

Land west of Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris
Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation
March 2019

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Report

Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation

Site

Land west of Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris

Date

March 2019

Planning Authority

Cherwell District Council

Approximate Site Centre

NGR 435437, 237069

Prepared By

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Approved By

Dr Rob Smith MCIfA

Report Status

Final

Issue Date

March 2019

Orion Reference

PN1803/2

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1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1** This document represents a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for undertaking a programme of archaeological evaluation at land west of Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The site is centred on NGR 435437, 237069 (Fig.1).
- 1.2** An application for residential development has been submitted to Cherwell District Council (Application Reference 18/01894/OUT).
- 1.3** Discussions have been held with Richard Oram, archaeological advisor to Cherwell District Council, regarding the scope of archaeological investigation and it has been agreed that an archaeological evaluation will be implemented. The evaluation will comprise the excavation of 15 trial-trenches, each measuring 30m long x 1.8m wide; locations are shown on Fig. 2. Mr Oram has confirmed that the evaluation trench layout is acceptable (email dated 22nd March 2019).
- 1.4** This document represents a Written Scheme of Investigation ('WSI') for the agreed archaeological investigation.
- 1.5** It is noted that a desk-based assessment, aerial imagery assessment and geophysical survey have been carried out; these reports are included here at Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to provide further baseline data and should be read in conjunction with this WSI.
- 1.6** In summary, the desk-based assessment identified a low potential for archaeological remains of all periods. The desk-based assessment acknowledged that archaeological investigation of the wider study area was limited and that this may be a contributor to the lack of archaeological data (Orion Heritage 2018). Aerial photographic assessment, as part of the National Mapping Programme, did not identify any potential archaeological features within the study site. Further aerial imagery analysis carried out by Air Photo Services identified two field boundaries within the site and concluded that the site was located within a Medieval/Post-Medieval landscape containing both levelled and extant ridge and furrow (Air Photo Services 2018). Geophysical survey has subsequently identified anomalies of probable and possible archaeological origin, including a large rectangular enclosure with an entranceway and internal arrangement of pits, a D-shaped enclosure and an unmapped and undated field system (Magnitude Surveys 2019).
- 1.7** In line with national and local planning policy, further archaeological investigation is now required to allow determination of the outline application; this will be achieved by means of archaeological evaluation trial-trenching.
- 1.8** The locations of evaluation trial-trenches are shown on Fig. 2 and are overlaid onto the proposed site layout and also onto the geophysical survey results. The evaluation trial-trenches are located to provide an assessment of the site's archaeological potential in relation to the proposed new build impacts, including areas of Suds, orchard planting, proposed allotments and landscaping and are also located in relation to the geophysical survey results, testing both areas of known archaeology and areas where no probable archaeological anomalies have been identified by geophysical survey.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 The principal aims of the archaeological investigation are to:

- Determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains;
- Determine the character, extent, date, complexity, integrity, state of preservation and quality of any archaeological remains present, therefore ensuring their preservation by record; and
- To provide robust baseline information to inform the scoping of a mitigation strategy, should this be required.

2.2 The general objectives are to ensure:

- The protection and recording of archaeological assets discovered during the archaeological works;
- That any below-ground archaeological deposits exposed are promptly identified; and
- The recording of archaeological remains, to place this record in its local context and to make this record available.

2.3 Further, more detailed, research aims may be generated from the results of the evaluation and specifically in relation to regional research frameworks (Solent-Thames: Research Framework for the Historic Environment (Oxford Wessex Monograph No. 6 2014). These will be reviewed during an on-site meeting with Cherwell District Council's archaeological advisor.

2.4 This document conforms to the requirements of current national and local planning policy (including *National Planning Policy Framework 2019*). It has been designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice, and the appropriate national and local standards and guidelines, including:

- *Management of Recording Projects in the Historic Environment: MORPHE* (English Heritage 2006);
- *Code of Conduct* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists [‘CIfA’] [revised edition] 2014); and
- *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA [revised edition] 2014).

3.0 Methodology

Programme of Archaeological Works

3.1 The archaeological programme of works will comprise the following:

- An archaeological trial-trench evaluation of the site, comprising the excavation of 15 trenches, each measuring 30m long x 1.8m wide. The evaluation trial-trench locations are shown on Fig. 2.
- Post-excavation research, analysis, report and archive production.

3.2 Prior to implementation of the archaeological programme of works, the appointed archaeological contractor will produce a detailed document specifying the methodology, including for example the sampling strategies and specialist personnel to be employed. All work will be undertaken to the satisfaction of Cherwell District Council.

Recording

3.3 The areas subject to archaeological investigation will be accurately tied into the National Grid, preferably by GPS and will be located onto a 1: 2,500 map of the area.

3.4 Topsoil and subsoil will be machine-excavated using a flat toothless bucket under continuous archaeological supervision to expose the uppermost horizon of archaeological remains or, where absent, the upper interface of geological deposits. Topsoil and subsoil will be stockpiled separately and trenches will be backfilled in reverse order.

3.5 The excavated trenches will be cleaned sufficiently to enhance the definition of features and a base plan will be produced at a suitable scale using a Global Positioning System ('GPS').

3.6 All structures, deposits and finds will be recorded according to accepted professional standards.

3.7 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features exposed or excavated will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets. Sample recording sheets, sample registers, finds recording sheets, access catalogues, and photo record cards will also be used.

3.8 Plans indicating the location of all archaeological features encountered will be drawn at an appropriate scale. The location and extent of archaeological features will be recorded by GPS.

3.9 Archaeological features will be plotted on an overall plan at a scale of either 1:100 or 1:50. Areas of significant remains or areas of complex stratigraphy will be planned in greater detail at 1:20 or 1:10 scale as appropriate. Plans and sections will include context numbers and Ordnance Datum ('OD') spot heights for all principal strata and features.

3.10 A photographic record of the project will be maintained. The images will illustrate the detail and context of the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the progress of the programme of archaeological works.

Finds and Samples

- 3.11** A high priority will be given to dating any finds exposed. All artefactual and ecofactual material revealed during the excavation will be retained for recording and assessment and, where appropriate, further analysis and will be treated in accordance with the CIfA *Guidelines for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological material* ([revised edition] 2014).
- 3.12** Environmental samples up to 40 litres in volume will be taken from suitable deposits. A sub-sample of the most productive looking samples will be selected by the archaeological contractor's environmental specialist for processing, sorting, assessment and discussion in the evaluation report, with a statement as to the potential for further analysis. The Regional Science Advisor for Historic England will be consulted, as appropriate and Cherwell District Council's archaeological advisor will also be consulted on the scope of environmental sampling.
- 3.13** All finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the UK Institute for Conservation's *Conservation Guideline No 2* (1983). Appropriate guidelines set out in the Museums and Galleries Commission's *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (1991) will also be followed.
- 3.14** Should finds and features be made that might constitute 'Treasure' under the definition of the *Treasure Act* (1996), these will, if possible, be archaeologically excavated and removed to a safe place. Such finds will also be reported immediately to the local coroner (within 14 days, in accordance with the Act).
- 3.15** Any human remains that are discovered will initially be left in-situ, covered and protected. If removal is necessary, this will comply with the relevant legislation, any Ministry of Justice and local environmental health regulations, and the appropriate Historic England advice.

Report and Archive

- 3.16** Details of style and format will be determined by the archaeological contractor. In any event, it will include:
- An executive summary of the work undertaken and the results obtained;
 - The aims and methods adopted during the programme of archaeological works;
 - The nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any archaeological deposits and material uncovered;
 - The nature and location of the features and deposits encountered;
 - Appropriate illustrative material such as maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs; including a site location plan at 1:2500, a site plan at 1:1250, and where appropriate, large-scale specific plans;
 - A summary of results; and
 - A description of the archive contents and details of its location for long-term storage.

- 3.17** The report will include a finds report, including: all pottery, glass and clay tobacco pipes discovered during the works, as well as all other artefacts that may be discovered. A specialist report on all animal or human bone discovered during the excavation will be included. Pottery and ceramic building material will be recorded by sherd count and weight, by ware type, and if appropriate, from within context groups, in line with the relevant fabric series.
- 3.18** The discussion of the archaeological potential of the site will include reference to the potential indicated by finds and environmental evidence.
- 3.19** A draft copy of the evaluation report will be sent to Cherwell District Council's archaeological advisor for comment, prior to a final copy being submitted. Digital copies of the final report will be submitted to Cherwell District Council to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the archaeological programme of works. One digital copy of the report will also be provided to the Historic Environment Record ('HER'). A copy will also be uploaded as part of the Archaeology Data Service Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations ('ADR OASIS') database record.
- 3.20** The site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the archaeological works, is to be prepared in accordance with guidance issued by the Archaeological Archives Forum ('AAF') (*Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* [Brown 2011]).
- 3.21** It is noted that the relevant museum is the County Museum Resource Centre at Standlake. The Museum's guidance in relation to archives should be abided by.
- 3.22** The archive will also be prepared in line with the ClfA *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* ([revised edition] 2014) and in consultation with the relevant Museums Service.

4.0 Timetable and Personnel

- 4.1 It is anticipated that the evaluation will be carried out in April 2019.
- 4.2 The archaeological works will be undertaken under the overall supervision of Cathy Patrick (Technical Director, Orion Heritage). Cathy is a ClfA Member and Orion Heritage is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with ClfA. The archaeological contracting organisation appointed to implement the works detailed in this WSI, will be a Registered Archaeological Organisation with ClfA.
- 4.3 Curriculum Vitaes of key personnel will be provided to Cherwell District Council in advance of the archaeological works commencing, if required.

5.0 Monitoring

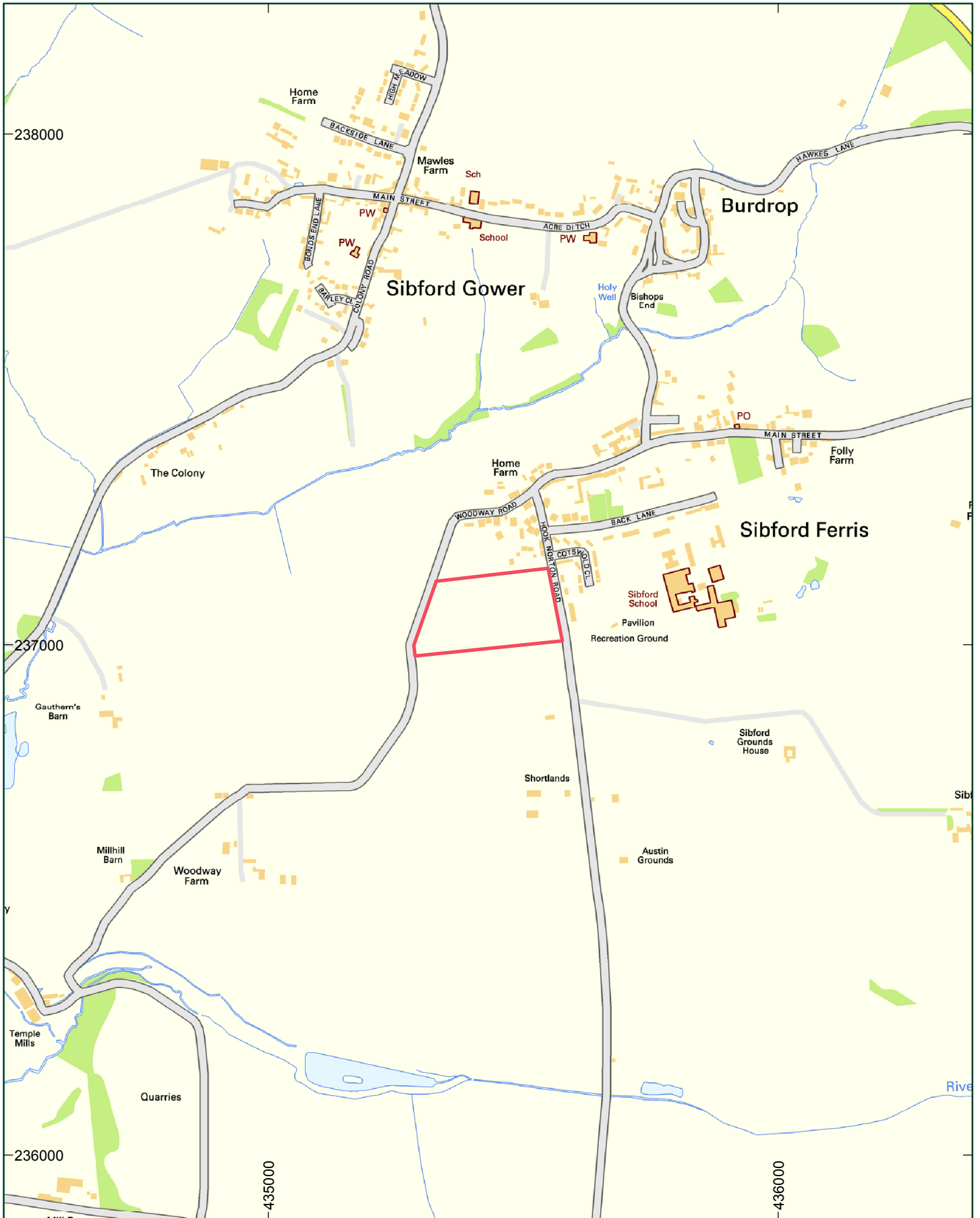
- 5.1 The aim of monitoring is to ensure that the archaeological works are undertaken within the limits set out in this WSI, and to the satisfaction of Cherwell District Council.
- 5.2 Cathy Patrick (Technical Director, Orion Heritage) will monitor the implementation of the archaeological works on behalf of the developers.
- 5.3 Representatives from Cherwell District Council will monitor the evaluation and ten working days' notice will be given to arrange a site meeting.
- 5.4 It is understood that a planning charge will be made to cover attendance of the monitoring meeting by Cherwell District Council's archaeological advisor.
- 5.5 No evaluation trench is to be backfilled until the archaeological works have been signed off, either by a site visit or by email confirmation, by Cherwell District Council's archaeological advisor.
- 5.6 Any alterations to this document should be agreed in writing with the relevant parties prior to commencement of on-site works, or at the earliest available opportunity thereafter.

6.0 Insurance

- 6.1 Both Orion Heritage and the appointed archaeological contractor can produce evidence of Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance.

7.0 Health and Safety

- 7.1 All works will follow the *Health and Safety at Work Act* (1974), applicable regulations and codes of practice, and recommendations of the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers ('SCAUM') *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (1986).
- 7.2 All archaeological staff will undertake their operations with safe working practices.
- 7.3 All staff will be made aware of the hazards and any necessary measures which need to be taken regarding those hazards.
- 7.4 A site-specific Risk Assessment will be prepared by the appointed archaeological contractor.



Legend
 Site

1:10,000 at A4

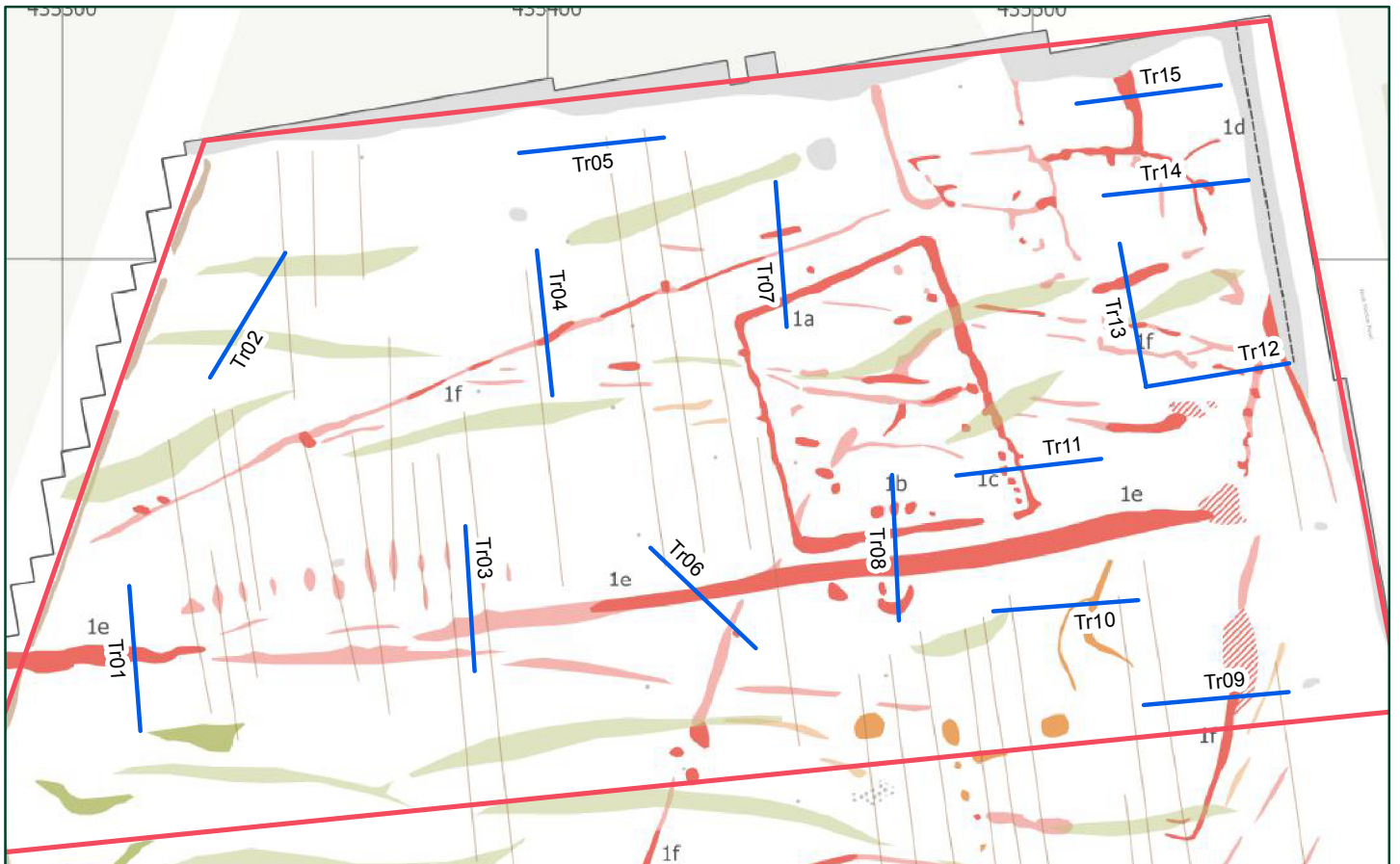
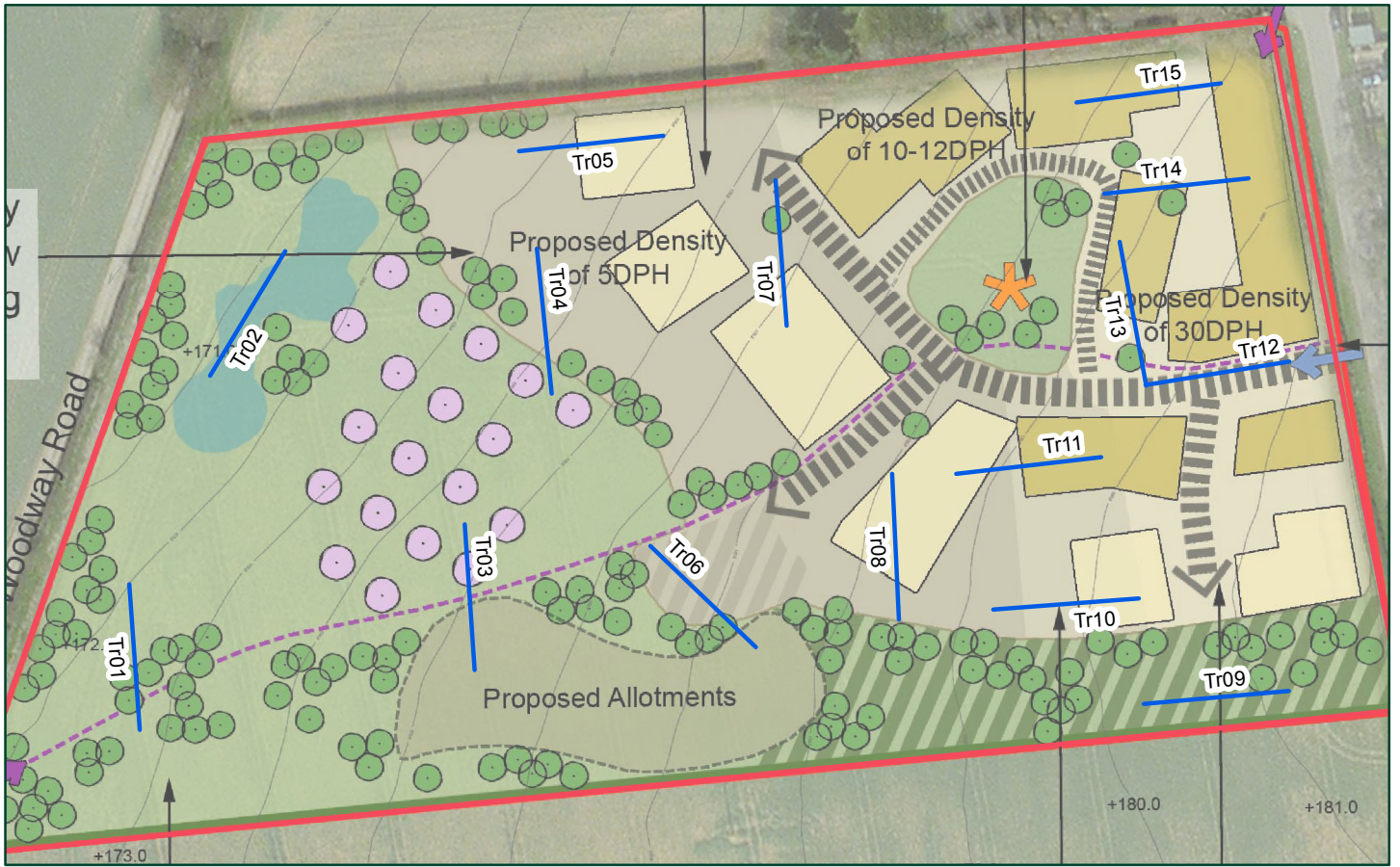


Title:
 Fig. 1: Site Location

Address:
 Land west of Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris



orion.



Legend

- ▭ Site
- Evaluation Trench

1:1,500 at A4



Title:
 Fig. 2: Archaeological Evaluation Trenches
Address:
 Land west of Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris



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Appendix 1

*Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.
Land west of Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris.*

Orion Heritage June 2018.

Appendix 3

Geophysical Survey Report.

Land west of Hook Norton Road, Sibford Ferris.

Magnitude Surveys January 2019.