

# Land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury, Oxfordshire

## Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation

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#### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Planning permission has been sought from Cherwell District Council for a residential development on a c. 3.3ha parcel of land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury, Oxfordshire (SP 4466 4253) (Fig.1). Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, archaeological work (evaluation) is required, to inform the planning process.
- 1.2 The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a detailed briefing document for the project prepared by Ms Victoria Green of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service drawing on the results of a desk-based assessment and geophysical survey (Tabor 2021; Beaverstock 2021). In summary, the site lies in an area of north Banbury in which recent fieldwork has revealed a number of sites and finds. In general relatively few sites and finds are recorded for these outcrops. However to the west a probable Bronze Age round barrow (ring ditch) had been re-used as a post-medieval windmill (McNicholl-Norbury and further to the west an Iron Age into Roman settlement has been excavated (MOLA 2016). Other fieldwork beyond the desktop study area boundary has revealed Roman occupation and possible prehistoric landscape features. A small number of linear and curvilinear anomalies were recorded by the geophysical survey on the site (Beaverstock 2021).
- 1.3 The site is located on (Lias) Charmouth Formation mudstone to the west and Dyrham silt and mudstones to the east (BGS 1982). It lies at a height of approximately 125m above Ordnance Datum.

#### **2.0 Requirement for Work**

- 2.1 As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, evaluation trenching has been requested by the County Archaeological Officer, with the potential for subsequent mitigation depending on the results of the evaluation. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021) and the District Council's Local Plan policies.
- 2.2 One component of work has been proposed at this stage: field evaluation by means of machine trenching. Further fieldwork may be required if significant archaeological deposits are encountered.

#### **3.0 Aims and Objectives**

- 3.1 The aims of the evaluation are to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.
- 3.2 This work will be carried out in a manner which will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.
- 3.3 The specific research aims of this project are;
  - a) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
  - b) To determine if the geophysical anomalies are of archaeological origin.
  - c) To provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary.
  - d) The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in Historic England Research Agenda (HE 2016) or any more local or thematic research priorities as necessary such as the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014).

## **4.0 Methodology**

### **4.1 Trench Layout**

4.1.1 It is proposed to dig 30 trenches, 25m long and 1.8m wide targeted at the area of development on the site. We propose to dig the trenches located as indicated on Figure 2.

4.1.2 A contingency of 25m of trench is included should this be necessary to clarify the results of the initial findings.

### **4.2 Excavation Methodology**

4.2.1 Topsoil and any other overburden will be removed by a JCB-type or 360°-type machine. A toothless ditching bucket will be used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision.

4.2.2 Where archaeological features are certainly or probably present, the stripped areas will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools.

4.2.3 Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed will be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the objective set out in 3.2.

4.2.4 In general, all finds and artefacts will be retained, though all but a sample of some classes of building material will be discarded after recording.

4.2.5 Conservation on site will follow guidelines in First Aid for Finds with any other specialist conservation work subcontracted to a conservator (see project team, below).

4.2.6 A programme of environmental sampling will take place should sufficient well stratified subsoil deposits be located. Typically, this involves samples of up to 40l depending on the size of the feature examined. A programme of environmental sampling will take place, if any significant deposits are encountered. These will be sampled in consultation with our environmental consultants and the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. Sampling will take place according to Historic England guidance (HE 2015b).

4.2.7 Discovery of any human remains will be reported to the coroner and Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service but will be left in-situ if at all possible. Recovery and recording methodologies for human remains follow guidelines issued by the Ministry of Justice, and the standard procedures identified by Mitchell and Brickley (2017) and TVAS Field Recording Manual (8th edition 2018). Any human remains that have to be removed will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service and will not be reinterred.

4.2.8 Metal detectors will be used to enhance the recovery of metal finds. Stripped areas and of spoil heaps will be scanned. It is proposed that this work will either be carried out by in-house staff and with no removal of finds without reference to contextual information. No title will be assumed by the finder. Gold, silver or other treasure finds will be reported to OCAS, the Coroner and county finds liaison officer and kept in a secure place as required by the Treasure Act (1996) and its subsequent amendments.

4.2.9 Following completion of all excavation and recording, the trench will be efficiently backfilled but will not be resurfaced or re-turfed. No liability is accepted for damage to any services unless a plan of these is provided by the client.

### **4.3 Recording Methodology**

4.3.1 A single context recording system will be used in accordance with the TVAS Field Recording Manual (8th edition 2018). Descriptions of individual deposits and features will be recorded on pro-forma context recording sheets.

- 4.3.2 All archaeological deposits exposed will be planned at a scale of 1:20 and sections drawn at a scale of 1:10. All site drawings will be by pencil on drafting film.
- 4.3.3 Heights above OD will be taken and recorded on plans and sections.
- 4.3.4 Where appropriate, significant finds will be recorded in 3D.
- 4.3.5 The locations of the trenches and of all plans and sections will be tied into the National Grid by GPS Unit.
- 4.3.6 A photographic record will be made of the evaluation project, consisting of digital images. It will record the principal features and finds discovered, both in detail and in their general context. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' and, where applicable, aerial photographs to illustrate the nature of the archaeological fieldwork programme. All feature shots will include appropriate scales and a photo board, the latter positioned in such a way that the writing is legible and including the context number and site code. Digital images are taken on Canon EOS 4000D cameras with APS-C sensors taking 16-megapixel images.

#### 4.4 Post-fieldwork

- 4.4.1 Finds processing, environmental sample processing and analysis will commence immediately following the completion of the fieldwork in accordance with guidelines in MoRPHE (HE 2015a), CIfA guidance (CIfA 2020a) and TVAS post-excavation procedures (6th edition 2013) with the results included within the report.
- 4.4.2 Artefacts/ecofacts will be cleaned, conserved and prepared for long term museum storage.
- 4.4.3 Specialist reports will be prepared on the artefacts recovered. Particular attention will be paid to correlating the pottery recovered with local or regional fabric type sequences.
- 4.4.4 Specialist analysis and reporting will be carried out by the following specialist staff or consultants as appropriate:

Pottery	Dr J Timby, Ms A Lyons or Ms S Anderson (consultants) or Dr R Tabor (TVAS)
Stone	Dr D Williams (Southampton University)
Bone	Dr M Holmes (consultants) or Dr C Falys (TVAS)
Human bone	Dr C Falys (TVAS)
Post-glacial struck flint	Dr S Ford (TVAS)
Palaeolithic struck flint	Professor N Barton (Oxford University)
Charred plant remains/environment	Professor M Robinson (Oxford University), Ms R McKenna (consultant) or Ms J Pine (TVAS)
Metalwork	Mr A Colyer (TVAS) or Dr R Taylor (consultant)
Pollen Remains	Mr D Young (Quest, Reading University)
Radiocarbon dating	Queens University, Belfast
Archaeomagnetic dating	Bradford University
Conservation	Wiltshire County Council Heritage Centre

## 5.0 Report and Dissemination

- 5.1 A report on the results of the evaluation should be available within 2 weeks of completion of the fieldwork.
- 5.2 The report will follow our established format, comprising a descriptive text, illustrations and catalogues in appendices.

- 5.3 The text will address the aims and objectives of the evaluation, the methodology employed, describe the basic nature of the archaeological deposits discovered, and report on the artefacts recovered. It will then attempt to place the significance of the findings in their local, regional and national setting if appropriate.
- 5.4 The report will include a front sheet providing the following information:
- Site name
  - Grid reference
  - Site activity (e.g. evaluation trenching, geophysical survey, fieldwalking, watching brief, excavation etc.)
  - Date and duration of project
  - Site code
  - Area of site
  - Summary of results
  - Monuments identified (referenced to the RCHME Thesaurus of Monument Types)
  - Location and reference of archive
- 5.5 The illustrations will include:
- a site location plan
  - a trench layout plan
  - a trench layout plan of the previous evaluation
  - trench plans and sections
  - profiles/sections of excavated features
  - a selection of colour photos of significant findings
- 5.6 Catalogues giving descriptions of trenches, archaeological features, and artefacts will be contained in a series of appendices.
- 5.7 Any findings of national or special local significance will be published as a dedicated report in an appropriate journal such as *Oxoniensia* or *South Midlands Archaeology*. Otherwise, a summary as defined in Management of Archaeological Projects 2, Appendix 7.1 will be produced for publication in ‘round up’ sections in publications such as *South Midlands Archaeology* or period specific national journals such as *Medieval Archaeology*.
- 5.8 A digital (PDF) draft version will be supplied to Oxfordshire County Archaeology service for verification prior to a final version being submitted with a planning application. A final digital copy and GIS shapefiles of the excavations will be supplied to the County Historic Environment Record on the understanding that the report can be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. Non-published report(s) will be made available for inspection or download on the TVAS website.
- 5.9 Copies of photographs (digital images) will be supplied to Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service for publicity or lecture purposes if requested.
- 5.10 A digital version of the report will be provided to the OASIS project.
- 6.0 Archive Selection Strategy and Data Management Plan**
- 6.1 The selection strategy deals only with the aims and objectives of this specific project – points 3.1 to 3.3 above.
- 6.2 Finds
- 6.2.1 All material recovered during the excavation (with the exception of building materials) will be returned to the TVAS offices for cleaning and analysis.

- 6.2.2 Building material will be assessed and recorded on site and examples retained for further assessment.
- 6.2.3 The finds returned to the TVAS offices will be reviewed following analysis.
- 6.2.4 Selection decisions will be based on specialists reports and selection recommendations and the Oxfordshire Museum Service collecting policy, and with consideration to the research priorities such as set out in the *Solent Thames Research Agenda* (Hey and Hind 2014).
- 6.2.5 Uncollected building material will be assessed and recorded in consultation with the TVAS CBM specialist and/or in accordance with the project specific discard policy prepared by the specialist. The uncollected material will be left on-site and incorporated into the backfill.
- 6.2.6 Material not selected for inclusion in the finds archive will be disposed of in agreement with landowner, museum and planning archaeologist.

### 6.3 Documentary

- 6.3.1 All primary context records will be selected for inclusion in the documentary archive. Duplicates, photocopies of original records, research materials and anything else unsuitable for inclusion in the final archive will be deselected either after project completion or during archive preparation in line with Oxfordshire Museum Service deposition guidelines.
- 6.3.2 The selection of the documentary archive will be guided by the following standards and guidance:

Oxfordshire Museums Service (2020), 'Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives, 2020-2021'

- 6.3.3 It is anticipated that the material de-selected from inclusion will be research material or duplicates/reproductions created during the post excavation stage of the project. Any such material will either be retained as part of TVAS' research files or recycled.

### 6.4 Digital data

- 6.4.1 Digital data will be selected for inclusion in the final archive based on the TVAS Data Management Plan (DMP) for forward deposition with the Archaeology Data Service.
- 6.4.2 Only the final version of all born digital documents will be selected for inclusion in the final archive.
- 6.4.3 Digital photographs will be assessed by the project team during post-ex and selected based on the TVAS DMP, Historic England, and ADS guidelines.
- 6.4.4 The digital data will be reviewed following data gathering and post-excavation to ensure it is being stored and that version-control is being adhered to as described in the TVAS DMP.
- 6.4.5 The final decision on selection for the preserved digital archive will be made following project completion.
- 6.4.6 The selection of digital data will be guided by the following standards and guidance:

Thames Valley Archaeological Services 2021. Data Management Plan. TVAS  
ADS. *Guides to good practice*. <http://guides.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/g2gp/Main>  
ADS. *Guidelines for depositors*. <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/advice/guidelinesForDepositors>  
ADS. *Guidance for the selection of material for deposit and archive*  
<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/advice/selectionGuidance>  
Historic England (2015a) *Digital Image Capture and File Storage*

## 7.0 Archive Deposition

- 7.1 The finds and site archive will be prepared in consultation with the recipient museum.
- 7.2 The site and finds archive will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service and the HER informed.
- 7.3 With the consent of the landowner, the site finds will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service. The integrity of a combined archive is highly preferable but retention of some or all finds by the landowner may require an additional level of recording.
- 7.4 A Transfer of Title request (to deposit the finds with the museum) will be sent to the landowner immediately on completion of the fieldwork when the volume and nature of any artefacts is known. The status of this request will be recorded in the report when it is issued.
- 7.5 An electronic security copy of the field records will be made shortly after completion of the fieldwork.
- 7.6 The records will be copied onto microfiche and a copy sent to the Historic England National Record of the Historic Environment.

## 8.0 General Items

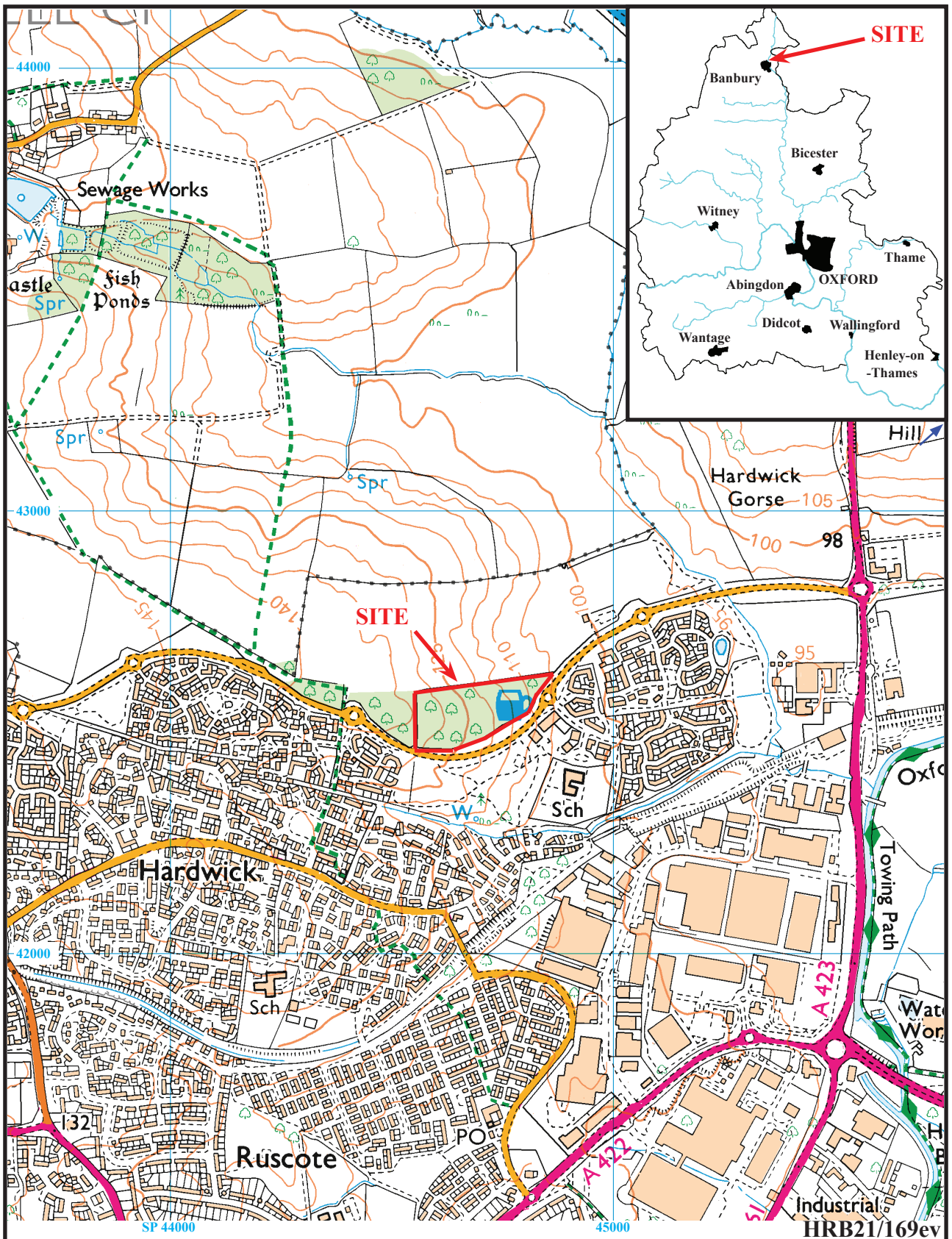
- 8.1 The project will be managed on a regular basis by a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (S. Ford, J. Pine or A. Taylor) with an appropriate area of competence.
- 8.2 The project will be carried out in accordance with the CIfA Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation (2020b) and Code of Conduct (2019) and the quality control mechanisms set out in the TVAS fieldwork and post-fieldwork manuals.
- 8.3 Safe working practices will be adopted and current health and safety regulations will be adhered to. This will include current risk assessments and guidelines for the Covid-19 pandemic, as produced by TVAS, the groundworks contractor and South Oxfordshire District Council. If the site is accessible to the public, the trenches will be fenced with Heras fencing or barrier mesh and road pins as necessary.
- 8.4 Our insurance cover comprises £10 million for public liability, £10 million for employee liability, cover for any hired-in plant, and professional indemnity cover of £5m.
- 8.5 The fieldwork and post-fieldwork will be monitored by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service and all reasonable access will be provided to the works. Two weeks' notice of the start of the works will be given to enable this. Trenches will not be backfilled until after monitoring has taken place and the County Archaeological Service has confirmed in writing that they have been signed off. A post-excavation plan and photographs will be provided in order to inform the decision to sign off. Any changes in the agreed project design and monitoring arrangements will be discussed and agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service before implementation.

## 9.0 References

- Beaverstock, K, 2021, Land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury, Oxfordshire, geophysical (magnetic) survey, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, report 21/169b, Reading
- BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet **201** Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- CIfA, 2019, Code of Conduct, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading
- CIfA, 2020a, 'Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives', Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading
- CIfA, 2020b, 'Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluation', Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading
- HE, 2015a, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*, MoRPHE project planning, Historic England, London

- HE 2015b, *Environmental Archaeology*. Centre for Archaeology Guidelines 1, Historic England, Portsmouth. (3rd edn)
- HE 2016, *Research Agenda*, Historic England, London
- Hey, G and Hind, J, 2014, *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas*, Oxford Wessex Monogr 6, Oxford
- McNicoll-Norbury, J, 2015, Land adjacent to Duke's Meadow Drive, Banbury, Oxfordshire, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, report 14/255, Reading
- Mitchell, P D, and Brickley, M (eds), 2017, *Updated Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*, CIfA and BABAO, Reading
- NPPF, 2021, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London
- Tabor, R, 2021, Land at Hanwell Fields, Banbury, Oxfordshire and archaeological desk-based assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services, report 21/169, Reading

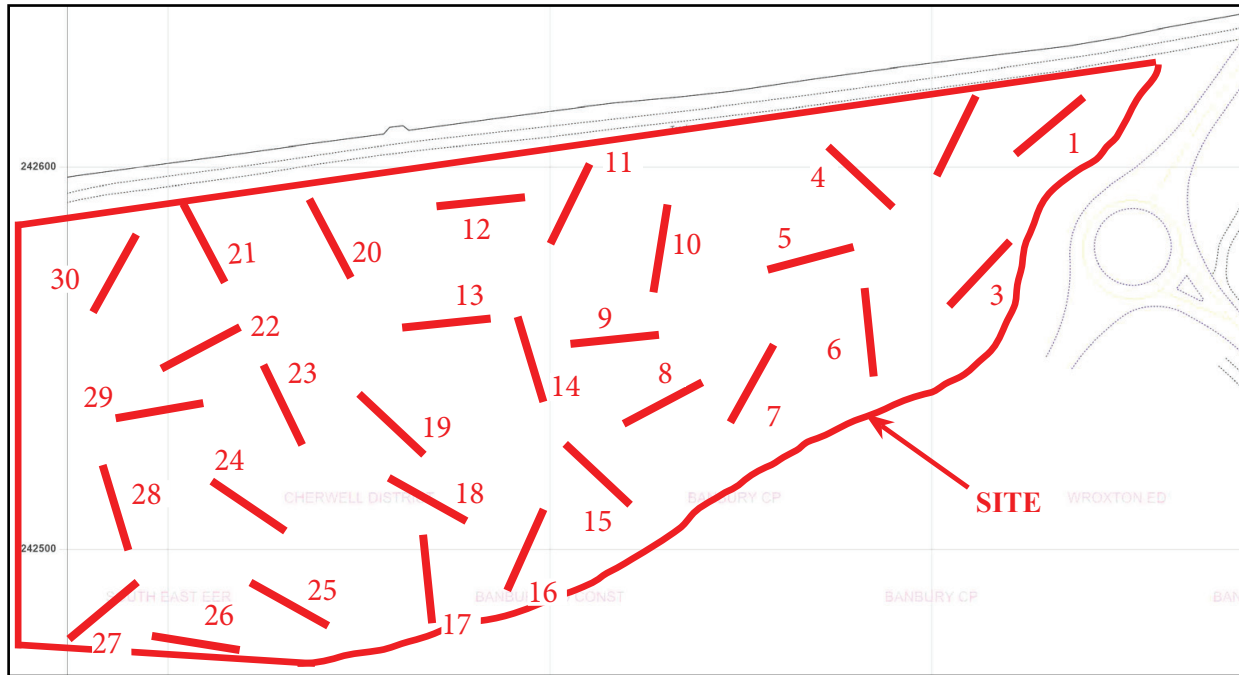




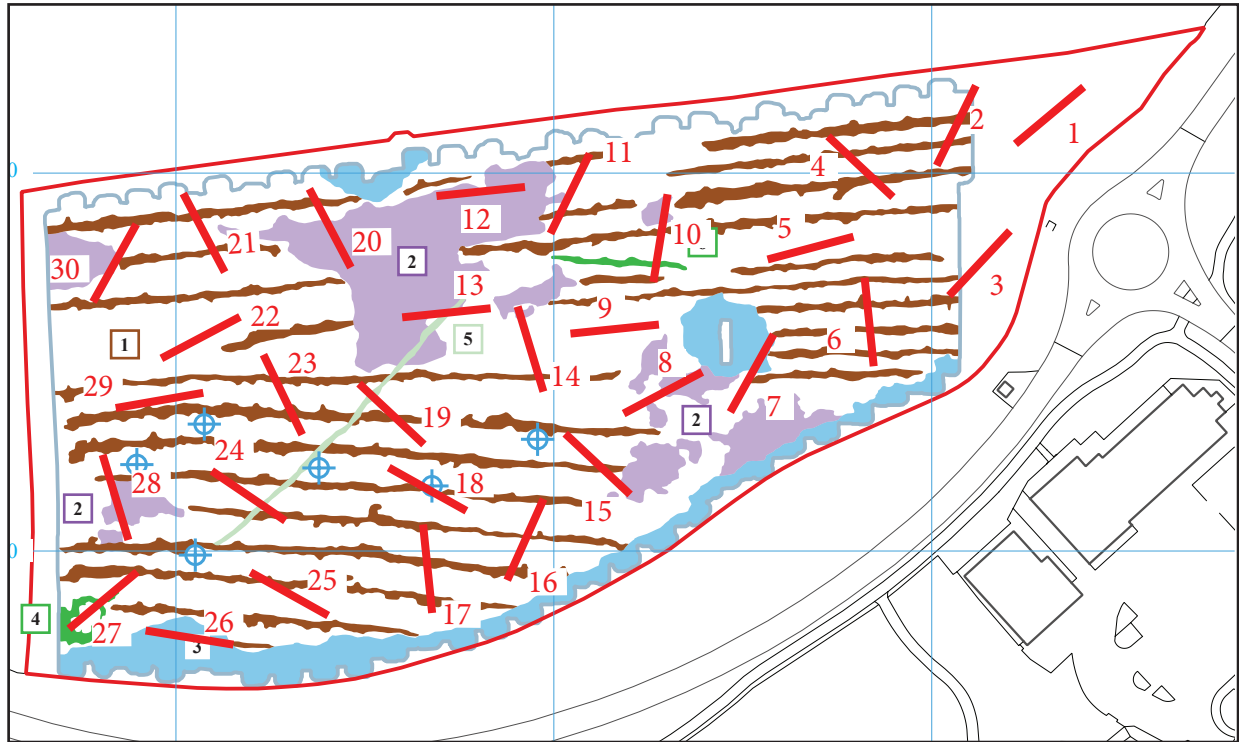
**Land at Hanwell Fields,  
Banbury, Oxfordshire**  
**Proposal for archaeological evaluation**  
 Figure 1. Location of site within Banbury and Oxfordshire.

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 SERVICES



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**Land at Hanwell Fields,  
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Figure 2. Location of trenches (upper) and shown relative to  
geophysical survey(lower).

