



Wokingham Major Highways Programme South Wokingham Distributor Road - Phase 2 Eval

Archaeological Evaluation



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Balfour Beatty, on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council ('the client'), to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a parcel of land to the south of Wokingham, located around Finchampstead Road (NGR 482954 167870 to 480933 167875).

The archaeological evaluation comprised the investigation and recording of 8 trial trenches and was undertaken between 10 April and 25 April 2025.

One of the eight excavated trial trenches contained archaeological features and deposits, indicating a limited presence of archaeological remains across the site.

The uncovered features comprised two charcoal burning pits and remain of uncertain date.

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Wokingham Major Highways Programme - South Wokingham Distributor Road - Phase 2

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Balfour Beatty, to undertake a phased archaeological mitigation of a 6.53 ha parcel of land to the south of Wokingham, located between Waterloo Road in the east (NGR 482954 167870) and Finchampstead Road in the west (NGR 480933 167875). Phase 2 of the mitigation works consisted of an archaeological evaluation centred on Finchampstead Road (NGR 482954 167870 to 480933 167875).

1.1.2 The development comprises the construction of the South Western Distributor Road (SWDR) with associated drainage/flood compensation works, and demolition works. The road will connect to Waterloo Road in the east via a new roundabout, and Finchampstead Road in the west via the existing roundabout at Tesco. A link road is also proposed towards the eastern extent of the scheme, connecting the road to the present junction of Easthampstead Road and Heathlands Road. The SWDR will comprise a single carriageway measuring approximately 2.7 km in length and will include a shared 3 m wide cycle lane/footpath.

1.1.3 A planning application (192928) submitted to Wokingham Borough Council, was granted in May 2021, subject to conditions. The following conditions relate to archaeology:

Condition 17 No development shall commence until a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of work) has been implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: it is known that the site is likely to contain archaeological remains and further investigation is required to allow preservation and recording of any archaeological features or artefacts before disturbance by the development in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment), Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25. Details are required prior to commencement to ensure appropriate mitigation of any impacts on archaeology arising from construction works.

1.1.4 Phase 1 of the archaeological mitigation was undertaken in 2024 and comprised the evaluation of a total of 8 out of the 14 proposed mitigation areas.

1.1.5 This document relates to the Phase 2 of the archaeological mitigation. The evaluation, comprising eight trial trenches was undertaken between 10 April and 25 April 2025.

1.1.6 All works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) and an addendum of written scheme of investigation (AWSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2024a & 2025). The Principal Archaeologist at Berkshire Archaeology approved the WSI and AWSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to the fieldwork.

1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the results of the evaluation, to interpret the results within a local, regional or wider archaeological context and assess whether the aims of the evaluation have been met.
- 1.2.2 The presented results will provide further information on the archaeological resource that may be impacted by the development and facilitate an informed decision with regard to the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation.

1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The scheme is located within a rural area to the south of Wokingham, with Waterloo Road to the east and Finchampstead Road to the west, Easthampstead Road bisects the eastern extent of the development area. The site is currently comprised of agricultural land, with an area within the centre utilised for pheasant farming. Agricultural fields extend to the north, east, and south of the site with boundaries comprising hedgerows, areas of scrub, small, wooded areas, treelines and ditches. Some individual light industrial and agricultural development is located sporadically along the southern border of the scheme with the line of the Reading to London Waterloo railway positioned along the bordering fields to the north beyond which the built-up area of Wokingham is located.
- 1.3.2 Emm Brook is located along the north-western boundary of the scheme, turning and transecting the western extent of the scheme on a north-west to south-east trajectory. Various tributaries to Emm Brook are located within the scheme bounds.
- 1.3.3 The scheme is located in a relatively flat area positioned slightly lower than land to the north of the railway line. Following the Emm Brook valley, ground levels across the site are recorded as gradually sloping from approximately 65 m Ordnance Datum (OD) in the east to 50 m OD in the west (WSP 2021).
- 1.3.4 The bedrock geology is mapped as clay, silt and sand of the London Clay Formation with outcrops of sand of the Bagshot Formation located within the central and south-western extents of the site. These sedimentary bedrocks were formed between 56 and 47.8 million years ago during the Palaeogene period. Overlying alluvial and Head clay, silt, sand and gravel deposits are concentrated along the Emm Brook valley, with concentrations of sand and gravel River Terrace Deposits mapped within the south-west and central north areas of the scheme (British Geological Survey 2024).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background has been previously assessed in a Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (HEDBA; WSP 2019), and during investigations by Cotswold Archaeology (2018) and AOC Archaeology (2017), as well as by Oxford Archaeology in association the evaluation undertaken in association with the SANG (Oxford Archaeology 2019). The most recent assessment is presented in the earlier WSI (WSP 2021) and is summarised below to save repetition. Additional resources are referenced, as appropriate.

2.2 Previous investigations related to the development

Trial Trench Evaluation (2018)

- 2.2.1 A programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation was conducted by Cotswold Archaeology (Cotswold Archaeology 2018), under WSP management, within the site. A

total of 128 trenches was excavated, all within the footprint of the proposed road alignment, with a buffer of 20 m either side (approximately 60% of the consented application site). One trench, in the eastern part of the site, was widened to fully expose a potential feature (a post-medieval quarry pit), and a further trench which contained two pits, also in the eastern part of the site, was widened to ascertain if there were more features in the vicinity of the trench.

- 2.2.2 The majority of the trenches were archaeologically sterile with only nine trenches found to contain archaeology. Post-medieval ditches were recorded in six trenches in the west and central parts of the site, and a former quarry in one trench in the eastern part of the site.
- 2.2.3 Just one feature of note was recorded during the evaluation: a pit containing 15 sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery, seven fragments of fired clay and three items of metal working debris, thought to be possible evidence of ironworking. This was found within a trench on the eastern side of the site, together with another undated pit.
- 2.2.4 An environmental bulk sample was taken from the Middle Iron Age pit to evaluate the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains in the area and recover environmental evidence of domestic or industrial activity on the site. A small, charred assemblage was recovered, including hulled wheat, emmer or spelt, thought to be possible evidence of dispersed domestic waste material rather than evidence of settlement activities in the immediate vicinity.

Trial Trench Evaluation (2019)

- 2.2.5 A programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation was conducted by Oxford Archaeology (Oxford Archaeology 2019) as part of a separate development scheme for a mixed-use development and SANG, partially extending into the current site.
- 2.2.6 In total 96 trial trenches were excavated, 25 of which were wholly or partly within the central and eastern parts of the site. An absence of archaeological remains was identified across the majority, with only field boundaries of little, if any, significance revealed. One small area of enhanced potential was identified within to the west of Britton's Farm, in the vicinity of the Iron Age pit found during the 2018 trial trench evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2018). Here, a number of undated ditches were identified. Though likely post-medieval in date, there remains the possibility, given their location, that these ditches relate to the Iron Age evidence found previously within this area. Historic field boundaries were also located and recorded within the central area of the SWDR site.

Trial Trench Evaluation (2024)

- 2.2.7 Phase 1 of the archaeological trial trench evaluations was conducted at the Site in 2024 by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology 2024b).
- 2.2.8 A total of 36 trial trenches were excavated, 10 of which contained archaeological features and deposits, indicating a limited presence of archaeological remains across the site, with a concentration of archaeology in Area 3. The majority of uncovered features comprising ditches and gullies remain of uncertain date. Features that contained datable evidence represented post-medieval period of activity.

2.3 Archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric (970,000 BC – AD 43)

- 2.3.1 Aside from investigations undertaken in 2018, no archaeological remains pertaining to this period have been identified within the site bounds. The evaluation carried out in 2018

recorded a pit containing sherds of Middle Iron Age pottery, fragments of fired clay and items of metal working debris, suggestive of possible ironworking, concentrated within the eastern extent of the site.

- 2.3.2 The well-drained sands and gravels (located in small areas on the east and south-western sides of the site), close to the wetland resources of the Emm Brook and its tributaries, however, would have been attractive for early settlement/land exploitation. Indeed, seasonal activity may have been present within the area as, though limited in number, there have been finds from the Lower Palaeolithic to Neolithic periods located in the vicinity of the site. These consist of prehistoric flint scatters, primarily found during fieldwalking adjacent to the eastern end of the site.

- 2.3.3 It is notable that within the site's environs, several settlement and activity sites dating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age periods have been recorded, with some continuation into the Romano-British period also evidenced.

Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)

- 2.3.4 Despite the fact that evidence for the potential agricultural use of this area (possible enclosures and field systems) during the Roman period was found towards the eastern end of the site, including Roman pottery sherds during East Berkshire Archaeological Survey in 1984–86, the 2018 and 2019 archaeological evaluations found no finds or features from this period.

Medieval (AD 410 – 1500)

- 2.3.5 No finds or features have been recorded from the Anglo-Saxon period in the site or inner study area. It is likely that the site, at this time, lay within a largely wooded landscape.
- 2.3.6 Although there is evidence of some kind of medieval settlement activity in the vicinity of the Buckhurst Farm 750 m north-east of the site, there are no known features or finds dating to the later medieval period within the site, and a number of pottery sherds dating to this period found during fieldwalking in the area are likely to be the result of manuring rather than discrete areas of archaeology. As for the early medieval period, it is likely the site lay within a landscape of open fields or woodland during this period. Though aerial photographs and historic mapping of the site and surrounding area suggest the presence of former strip cultivation (ridge & furrow) no evidence of this was found during the 2018 and 2019 archaeological evaluations.

Post-medieval and modern (AD 1500 – present day)

- 2.3.7 The site has largely continued in agricultural use until the present day. A number of post-medieval ditches, most likely marking former field boundaries, were found during the 2018 and 2019 archaeological evaluations, while the 2018 evaluation also identified a former quarry, the latter also shown on historic maps of the area. Aerial photographs and historic mapping of the site and surrounding area also suggest the presence of former strip cultivation (ridge & furrow) but no evidence of this was found during the 2018 and 2019 archaeological evaluations. Further evidence relating to the agricultural history of the site (e.g. field boundaries, ditches, pits) is therefore likely to be encountered. Foundation remains of earlier 19th / 20th century buildings at the western edge of the site may also be encountered as development within this area began during this period. Continued development of the western extent of the site has since been undertaken.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2024a), were to:

- provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and
- inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

3.2 General objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation were to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;
- establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI and AWSI (Wessex Archaeology 2024a & 2025) and in general compliance with ClfA standards and guidance (ClfA 2023a–b). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

- 4.2.1 The trench locations were set out using a Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), in the approximate positions proposed in the AWSI (Fig. 1). Trench 40 required extending the trench edges around identified features in order to meet the defined aims in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2024a). Trench 39 was not excavated.
- 4.2.2 Eight trial trenches, six measuring 30 m in length and 2 m wide, and two measuring 50 m in length and 2 m wide, were excavated in level spits using a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.
- 4.2.3 Where necessary, the base of the trench/surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand. A sample of archaeological features and deposits was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the project aims.

- 4.2.4 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. In this case no artefacts were recovered.
- 4.2.5 Trenches completed to the satisfaction of the client and the Principal Archaeologist at Berkshire Archaeology were backfilled using excavated materials in the order in which they were excavated, and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

Recording

- 4.2.6 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.
- 4.2.7 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.8 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 16 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2024a). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014a), *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011), and ClfA's (n.d. a) *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (Type 2: Appraisal).
- 4.3.2 In this case no artefacts were recovered.

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 The Principal Archaeologist at Berkshire Archaeology monitored the evaluation on behalf of the LPA. Any variations to the WSI & AWSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the client and the Principal Archaeologist at Berkshire Archaeology.

5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 One of the eight excavated trial trenches contained archaeological features and deposits, indicating a limited presence of archaeological remains across the site (Fig. 1).
- 5.1.2 The uncovered features, revealed in Trench 40, comprised two pits of uncertain date (Figure 2). Trenches 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47 were archaeologically sterile (Figures 3, 4 & 5).

5.1.3 The following section presents the results of the evaluation with archaeological features and deposits discussed by trench.

5.1.4 Detailed descriptions of individual contexts are provided in the trench summary tables (Appendix 1). Figures 2-5 show all archaeological features recorded within the trenches, together with the results of previous investigations. Figure 2 also provides detail of the features in Trench 40.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

5.2.1 A similar sequence of soils and natural deposits were encountered across the evaluation areas (Figures 7 & 10-16).

5.2.2 The natural substrate consisting of sands, sandy gravels and clays was revealed in all eight trenches at between 0.28 m and 0.52 m below ground level (bgl). The natural deposits were overlain by a silty sandy loam subsoil in Trenches 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46 and 47 measuring an average of 0.15 m in thickness. However, subsoil was not encountered in Trench 45. The subsoil (and natural in Trench 45) was in turn sealed by a silty clay loam topsoil measuring up to 0.34 m in thickness.

5.3 Trench 40

5.3.1 Two artefactually undated pits, 4004 and 4006 were revealed, one at either end of Trench 40 (Figure 2). Both pits were cut into the natural substrate 4003 and were in turn sealed by the subsoil horizon 4002.

Pit 4004

5.3.2 Circular pit 4004 was encountered at the western end of Trench 40. The pit measured 0.85 m in diameter and 0.15 m in depth with moderate sloping sides to an irregular base (Figure 6, Section 1). The pit contained a crumbly, dark brown sandy clay with frequent large charcoal lumps, but was otherwise artefactually sterile (Figure 8). The natural substrate underlying the pit showed signs of burning/heating suggesting in-situ burning.

Pit 4006 & recut 4009

5.3.3 At the eastern end of Trench 40, a larger circular pit 4006 and its associated recut 4009 were recorded (Figure 2).

5.3.4 Pit 4006 measured 2.2 m in width, 0.3 m in depth with moderate to steep sloping sides to a flat base. The pit contained two fills, 4007 and 4008 (Figure 6, Section 2). The lower fill 4007 consisted of a crumbly, black charcoal (90%) in a brown clay matrix and probably represents in-situ burning, possible for the production of charcoal. The lower charcoal rich fill was sealed by a yellowish-grey clay fill 4008, presumably a deliberate backfill (Figure 9).

5.3.5 Cut into the upper fill of pit 4006, a recut 4009 was observed. The recut measured 2.4 m in width and 0.22 m in depth and had an almost identical profile and fill sequence suggesting it performed the same function (Figure 6, Section 1). The lower fill, 4010, consisted of crumbly, black charcoal (90%) in a brown clay matrix and probably represents in-situ burning and was sealed by a blueish-grey clay fill 4008, presumably a deliberate backfill (Figure 9).

6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Two bulk environmental (flotation) samples were taken from two pits and were processed for the recovery and assessment of the environmental evidence.

6.2 Aims and methods

- 6.2.1 The aim of this assessment is to determine the nature and significance of the environmental remains preserved at the site. This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with Historic England's guidelines outlined in *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

Bulk samples

- 6.2.2 The size of the bulk sediment samples varied between 16 and 33 litres, with an average volume of approximately 24.5 litres. The samples were processed by standard flotation methods on a Siraf-type flotation tank; the flot retained on a 0.25 mm mesh and the residues retained on a 1 mm mesh. The residues were split into 4 mm and 1 mm fractions. The coarse fractions of the residues (>4 mm) were sorted by eye for artefactual and environmental remains and discarded. The environmental material extracted from the residues was added to the flots. A riffle box was used to split one large flot into a smaller subsample.
- 6.2.3 The flots and fine residue fractions were examined using a Leica MS5 stereomicroscope at up to x40 magnification. The presence of recent material was noted in the samples, including modern roots, modern seeds, soil fungal sclerotia, shells of the burrowing blind snail (*Cecilioides acicula*), earthworm eggs, and modern insects.
- 6.2.4 All remains were recorded semi-quantitatively on an abundance scale: C = <5 ('Trace'), B = 5–10 ('Rare'), A = 10–30 ('Occasional'), A* = 30–100 ('Frequent'), A** = 100–500 ('Common'), A*** = >500 ('Abundant').

6.3 Results

- 6.3.1 The results are presented in Appendix 2, Table 1.
- 6.3.2 The flots are moderate to very large in size. Potential indicators of bioturbation are present in low concentrations but included modern roots and modern seeds.
- 6.3.3 Moderately well-preserved charcoal is present in high concentrations in both samples. Many of the fragments are heavily mineral-coated, probably reflecting fluctuating water-levels during burial. No charred plant remains have been recovered from the samples.

6.4 Conclusions

- 6.4.1 The environmental assessment indicates a strong potential for the recovery of environmental evidence on the site. A moderately-preserved assemblage of wood charcoal was recovered from both sampled features. Pit 4009 is a large, shallow circular pit, closely comparable to ethnographic examples of charcoal pit kilns (Deforce *et al.* 2021). Similar features are commonly dated to the medieval period, though Romano-British examples also exist (e.g., Challinor 2011; Hardy and Young 2019; Treasure 2022; Wessex Archaeology 2022). Pit 4004, though smaller and less well-defined, is also a shallow, circular pit that

yielded environmental material similar to pit 4009, suggesting its possible use for charcoal production as well.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Summary

7.1.1 The trial trench evaluation was successful in providing information about the archaeological potential of the site and identifying areas of archaeological interest.

7.1.2 One of the eight excavated trial trenches in Area 5 (Trench 40) contained archaeological features and deposits, demonstrating that some archaeological remains have survived across the site.

7.1.3 The uncovered features comprising pits remain of uncertain date.

7.2 Discussion

7.2.1 The results of the evaluation were largely in line with the findings of the earlier investigations by Cotswold Archaeology (2018), Oxford Archaeology (2019) and Wessex Archaeology (2024b). The majority of the trenches were archaeologically sterile with no archaeological finds, features or deposits recovered.

7.2.2 Two pits were found in Trench 40 in the north-eastern part of Area 5. No datable artefacts were recovered from the pits, and they remain undated. However, the charcoal rich nature of the pit fills suggest they may have functioned as charcoal burning pits. Similar features are commonly dated to the medieval period, though Romano-British examples also exist.

7.2.3 The 1817 enclosure map of Wokingham (not illustrated) shows much of the local landscape is unenclosed woodland and heath. Many of the fields take the curvilinear form of assarts carved out of the woods. Located to the south of the town, the field boundaries close to the pits suggest that these fields may have been assarted in the earlier medieval period. The charcoal burning evidenced by the pits could potentially be part of these woodland clearance activities.

Environmental recommendations

7.2.4 If further fieldwork is undertaken at the site, sampling should continue to follow Wessex Archaeology's in-house guidance. The samples for the recovery of charred plant remains and wood charcoal should be taken from well-sealed features and deposits, covering as wide a range of phases as possible. The samples from archaeological features should be of 40–60 litres per context where possible.

7.2.5 Radiocarbon dating could be undertaken to examine the chronology of the features. Samples of short-life charcoal should be submitted for dating where these are present.

7.2.6 There is potential for further analysis of the wood charcoal as a part of the wider scheme of investigation at the site.

8 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

8.1.1 The archive is currently held in the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Bristol. The site falls within an area where there is currently no collecting museum. Every effort will be made to identify a suitable repository for the archive resulting from the fieldwork, and if this is not

possible, Wessex Archaeology will initiate discussions with the local planning authority in an attempt to resolve the issue. If no suitable repository is identified, Wessex Archaeology will continue to store the archive but may institute a charge to the client for ongoing storage beyond a set period.

8.2 Preparation of the archive

Physical archive

8.2.1 The physical archive will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014b; SMA 1995).

8.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the site code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 1 cardboard boxes or airtight plastic boxes of ecofacts, ordered by material type
- 1 files/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics

Digital archive

8.2.3 The digital archive, which comprises born-digital data (e.g., site records, survey data, databases and spreadsheets, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

8.3 Selection strategy

8.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected for retention are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities (i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving museum).

8.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's (n.d. b) *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives*. It should be agreed by all stakeholders (e.g., Wessex Archaeology's specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.

8.3.3 Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. The proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (e.g., museum, local authority), prior to deposition of the archive. Any material not selected for retention may be used for teaching or reference collections by Wessex Archaeology.

Finds

8.3.4 In this case no artefacts were recovered.

Palaeoenvironmental material

8.3.5 The flots should be retained within the site archive. However, the significance of the whole assemblage should be reconsidered following further archaeological mitigation within the proposed development area. If no further mitigation is undertaken, recommendations for retention or discard should be established on a case-by-case basis.

8.3.6 The fine residues were discarded after sorting.

Documentary records

8.3.7 Paper records comprise site registers (other pro-forma site records are digital), drawings and reports (written scheme of investigation, client report). All will be retained and deposited with the project archive.

Digital data

8.3.8 The digital data comprise site records (tablet-recorded on site) in spreadsheet format; finds records in spreadsheet format; survey data; photographs; reports. All will be deposited, although site photographs will be subject to selection to eliminate poor quality and duplicated images, and any others that are not directly relevant to the archaeology of the site.

8.4 Security copy

8.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g., Brown 2011), on completion of the project, a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file.

8.5 OASIS

8.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 3). A .pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the Principal Archaeologist at Berkshire Archaeology on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

9 COPYRIGHT

9.1 Archive and report copyright

9.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.

9.1.2 Digital copies of the final report will be made available to the Historic Environment Record (HER) through OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations). Geospatial/survey data forming part of the digital archive will be supplied, on request, to the HER.



9.2 Third party data copyright

- 9.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g., Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench summaries

Depth bgl = below ground level

Trench No 40		Length 30 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.52 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
4001		Topsoil	Mid brown silty loam. Grass topped with moderate rooting at the top.	0.00–0.32
4002		Subsoil	Mid greyish brown silty sand with moderate to frequent mid-sized rounded stone dispersed throughout.	0.32–0.46
4003		Natural	Light yellowish-brown sand with occasional large lenses of light grey sandy gravel and mid brown mottles	0.46–0.52+
4004	4005	Pit	Circular pit with steep, concave sides and an irregular / undulating base. Length: 0.85 m. Width: >0.25 m. Depth: 0.15 m.	0.46–0.56
4005	4004	Secondary fill	Dark grey, brown sandy silt	0.46–0.56
4006	4007 & 4008	Pit	Circular. Concaved sides. Flat base. 0.28m deep. 2.2m diameter. Partly exposed against the south-facing section. Recut by pit 4009. Filled by 4007, 4008. charcoal burning pit.	0.64–0.92
4007	4006	Fill	Crumbly, black charcoal (90%) in a brown clay matrix. Lines the base of pit 4006. Under 4008. Fills 4006	0.75–0.92
4008	4006	Deliberate backfill	Blocky, yellowish-grey clay. Cut by 4009. Over 4007. Fill of 4006	0.64–0.75
4009	4010 & 4011	Pit recut	Circular. Concaved sides. Flat base. 0.23m deep. 2.4m diameter. Partly exposed against the south-facing section. Recut of pit 4006. Under 4002. Filled by 4010, 4118. charcoal burning pit.	0.55–0.78
4010	4009	Fill	Crumbly, black charcoal (90%) in a brown clay matrix. Lines the base of pit 4009. Under 4011. Fills 4006	0.55–0.78
4011	4009	Deliberate backfill	Stiff, blueish-grey clay. Under 4002. Over 4010. Fill of 4009	0.55–0.71

Trench No 41		Length 30 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.42 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
4101		Topsoil	Mid brown silty loam. Grass topped with moderate rooting at the top.	0.00–0.28
4102		Subsoil	Mid brown silty sandy loam. No inclusions.	0.28–0.37



4103		Natural	Light yellowish-brown clay with moderate, large sandy gravel lenses	0.37–0.42+
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Trench No 42		Length 30 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.40 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
4201		Topsoil	Mid brown silty loam. Grass topped with moderate rooting at the top.	0.00–0.26
4202		Subsoil	Mid brown silty sandy loam. No inclusions.	0.26–0.36
4203		Natural	Light yellowish-brown clay with moderate, large sandy gravel deposits	0.36–0.40+

Trench No 43		Length 30 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.55 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
4301		Topsoil	Mid-brown silty clay loam. Grass topped. Frequent rooting.	0.00–0.34
4302		Subsoil	Mid yellowish brown silty sandy clay. Loose to moderately friable. Moderate small, rounded stones and mid brown mottling.	0.34–0.52
4303		Natural	Light yellow sandy gravel. Occasional light brown clay lenses.	0.52–0.55+

Trench No 44		Length 30 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.52 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
4401		Topsoil	Mid-brown silty clay loam. Grass topped. Frequent rooting.	0.00–0.34
4402		Subsoil	Mid yellowish brown silty sandy clay. Loose to moderately friable. Moderate small, rounded stones and mid brown mottling.	0.34–0.48
4403		Natural	Light yellow sandy gravel. Occasional light brown clay lenses.	0.48–0.52+

Trench No 45		Length 50 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.36 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
4501		Topsoil	Mid brown silty loam. Grass topped. Moderate rooting at the top.	0.00–0.28
4502		Natural	Light yellowish brown sandy clay. Occasional orange ironstone mottles / inclusions.	0.28–0.36+

Trench No 46		Length 50 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.45 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL



4601		Topsoil	Mid brown silty loam. Grass topped. Moderate rooting at the top.	0.00–0.26
4602		Subsoil	Light brown silty clay. Sparse small angular stones	0.26–0.36
4603		Natural	Light yellowish-brown sand. Occasional large dark greyish brown clay lenses. Occasional orange ironstone mottles / inclusions.	0.36–0.45+

Trench No 47		Length 30 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.46 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
4701		Topsoil	Mid brown silty loam. Grass topped. Moderate rooting at the top.	0.00–0.27
4702		Subsoil	Light brown silty clay. Sparse small angular stones	0.27–0.39
4703		Natural	Light yellowish-brown sand. Occasional large dark greyish brown clay lenses. Occasional orange ironstone mottles / inclusions.	0.39–0.46+



Appendix 2 Environmental Data

Table 1 Assessment of the environmental evidence

Scale of abundance: C = <5, B = 5–10, A = 10–30, A* = 30–100, A** = 100–500, A*** = >500; Bioturbation proxies: Roots (%), Uncharred seeds (scale of abundance)

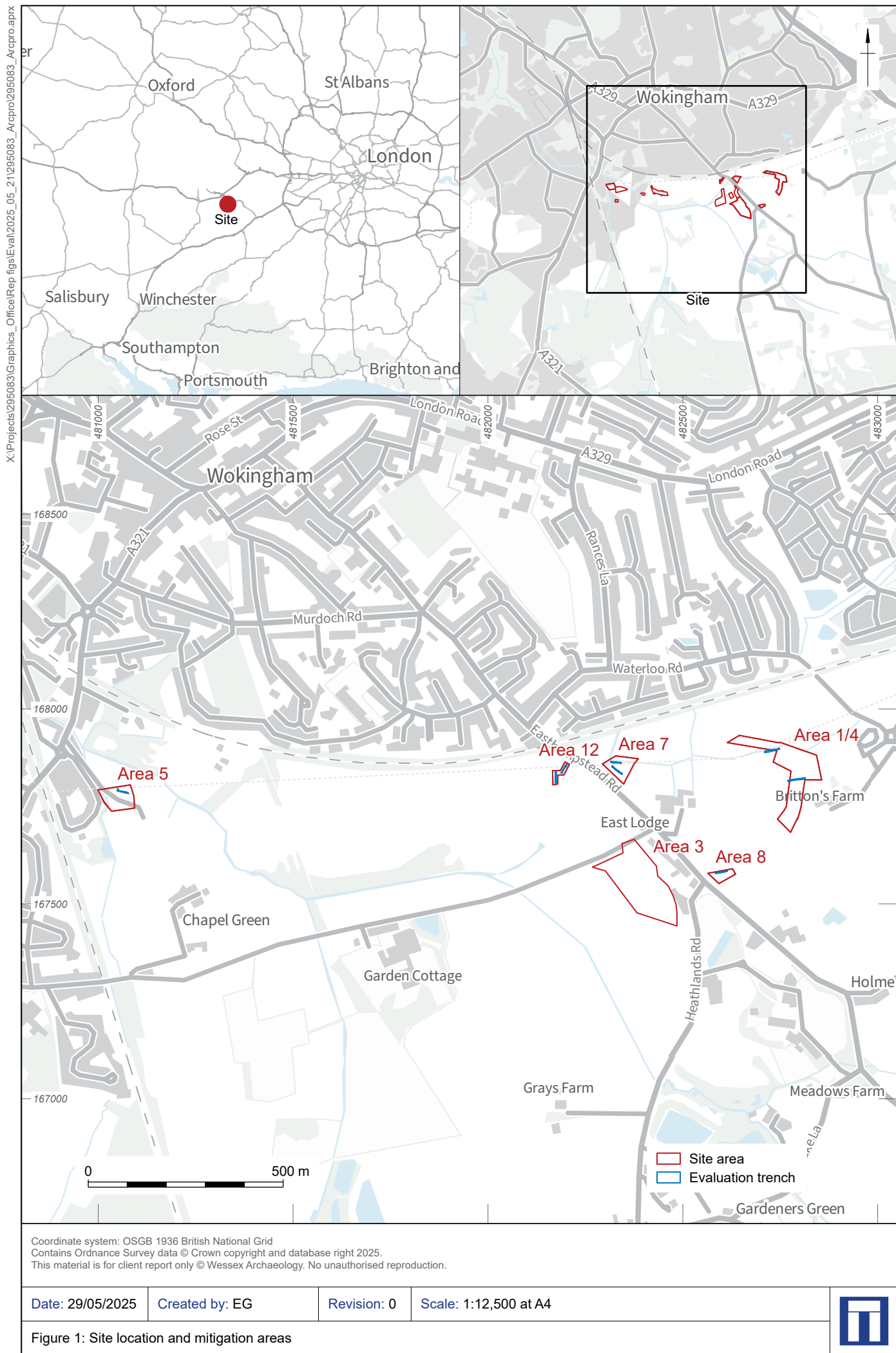
Area	Feature Type	Feature	Context	Sample Code	Sample vol. (l)	Flot vol. (ml)	Bioturbation proxies	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal >2mm (ml)	Charcoal	Other
5	Pit	4004	4005	295083_4001	16	150	5%, C	-	-	-	-	-	125	Moderate condition, some heavily mineral-coated pieces, some large >10mm	-
5	Pit	4009	4010	295083_4002	33	5000	5%	-	-	-	-		1500 (estimated)	Moderate condition, some heavily mineral-coated pieces, some large >10mm	Burnt stone frags (A)

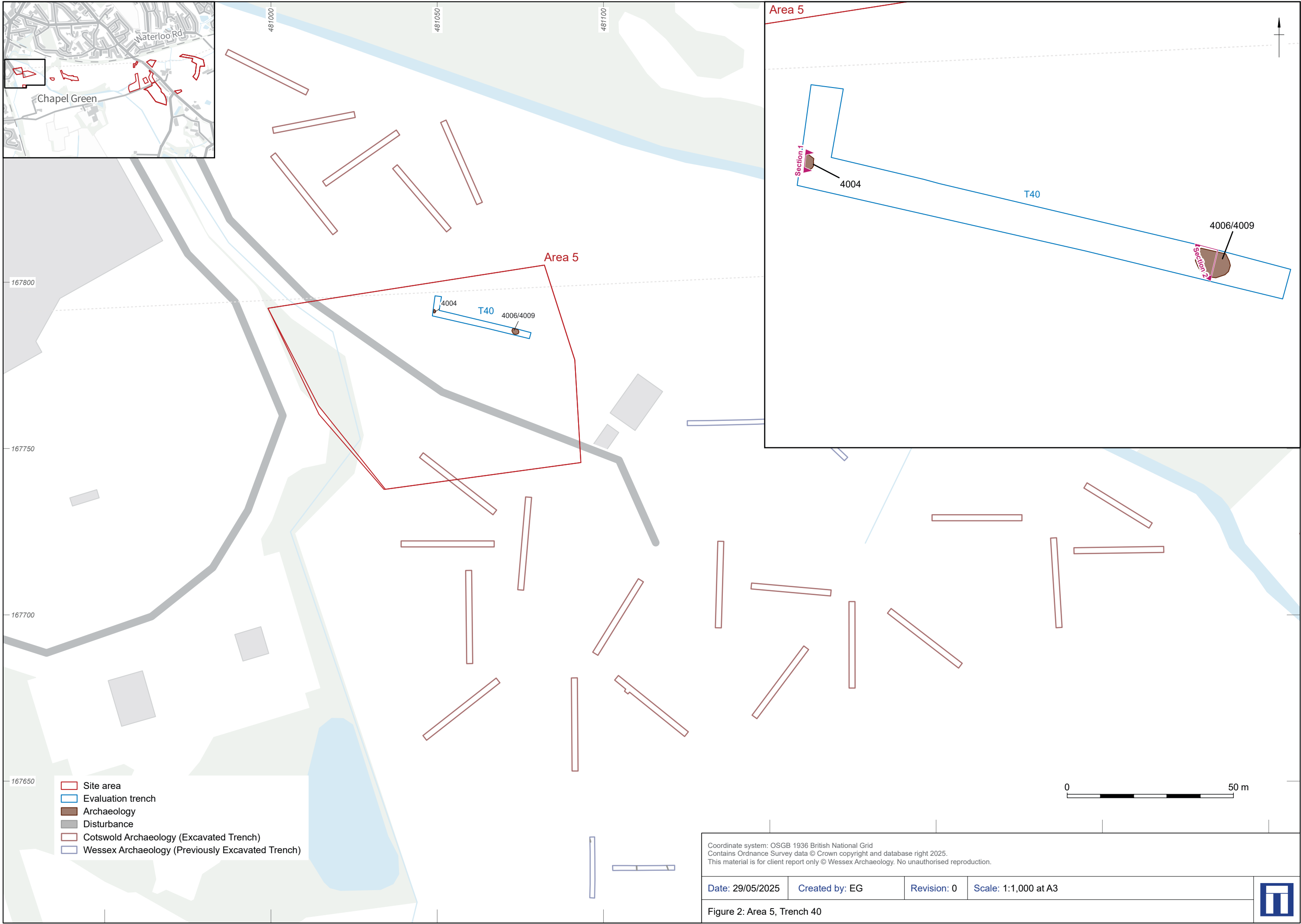


Appendix 3 OASIS summary

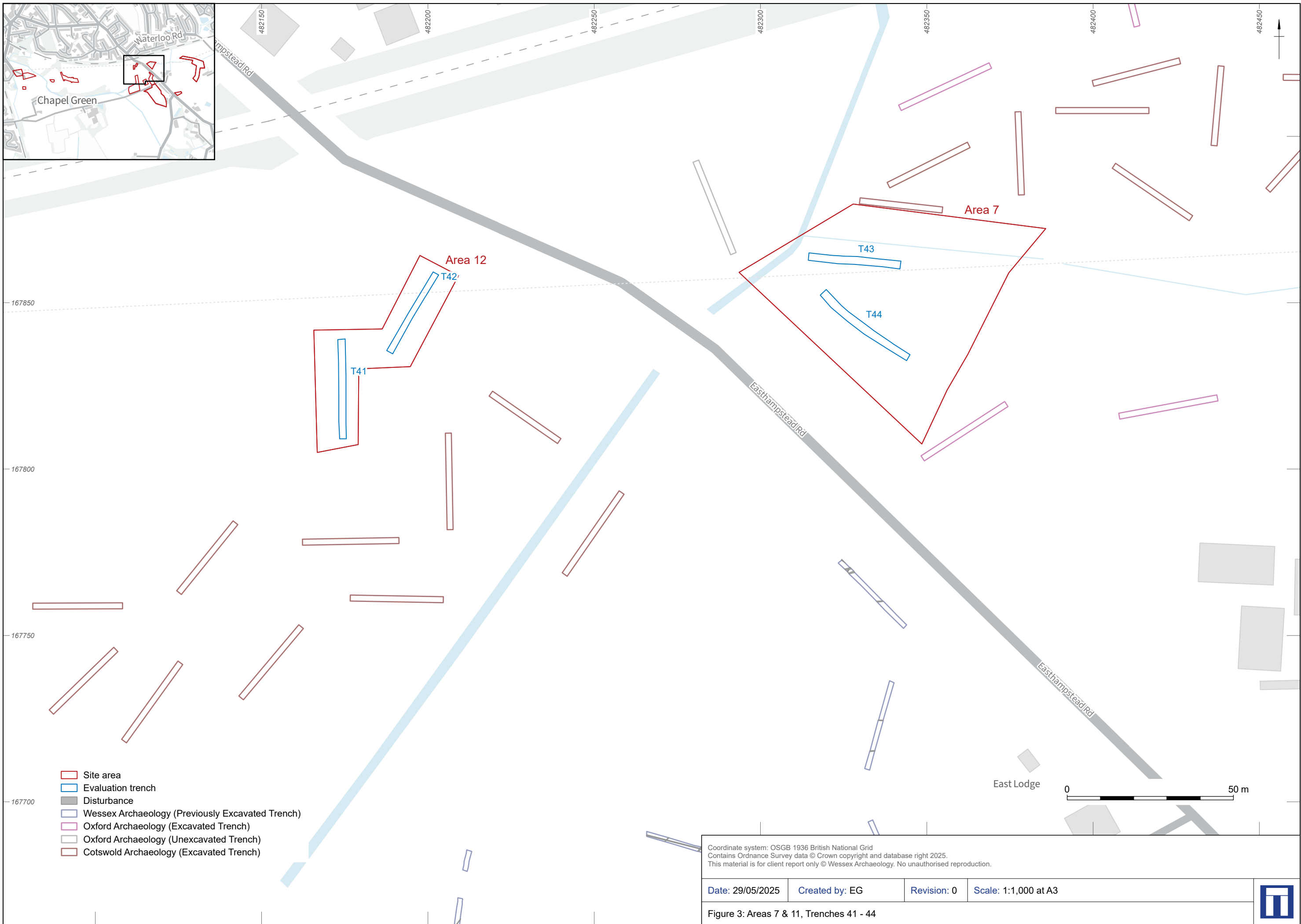
OASIS ID (UID)	wessexar1-533994
Project Name	Wokingham Major Highways Programme - South Wokingham Distributor Road - Phase 2. Archaeological Evaluation
Sitename	Wokingham Major Highways Programme - South Wokingham Distributor Road - Phase 2
Sitecode	295083
Project Identifier(s)	295083
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	192928
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Wessex Archaeology
Project Dates	10-Apr-2025 - 25-Apr-2025
Location	Wokingham Major Highways Programme - South Wokingham Distributor Road - Phase 2 NGR: SU 82954 67870 LL: 51.403802346264314, -0.808830374396904 12 Fig: 482954,167870
Administrative Areas	Country: England County/Local Authority: Wokingham Local Authority District: Wokingham Parish: Wokingham Without
Project Methodology	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Balfour Beatty, on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council ('the client'), to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a parcel of land to the south of Wokingham, located around Finchampstead Road (NGR 482954 167870 to 480933 167875). The archaeological evaluation comprised the investigation and recording of 8 trial trenches and was undertaken between 10 April and 25 April 2025.
Project Results	The archaeological evaluation comprised the investigation and recording of 8 trial trenches and was undertaken between 10 April and 25 April 2025. One of the eight excavated trial trenches contained archaeological features and deposits, indicating a limited presence of archaeological remains across the site. The uncovered features comprised two charcoal burning pits and remain of uncertain date.
Keywords	Charcoal Burners Site - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private or public corporation Balfour Beatty
HER	Berkshire Archaeology HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	John Davey
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;

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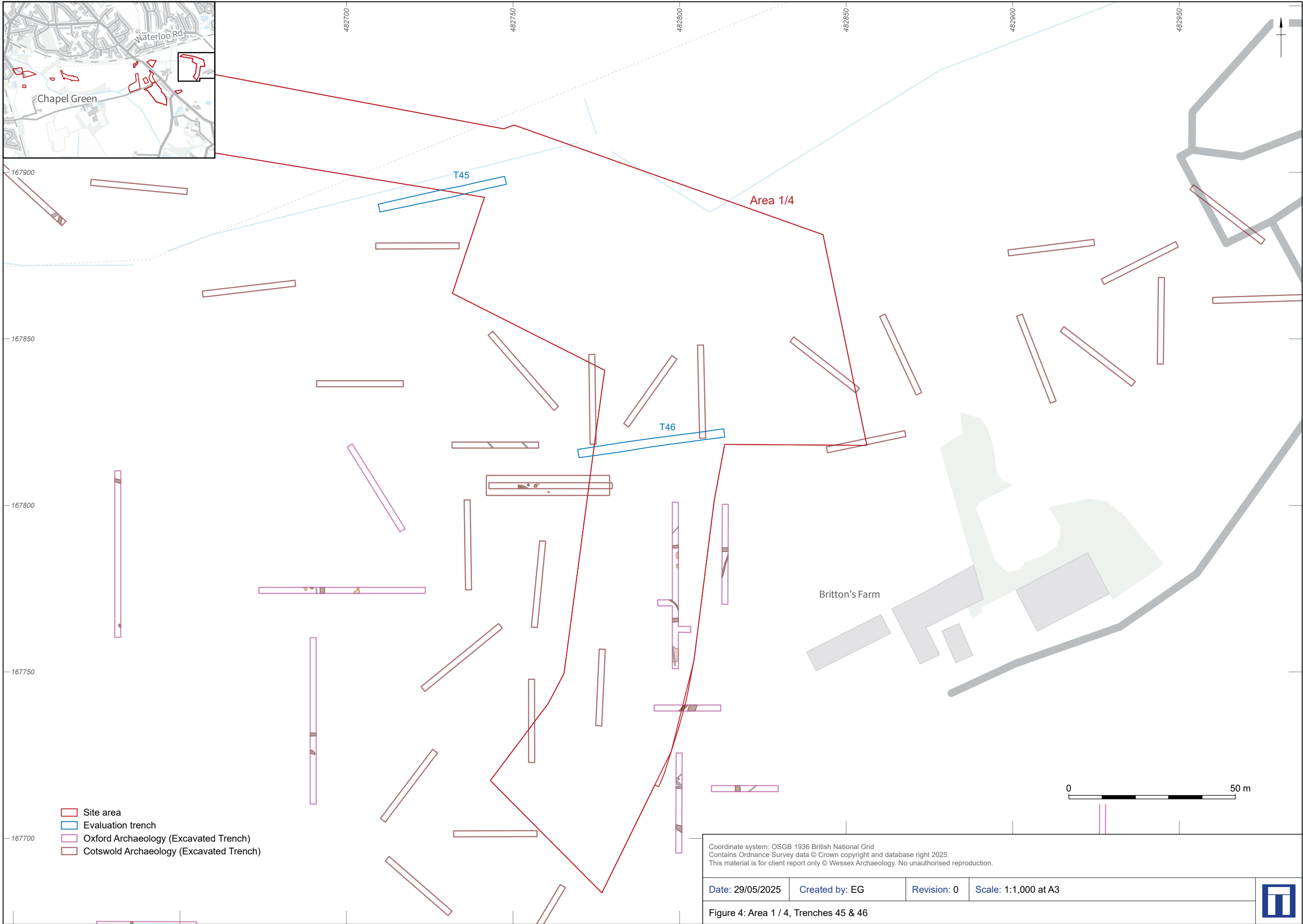




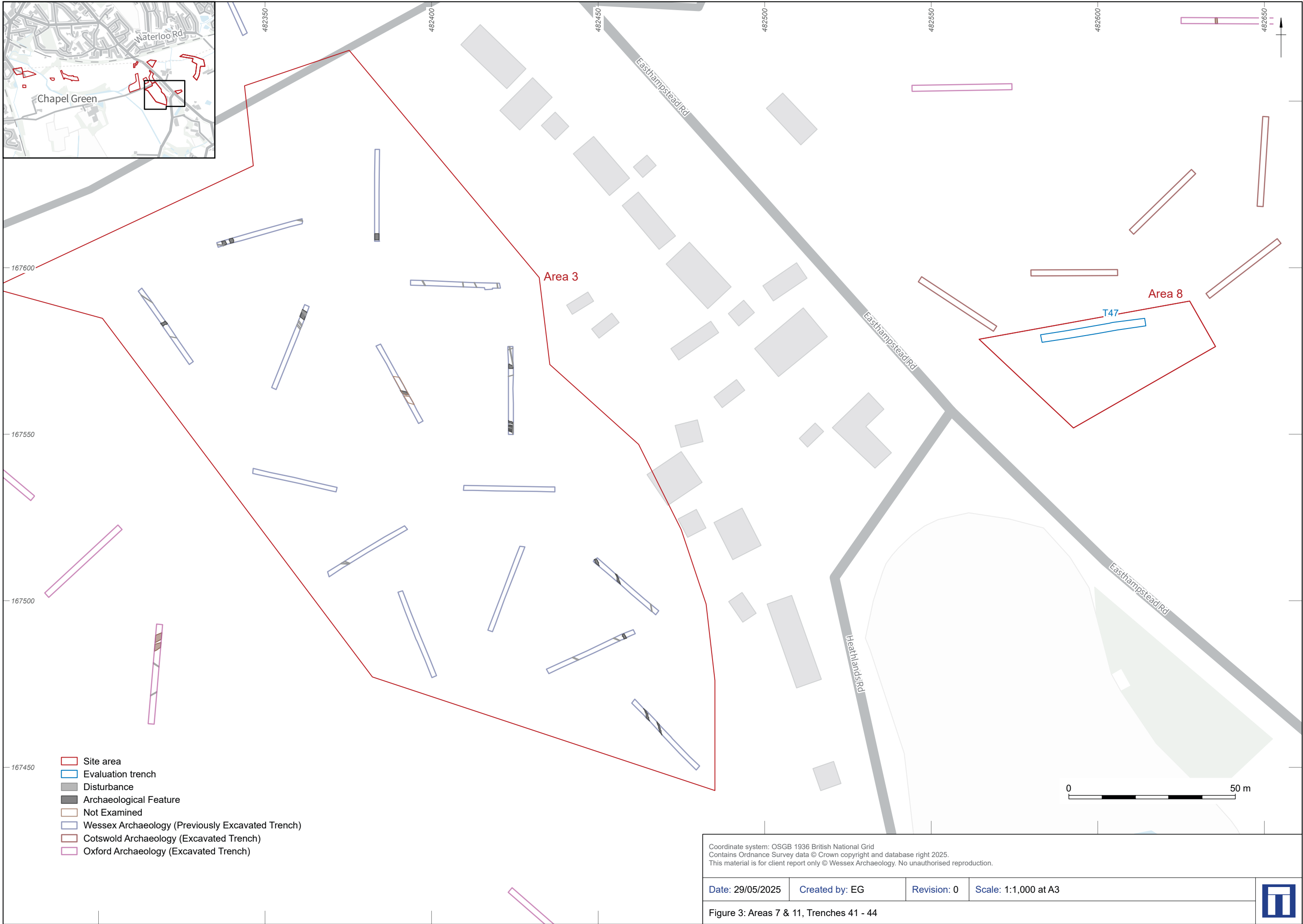
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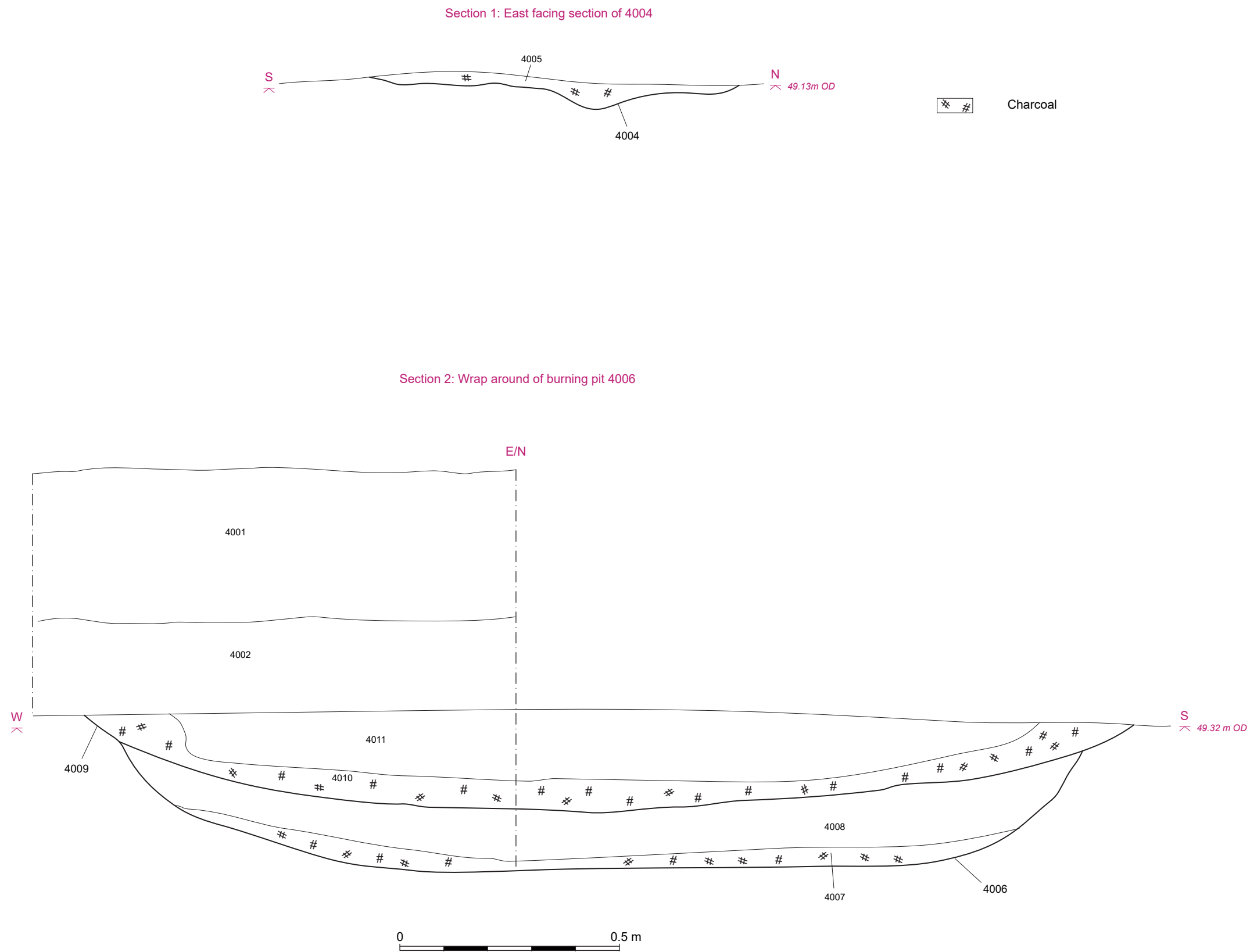


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Figure 6: Sections



Figure 7: Trench 40, general view looking east, 1 m & 2 m scales



Figure 8: Trench 40, pit 4004 looking west, 0.3 m scale



Figure 9: Trench 40, pit 4006 and recut 4009 looking north, 1 m scale



Figure 10: Trench 41, general view looking south, 1 m & 2 m scales



Figure 11: Trench 42, general view looking south, 1 m & 2 m scales



Figure 12: Trench 43, general view looking south, 1 m & 2 m scales



Figure 13: Trench 44, general view looking northwest, 1 m & 2 m scales



Figure 14: Trench 45, general view looking west, 1 m & 2 m scales



Figure 15: Trench 46, general view looking east, 1 m & 2 m scales



Figure 16: Trench 47, general view looking west, 1 m & 2 m scales



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