

North West Bicester: Hawkwell Village  
Heritage Impact Assessment  
October 2021

North West Bicester: Hawkwell Village  
Heritage Impact Assessment  
October 2021

© Orion Heritage Ltd 2021

No part of this report is to be copied in any way  
without prior written consent.

Every effort is made to provide detailed and accurate  
information, however, Orion Heritage Ltd cannot be held  
responsible for errors or inaccuracies within 3<sup>rd</sup> party data  
supplied to Orion and referred to within this report.

© Ordnance Survey maps reproduced with the  
sanction of the controller of HM Stationery Office.

Licence No: 100056706

Report

Heritage Impact Assessment

Site

North West Bicester: Hawkwell Village, Cherwell, North Oxfordshire

Clients

Hallam Land Management

Date

October 2021

Planning Authority

Cherwell District Council

Site Centred At

SP 57153 24741

Prepared By

Sylvia Lock BA ACIfA

Approved By

Rob Bourn BA MA MCIfA

Report Status

FINAL

Orion Ref

PN2935/HIA1

## Contents

### Executive Summary

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Site Location & Description
- 3.0 Planning Background and Development Plan Framework
- 4.0 Archaeological & Historical Background
- 5.0 Methodology
- 6.0 Aims and Objectives
- 7.0 Timetable and Personnel
- 8.0 Monitoring
- 9.0 Insurance
- 10.0 Health & Safety

### Sources Consulted

### Figures

- Figure 1: Site Location with areas of archaeological activity
- Figure 2: Proposed programme of archaeological excavation

## 1.0 Introduction

### Background

- 1.1 This document represents a Heritage Impact Assessment to support a new outline application for residential development north-west of Bicester (Figure 1). This document is produced to allow Cherwell District Council to refine the scope of works to be included within the Written Scheme of Investigation. Further consultation with Oxfordshire County Council's Archaeological Advisor is required prior to the production of the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 1.2 A planning application (ref: 14/01384/OUT) was submitted to Cherwell District Council in 2014 for substantially the same site. The council resolved to grant consent, although this was subsequently not issued. The description was as follows:

*Development comprising redevelopment to provide up to 2600 residential dwellings (Class C3), commercial floorspace (Class A1 – A5, B1 and B2), social community facilities (Class D1), land to accommodate one energy centre, land to accommodate one new primary school (up to 2FE, Class D1) and land to accommodate the extension of the primary school permitted pursuant to application 10/1780/HYBRID. Such development to include provision of strategic landscape, provision of new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access routes, infrastructure, ancillary engineering and other operations.*

The application for Outline Planning Permission was supported by an Environmental Statement, Desk Based Assessment, Aerial Photographic Assessment, Geophysical Survey and Archaeological Evaluation (see Section 4.1 below).

In his consultation response, dated 08/09/2014, the Oxfordshire County Council Planning Archaeologist stated:

*'No objection subject to conditions. The site is located in an area of archaeological interest as identified by a desk-based assessment, a geophysical survey and a trenched evaluation. A further programme of archaeological investigation and mitigation will need to be undertaken ahead of any development. This can be secured through a condition on any resultant planning permission'*

and suggested the following conditions:

- a) *Prior to any demolition on the site, the commencement of the development and any archaeological investigation, a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the Local Planning Authority shall prepare a first stage archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation, relating to the application area, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason – to safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological importance on the site in accordance with Policy BE6 of the South East Plan 2009 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.*
- b) *Prior to any demolition on the site and the commencement of the development and following the approval of the first stage Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition [a], a programme of archaeological evaluation, investigation and recording of the application area shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved first stage Written Scheme of Investigation. Reason – in order to determine the extent, character and significance of the surviving remains of archaeological*

*interest and to safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological importance on the site in accordance with Policy BE6 of the South East Plan 2009 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.*

Further, the following detailed comments were provided:

*The site is located in an area of archaeological interest as identified by a desk-based assessment, a geophysical survey and a trenched evaluation. The geophysical survey and evaluation identified a number of areas of surviving archaeological features, including a Neolithic Pit, an area of Bronze Age activity including two possible 'burnt mound' deposits, a number of areas of Iron Age activity and a number of areas of Roman activity. This development will therefore disturb these surviving features and a further programme of archaeological investigation and mitigation will need to be undertaken ahead of any development.*

*We would therefore recommend that, should planning permission be granted, the applicant should be responsible for ensuring the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological investigation to be maintained during the period of construction. This can be ensured through the attachment of a suitable negative condition as suggested above.*

- 1.3 Further archaeological investigation will be implemented and will be achieved by means of the following scope of archaeological works:
1. Production of a Written Scheme of Investigation
  2. Archaeological excavation (Fig. 3) in three areas within the study site, targeting areas of potential Bronze Age activity as well as areas of Iron Age and Roman activity
- 1.4 This supporting document will also be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist for approval.
- 1.5 This Heritage Impact Assessment has been guided in its composition by the ClfA Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation (ClfA, 2014), the Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (English Heritage 1991) and the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Manager's Guide (Historic England 2015).

## 2.0 Site Location & Description

- 2.1 The site is located north-west of Bicester, approximately 1.5km from the town centre. It is c.176.8 hectares and bound to the south by the A4095, to the west by a railway, to the north by open fields and the village of Bucknell and to the east by open fields and residential development. Hawkwell Farm and Lord's Farm are surrounded by the proposed development but are excluded from it. The study site comprises enclosed agricultural fields with no building stock.
- 2.2 The bedrock geology at the study site is recorded as Cornbrash Formation – Limestone with outcrops of Forest Marble Formation – Limestone and Mudstone, Interbedded along the three stream valleys within the study site. The superficial geology is recorded as Alluvium – Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel along two of the stream valleys within the study site.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.3 The locations of three borehole scans are recorded within the study site, one of which is freely accessible online.<sup>2</sup> It recorded the geology at the study site as follows: 0.80m of friable, dark brown, sandy slightly gravelly topsoil with occasional rootlets, underlain by 2.25m of subangular to subrounded gravel and cobbles of brown and grey medium grained generally moderately or highly weathered Limestone, moderately strong becoming strong with variable amounts of calcareous sand or clay, which is in turn underlain by very stiff grey calcareous Clay becoming moderately weathered calcareous Mudstone, weak. The borehole was complete at 5.50m below ground level.
- 2.4 The study site undulates gently, with heights ranging between c.80m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) and c.100m aOD.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://scans.bgs.ac.uk/sobi\\_scans/boreholes/336755/images/10637247.html](http://scans.bgs.ac.uk/sobi_scans/boreholes/336755/images/10637247.html)

### 3.0 Planning Background and Development Plan Framework

#### Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979

- 3.1 The Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended) protects the fabric of Scheduled Monuments but does not afford statutory protection to their settings.

#### Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 3.2 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out broad policies and obligations relevant to the protection of listed buildings and conservation areas and their settings.
- 3.3 Section 66(1) states:  
*“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.*
- 3.4 Section 69 of the Act requires local authorities to define as conservation areas any ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ and Section 72 gives local authorities a general duty to pay special attention ‘to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’ in exercising their planning functions. These duties are taken to apply only within a Conservation Area. The Act does not make specific provision with regard to the setting of a Conservation Area that is provided by the policy framework outlined below.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) & National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 3.5 Government policy in relation to the historic environment is outlined in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), entitled ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’. This provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:
- Delivery of sustainable development;
  - Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
  - Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
  - Recognition of the contribution that heritage assets make to our knowledge and understanding of the past.
- 3.6 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term.
- 3.7 Paragraph 194 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset, and that the level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.



- 3.8 Paragraph 198 states that in considering any applications to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of their retention in situ, and, where appropriate, of explaining their historic and social context rather than removal.
- 3.9 Paragraph 203 requires the decision-maker to take into account the effect on the significance of non-designated heritage assets and to take a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the asset(s) potentially affected.
- 3.10 The *Historic Environment* is defined in Annex 2 as: all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
- 3.11 *Heritage Assets* are defined as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- 3.12 *Archaeological Interest* is defined as: a heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
- 3.13 *Designated Heritage Assets* comprise: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Parks and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Areas designated under the relevant legislation.
- 3.14 *Significance* is defined as: The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 3.15 *Setting* is defined as: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
- 3.16 The NPPF is supported by the PPG (July 2019). In relation to the historic environment, paragraph 002 (002 Reference ID: 18a-002-20190723) states that:  
*"Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets."*
- 3.17 Paragraph 18a-013 (Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 18a-013-20190723) outlines that although the extent and importance of setting is often expressed in visual terms, it can also be influenced by other factors such as noise, dust and vibration. Historic relationships between places can also be an important factor stressing ties between places that may have limited or no intervisibility with each

other. This may be historic as well as aesthetic connections that contribute or enhance the significance of one or more of the heritage assets.

3.18 Paragraph 18a-013 concludes:

*“The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. This will vary over time and according to circumstance. When assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset’s significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its on-going conservation.”*

3.19 The key test in NPPF paragraphs 199-202 is whether a proposed development will result in substantial harm or less than substantial harm to a designated asset. However, substantial harm is not defined in the NPPF. Paragraph 18a-017 (Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723) of the PPG provides additional guidance on substantial harm. It states:

*“What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”*

3.20 Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 194-196) apply.

3.21 Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

3.22 Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

3.23 While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later additions to historic buildings where those additions are inappropriate and harm the buildings’ significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm, depending on the nature of their impact on the asset and its setting.”

3.24 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF outlines that where a proposed development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm arising should be weighed against the public benefits accruing from the proposed development. Paragraph 18a-020 of the PPG (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723) outlines what is meant by public benefits:

*“Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.*

*Examples of heritage benefits may include:*

- *sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;*
- *reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset; and*
- *securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation.”*

- 3.25 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

### Local Planning Policy

- 3.26 The Cherwell District Council Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Part 1) contains the following policie(s) and strategic objectives relevant to this assessment:

#### *Strategic objective SO 15*

*To protect and enhance the historic and natural environment and Cherwell’s core assets, including protecting and enhancing cultural heritage assets and archaeology, maximising opportunities for improving biodiversity and minimising pollution in urban and rural areas.*

#### *Policy Bicester 1: North West Bicester Eco-Town*

*Planning permission will only be granted for development at North West Bicester in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan for the whole area, to be approved by the Council as part of a North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document. The Council will expect the Masterplan and applications for planning permission to meet the following requirements specific to archaeology:*

- *Undertake a staged programme of archaeological investigation.*

#### *Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment*

*Successful design is founded upon an understanding and respect for an area’s unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District’s distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential.*

*New development proposals should:*

- *Be designed to deliver high quality, safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions*
- *Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions*

- *Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity*
- *Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting*
- *Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage's At Risk Register, into appropriate use, will be encouraged*
- *Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposals on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, field evaluation*
- *Respect the traditional patterns of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages*
- *Reflect, or in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette*
- *Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features*
- *Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high-quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed*
- *Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space*
- *Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation*
- *Be compatible with up-to-date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation*
- *Consider sustainable design and layout at the masterplanning stage of design, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout*
- *Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also see Policies ESD 1 – 5 on climate change and renewable energy)*

- *Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10 Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). Well designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality*
- *Use locally sources sustainable materials where possible*

*The Council will provide more detailed design and historic environment policies in the Local Plan Part 2.*

*The design of new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The Council expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design & Access Statement. Further guidance can be found on the Council's website. The Council will require design to be addressed in the pre-application process on major developments and in connection with all heritage sites. For major sites/strategic sites and complex developments, Design Codes will need to be prepared in conjunction with the Council and the local stakeholders to ensure appropriate character and high-quality design is delivered throughout. Design Codes will usually be prepared between outline and reserved matters stage to set out design principles for the development of the site. The level of prescription will vary according to the nature of the site.*

### Guidance

*Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015)*

- 3.27 The purpose of this document is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the NPPF and NPPG. It outlines a six-stage process to the assembly and analysis of relevant information relating to heritage assets potentially affected by a proposed development:
- Understand the significance of the affected assets;
  - Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
  - Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
  - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
  - Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change; and
  - Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

*Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2017)*

- 3.28 Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 provides guidance on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets.
- 3.29 The document restates the definition of setting as outlined in Annex 2 of the NPPF. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and

context; while it is largely a visual term, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by noise, vibration, odour and other factors. The document makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset, nor is it a heritage designation, though land within a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of a heritage asset.

- 3.30 The Good Practice Advice Note sets out a five-staged process for assessing the implications of proposed developments on setting:
1. Identification of heritage assets which are likely to be affected by proposals;
  2. Assessment of whether and what contribution the setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset;
  3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset;
  4. Maximising enhancement and reduction of harm on the setting of heritage assets; and
  5. Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes
- 3.31 The guidance reiterates the NPPF in stating that where developments affecting the setting of heritage assets results in a level of harm to significance, this harm, whether substantial or less than substantial, should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

## 4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

### 4.1 The study site has been subject to the following previous investigations:<sup>3</sup>

- Cultural Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (Hyder Consulting Ltd 2014, ES Technical Appendix 10A)
- Interpretation of Aerial Photographs for Archaeology (Air Photo Services 2010, ES Technical Appendix 10B)
- Archaeological Geophysical Survey for the Proposed Bicester Eco Development Oxfordshire (Northamptonshire Archaeology December 2011 – February 2012, ES Technical Appendix 10C)
- Archaeological Evaluation Report Volume 1 Main Report and Appendices and Volume 2 Figures and Plates (Oxford Archaeology South 2014, ES Technical Appendix 10D)

4.2 The 2014 archaeological evaluation involved the excavation of a large number of trenches across the study site and an area immediately to the west of it. It was proposed to excavate an array of 541 trenches, each 50m long, representing a 2% sample of the site, excluding areas of existing woodland, hedgerows and buildings. A number of trenches could not be excavated mostly due to ecological constraints and in the event a total of 529 trenches were excavated. The trenches were located to investigate geophysical anomalies and cropmarks as well as blank areas. Of the 529 trenches, 130 contained features of archaeological origin, including 26 that had only furrows or modern features. Of those 130 trenches containing features of archaeological origin, 44 were located within the study site.

4.3 The following provides a summary of the areas of archaeological activity identified within the study site (Figure 1) as a result of the geophysical survey and subsequent archaeological trial trenching evaluation. In summary, within the study site, one main area and one subsidiary area of Roman activity were recorded, as were two small, dispersed areas of early to middle Iron Age activity and one area of potential Bronze Age activity. Within the study site:

- Trench 431, in the southern part of the study site, contained undated features. However, the presence of burnt stones and charcoal forming low mounds sealed beneath a deposit of colluvium is significant. Such 'burnt mounds' are widely known (although unusual in Oxfordshire) and generally date to the Bronze Age. A number of pits in trench 439 and a sinuous ditch in trench 436 in the same valley may represent further activity of the same date.
- Trenches 322, 378, 394, 462 and 471 had features that contained early to middle Iron Age pottery. Trenches 394 and 471 produced single sherds of pottery only, whereas trench 322, adjacent to the study site's western boundary, contained a ditch with a significant quantity of early to middle Iron Age pottery. It corresponded to a geophysical anomaly, perhaps a small enclosure. The pottery from trench 378, roughly in the study site's centre, came from a feature which also contained early Roman material. It is likely, therefore, to have been redeposited within this feature and nothing further can be said about the nature of activity. Trench 462, in the study site's south-east corner, contained a short length of ditch, the fill of which contained a fragment of iron and animal bone. A small pit lay partially within the trench. Its fill contained three sherds of middle Iron Age pottery.
- Trenches 322, 323, 377, 378, 379, 422, 502, 503, 504, 505, 507 and 512 contained features of Roman date. Trench 322, adjacent to the study site's western boundary, contained two sherds of late 1<sup>st</sup> century pottery. Trench 323,

<sup>3</sup> <https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/Planning/Display/14/01384/OUT>

c.50m east of trench 322, contained a ditch, two pits and a cremation burial. Ditch 32302 contained two fills, the upper fill contained animal bone and 44 sherds of mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century pottery. To the west was a cremation pit. The fill contained over 1kg of burnt human bone, from two adult individuals, as well as charcoal and two sherds of 1<sup>st</sup> century pottery. In Area B, roughly in the study site's centre, trenches 377, 378, 379, 422, 502, 503, 504, 505, 507 and 512 contained Roman finds and features suggesting an agricultural settlement of relatively low status. The fragmentary remains of a human neonate were present in the topsoil of trench 507 and a single human tooth was found in a late Roman pit in trench 422, perhaps from an earlier burial.

- Trenches 364, 368, 395, 397, 405, 408 and 409 contained only furrows which were of probable medieval to early post-medieval date.
- Trenches 391 and 429 contained only features of post-medieval date.
- Trenches 316, 343, 348, 382, 390, 403, 404, 407, 414, 418, 435, 450, 457, 501, 506 and 529 contained only undated features.

4.4 Furrows were present in a number of the evaluation trenches, which suggests that much of the study site was under arable cultivation during the medieval period and later. No evidence of medieval or later settlement was recorded within the study site, aside from the extant farmhouses Hawkwell Farm and Lord's Farm, which are excluded from the proposed development. A review of readily available historic mapping indicates that the study site has been enclosed agricultural land since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, containing no buildings stock.<sup>4</sup> By 1923 the railway line which forms the study site's western boundary had been constructed and filter beds had been added near the study site's north-eastern corner, which are not marked anymore on the 1955 Ordnance Survey Map.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> National Library of Scotland, OS Maps 1885 – 1952  
<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/find/#zoom=14&lat=51.91305&lon=-1.16367&layers=102&b=1&z=1&point=51.90644,-1.16200>

<sup>5</sup> Cultural Heritage desk-based assessment, Hyder Consulting Ltd. 2014



## 5.0 Methodology

### Programme of Archaeological Works

- 5.1 The archaeological programme of works will comprise the following:
- Topsoil strip and excavation of the three areas of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman activity (Figure 2) identified during the previous geophysical survey and archaeological trial trenching evaluation
  - Targeted hand-excavation of specific areas
  - Sampling of deposits
  - Post-excavation research, analysis, report and archive production
- 5.2 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) will be produced prior to implementation of the archaeological programme of works in which the appointed archaeological contractor will specify the methodology, including for example the sampling strategies and specialist personnel to be employed. The WSI will be approved in writing by Oxfordshire County Council.
- 5.3 All works will be undertaken to the satisfaction of Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist.
- 5.4 No area is to be backfilled without prior formal approval of Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist.

### Recording

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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 the excavation areas will be backfilled in reverse order.
- 5.3 All mechanical excavation will be undertaken under continuous archaeological supervision.
- 5.4 The excavated areas 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').
- 5.5 All structures, deposits and finds will be recorded according to accepted professional standards.
- 5.6 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.
- 5.7 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.

- 5.8 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.
- 5.9 A digital 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. Consideration is to be given to the use of drone aerial photography to complement recording techniques.

### Finds and Samples

- 5.10 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 ClfA *Guidelines for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological material* ([revised edition] 2014).
- 5.11 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.
- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 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).
- 5.14 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

- 5.15 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.
- 5.16 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.
- 5.17 The discussion of the archaeological potential of the site will include reference to the potential indicated by finds and environmental evidence.
- 5.18 A digital copy of the report will be provided to Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist for comment and approval.
- 5.19 Once approved, a digital copy of the report will be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the archaeological programme of works.
- 5.20 A digital copy of the report (in PDF/A format) will be provided to the Historic Environment Record ('HER') and will also be uploaded as part of the Archaeology Data Service Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations ('ADR OASIS') database record.
- 5.21 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]). An accession code from the relevant Museum will be obtained prior to the deposition of the archive.
- 5.22 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 Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives (Oxfordshire County Council 2020-2021).

### Consideration of Outreach and Engagement

- 5.23 A programme of community engagement and public outreach will be agreed with Oxfordshire County Council and appointed archaeological contractor who undertakes the archaeological investigations. The scope for community engagement activities on site will depend upon the Health & Safety requirement and so may not be possible. However, consideration will be given to enabling on site public participation and/or open day(s). Alongside this a programme of digital outreach will be devised and agreed with Oxfordshire County Council.

## 6.0 Aims and Objectives

- 6.1 The principal aims of the archaeological excavation in the three designated areas within the study site are:
- Further investigation of potential Bronze Age features identified in the 2014 evaluation in the south-east area of the study site in trenches 431 and 439.
  - Further investigation of the Iron Age and Roman features identified in trenches 322 and 323 adjacent to the study site's western boundary. Two adult individuals (a possible male and a possible female) were thought to be represented in a cremation deposit in trench 323, together with the remains of a juvenile sheep or goat. They were thought to be of Roman date. It was recommended in the evaluation report that these burials should be considered as part of the wider burial landscape, should any further burials be recovered during further archaeological investigation.
  - Further investigation of an area roughly in the study site's centre. This area covered fields B6 and B10 during the geophysical survey in 2011/12<sup>6</sup> and was found to contain a possible settlement site, composed of sub-rectangular enclosures of various dimensions, pits and sub-dividing ditches. During the subsequent archaeological evaluation in 2014, this area (Area B) yielded significant amounts of Roman finds and features. Trenches 377, 503 and 507 contained the largest amounts of features and finds as well as neonate human remains.
- 6.2 The general objectives for the excavation within the study site 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.
- 6.3 It is noted that further, more detailed, research aims may be generated from the archaeological investigation and specifically in relation to the regional research frameworks (Solent Thames Archaeological Research Framework (Hey and Hind 2014)). These will be reviewed during an on-site meeting with Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist.
- 6.4 This document conforms to the requirement 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 Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Manager's Guide (Historic England 2015)
  - Code of Conduct (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA; revised edition 2014) and
  - Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation (CIfA 2014)

<sup>6</sup> <https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/Planning/Display/14/01384/OUT> Appendix 10C Geophysical Survey

## 7.0 Timetable and Personnel

- 7.1 There is no timetable available at present (October 2021) and the timing of the excavation is subject to the new outline planning application, ongoing discussions with the Oxfordshire County Council Planning Archaeologist and the production and approval in writing of a written scheme of investigation (WSI).
- 7.2 The archaeological works will be undertaken under the overall supervision of Rob Bourn (Managing Director, Orion Heritage) and Sylvia Lock (Senior Consultant, Orion Heritage). Rob is a CfA Member and Orion Heritage is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with CfA. The archaeological contracting organisation appointed to implement the works detailed in this WSI will be a Registered Archaeological Organisation with CfA.
- 7.3 Curriculum Vitaes of key personnel will be provided to Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist in advance of the archaeological works commencing, if required.

## 8.0 Monitoring

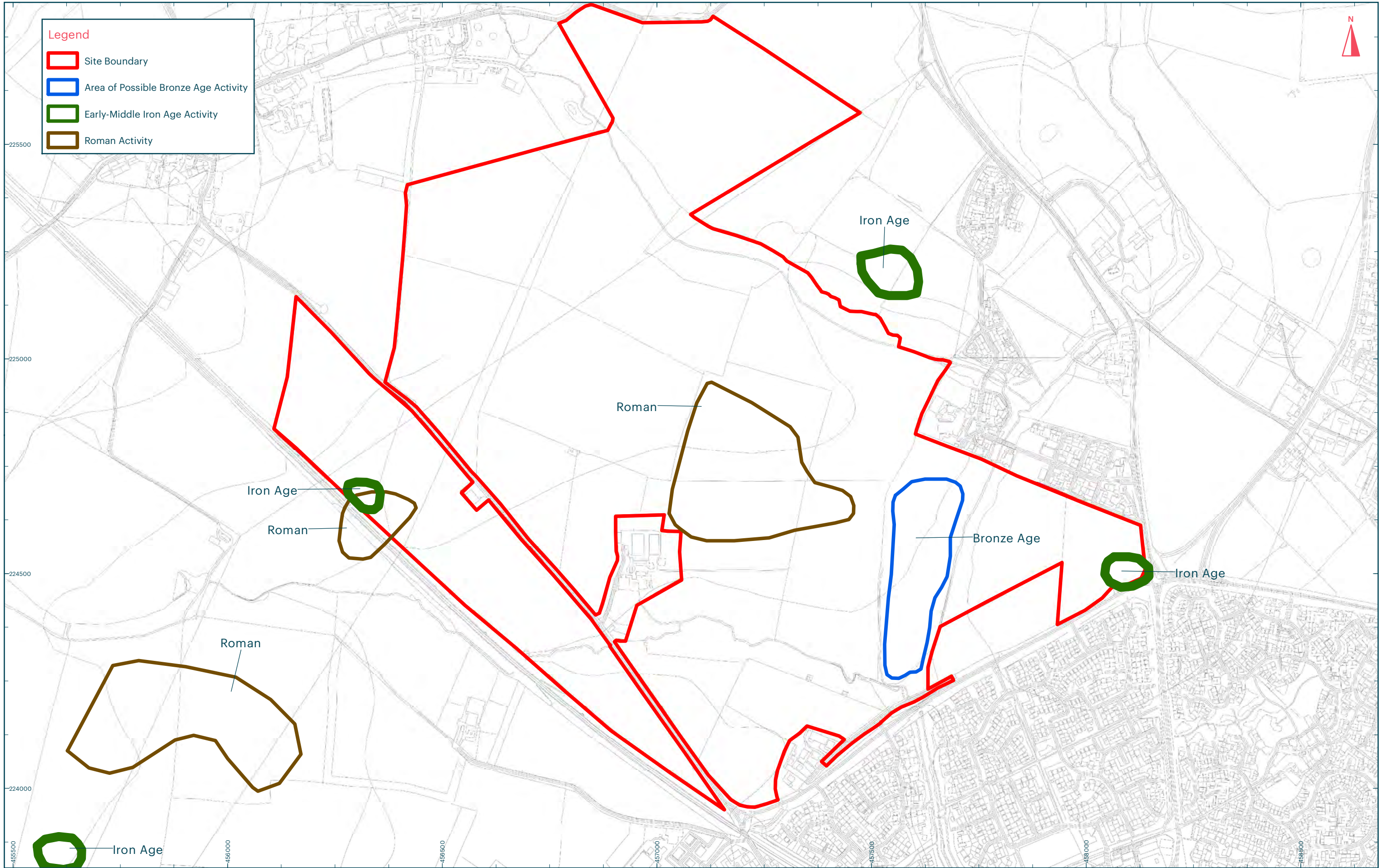
- 8.1 The aim of monitoring is to ensure that the archaeological works are undertaken within the limits set out in a WSI, which is to be agreed with Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist, and to the satisfaction of Cherwell District Council/Oxfordshire County Council.
- 8.2 Sylvia Lock (Senior Consultant, Orion Heritage) will monitor the implementation of the archaeological works on behalf of the developers.
- 8.3 Representatives from Oxfordshire County Council will monitor the evaluation and ten working days' notice will be given to arrange a site meeting.
- 8.4 It is understood that a planning charge will be made to cover attendance of the monitoring meetings by Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist.
- 8.5 No excavated area is to be backfilled until the archaeological works have been signed off, either by a site visit or by email confirmation, by Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist.

## 9.0 Insurance

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

## 10.0 Health and Safety

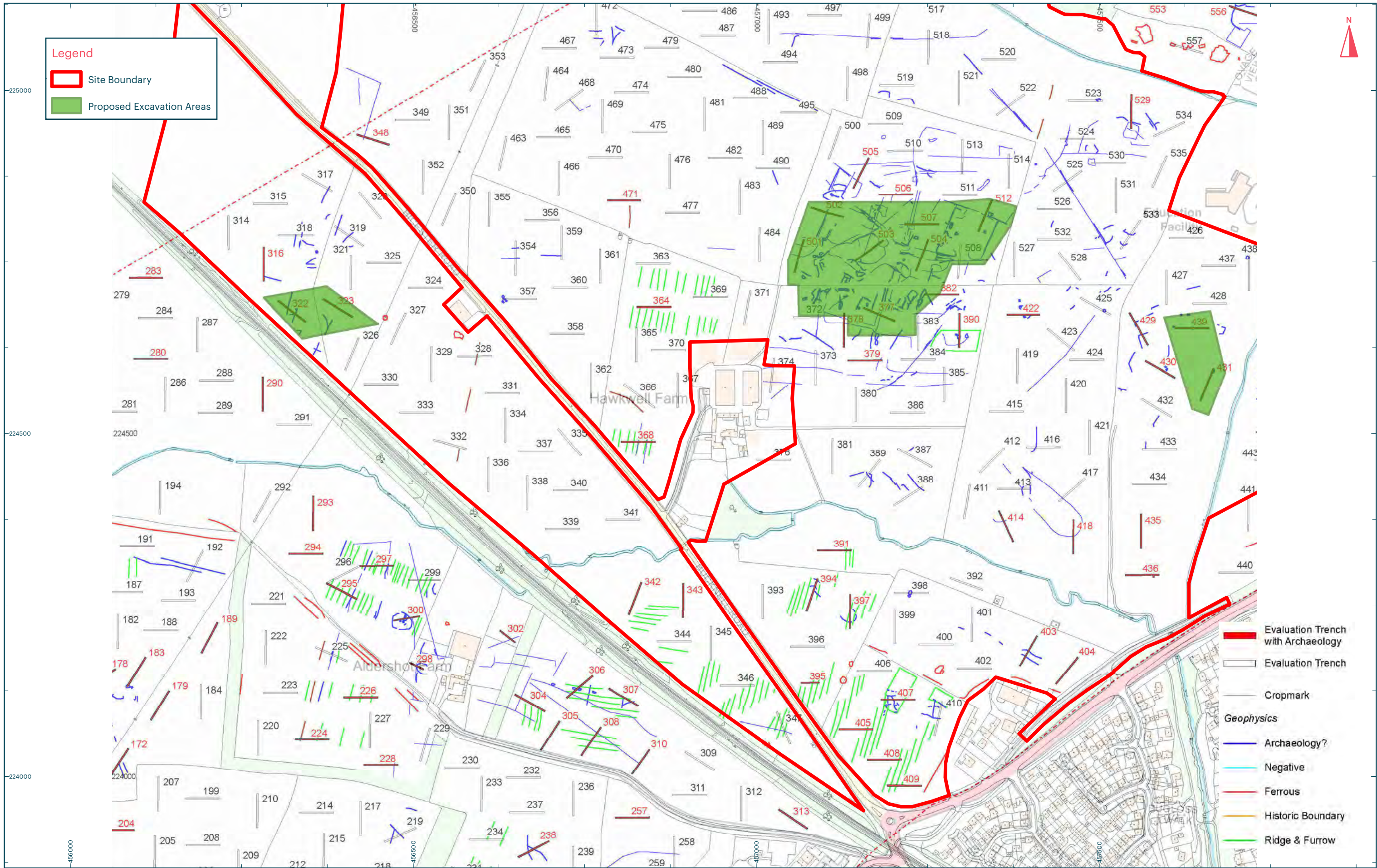
- 10.1 All works will follow the *Health and Safety at Work Act* (1974), applicable regulations and codes of practice, and recommendations of the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers ('SCAUM') *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (1986).
- 10.2 All archaeological staff will undertake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



**Title:**  
Figure 1: Site Location with areas of archaeological activity  
**Address:**  
NW Bicester

Scale at A3: 1:8,000  
0 200m





**Title:**  
Figure 2: Proposed programme of archaeological excavation

**Address:**  
NW Bicester

Scale at A3: 1:5,000

0 150m

