

Written Scheme of Investigation: Archaeological Evaluation

Land East of Longwater Road, Finchampstead,
Berkshire

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Tetra Tech Consulting Services Ltd has been commissioned by Stonebond Properties (Guildford) Ltd to undertake the archaeological evaluation at Land East of Longwater Road, Finchampstead, Berkshire (hereafter the site). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 79676 62707, and its location is shown on Figure 1.
- 1.2 The site comprises an area c.2.29ha on the south side of Finchampstead. The site is an enclosed agricultural field, bound to the north by residential properties, to the east by agricultural fields, to the south by Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve and to the west by Longwater Road.
- 1.3 The site is proposed (planning ref.: 241567) for the erection of 38no. dwellings (Use Class C3), together with associated outdoor space and landscaping, drainage infrastructure, hard and soft landscaping, parking, access, and associated works.
- 1.4 The site has been subject to prior archaeological assessment by Geophysical Survey (Sumo 2017) and extremely limited, targeted archaeological evaluation (PCA 2017). In their planning consultation response, Berkshire Archaeology (2024) noted:

“The development site was subject of previous archaeological work (geophysics and a small trial trench evaluation) in 2017, which established that there are significant archaeology features within the site, including several enclosures and pits, two of which have been dated to the Iron Age or early Roman period. These works evidence the potential of further archaeological investigation to facilitate a better understanding of past activity on the site, enable preservation by record, and mitigate the impacts of the development.

Early mitigation, prior to determination, is recommended which would permit any archaeology found to inform on the design details of this development.”

- 1.5 Further to this, Berkshire Archaeology have recommended the following planning condition:

A) No development shall take place/commence until a programme of archaeological work, including a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority in writing.

The WSI shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording*
- 2. The programme for post investigation assessment*
- 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording*
- 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of site investigation*
- 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation.*
- 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the WSI.*

B) The Development shall take place in accordance with the WSI approved under condition (A).

The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI

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approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason:

The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, particularly for, but not limited to, Prehistoric and Roman remains. The potential impacts of the development can be mitigated through a programme of archaeological work. This is in accordance with national and local plan policy.

- 1.6 Berkshire Archaeology's recommendation is for a further phase of works, informed by the previous geophysical survey and trial trenching (Berkshire Archaeology 2024). This should include both evaluation through trial trenching of further elements of the development site, along with a wider investigation of areas identified during previous investigations.
- 1.7 Accordingly, this Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological evaluation has been produced to address the requirement for a WSI in Part A) of the requirements of the condition. All work will be undertaken in accordance with this document and in accordance with relevant Standards and Guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2023 a & b) and the Berkshire Archaeology standards (BA 2021). All work will be reported upon in line with guidelines set out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE; Historic England 2015). It has been submitted to Wokingham Borough Council and Berkshire Archaeology for approval.
- 1.8 The results of the archaeological evaluation will inform decisions regarding the need for, and extent of, any further archaeological works that may be required to mitigate the impact of the development upon the archaeological resource. The requirement for and scope of any further stages of works will be determined by the LPA and their archaeological advisors, Berkshire Archaeology. Any further stages of work, such as those for the wider investigation of mitigation/excavation areas will be subject to a separate WSI.

2 Geological and Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The following information is drawn from Archaeological and Heritage Assessment (EDP 2024) and other readily available sources. For further information please refer to those documents.

Geology and Topology

- 2.2 The site is situated on a gradual slope that descends from the northern site boundary at c.58m AOD to the southern one at c.55m AOD.
- 2.3 The British Geological Survey (BGS 2025) records the underlying solid geology as Bagshot Formation – Sand, a sedimentary bedrock formed between 56 and 47.8 million years ago during the Palaeogene period. No superficial geological deposits are recorded across the northern part of site, but superficial deposits comprising River Terrace Deposits, 2 - Sand and gravel (a sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 2.588 million years ago and the present during the Quaternary period) are recorded across the southern third of the site.

Archaeological Background

Prehistoric

- 2.4 Potential Mesolithic activity (MRM16222) was recovered from ditches and pits during an evaluation undertaken in 2008, 0.68km to the south-west of the site. The evaluation was undertaken in advance of quarrying operations at Fleet Farm, where a small number of archaeological features were spread widely across an area of c.48 ha. The subsequent mitigation involved the stripping of a 6.58ha area (ERM2726), identifying several charcoal rich pits and other evidence suggestive of Iron Age iron working activity (MRM16220, MRM16221). Several paleochannels (MRM16223) were also identified, although were not dated.
- 2.5 An Iron Age iron working site (MRM17498) was excavated 0.6km to the east of the site ahead of an agricultural development in 2013. In common with the Fleet Farm site, iron working was identified from a number of pits, post holes and gullies; a furnace/hearth was also identified.
- 2.6 Prehistoric flint flakes (MWK14081, MWK14082, MWK14083, MWK14085, MWK14086, MWK14089) were recovered from fieldwalking in an area 0.5-0.7km to the north-east and east of the site, indicating a background level of prehistoric activity to the east of the site. Cropmarks forming slightly curving parallel ditches (MWK1891) were recorded 0.68km to the north-east of the site, in the vicinity of the flint finds. Undated iron slag (MWK1892, MWK15624) was also recovered from fieldwalking in this vicinity.
- 2.7 Evaluation trenching undertaken within the site (PCA 2017) identified features of an Iron Age date that corresponded to Geophysical anomalies.

Romano-British

- 2.8 The HER records indicate that the posited iron working in the area may have continued into the Roman period. A number of undated slag-mounds (MWK1892, MWK15624) found during fieldwalking 0.7km to the north-east of the site supports this. Possible Roman land division has also been postulated because of the undated ditches (MRM16220) identified at Fleet Farm c.0.6-0.7km to the south-west of the site.
- 2.9 Roman activity has been identified 1.2km to the north of the site. The course of a Roman road known as the Devil's Highway (not illustrated) was identified through archaeological investigation
- 2.10 The targeted archaeological evaluation (PCA 2017) identified clear evidence of Iron Age/Early Roman features within the eastern half of site.
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Early Medieval and Medieval

- 2.11 There were no early medieval or Medieval heritage assets recorded on the Berkshire HER within the study site. More definitive evidence for medieval activity was identified beyond the search radius near the Church of St James, 1.2km to the north. Findspots (not illustrated) in the vicinity of the church suggest that it was the focus for settlement activity during the medieval period, as suggested by the Domesday survey.
- 2.12 Undated pits and ditches were recorded during the evaluation (PCA 2017) and it is possible that those features could have been Medieval in date.

Post-Medieval and Modern

- 2.13 There were numerous post-medieval heritage assets recorded on the Berkshire HER within the 1km study area around the site, including a number of listed buildings.
- 2.14 Evidence for the post-medieval period in the area is generally related to agricultural activity. Post-medieval pottery (MWK15624) has been found during fieldwalking 0.7km to the north-east. Further evidence for agricultural activity within the vicinity is recorded through field boundaries (MRM16220, MRM16223) recorded across Ferry Farm c.0.2-0.7km to the south-west of the site.
- 2.15 The former course of Longwater Road (MRM16219) is recorded on the HER as running 0.5km to the west of the site. According to the HER, the present course of Longwater Road, which runs along the western boundary of the site, was constructed in 1854. Prior to this, it ran in a wide curve to cross the Blackwater via a ford.
- 2.16 A mound and trackway (59743) are recorded in the Hampshire HER located in Eversley Cross 0.8km to the south of the site.

Previous Archaeological Fieldwork

Geophysical Survey

- 2.17 A detailed magnetometer survey was conducted over approximately 2.2 ha of grassland at Finchampstead in 2017. The survey at Finchampstead revealed two irregular-shaped enclosures, along with possible smaller enclosures and evidence of industrial activity. Given that Iron Age and medieval iron working and charcoal production is recorded (CA 2009) within the area surrounding the site, it is possible that the responses detected are associated with similar activity. Several areas of increased response are of uncertain or natural origin.

Archaeological Evaluation

- 2.18 A highly targeted archaeological evaluation was undertaken by PCA in 2017. The evaluation entailed the excavation of 5 trenches within the site, which each measured 30m by 1.80m and were excavated stratigraphically to the top of the underlying geology. The evaluation uncovered limited evidence indicative of sporadic and transient Mesolithic to early Neolithic activity in the form of unstratified flint artefacts and clear evidence of Iron Age/Early Roman activity in the form of archaeological features, deposits and artefacts, specifically pottery and waste indicative of iron smithing activity. Post-medieval remains in the form of land drains and subsoil was also identified.

3 Research Aims and Objectives

3.1 The general aims of the archaeological investigation are as follows:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or remains and if so, to assess the date, survival and condition of said remains.
- To record the character, date, location and preservation of any archaeological remains on the site.
- To record the nature and extent of any previous impacts on the archaeological sequence across the site.
- To enable Berkshire Archaeology to make an informed decision as to the requirement for and scope of any further work required in order to satisfy the archaeology condition

3.2 The site-specific aims of the archaeological investigation are as follows:

- Is there evidence for prehistoric archaeology across the site?
- Is there any evidence of the Iron Age/Roman activity observed in the 2017 Evaluation elsewhere on site.
- Is there any evidence for medieval and/or post-medieval land boundaries within the site?

3.3 With reference to the Solent-Thames Research Framework (Hey & Hill, 2014) the archaeological evaluation may be able to address the following regional research objectives:

The Later Bronze Age and Iron Age

- *10.4.5: For field systems in the Solent-Thames area, their origin and purpose, including the reason for co-axial fields and the form taken by field boundaries, would merit further study. (10.4 Landscape and land use)*
- *10.4.6: Changes in the relationship of fields to settlements across the region should also be investigated. (10.4 Landscape and land use)*
- *10.4.7: Research may show whether fields were mainly created to control grazing. The importance of grassland management in the Iron Age economy, and the degree of specialisation of grazing farmsteads, for example whether horse raising was a major economic activity in the Thames valley, should be explored. (10.4 Landscape and land use)*

The Roman Period

- *12.2.1: Sites with well-preserved deposits of both late Iron Age and Roman date should be given careful attention in order to investigate continuity of local tradition at these sites. Sampling strategies should ensure that as wide a range of contexts are sampled as possible. Excavations of deep, well-sealed features are required (as opposed to buildings). (12.2 Inheritance)*
 - *12.3.2: Variation in resources and agricultural regimes from different scales of farm needs to be investigated. (12.3 Environmental evidence)*
 - *12.6.2: Equally important is the need to gain an understanding of settlement, its density and variability as well as economy in other environments, such as claylands and heathlands. This is crucial not only to our understanding of population density and its fluctuation over time, but also to determining the extent of woodland in the region and its change through time. (12.6 Settlement)*
-

4 Methodology

- 4.1 The evaluation will consist of 14 trenches measuring 30m x 2m at base that will bring the total sample per centage up to 5% of the total site area, including the 2017 evaluation trenches. There will also be a further 1% contingency if required (c.3 trenches measuring 30m x 2m at base). Trenches are placed to give a good general coverage across the site. Trench locations are shown on Figure 2. Trench locations may be altered, subject to unforeseen on-site constraints.
 - 4.2 A Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) will be prepared prior to commencement of the work. A unique site code will be obtained for the works.
 - 4.3 Written notice will be given to Berkshire Archaeology a minimum of 5 days prior to the commencement of fieldwork.
 - 4.4 Spoil will be banded around the edges of the trenches to provide a physical and visible barrier and at least one end of each trench will be ramped to allow for trapped animals to escape
 - 4.5 Trenches will be set out using survey grade GNSS equipment. The location of archaeology will be recorded using one, or a combination of the following methods: survey grade GNSS equipment with SMARTNET correctional data enabled (for example Leica GS18); TST (e.g Leica TS16) tied into the OS National Grid; photogrammetric survey using a terrestrial or RPAS (remote pilot aircraft system) mounted camera, georeferenced using SMARTNET tied to the National Grid. RPAS mounted cameras will have a 1" CMOS sensor or greater
 - 4.6 All trenches will be scanned prior to excavation using a CAT scanner.
 - 4.7 The trenches will be excavated using a suitable mechanical excavator under constant archaeological direction. The trenches will be excavated through undifferentiated topsoil and modern made ground in spits of no more than 0.10m with artefact recovery taking place every scrape until archaeological deposits are encountered or the top of the underlying natural sediments reached. The excavator will be fitted with a smooth grading bucket and care will be taken that archaeological deposits are not damaged due to over machining. All machining will stop if significant archaeological deposits are encountered.
 - 4.8 Any exposed archaeological deposits will then be cleaned by hand and recorded in plan and section. During the evaluation archaeological features/deposits will be excavated enough to characterise them.
 - 4.9 All trench bases, features and spoil heaps will be scanned using a metal detector. The detector will not be set to discriminate against iron.
 - 4.10 The opportunity to have a meeting on site shall be provided once the trenches are open with Berkshire Archaeology to assess the results, or by remote monitoring via email summaries/photos/trench plans at the discretion of Berkshire Archaeology.
 - 4.11 Backfilling and compaction will be undertaken by the machine on completion of the work once agreed with Berkshire Archaeology, but there will be no reinstatement to existing condition.
 - 4.12 An OASIS form will be completed for the project.
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5 Standards

- 5.1 The sub-contractor appointed by Tetra Tech Consulting Services Ltd will be a Registered Organisation with ClfA. All fieldwork will adhere to the ClfA Standard for archaeological field evaluation (2023), and Code of Conduct (ClfA 2014b, revised 2022 & 2014c, revised 2020).
 - 5.2 All exposed archaeological features and deposits will be recorded and excavated, except obviously modern features and disturbances.
 - 5.3 Standard field recording methodologies will be employed. All stratigraphy will be recorded using the single context recording system if required.
 - 5.4 An overall plan tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid will be drawn in addition to individual plans showing areas of archaeological interest. All features revealed will be planned.
 - 5.5 Site plans will be at 1:20 unless circumstances dictate otherwise. Plans at other scales will be drawn if appropriate (e.g., cremation burials at 1:10). Sections will be drawn at 1:10.
 - 5.6 Archaeological features and deposits will be excavated using hand tools unless they cannot be accessed safely or unless a machine-excavated trench is the only practical method of excavation. Any machine-excavation of archaeologically significant features will be agreed with Berkshire Archaeology in advance.
 - 5.7 With the exception of modern disturbances, normally a minimum 50% of all contained features will be excavated. Modern disturbances will only be excavated as necessary in order to properly define and evaluate any features that they may cut. Normally 10% (or at least a 1m-long segment) of non-structural linear features will be excavated. At least 50% of linear features with a possible structural function (e.g., beam slots) will normally be excavated. Details of the precise excavation strategy and any alterations to it will be discussed with the monitoring officer if particularly significant archaeology is revealed as a result of topsoil stripping. Further discussion and agreement on the approach to the excavation of complex areas may be requested during the project.
 - 5.8 Should human remains be encountered the coroner will be informed, together with the client and monitoring officer. All articulated human remains; graves and cremation vessels/deposits will receive minimal excavation to define their extent and establish whether they are burials or not. Generally, all graves and cremation burials will be recorded and their positions noted without full excavation, only surface cleaning. A decision would then be made on future treatment of the human remains in consultation with the client/their agent and Berkshire Archaeology. Graves and cremation burials would only be excavated in exceptional circumstances and only with the necessary licence from the Ministry of Justice.
 - 5.9 A full photographic record comprising colour digital images will be made. The photographic record will aim to provide an overview of the excavation and the surrounding area. A representative sample of individual feature shots and sections will be taken, in addition to working shots and elements of interest (individual features, group and general shots). The photographic register will include: shot number, location of shot, direction of shot and a brief description of the subject photographed.
 - 5.10 All archaeological remains will be recorded and levelled relative to Ordnance Datum by an archaeological surveyor, using DGPS (Differential Global Positioning System) technology. Sufficient levels will be taken to ensure that the relative height of the archaeological/subsoil horizon can be extrapolated across the whole of the development area
 - 5.11 All archaeological features and deposits will be recorded using standard context record sheets. Soil colours are recorded using visual inspection and not by reference to the Munsell Colour chart.
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6 Finds/Environmental Remains

- 6.1 In general, all finds from all features will be collected. Where large quantities of post-medieval and later finds are present, and the feature is not of intrinsic or group interest, a sample of the finds assemblage will normally be collected sufficient to date and characterise the feature.
- 6.2 Finds will be identified, by context number, to a specific deposit or, in the case of topsoil finds, to a specific area of the site.
- 6.3 All finds will be properly processed according to the ClfA Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (2020c). All pottery and other finds, where appropriate, will be marked with the site code and context number.
- 6.4 If appropriate, environmental samples will be taken from well-stratified, datable deposits that are deemed to have potential for the preservation/survival of ecofactual material. Bulk soil samples (minimum 40 litres or 100% of context) will be taken for wet sieving and flotation, and for finds recovery. If necessary, the Historic England regional scientific advisor will be consulted. In all instances deposits with clear intrusive material shall be avoided.
- 6.5 Any finds believed to fall potentially within the statutory definition of Treasure, as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, amended 2003, shall be reported to the Finds Liaison Officer, the client and Berkshire Archaeology. Should the find's status as potential treasure be confirmed the coroner will also be informed. A record shall be provided to all parties of the date and circumstances of discovery, the identity of the finder, and the exact location of the find(s) (OS map reference to within 1 metre and find spot(s) marked onto the site plan).
- 6.6 A site-specific Selection Strategy (ClfA: The Selection Toolkit for Archaeological Archives) will be set out by the appointed contractor in their Method Statement. That strategy makes provision for expanding sampling of features following discussion with the Berkshire Archaeology.

7 Post-Excavation, Analysis, Reporting and Archive

- 7.1 Within eight weeks of the completion of fieldwork a report will be produced containing: Summary, Introduction, Background, Aims & Objectives, Method, Fieldwork Results, Specialist Reports, Discussion & Conclusions, Appendices, Figures.
- 7.2 The report will be supplied to Berkshire Archaeology and the Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science at Historic England's South East office, along with the trench and feature shapefiles.
- 7.3 A form will be completed for the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/UTH> in accordance with the guidelines provided by Historic England and the Archaeological Data Service.

Publication

- 7.4 Publication will be by an evaluation report produced within eight weeks of the completion of fieldwork. A summary report will also be submitted for publication in the annual fieldwork round-up in a suitable journal. In the event that no further works are planned, and exceptional archaeological remains are found which warrant publication in their own right a separate note on these will be produced to a timetable agreed with the client and Berkshire Archaeology.

Archive

- 7.5 It is normally intended to deposit the archive with a local museum. At present there is no receiving museum for Wokingham, so Berkshire Archaeology requests that the unit undertaking the archaeological investigation is able to provide archival storage until this situation is rectified. The Guidelines for preparation and deposition will be followed, as well as those contained in the ClfA *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (2020a) and the requirements of the recipient museum will be followed for the preparation of the archive for museum deposition.
- 7.6 Finds from the archaeological fieldwork will be kept with the archival material.
- 7.7 Subject to agreement with the legal landowner, the archaeological sub-contractor would normally arrange the recipient museum for the deposition of the archive and artefact collection. Any items requiring treatment would be conserved. The landowner would normally be asked to donate the finds to the recipient museum. At present there is no receiving museum for Wokingham, so Berkshire Archaeology requests that the unit undertaking the archaeological investigation is able to provide archival storage until this situation is rectified.
- 7.8 A site-specific Data Management Plan will be set out in the appointed contractors Archaeological Method Statement.
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8 Health and Safety

- 8.1 The archaeological sub-contractor will produce a Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) for the project. This will cover most aspects of excavation work and ensure that for most sites any risks are adequately controlled. Prior to and during fieldwork all sites are subject to an ongoing assessment of risk. Site-specific risk assessments are kept under review and amended whenever circumstances change which materially affect the level of risk. Where significant risks have been identified in work to be carried out by the archaeological sub-contractor a written generic assessment will be made available to those affected by the work. A copy of the Risk Assessment will be kept on site.

9 Resources

- 9.1 The archaeological work will be undertaken by a professional team of archaeologists.
- 9.2 The appointed archaeological sub-contractor will provide the site programme, name of the appointed archaeological supervisor, as well as the list of specialists who may be consulted as required during the project.

10 Monitoring

- 10.1 Berkshire Archaeology will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards on behalf of the LPA throughout the project.
- 10.2 Any variations to the specification will be agreed with the client and Berkshire Archaeology prior to works being undertaken.
- 10.3 Berkshire Archaeology will be kept informed of progress by the client throughout the project and will be contacted in the event that significant archaeological features are discovered. Arrangements will be made for the monitoring officer to inspect the evaluation trenches before they are backfilled – trenches will not be backfilled without the agreement of the monitoring officer.

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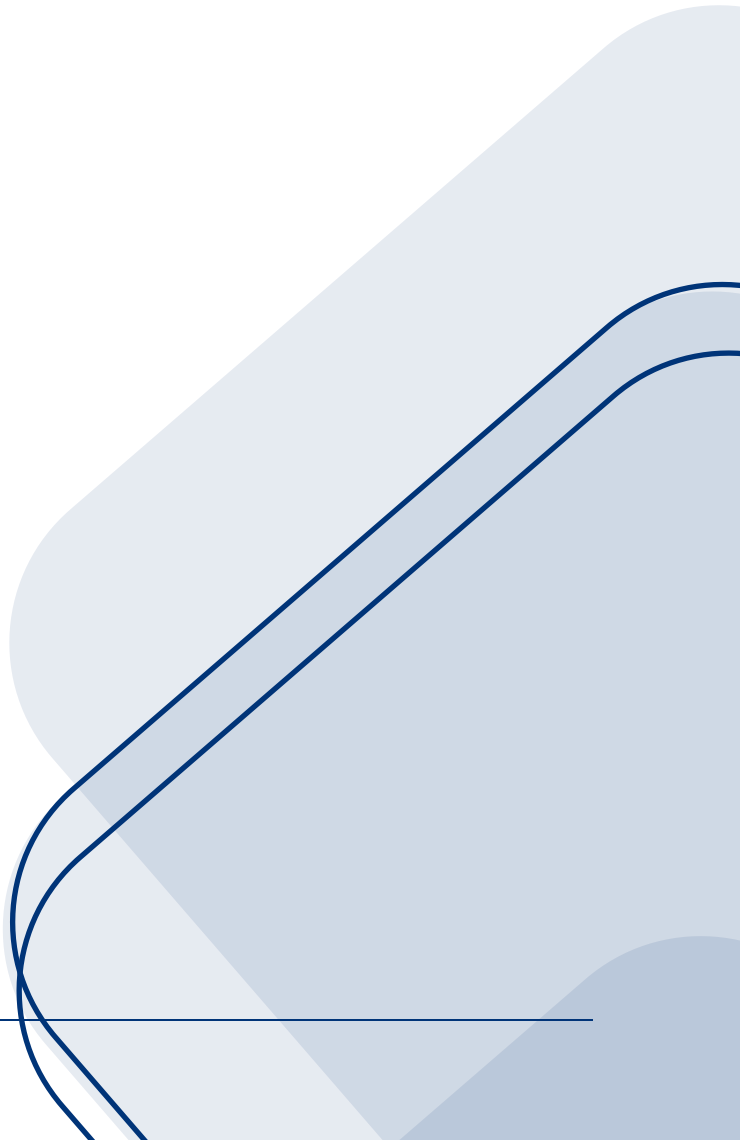
Historic England 2011 *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*

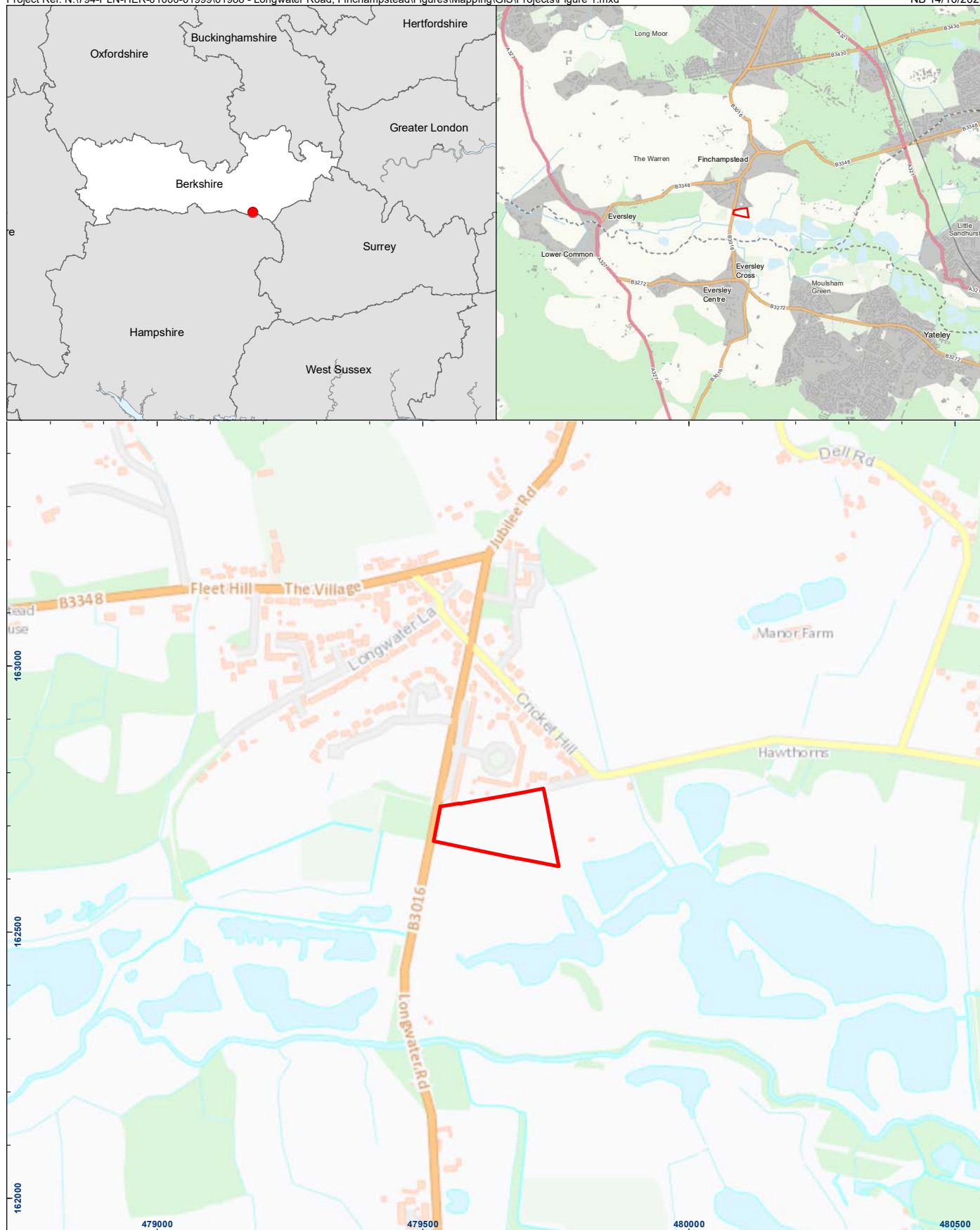
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Figures





 Site Boundary



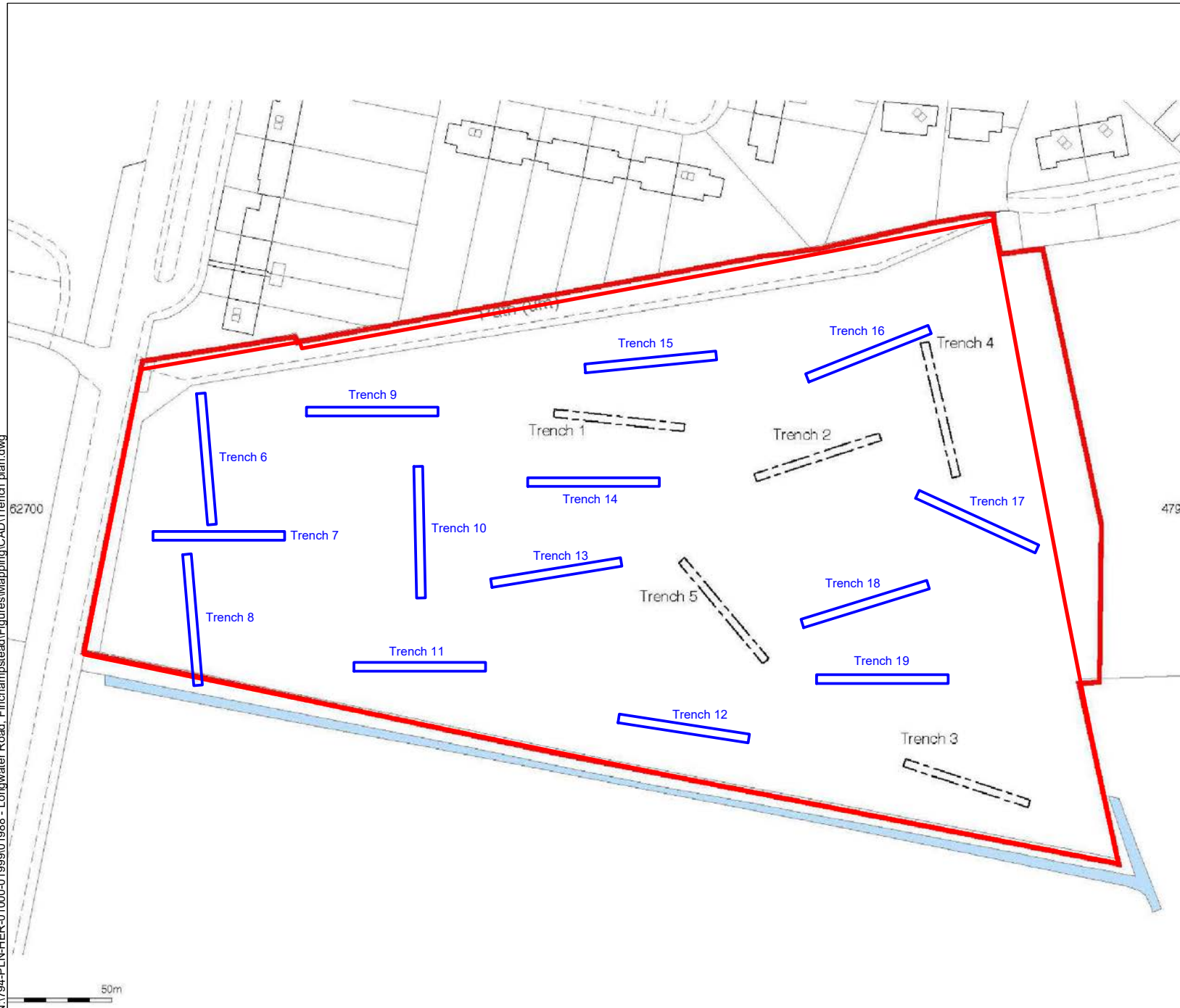
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Scale at A4: 1:10,000



Figure 1

Site Location

N:\794-PLN-HER-01000-01999\01988 - Longwater Road, Finchampstead\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Trench plan.dwg



- Site Boundary
- Proposed 30m trench

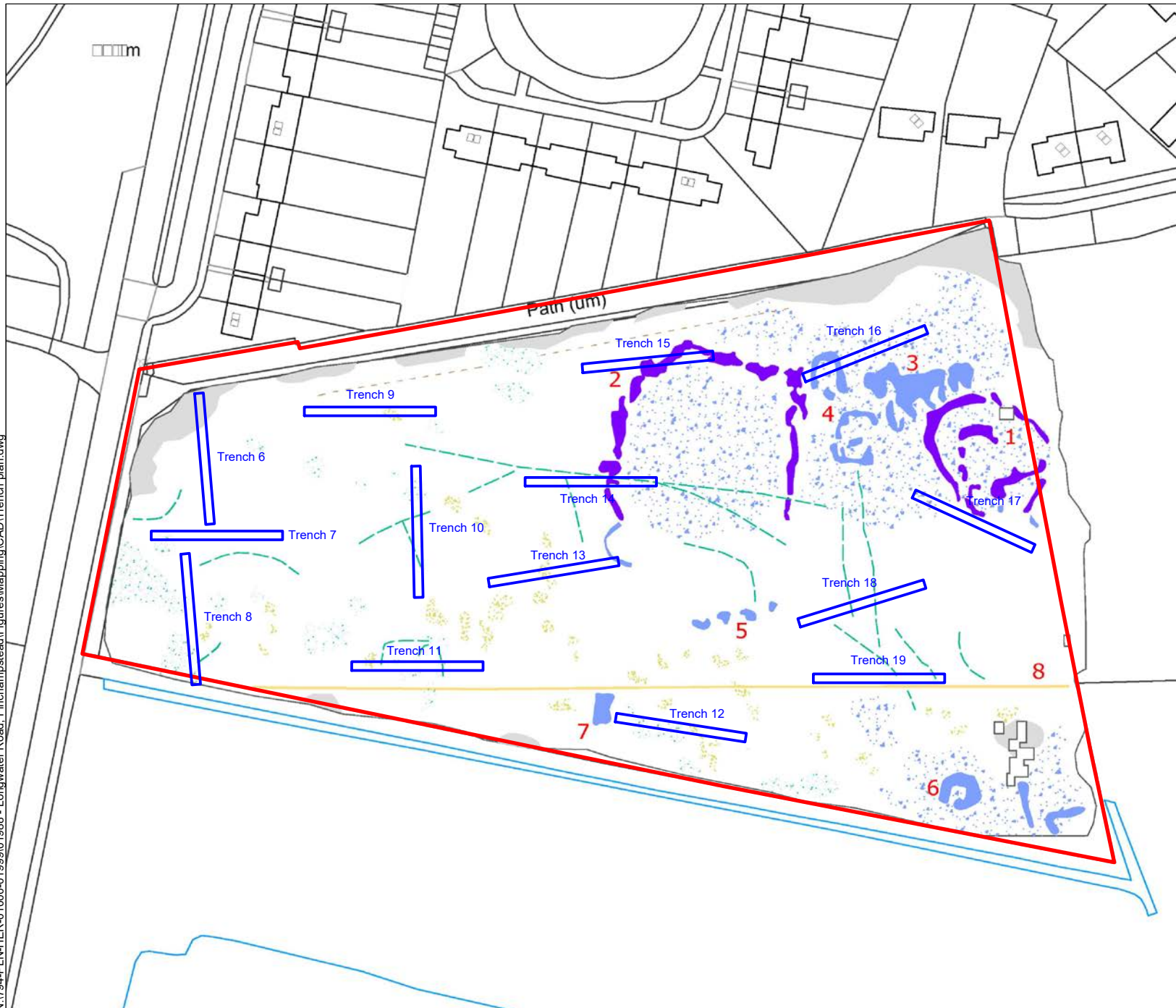


0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,250



Figure 2
Trench location

N:\794-PLN-HER-01000-01999\01988 - Longwater Road, Finchampstead\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Trench plan.dwg



- Site Boundary
- Proposed 30m trench

	Probable archaeology (positive)
	Possible archaeology (positive/area of increased response/trend)
	Uncertain (positive/area of increased response/trend)
	Former field boundary (conjectural)
	Agriculture (e.g. ploughing headland)
	Natural (e.g. geological or pedological)
	Ferrous
	Evaluation Feature



0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,250



Figure 3

Proposed trenches overlaying the geophysics results

