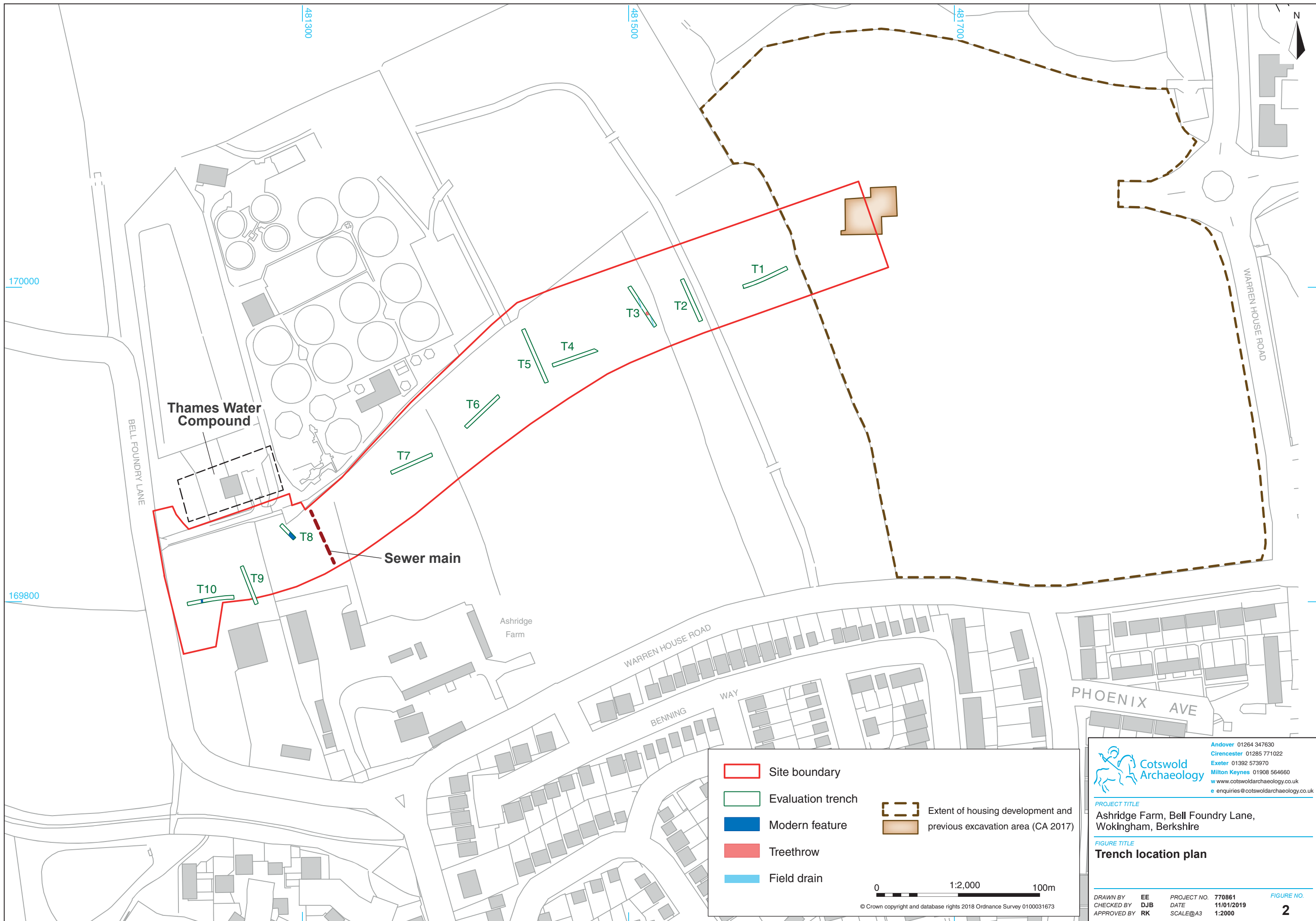

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PROJECT TITLE
 Ashridge Farm, Bell Foundry Lane,
 Wokingham, Berkshire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	TB	PROJECT NO.	770861	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	14.12.18	
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	1

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Ordnance Survey 0100031673



- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Modern feature
- Extent of housing development and previous excavation area (CA 2017)
- Treethrow
- Field drain




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PROJECT TITLE
**Ashridge Farm, Bell Foundry Lane,
 Wokingham, Berkshire**
 FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan

DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	770861	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	11/01/2019	2
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE@A3	1:2000	



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



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



Trench 3, looking north-east (1m scales)



Trench 4, looking south-west (1m scales)


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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
Photographs

DRAWN BY	TB	PROJECT NO.	770861	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	14.12.18	
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE@A3	NA	3



Trench 5, looking north-east (1m scales)



Trench 6, looking north-west (1m scales)



Trench 7, looking north-west (1m scales)



Trench 8, looking north-west (1m scales)



Trench 9, looking south-east (1m scales)



Trench 10, looking north-east (1m scales)

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