

# Bletchingley Wellsite extensions, Kings Farm, Bletchingley, Surrey:

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

NGR TQ 3475 4803

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On behalf of:  
IGas Energy

Document No: ACW939/1/0

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archaeology

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# **BLETCHINGLEY WELLSITE EXTENSIONS, KINGS FARM, BLETCHINGLEY, SURREY:**

## **Results of archaeological trench evaluation**

**(NGR: TQ3475 4803)**

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### **SUMMARY**

*An archaeological trench evaluation consisting of the machine-excavation of six trenches on land at Kings Farm, Bletchingley, Surrey (TQ34375 4803) was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd. in May 2018. The investigation comprised the first stage of a programme of archaeological investigation in connection with the extension and redevelopment, respectively, of the Bletchingley Central Wellsite and Bletchingley 2 Wellsite, operated by IGas Energy. No archaeological cut features, deposits or artefacts were present in any of the trenches; evidence for previous disturbance, comprising modern truncation and infilling, was revealed in Trench 4 at Wellsite 2.*

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** This document sets out the results of archaeological investigations on land at the Kings Farm, Bletchingley, Surrey (TQ3475 4803). The work was commissioned by IGas Energy as the first stage of a programme of archaeological investigations required as a condition of a planning consent (Ref: TA/2015/1572) granted by Surrey County Council (SCC), and following consultation with the Surrey County Council Archaeologist (SCCA). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.

**1.2** Condition 7 of the consent states:

*Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, the applicant shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work for Bletchingley Central, Bletchingley 2 and the installation of the pipeline in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the County Planning Authority in writing.*

**1.3** Condition 43 of the consent states:

*The fencing as erected alongside the Birchen Coppice County Site of Archaeological Importance, shall be maintained and remain in place in accordance with details approved under planning approval ref: TA06/1788/D1 dated 25 June 2008 for the duration of the development; and no works shall take place within the area inside that fencing.*

**1.4** The redevelopment includes the extension of c. 0.2 ha of land to the north of the existing compound at Bletchingley Central wellsite and the extension and upgrading of Wellsite 2.

The consent all includes for the installation of connecting pipelines along the access track joining the two wellsites.

- 1.5 Standing at c. 73m OD, the Central wellsite is surrounded by Birchen Coppice to the south and east, and by pasture fields to the north and west. Wellsite 2 lies 90m west of Tilburstow Road, and the access track skirts a number of pasture and arable fields.
- 1.6 The underlying geology comprises Cretaceous mudstone of the Weald Clay formation (BGS online). No significant thicknesses of superficial geology are noted.

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This mitigation follows a previous desk-based assessment (Cox 2005), an archaeological evaluation (Cox & Cottam 2008) and monitoring (Robinson 2008) associated with the construction of the Bletchingley Central wellsite and access track. The results of the archaeological investigations were summarised in a Historic Environment Assessment (HEA, Cottam 2014), which noted that no archaeological features were identified during the evaluation relating to the two enclosures of probable medieval date, known to exist 230m and 400m ENE of the site; two pieces of worked flint were retrieved, one of which may be Mesolithic. Very few other features of archaeological interest were noted along the line of the access track during the archaeological monitoring.
- 2.2 The HEA observed that there are no designated heritage assets within the site and that there is a low potential for significant unknown archaeological remains to be present; it concludes that the principal archaeological interest would be evidence for the medieval and later landscape.
- 2.3 No archaeological monitoring is known to have been undertaken in the 1960s during the construction of Wellsite 2 at the eastern extent of the scheme and it is considered likely that any archaeological features that may have been present will have been entirely removed.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The investigations were undertaken to determine, as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any heritage assets present on the site, as dictated by current best practice.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The investigations were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by AC archaeology Ltd (Urmston 2017), and approved prior to commencement on site.
- 4.2 Six trenches totaling 96m in length, each 1.5m wide, were excavated. All spoil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Topsoil and overburden were removed by mechanical excavator, using a wide toothless bucket, and ceased at the

level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed. Site levels relate to Ordnance Survey Datum.

4.3 Each trench was recorded using the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system.

4.4 The archive has been prepared using the site code ACW939.

## 5. RESULTS

### Central wellsite

5.1 All of the trenches were positioned on generally level ground within a pasture field and totalled 60m in length, each 1.5m. Each trench revealed the same soil sequence comprising topsoil directly overlying natural. No archaeological cut features or deposits were present in any of the trenches (See Fig. 3a for typical trench section and Plates 1-3). The recorded layer sequence is summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Trench depositional sequence**

Trench No	Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation	Comment
1	100	0 – 300mm	Mid brown, silty clay loam, slightly gleyed in appearance and ,containing occasional small gravels.	Grass / topsoil - pasture	
	101	300mm+	Stiff yellow-brown clay, containing manganese flecks.	Natural – mudstone	
2	200	0 – 300mm	Mid brown, silty clay loam, slightly gleyed in appearance and ,containing occasional small gravels.	Grass / topsoil - pasture	
	201	300mm+	Stiff yellow-brown clay, containing manganese flecks.	Natural – mudstone	
3	300	0 – 250mm	Mid brown, silty clay loam, slightly gleyed in appearance and ,containing occasional small gravels.	Grass / topsoil - pasture	Modern stone filled drainage trench present.
	301	250mm+	Stiff yellow-brown clay, containing manganese flecks.	Natural – mudstone	

### Wellsite Bletchingley 2

5.2 Three trenches totalling 36m in length, each 1.5m wide, were positioned in this area and situated on the footprint of a proposed perimeter ditch. Trench 4 was on level ground, within an area of former compound which appeared to have been reduced in level (by up to 500mm) and then infilled with rubble to form a hard-standing for the original drill site. The remaining two trenches were positioned on the edge of pasture land in areas less affected by the previous construction of the compound. No archaeological deposits or features were present in any of the trenches. (See Fig. 3a for typical section of Trenches 5 and Plates 4-6). The recorded layer sequence is summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2: Trench depositional sequence**

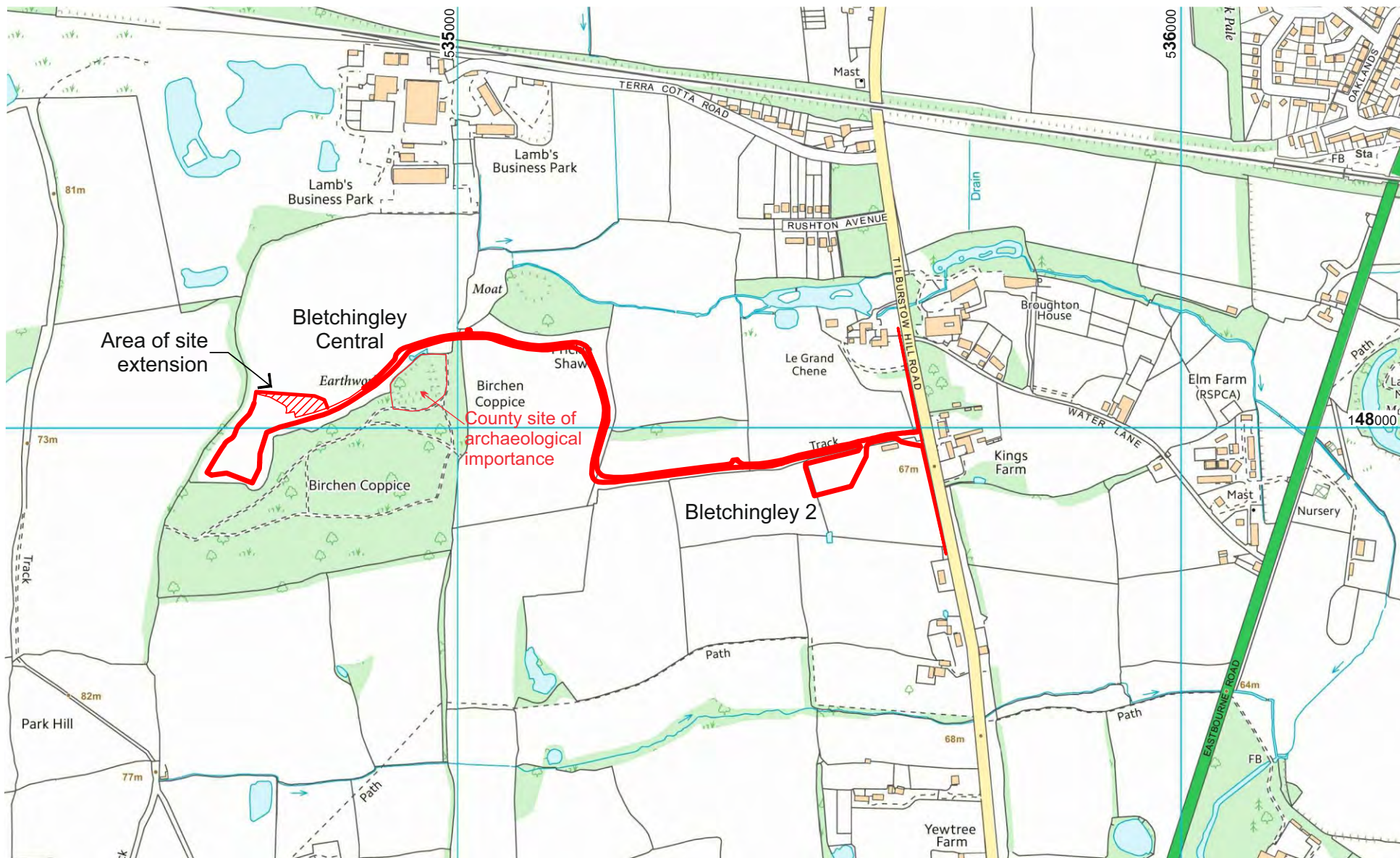
Trench No	Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation	Comment
4	400	0 – 50mm	Turf/grass line.	Present ground surface.	Grass line developed since compound gone out of use.
	401	50 – 600mm	Thin horizon of compacted stone scalplings, overlying a depth of loosely compacted concrete, stone and brick rubble.	Dumped building materials acting as base for former compound.	Reduced ground relating to 1960s wellsite 2 construction.
	402	600mm+	Stiff yellow clay.	Natural - mudstone	Truncated natural.
5	500	0 – 300mm	Mid brown, silty clay loam containing occasional small gravels.	Grass / topsoil - pasture	
	501	300mm+	Stiff yellow-brown clay.	Natural - mudstone	
6	600	0 – 300mm	Slightly mixed mid brown, silty clay loam containing concrete, brick and occasional gravels.	Grass / topsoil.	Appears disturbed and containing materials probably associated with construction of former compound.
	601	300mm+	Stiff yellow-brown clay, containing manganese flecks.	Natural - mudstone	

## 6. COMMENT

- 6.1 The trench evaluation has shown no evidence for archaeological activity in any of the trenches. All three trenches in the Central wellsite area proved consistent in terms of soil type and depths. Only a modern drainage trench, associated with the existing compound to the south, was present in Trench 3. The three trenches situated in the Wellsite 2 area also proved negative; here there was evidence for modern truncation and infilling associated with the construction of the wellsite in the 1960s (Trench 4). The absence of finds and pre-modern archaeological deposits may indicate that it is unlikely that any archaeological deposits of significance are present in either of the wellsite areas.

## 7. REFERENCES

Urmston, B., *'Bletchingley Wellsite Extensions, Bletchingley, Surrey: Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological mitigation'*, Unpublished client report Ref ACW939/1/3 May 2017

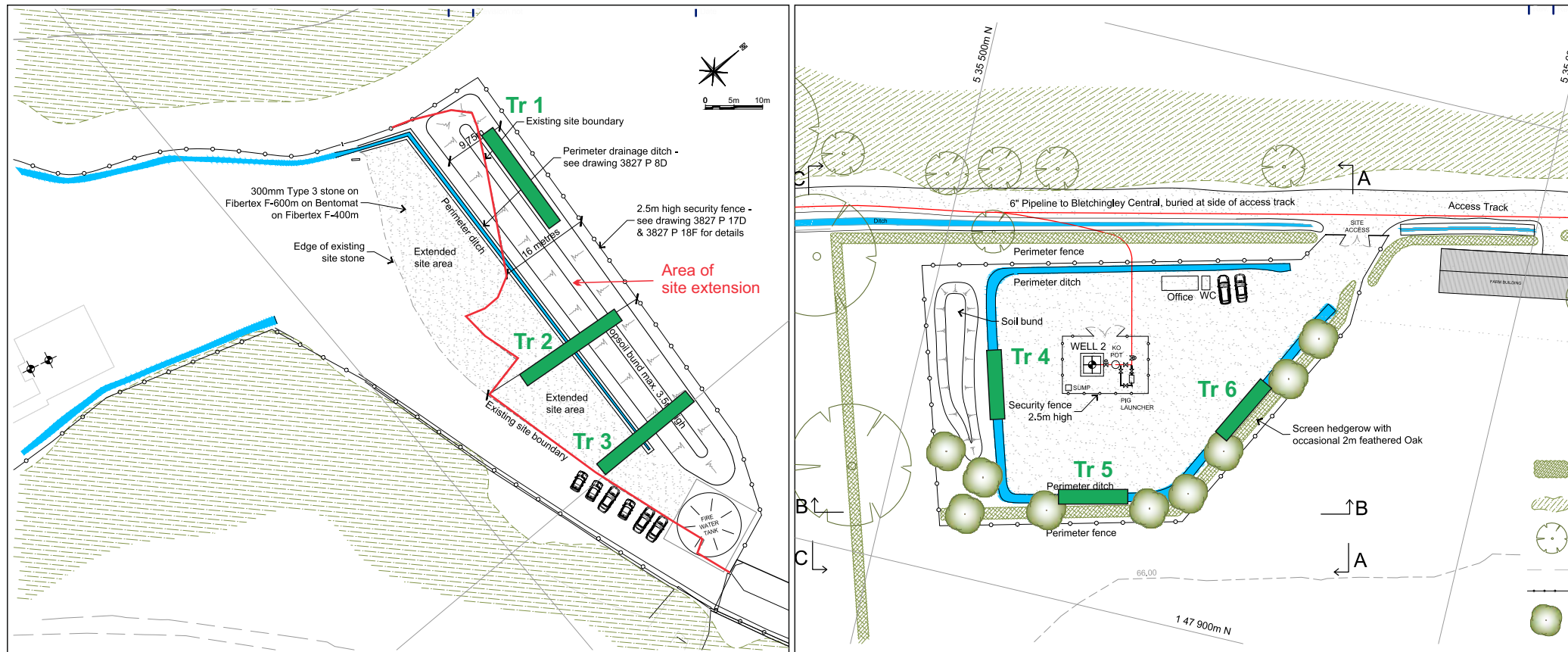


PROJECT

Bletchingley Wellsites

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location



Evaluation trench

PROJECT

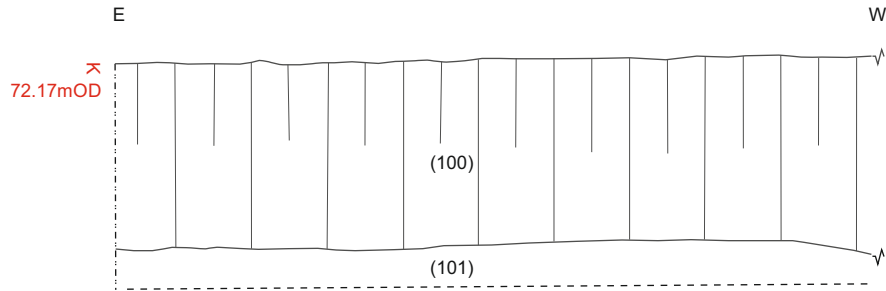


Bletchingley Wellsites

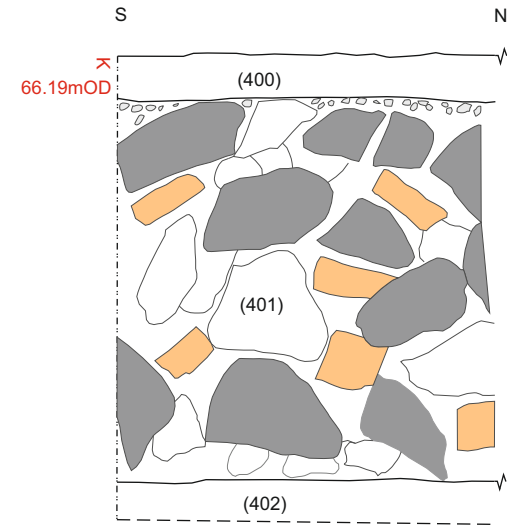
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Fig. 2: Trench location plan

Trench 1  
a) Representative section



Trench 4  
b) Representative section



Key

- Concrete
- Brick
- Stone







Plate 1: View along Trench 1 from the east  
(Scale 2m)



Plate 2: View along Trench 2 from the northeast  
(Scale 2m)



Plate 3: View along Trench 3 from the northeast  
(Scale 2m)



Plate 4: View along Trench 4 from the north  
(Scale 2m)



Plate 5: View along Trench 5 from the west  
(Scale 2m)



Plate 6: View along Trench 6 from the southwest  
(Scale 2m)

PROJECT

Bletchingley Wellsite

TITLE

Plates

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