

New drain at Cotefield Farm, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire

Project specification for an archaeological watching brief

19th September 2017



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New drain at Cotefield Farm, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire Proposal for an archaeological Watching Brief

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission (P17/01225/F) has been sought from Cherwell District Council for the construction of a new drain for development at Cotefield Farm, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire (SP 4655 3720). Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features planning conditions are expected to be attached to the consent requiring that a programme of archaeological investigation be initiated.

1.2 The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Mr. Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. In summary, the site lies to the south of an area containing a range of archaeological deposits initially recorded by archaeological evaluation (Wolframm-Murray 2010). These mostly represent Iron Age into Roman settlement with roundhouses and enclosure present but also with earlier, Neolithic pits recorded. The full extent of these deposits is not known and may extend into the area traversed by the proposed drainage scheme.

1.3 The site is located on Middle Lias and lies at a height of approximately 100m above Ordnance Datum.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 Background

A number of countrywide policy documents for archaeological research such as English Heritage Research Agenda (EH 2005; James and Millett 2001) consider the full range of deposits that might be encountered on the site. More specific aims are presented in the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014).

2.2 General objectives

The general objectives of the project are to:

Record and, if necessary, excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the areas threatened by the proposed development.

Produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site.

Establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic, etc.

Produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Site clearance and topsoil removal

3.1.1 The area proposed for excavation is shown on Figure 1. This comprises an easement strip (minimum 1.6m wide) for the pipeline route and any other areas needed for the works. These will be stripped of overburden, down to the top of the archaeologically relevant level, here expected to be the top of the natural geology, under constant archaeological supervision.

3.1.2 Topsoil will be removed under continuous archaeological supervision by one or more 360° diggers fitted with a toothless bucket to expose the uppermost surface of archaeological deposits.

3.1.3 Where appropriate and necessary, hand cleaning of the stripped surface will take place.

3.2 Excavation methodology

3.2.1 All archaeological features will be planned and sectioned as a minimum objective.

3.2.2 Isolated, discrete features such as pits and postholes not belonging to structures or activities discussed in para 3.2.4 (below) will be half-sectioned as a minimum. Full excavation will take place if half sectioning fails to provide sufficient artefactual dating evidence.

3.2.3. Sampling of linear features such as ditches and gullies relating to agricultural activity will be up to 10% of their length with a minimum of 10m of each ditch being dug. The linear features will be excavated in 1-3 m. wide slots. All termini and intersections will be examined. Linear features unambiguously of post-medieval date will be sampled at 1% of their length. Should any areas of unexpected complexity or interest be encountered, the level of sampling may be increased to 20%. This will be implemented in consultation with the County Archaeological Officer.

3.2.4 Any deposits relating to funerary/ritual activities such as burials and cremation deposits and domestic/industrial activity such as walls, postholes floors, middens, walls, hearths, ring gullies) will be fully excavated. Discrete features such as cremation deposits will be 100% sampled for subsequent analysis.

3.2.5 Area deposits such as buried soils will be hand excavated to a minimum of 5%. Subsequent excavation by machine will be considered in consultation with the County Archaeological Officer.

3.2.6 Area deposits such as large, artefact-rich, prehistoric middens will be hand excavated to a minimum of 50%. Subsequent excavation by machine will be considered in consultation with the County Archaeological Officer.

3.2.7 Discovery of any human remains will be reported to the coroner and will be excavated following guidelines issued by the Ministry of Justice. Recovery and recording methodologies for human remains follow standard procedures identified by McKinley and Roberts (1993), Brickley and McKinley (2004) and TVAS Field Recording Manual (7th edition 2011). Any human bone recovered of archaeological significance will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service and will not be reinterred in earth.

3.2.8 A proportion (up to 5% of the total) of what may be considered to be tree holes will be examined to confirm this interpretation.

3.3 Recording Methodology

3.3.1 A single context recording system will be used in accordance with the TVAS Field Recording Manual (7th edition 2011). Descriptions of individual deposits and features will be recorded on pro-forma context recording sheets.

3.3.2 Plans and sections will be drawn in pencil on drafting film, normally at scales of 1:100, 1:20 and 1:10 respectively. Digital (GPS) planning will be employed. Where appropriate, eg for the recording of inhumations, more detailed plans will be drawn at a scale of 1:10. Plans and sections will be accurately located in relation to the National Grid. Overall plans at 1:100 will also be used.

3.3.3 Heights above OD will be taken and recorded on all plans and sections.

3.3.4 A Harris matrix stratification diagram will be employed to record all stratigraphic relationships.

3.3.5 The photographic record will consist of digital image. 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' to illustrate the nature of the archaeological fieldwork programme.

3.4 Finds Retrieval

3.4.1 In general, all identified finds and artefacts pre-dating 1750 will be retained. Samples of later material may be retained if of intrinsic interest or significant for dating purposes. All but a sample of most classes of building

material will be discarded after recording but the specific guidance of the recipient museum collecting policy will be followed.

3.4.2 Metal detectors will be used to enhance the recovery of metal finds. 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 prehistoric base metal or other treasure will be reported to the Coroner and county finds liaison officer and kept in a secure place as required by the Treasure Act (1996) and its subsequent amendments.

3.4.3 Finds recovered from fills of cut features will be recorded under the appropriate context number.

3.4.4 All finds discovered in layers and surfaces will be recorded in two horizontal dimensions. This spatial distribution will generally be within a 1m grid square but for particularly sensitive areas a grid of 0.1m will be used. Three-dimensional recording will be used for significant finds such as chronologically distinctive metalwork.

3.4.5 According to our standard practice, features will be spot-dated by their finds on-site, so that any appropriate adjustment can be made to excavation or retrieval strategies in order to maximise the information available to answer the research aims of the project.

3.4.6 Conservation on site will follow guidelines in First Aid for Finds with any other specialist conservation work sub-contracted to the project conservator.

3.5 Environmental sampling and scientific dating

3.5.1 Well-defined, closely-dated contexts will be bulk sampled for the recovery of carbonised botanical remains (HE 2015)

3.5.2 Sieving will take place to enhance the recovery of small bones and artefacts as advised by our faunal remains specialist. Provision is made for sampling 10-15 deposits. Up to 40 litres of their fill will be wet-sieved using a 2mm mesh. Charred plant remains will be recovered using floatation and a 0.25mm sieve. In addition, unusual and rich contexts will be sieved in a similar manner.

3.5.3 Bulk samples from dry contexts will be in the order of 40 litres except in cases where the volume of the features is below this threshold. Deposits of earlier prehistoric date (Neolithic/Bronze Age) will be sampled at 40 litres or above. Variations to sample volumes and collection strategies will be discussed on site with our palaeobotanical specialist and the County Archaeological Officer as necessary.

3.5.4 The presence of waterlogged deposits is unlikely and is only possible in very deep or large features. Should these be encountered the sampling strategy will be discussed with our environmental specialists and the County Archaeological Officer as necessary.

3.5.5 Samples for pollen analysis and micromorphology will be taken under the guidance of the appropriate specialists on-site if appropriate.

3.5.6 Where appropriate, samples will be taken for radiocarbon dating, dendrochronology, thermoluminescence, archaeomagnetic dating or for any other less common scientific analyses as necessary.

3.5.7 Provision is made for three radiocarbon determinations should Saxon or prehistoric deposits be encountered.

4.0 POST-FIELDWORK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Following the ordering of the site archive, a short summary will be prepared giving a preliminary account of the excavation findings and brief outlines of the artefactual and environmental data collected, as set out in MoRPHE (EH 2006). Post-fieldwork will be completed according to TVAS post-fieldwork manual (6th edition 2013).

4.2 Discussion will take place between all specialist members of the Project Team (see 8.0 below), to assess the quality, character, and significance of the various data collected, and the degree to which it will enable the research aims to be addressed.

4.3 At this stage it may be possible to identify classes of material which will not fulfil their potential for information retrieval and allow resources to be re-allocated where they will be most beneficial.

4.4 Formal post excavation assessment documents or interim reports will be produced following completion of the fieldwork depending on the scale of any findings made.

4.5 A digital (pdf) version will be supplied to Oxfordshire County Archaeology service for verification. A final digital copy will be supplied to the County Historic Environment Record and Planning archaeologist 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 web site.

4.6 A digital version of the report will be provided to the OASIS project.

5.0 POST-EXCAVATION ANALYSIS AND ARCHIVE PREPARATION

5.1 Post-fieldwork will be completed according to TVAS post-fieldwork manual (6th edition 2013).

5.2 The aims of the post-fieldwork phase of the project are to:

5.3 Prepare an orderly archive of the records of the fieldwork.

5.4 Clean, conserve and prepare artefacts/ecofacts for long term museum storage.

5.5 Prepare specialist reports on the artefacts recovered. Particular attention will be paid to tying in the pottery recovered to the local or regional fabric sequences that are available. Metal finds will be x-rayed where appropriate to aid identification.

5.6 Prepare specialist reports on environmental studies.

5.7 Prepare a report describing the basic nature of the archaeological deposits discovered.

5.8 Draw together the information in sections 5.3-5.7 to place the site in its local, regional and national setting as appropriate.

5.9 The finds and site archive will be prepared in accordance with guidelines in MoRPHE (EH 2006), CifA guidance (CifA 2014a) and after consultation with the recipient museum. Guidance produced by the Museum and Galleries Commission's Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (1992), the Society of Museum Archaeologist's Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections (1993) and the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage (1990) will be followed. The records will be copied onto microfiche and a copy sent to the National Archaeological Record.

5.10 The site archive will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service and an accession number will be obtained prior to a commencement on site.

5.11 The site finds will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service with the agreement of the landowner.

5.12 An electronic security copy of the field records will be made shortly after completion of the fieldwork.

5.13 A selection of digital images showing the site location and principal features will be provided to the County Archaeological Officer for educational and planning purposes if requested.

6.0 PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

6.1 Within 12-15 months of the completion of all fieldwork a comprehensive report to publication standard will be produced. This will comprise a descriptive text and illustrations of the stratigraphic sequence with its interpretation, catalogues, specialist reports, distribution plans of the finds, and any available environmental information followed by a discussion and interpretation of the results.

6.2 The findings will be published in an appropriate journal such as *Oxoniensia* or the TVAS monograph series.

6.3 A sum will be allocated within the resourcing of the project for full editing and publication costs.

7.0 PROJECT TEAM

Project Management	Dr. Steve Ford, Joanna Pine or Andy Taylor
Fieldwork director	(from) Andy Taylor, Lizzie Lewins, Luis Esteves, David Sanchez
Pottery Specialist	Dr. Jane Timby, Mr. Paul Blinkhorn or Dr. Malcolm Lyne (consultants) or Dr. Richard Tabor (TVAS)
Struck Flint Specialist	Dr. Steve Ford (TVAS)
Stone Specialist	Dr. David Williams (Southampton University)
Metalwork Specialist	Mr Aidan Colyer (TVAS) or Dr. Robin Taylor (consultant)
Carbonised Plant Remains	Professor Mark Robinson (University of Oxford) or Rossy McKenna (consultant)
Mollusc Remains	Professor Mark Robinson, (University of Oxford)
Faunal Remains	Ms Sheila Hamilton-Dyer or Dr Matilda Holmes (consultants) or Ms Lizzie Lewins (TVAS)
Human Remains	Dr Ceri Falys (TVAS)
Pollen Remains	Mr D Young (Quest, Reading University)
Radiocarbon dating	Queens University, Belfast
Archaeomagnetic dating	Bradford University
Conservation	Wiltshire County Council Conservation Centre

8.0 GENERAL ITEMS

8.1 Health and Safety

All site operations will be carried out in a safe manner in accordance with TVAS health and safety policy and current Health and Safety legislation. A risk assessment will be prepared before commencement on site.

8.2 Timetable

Supervised topsoil stripping, fieldwork and post-fieldwork is expected to take 3-10 man/days with a smaller amount for post-fieldwork.

8.3 Professional standards

The project will be carried out in accordance with the CIFA Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation (2014b) and Code of Conduct (2014c) and the quality control mechanisms set out in the TVAS fieldwork and post-fieldwork manuals. .

8.4 Insurance Cover

Insurance cover comprises £10m for public liability, £10m for employee liability, cover for any hired-in plant and professional indemnity cover for £5m.

8.5 Reinstatement

Not Applicable

8.6 Press Release

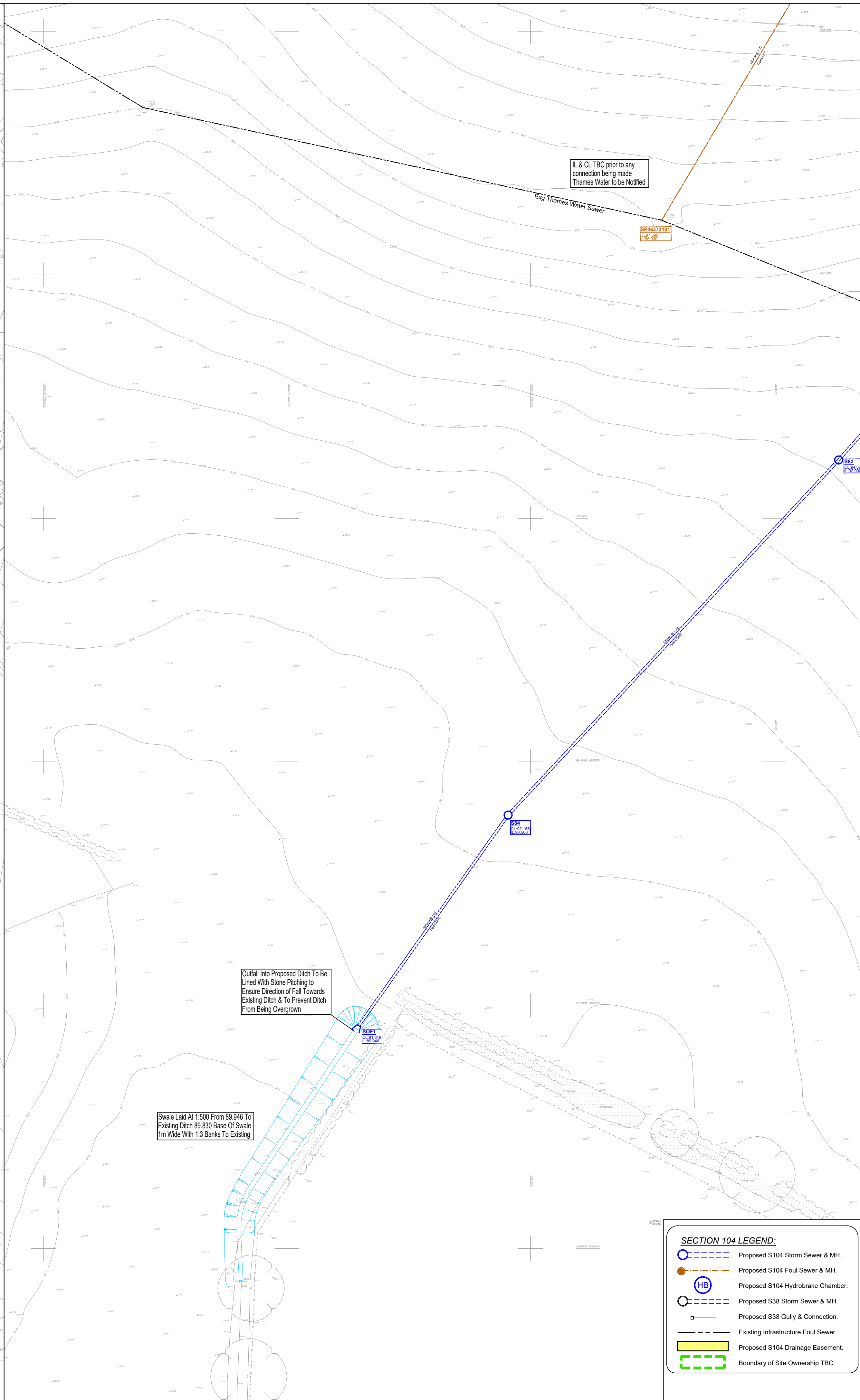
Should any significant archaeological deposits be located, a press release will be prepared in consultation with the County Archaeological Officer and the client.

8.7 Monitoring

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. Any changes in the agreed project design will be discussed and agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service before implementation.

9.0 REFERENCES

- Brickley, M and McKinley, J (eds), 2004, *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*, IFA Pap 7
- CIfA, 2014a, *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading
- CIfA, 2014b, *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching brief*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Reading
- CIfA, 2014c, *Code of Conduct*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading
- EH 2005, *Research Agenda*, English Heritage, London.
- EH, 2006, *The MoRPHE project managers' Guide*, English Heritage, London
- HE 2015, *Environmental Archaeology*, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines 1, Historic England, Portsmouth. (3rd edn)
- Hey, G and Hind, J, 2014, *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas*, Oxford Wessex Monogr 6, Oxford
- James, S and Millett, M (eds), 2001, *Britons and Romans: advancing an archaeological agenda* CBA Res Rep 125, York
- McKinley, J I and Roberts, C, 1993, *Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed human remains*, Institute of Field Archaeologists Techn Pap 13, Reading
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
- Wolframm-Murray, Y, 2010, *An archaeological evaluation of land south of Blackwood Place, and Molyneux Drive and north west of Cotefield Far, Oxford Road, Bodicote*, Bodicote, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire Archaeology report 10/203, Northampton



Rev.	Description	Date	By
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Cotefield Farm
Bodicote

Section 104 Agreement Plan
Sheet 2 of 2



File	Drawing
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LEGEND

	Proposed S104 Storm Sewer & MH.
	Proposed S104 Foul Sewer & MH.
	Proposed S104 Hydrobrake Chamber.
	Proposed S38 Storm Sewer & MH.
	Proposed S38 Gully & Connection.
	Existing Infrastructure Foul Sewer.
	Proposed S104 Drainage Easement.
	Boundary of Site Ownership TBC.