

Land to the South of the M25 at Rooks Nest, Tandridge, Surrey



Strip, Map and Sample Fieldwork Report



April 2014

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Joint Venture**


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1	Kevin Moon Supervisor	Steve Lawrence Senior Project Manager	

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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263800

e: oasouth@thehumanjourney.net

f: +44 (0) 1865 793496

w: oasouth.thehumanjourney.net

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Land to the South of the M25 at Rooks Nest, Tandridge, Surrey

Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Recording

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA), was commissioned by Skanska Balfour Beatty Joint Venture to undertake recording of potential archaeological remains that may have been impacted by the construction of a temporary piling mat to facilitate the installation of permanent land stabilisation and drainage works to the south of the M25 and east of Palmer's Wood at Rooks Nest, near Tandridge, Surrey.

No archaeological potential, deposits or finds were encountered during the fieldwork. Excavation to between 2.5m and 1m deep on the sloped roadside area revealed a sequence of modern redeposited clay layers used to create the motorway embankment. The underlying natural geology was not encountered at the base of the construction impact (147m aOD). The construction groundwork was archaeologically monitored for approximately 80m of the 200m long area impacted by the piling mat and piling. Three trial pits were excavated as a sample within the remaining area confirming that the modern made ground clay sequence was present throughout.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project details

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Skanska Balfour Beatty Joint Venture to undertake recording of potential archaeological remains prior to construction of temporary and permanent land stabilisation and drainage works to the south of the M25 and to the east of Palmer's Wood near Tandridge, Surrey. The construction work was undertaken through a general permitted development order as part of the programme of carriageway widening along the M25 within Kent and Surrey between junctions 5 and 7. This specific construction was required due to land to the north and south of the M25 slumping downhill. The construction comprised ground revetment to secure the M25 carriageway and drainage installation.
- 1.1.2 Prior to the fieldwork attendance, OA had produced a Desk-based Assessment (DBA) of the heritage potential centred upon the temporary construction compound to the west of this site near Godstone and south of Junction 6 (OA 2012). The study area for this DBA incorporated the Rooks Nest site location although this was near its eastern limit. This suggested low potential for archaeological remains to be present within the scope of the construction works. These data formed the basis for discussions with Gary Jackson, Archaeological Officer at Surrey County Council (SCC) with regard to defining a suitable programme of Strip, Map and Sample (SMS) archaeological recording to mitigate the impacts of the construction. In April 2013 OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2013) submitted to and approved by SCC immediately before the fieldwork commenced. The fieldwork programme was completed between 10th and 19th April 2013.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site is centred on TQ 3665 5281 immediately to the south of the M25 west-bound carriageway and between Palmer's Wood to the west and Tandridge Hill Lane to the east (Fig. 1). The site is located within Surrey within the parish and district of Tandridge. The area subject to piling and stabilisation was immediately adjacent to the M25 carriageway with the drainage to the south situated within a larger area of c 2 hectares. This comprised grazed pasture with a hedge boundary set back from and parallel to the M25.
- 1.2.2 The land surface slopes from the north to the south with the verge of the M25 bordering the site at approximately 150m aOD and the southern boundary at approximately 137m aOD. The main excavation zone for the piling mat slopes from c 150m to 146m aOD. The underlying geology is Gault Clay deposits of the Cretaceous Era.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site was partly covered by a DBA produced for the construction temporary compound located near Junction 6 of the M25 (OA 2012). The Rooks Nest site lies at the eastern edge of that study area. This recorded no archaeological finds or sites within the vicinity with only an archaeological watching brief being undertaken close by that recorded entirely negative results. The DBA should be referred to for a general background to the surrounding area and further detail and references.



2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Scope of works

2.1.1 Archaeological works within the c 2 hectares land stabilisation boundary south of the M25 was limited to the specific subsurface construction impacts. This comprised the excavation of the c 200m by 14m piling mat area adjacent to the M25 west-bound carriageway. In the event only part of the piling mat excavation was subject to detailed archaeological observation with the remainder of it investigated with three trial pits (Fig. 2). Observation of the drainage works was not undertaken as this was largely confined to modern made ground.

2.2 Aims

2.2.1 General objectives of the SMS approach were:

- (i) to establish the presence/absence, extent, date, nature, function, and phasing of any archaeological remains present within the boundary of the site work impacts and to preserve these by detailed archaeological records.
- (ii) to characterise the overall nature of any archaeological remains encountered and to understand the process of their formation.
- (iii) to identify priorities within any areas of exposed archaeological remains that may warrant more detailed investigation (excavation) and to provide evidence to inform more detailed excavation proposals.
- (iv) to establish the relative archaeological value of any remains encountered and implementing an appropriate archaeological recording response to these through agreement with the Surrey HCT.
- (v) to recover evidence for the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features where this is considered appropriate to investigate.
- (vi) to make available the results of the investigation through appropriate publication.
- (vii) to contribute information to key research objectives based upon the Regional Research Agenda for this region.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 The piling mat excavation was undertaken using a tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket operating under archaeological supervision. The topsoil was removed from the entirety of the mat area with the western 35m of this also being excavated to 1m below the existing ground surface. Following this a further 70m long area within the centre of the piling mat extent was excavated to the full impact depth (147m aOD). Due to the negative results encountered at this stage, the remaining part of the piling mat was investigated to impact depth at three trial pit locations. These were machine excavated under archaeological supervision and following approval of this approach from the Archaeological Officer at SCC.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Deposit sequence

- 3.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were found within the fully excavated area or the adjacent trial pits. The initial excavation area revealed a deep sequence of modern made ground clay deposits containing occasional debris such as brick, concrete and timber (Figs 3 and 4). A gravel layer was also recorded probably representing roadside drainage. These deposits were clearly part of the embankment construction for the M25 carriageway at this location. A full list of the recorded deposits is presented in Appendix A for reference. Excavation ceased at 147m aOD for the piling mat construction. The underlying Gault Clay was not encountered at any point within the limits of this excavation.
- 3.1.2 Following the negative results of the initial excavation, the remainder of area was investigated through three machine excavated trial pits (Fig. 2). These confirmed that the same sequence of redeposited clay layers were present throughout the piling mat impact and the embankment area.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Interpretation and significance

- 4.1.1 No archaeological features were encountered and the construction impact was limited to the modern made ground forming the current M25 embankment. With consideration of the existing topography visible on site and with the knowledge of the embankment construction, it is reasonably clear from a view along the M25 that this area has been raised significantly as part of the road construction (Fig. 5). However, the undulating natural landscape of this area and the tree and shrub cover did make this less obvious prior to the start of the fieldwork.
- 4.1.2 It is likely that the nature of the made ground and water ingress had resulted in the gradual slumping effect of the embankment requiring the current stabilisation works. Any horizon that may contain archaeological potential is likely to be buried significantly deeper than the limit of the current works.



APPENDIX A. TRIAL PIT DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Sequence in SMS area						
General description				Orientation	-	
Multiple layers of redeposited clay and a gravel drainage deposit sealed by topsoil and turf. M25 embankment construction deposits.				Avg. depth (m)	3	
				Width (m)	14	
				Length (m)	70	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1	Layer	-	0.1	Topsoil	-	modern
2	Layer	-	0.2	Made ground	-	modern
3	Layer	-	0.3	Redeposited clay	-	modern
4	Layer	-	0.1	Gravel make-up/drainage	-	modern
5	Layer	-	0.8	Redeposited clay	-	modern
6	Layer	-	0.65	Redeposited clay	-	modern
7	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern



Trial Pit 1						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trial Pit excavated demonstrating the continuation of the embankment made ground sequence.				Avg. depth (m)		2
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		2.2
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern
101	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern

Trial Pit 2						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trial Pit excavated demonstrating the continuation of the embankment made ground sequence.				Avg. depth (m)		3
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		2.2
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Layer	-	-	Made Ground	-	modern
201	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern
202	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern
203	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern

Trial Pit 3						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trial Pit excavated demonstrating the continuation of the embankment made ground sequence.				Avg. depth (m)		3
				Width (m)		1.8
				Length (m)		2.2
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
300	Layer	-	-	Made Ground	-	modern
301	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern
301	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern
302	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern
303	Layer	-	-	Redeposited clay	-	modern



APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA, 2012 M25 Junction 6 Temporary Compound, Godstone, Surrey. Desk-based Assessment Unpublished client report for Skanska Balfour Beatty JV

OA, 2013 Land to the South of the M25 at Rooks Nest, Tandridge, Surrey. Written Scheme of Investigation. Unpublished client document



APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Land to the South of the M25 at Rooks Nest, Tandridge, Surrey
Site code:	TROK13
Grid reference:	TQ 3665 5281
Fieldwork type:	Strip, Map and Sample Recording
Date and duration:	10th-19th April 2013
Area of site:	Approximately 200m x 14m, 2,800m ²

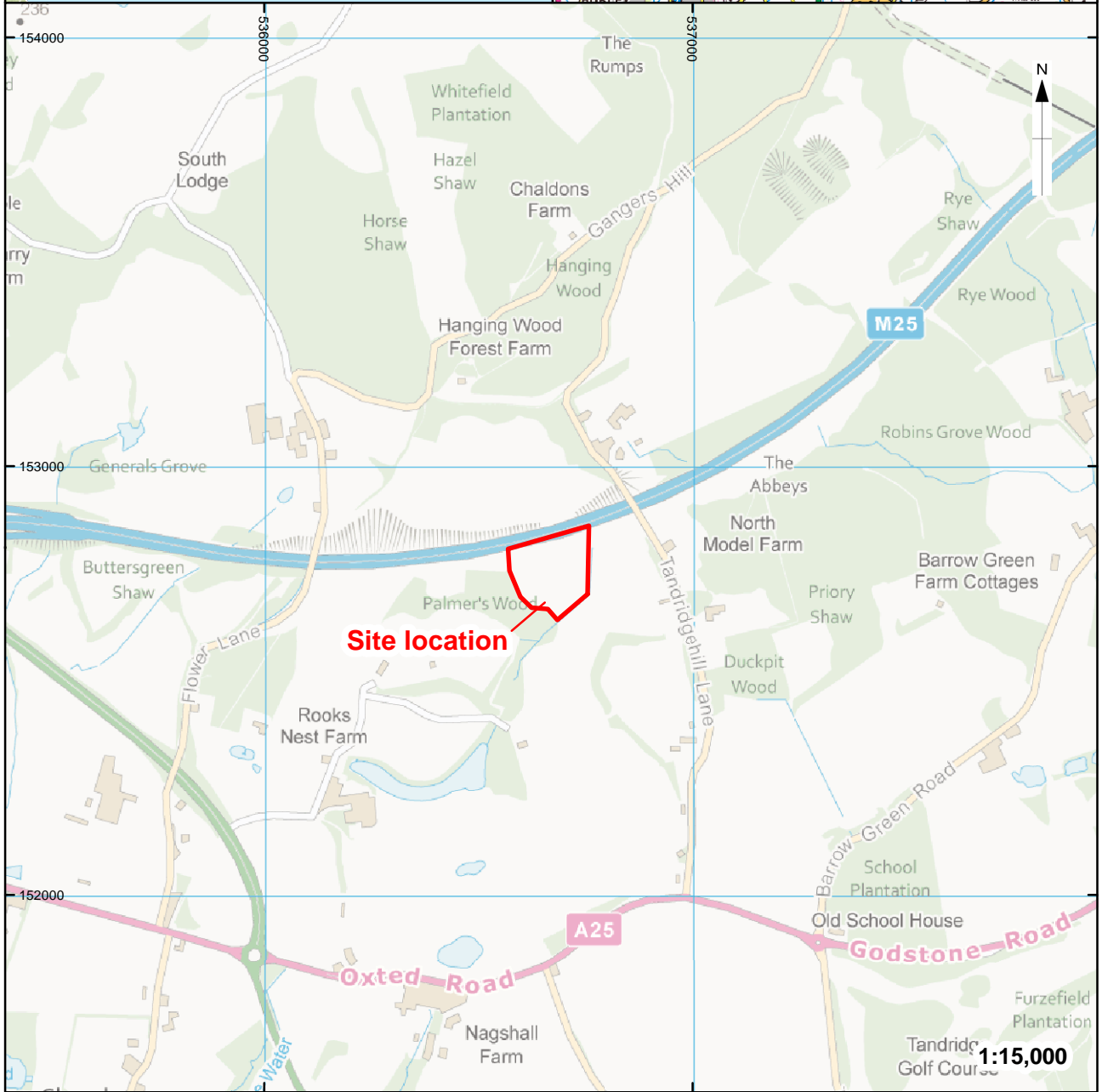
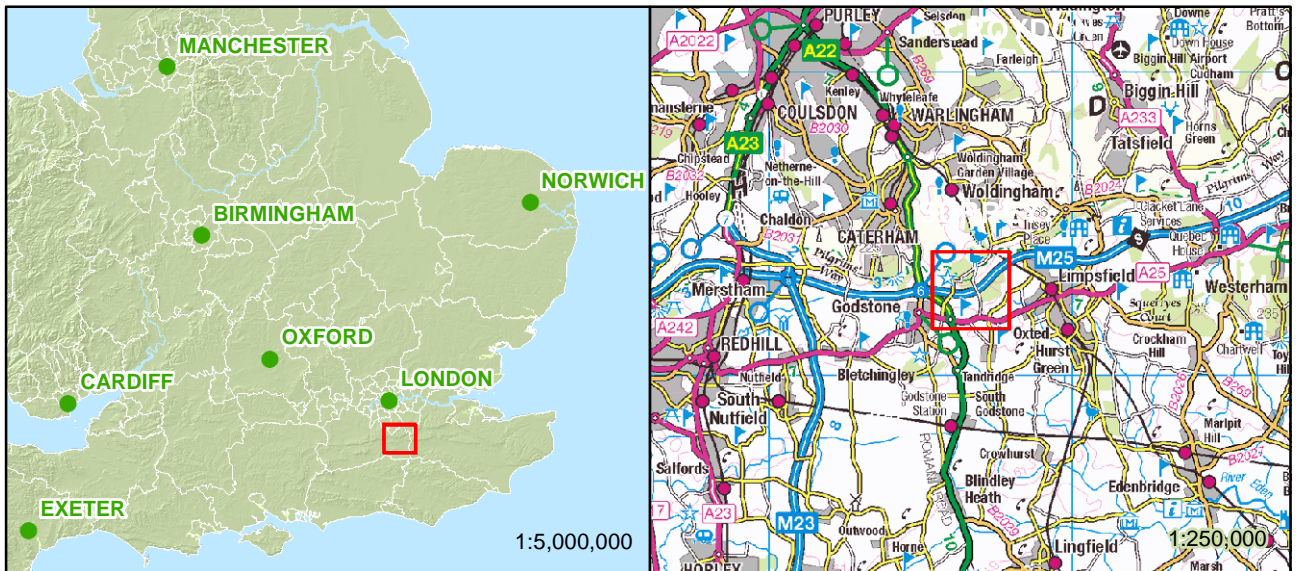
Summary of results:

Oxford Archaeology (OA), was commissioned by Skanska Balfour Beatty Joint Venture to undertake recording of potential archaeological remains that may have been impacted by the construction of a temporary piling mat to facilitate the installation of permanent land stabilisation and drainage works to the south of the M25 and east of Palmer's Wood at Rooks Nest, near Tandridge, Surrey.

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Location of archive:

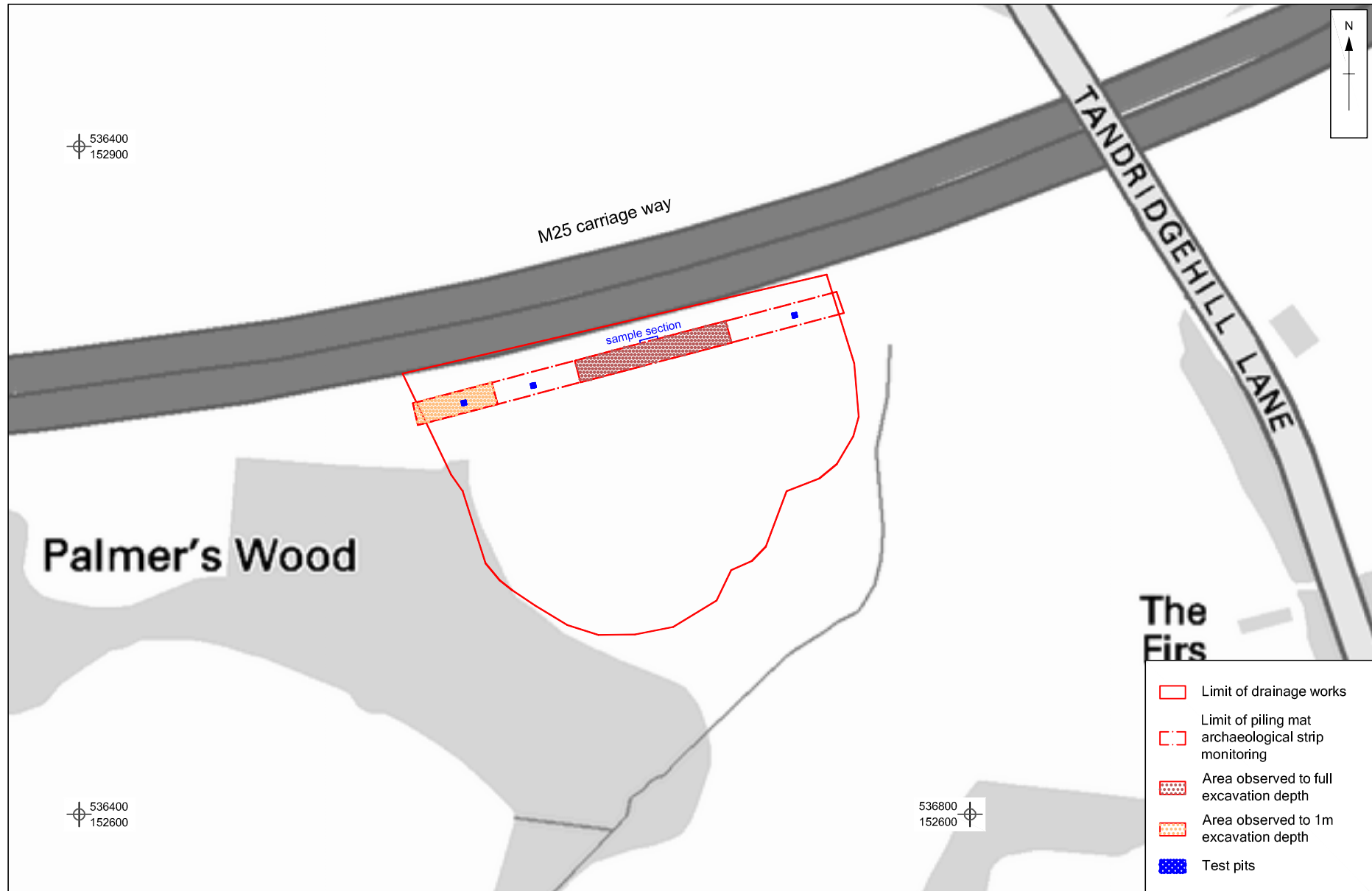
The archive is currently held at the office of Oxford Archaeology, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. This will be deposited with the East Surrey Museum in due course. The accession number has not been issued at the time of this report production.



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Figure 1: Site location

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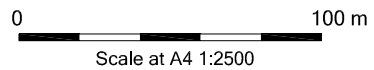


Figure 2: Site plan

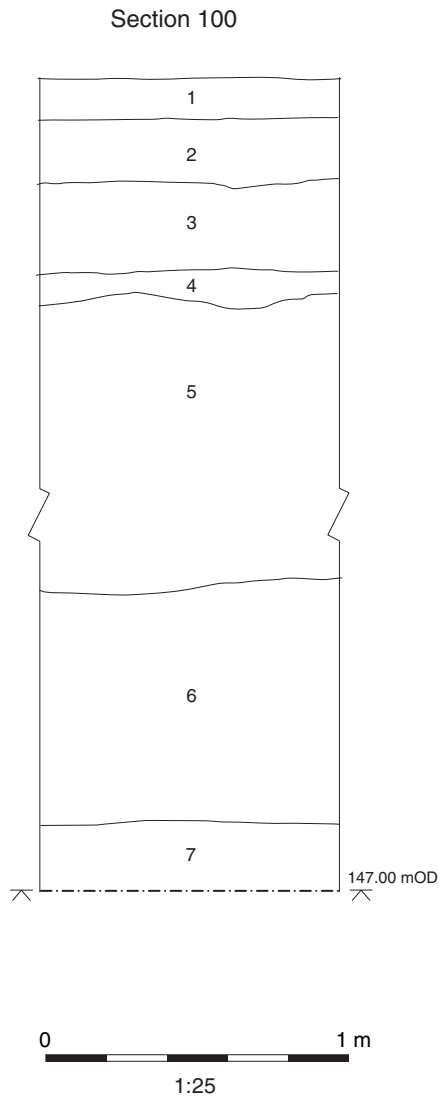


Figure 3: Sample section



Figure 4: Excavation area to full impact depth



Figure 5: General view of the construction and excavation area showing the motorway embankment. View west



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarchaeology.com
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1QD

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



Director: Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MIFA
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