



Land to the Rear of 73 High Street, Burnham, Buckinghamshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

January 2019

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

Written by Mark Dodd

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology carried out a single-trench evaluation ahead of residential development to the rear of 73 High Street, Burnham, Buckinghamshire, in December 2018. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered. A probable former topsoil was identified below the existing car park surfacing and made ground suggesting limited prior truncation.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank FPT Commercial Properties LLP for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to the planning archaeologist, Phil Markham, who monitored the work on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council, for his advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Steve Lawrence. The fieldwork was completed by Mark Dodd.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Commission and scope

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by FPT Commercial Properties LLP to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of a residential development on land to the rear of 73 High Street, Burnham, Buckinghamshire.

1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. 17/01774/FUL). The Local Planning Authority did not set a brief for the work, although a discussion with Phil Markham, Planning Archaeologist, Buckinghamshire County Council, did establish the scope of work required to fulfil condition 10 of the planning permission. Condition 10 stated:

1.1.3 “No development shall take place within the area of archaeological interest until the applicant has secured the implementation of a program of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.”

1.1.4 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by OA confirming the scope, aims and methods of the evaluation (OA 2018). This document was submitted to and approved by the planning archaeologist prior to the start of the fieldwork.

1.1.5 The fieldwork was carried out on 13 December 2018.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The site lies to the rear of 73 High Street, Burnham, Buckinghamshire, and is centred on SU 9307 8255 (Fig. 1). The area of development currently comprises parking to the rear of the High Street frontage. The site is currently under tarmac paving and is flat with a surface level at approximately 53.8m aOD.

1.2.2 The solid geology of the area is mapped as Lambeth Group - Clay, Silt and Sand. Sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 48 to 59 million years ago in the Palaeogene Period. Local environment previously dominated by swamps, estuaries and deltas (BGS website). The superficial geology is mapped as Boyn Hill Gravel Member - Sand and Gravel formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. The local environment was previously dominated by rivers (BGS website).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 Data from the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was collated within a 250m radius of the site and combined with information derived from the Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Assessment Report for Burnham (BCC 2011). These data sources were used to produce an archaeological and historical background section presented as part of the WSI accompanied by a location map of the data locations (Fig. 2). This background section is repeated from the WSI below.

1.3.2 Burnham is situated on the northern side of the River Thames on the Boyn Hill sand and gravel deposits. These deposits have produced numerous Palaeolithic finds

including a flint handaxe found 110m east of the site. Neolithic and Bronze Age flints have been found 200m north-west of the site, although evidence for later prehistoric activity in and around Burnham is lacking. This contrasts sharply with adjacent areas such as Taplow, Eton and Dorney. In addition to the lack of later prehistoric remains, there is also a paucity of Romano-British finds and no Romano-British settlement evidence has as yet been identified.

- 1.3.3 The exact origins of the settlement at Burnham is unknown. It was first recorded in the Domesday Survey (1086) as Burneham, which comprised 28 villagers, 7 small holders and 2 slaves, and was the administrative centre of a hundred. The layout and extent of the early settlement is unknown, although it is thought that the current church, 105m south of the site, which is 12th-century in date, might be on the site of an earlier minster church. This is likely to have been the focus of any early settlement.
- 1.3.4 Despite a degree of town planning in the 13th century and the establishment of a market at Burnham Abbey in 1271, the village remained small throughout the medieval period, relying on an agricultural economy. In the 18th century and with the opening of the Marlow to Burnham Turnpike Burnham became a coaching town, although this was short lived and declined following the construction of the railway in the 19th century.
- 1.3.5 The site is situated within both an archaeological notification area and the conservation area which covers the historic core of Burnham. The site is located to the rear of properties fronting the High Street. These properties are situated within long narrow burgage plots laid out in the medieval period. Despite being part of a larger field immediately adjacent to the burgage plots on the tithe map (1841), it is possible that the site may originally have lain within one of the burgage plots. An excavation undertaken to the north of the site to the rear of Burnham House, 93 High Street, discovered a late post-medieval well and pit and a modern concrete garden terrace wall.

1.4 Historic Environment Record gazetteer

OA No.	HER Ref	Name	Monument Type	Grade	Period
1	MBC1170 9	ST. PETER'S CHURCH, BURNHAM	CHURCH	II*	12th Century to 19th Century
2	MBC1171 3	SOUTH BOUNDARY WALL TO	BOUNDARY WALL	II	18th Century
3	MBC1791 9	THE CRISPIN INN	HOUSE; INN	II	18th Century
4	MBC1792 3	TUDOR COTTAGE, 11 CHURCH STREET	HOUSE; TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; JETTIED HOUSE	II	16th Century
5	MBC1792 4	16 CHURCH STREET, BURNHAM	HOUSE	II	18th Century
6	MBC1794 6	CHURCH COTTAGES, 1 & 3 HIGH STREET	HOUSE	II	19th Century
7	MBC1794 7	9, 11 & 11A HIGH STREET	HOUSE; TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; SHOP	II	17th Century to Modern
8	MBC1794 8	GARIBALDI PUBLIC HOUSE	INN; TIMBER FRAMED BUILDING	II	17th Century to 18th Century
9	MBC1794 9	19 HIGH STREET	HOUSE	II	19th Century
10	MBC1795 0	21 TO 25 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; RESTAURANT; OFFICE	II	17th Century to 21st Century
11	MBC1795 1	27 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; DAME SCHOOL; SHOP	II	17th Century to Modern
12	MBC1795 2	29 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; BEER HOUSE	II	17th Century to Modern
13	MBC1795 3	47 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; BUTCHERS SHOP; SHOP	II	15th Century to 21st Century
14	MBC1795 4	57 TO 61 HIGH STREET	TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; HOUSE; RESTAURANT	II	17th Century to 21st Century
15	MBC1795 5	71 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; SHOP	II	18th Century to 19th Century
16	MBC1795 6	73 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; SHOP	II	18th Century to Modern
17	MBC1795 7	NOS 75 TO 81 HIGH STREET	HOUSE	II	18th Century to Modern
18	MBC1795 8	NO 83 HIGH STREET (ARCADE HOUSE)	HOUSE	II	18th Century to Modern
19	MBC1795 9	BURNHAM HOUSE, 93 HIGH ST	WELL; PIT; HOUSE	II	Post-Medieval to 19th Century
20	MBC1796 0	NO 93A HIGH STREET	HOUSE	II	18th Century to 19th Century
21	MBC1796 1	NOS 113 TO 121(ODD)HIGH ST	HOUSE	II	17th Century

OA No.	HER Ref	Name	Monument Type	Grade	Period
22	MBC1796 2	K6 TELEPHONE KIOSK ADJACENT TO 93 HIGH STREET, BURNHAM	TELEPHONE BOX	II	Modern
23	MBC1832 2	2 HIGH STREET	HOUSE	II	19th Century
24	MBC1832 3	12, 12A & THE FORMER POST OFFICE, HIGH STREET	HOUSE; TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE?; POST OFFICE	II	17th Century to Modern
25	MBC1832 4	14 & 16 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; SHOP	II	18th Century to Modern
26	MBC1832 5	THE GEORGE PUBLIC HOUSE, 20 HIGH STREET	INN; TIMBER FRAMED BUILDING	II	16th Century to 18th Century
27	MBC1832 6	22 HIGH STREET	MISSION HALL; SHOP; RESTAURANT	II	19th Century to 21st Century
28	MBC1832 7	24 HIGH STREET (FORMERLY CASTLE BAKERY)	HOUSE; TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; BAKERY; COMMERCIAL OFFICE; PRINTING WORKS	II	17th Century to Modern
29	MBC1832 8	30 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; SHOP; CHEMISTS SHOP	II	18th Century to 21st Century
30	MBC1832 9	32 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; BLACKSMITHS WORKSHOP; SHOP	II	19th Century to Modern
31	MBC1833 0	OLD SWAN COTTAGE, 36 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; JETTIED HOUSE; SHOP?	II	16th Century to 19th Century
32	MBC1833 1	38-44 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; SHOP	II	16th Century to Modern
33	MBC1833 2	NO 64 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; SHOP	II	18th Century to 19th Century
34	MBC1833 3	NO 66 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; INN	II	18th Century to 19th Century
35	MBC1833 4	NOS 76 & 78 HIGH STREET	HOUSE; SHOP	II	18th Century
36	MBC1833 5	NOS 98 TO 102 HIGH ST	HOUSE; SHOP	II	19th Century
37	EBC17149	Trial trenching at the rear of 24 High Street			
38	EBC17527	Excavation at Burnham House			
39	MBC5626	HIGH STREET, BURNHAM	Findspot		Prehistoric
40	MBC1204 7	SPORTS GROUND, GORE ROAD	Findspot		Prehistoric
41	MBC1204 6	SPORTS GROUND, GORE ROAD	Findspot		Prehistoric
42	MBC1164 8	MARKET HALL, CHURCH STREET	Market; Market Hall		Medieval

OA No.	HER Ref	Name	Monument Type	Grade	Period
43	MBC1171 0	ST. PETER'S CHURCH, BURNHAM	Findspot		Medieval
44	MBC1171 1	ST. PETER'S CHURCH, BURNHAM	Wall Painting		Medieval
45	MBC1171 2	ST. PETER'S CHURCHYARD	Churchyard		Medieval
46	MBC2381 1	Burnham	Vill; Settlement; Town; Village		Medieval
47	MBC2533 1	REAR OF 24 HIGH STREET, BURNHAM	Pit		Medieval
48	MBC2554 1	Former Congregational chapel?	Congregational Chapel		Post-medieval
49	MBC3331 4	St Peter's Church Burnham	War Memorial; Plaque		Modern
50	MBC3331 7	Memorial to 2nd Lieut. T.L.Jones MC	Window; Plaque; War Memorial		Modern
51	MBC3335 7	St Peters Church, Burnham	War Memorial; Plaque		Modern
52	MBC3337 1	Burnham war memorial	War memorial		Modern

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were:

- i. to determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains,
- ii. to determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means,
- iii. to determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present,
- iv. to determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains,
- v. to determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy,
- vi. to determine the geo-archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered,
- vii. to make available the results of the investigation through an appropriate level of reporting or publication,
- viii. to collate and submit the project archive to the receiving museum.

2.2 Site specific

2.2.1 The specific aims of the evaluation were:

- ix. to identify medieval plot boundaries and activities specific to individual plots.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 A single evaluation trench was excavated within the footprint of the development on a NNW-SSE alignment to best evaluate the potential presence of plot boundaries (Fig. 3). Excavation was preceded by a ground check for buried services. A single surface water drain was located at the southern end of the trench. The trench was shortened by approximately 1m to 14m to avoid damaging this drain. The width of the trench was increased to 1.9m in order to maintain the intended trench area as set out in the WSI.

2.3.2 All deposits of modern made ground were machine excavated to expose the underlying natural geology. Where necessary, the surface of the geology was cleaned by hand in order to clarify any potential features.

2.3.3 Once the excavation was completed and all appropriate recording had taken place the trench was backfilled. The planning archaeologist was consulted prior to fieldwork commencing and did not require a site visit to confirm the field results. An email summary of the results and images of the trench were sent to the planning archaeologist by the project manager immediately before backfilling.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the trench excavated. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.

3.2 Trench 1

3.2.1 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in Trench 1.

3.2.2 The natural geology (105) was encountered at a depth of c 0.7m below ground level (Plates 1 and 2). It was overlain by the probable remnants of a buried soil (104), up to 0.15m thick. A thin layer of dark grey, silty clay (103) overlay deposit 104 and may represent the remains of a former garden soil or topsoil. The upper deposits comprised rubble and gravel make-up layers (101 and 102) associated with the tarmac surface (100) construction of the existing car park.

3.3 Finds summary

3.3.1 No artefacts were encountered during the fieldwork.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The weather and ground conditions were good on the day of the fieldwork and did not affect the ability to accurately identify archaeological deposits within the trench.
- 4.1.2 The single trench also spanned the full width of the construction footprint confidently excluding the probability that any potential former property boundaries exist or will be impacted upon by this development.

4.2 Interpretation

- 4.2.1 No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered. The presence of a probable former topsoil horizon preserved below the modern car park construction horizons suggests limited prior truncation. This indicates that there is no archaeological presence at this location. However, with the small scale of this development in mind it is not reasonable to draw any further conclusions with regards to the extent or location of the medieval settlement of Burnham, or how the street layout and property boundaries may have evolved over the history of the village.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	NNW-SSE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Made ground deposits and a possible buried soil horizon overlying a mixed natural geology of sandy gravels and sandy clay.					Length (m)	14
					Width (m)	1.9
					Avg. depth (m)	0.70
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	 Finds	Date
100	Layer	-	0.1	Tarmac	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.7	Type 1 gravel	-	-
102	Layer	-	0.23	Brick rubble deposit	-	-
104	Layer		0.17	Dark grey silty clay	-	-
105	Layer		0.15	Mid brown grey, sandy clay and gravel	-	-

APPENDIX B BIBLIOGRAPHY

Buckinghamshire County Council, 2011 Burnham, Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Assessment Report Unpublished report

Oxford Archaeology 2018 Land to the rear of 73 High Street, Burnham, Buckinghamshire. Written Scheme of Investigation Archaeological Evaluation, Unpublished document July 2018

APPENDIX C SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name:	Land to the rear of 73 High Street, Burnham
Site code:	BU73HS 18
Grid Reference	SU 9307 8255
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	13 December 2018, 1 day
Area of Site	Approximately 200m ² (property footprint)
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course. The accession number was not available at the time of issuing this report.
Summary of Results:	No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered. A probable former topsoil was identified below the existing car park surfacing and made ground suggesting limited prior truncation.

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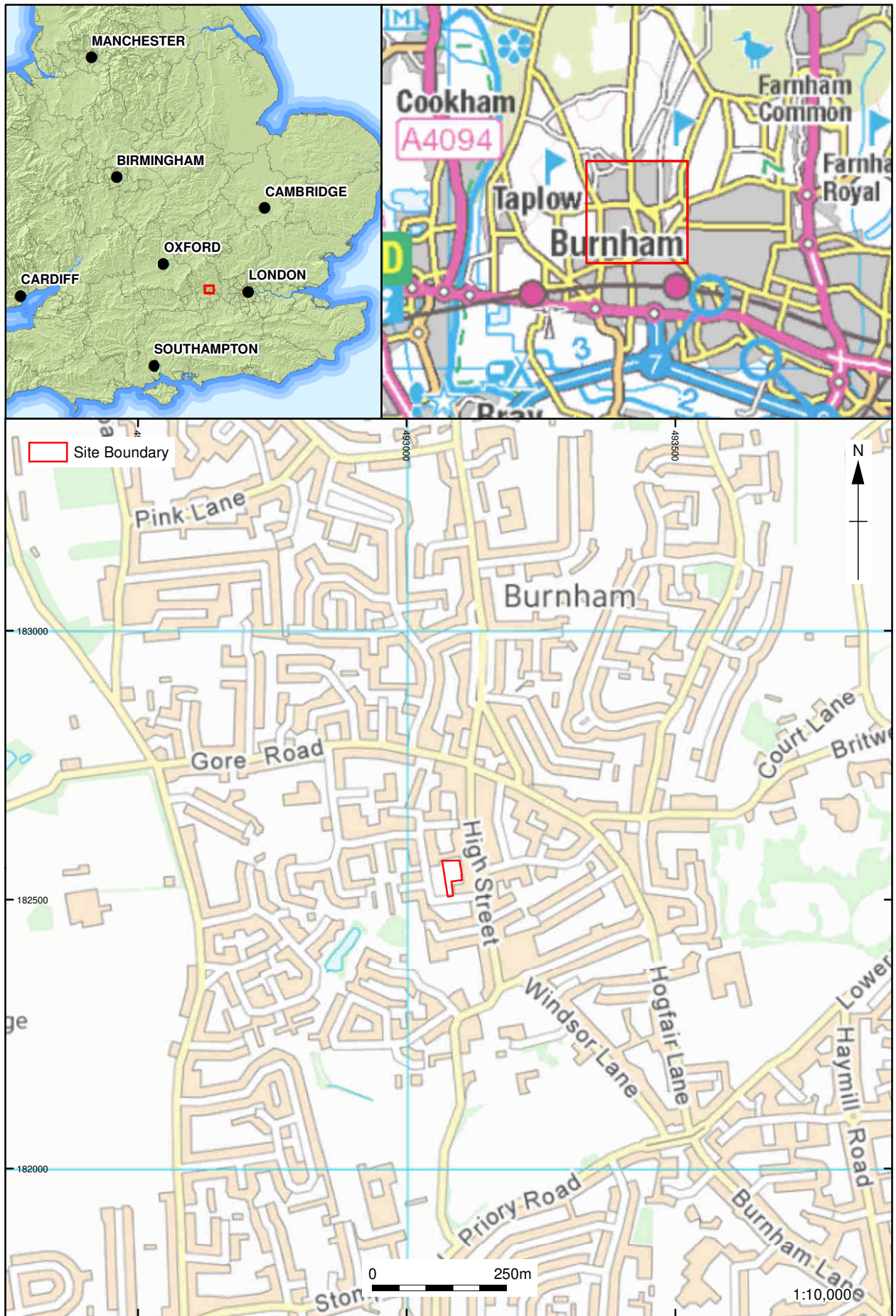
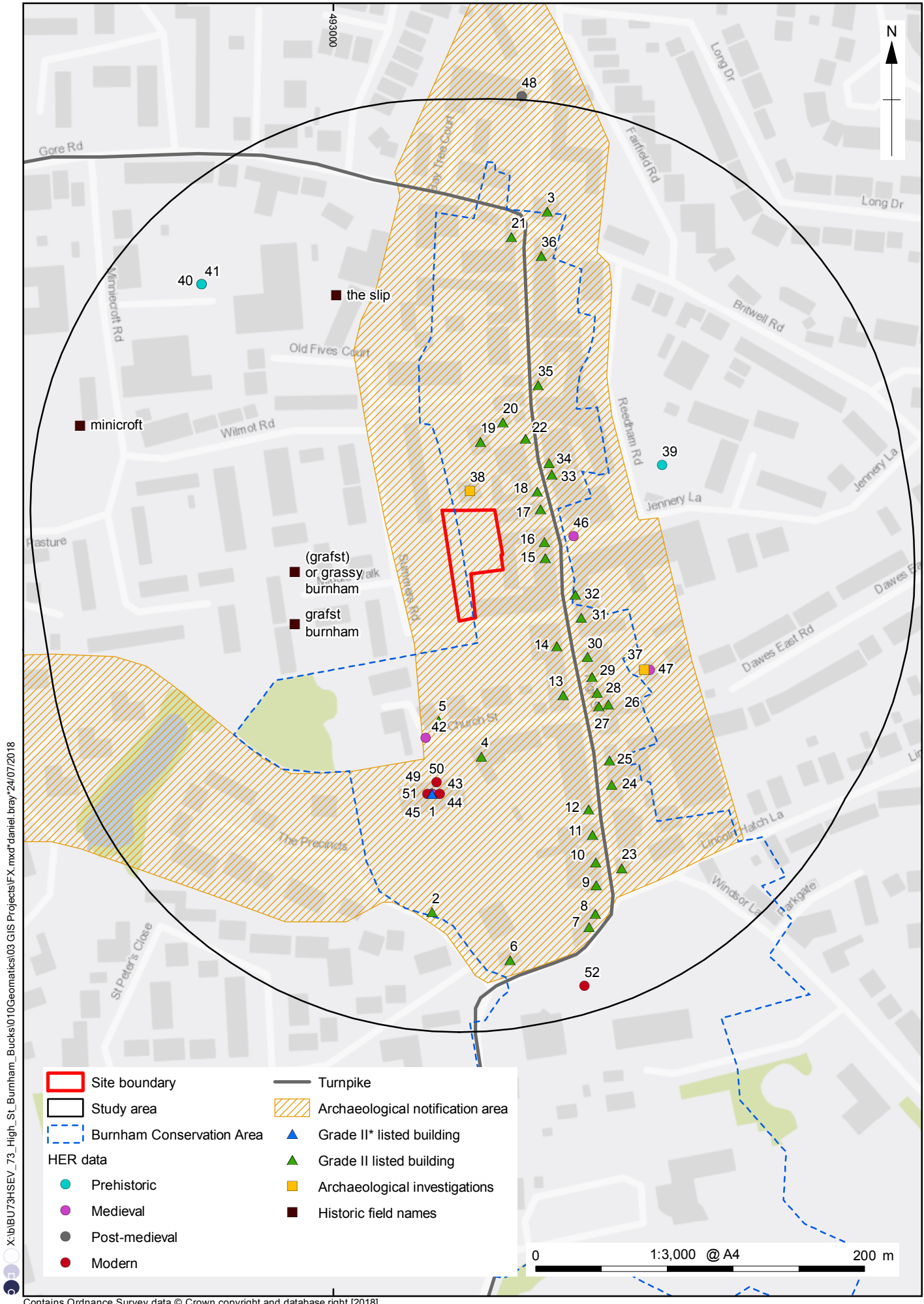


Figure 1: Site location

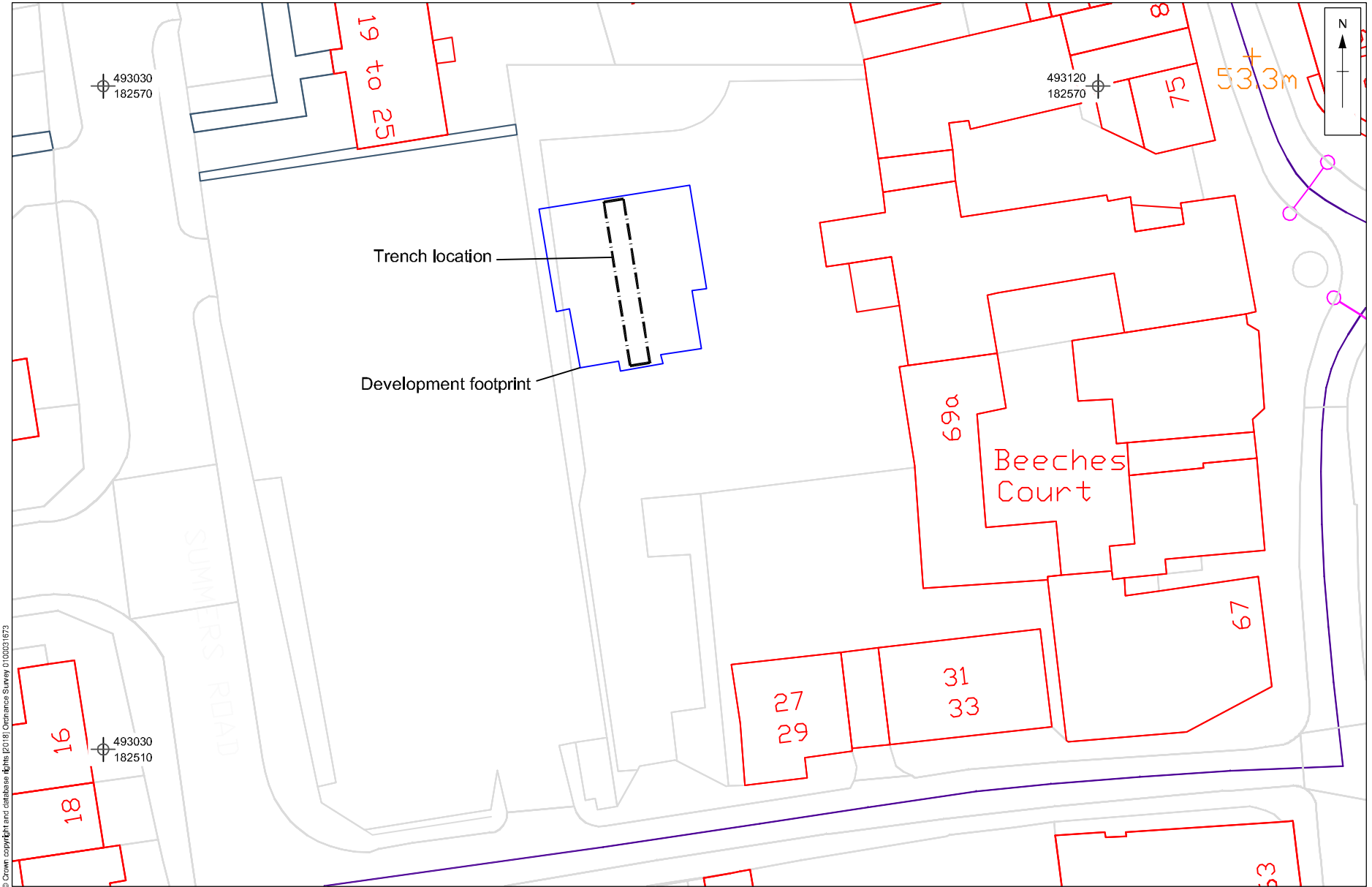


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- | | |
|--|--|
| Site boundary | Turnpike |
| Study area | Archaeological notification area |
| Burnham Conservation Area | ▲ Grade II* listed building |
| HER data | ▲ Grade II listed building |
| ● Prehistoric | ■ Archaeological investigations |
| ● Medieval | ■ Historic field names |
| ● Post-medieval | |
| ● Modern | |

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Figure 2: Heritage assets within 250 m study area



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0 20 m
Scale at A4 1:500

Figure 3: Trench location



Plate 1: View of the excavated trench looking NNE



Plate 2: Section showing the soil and construction horizons



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