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Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 [RPS Tetra Tech Consulting Ltd](#) has been commissioned by Oxfordshire Railfreight Ltd to prepare and agree a specification of works with the Local Planning Authority for a programme of archaeological mitigation that is required in association with a planning application.
- 1.2 This Archaeology Mitigation Strategy outlines the scope of a programme of archaeological excavation.
- 1.3 The objective of this document is to provide a detailed strategy for excavation, including the methodology, the means of reporting and the timescales for notification, sufficient to provide clarity and certainty of the archaeological obligation to correctly and appropriately mitigate and record any finds.
- 1.4 This document forms the basis for the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced archaeological contractor to implement the works and is to be submitted for approval with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the provisions of this approved scheme of works. The archaeological contractor will also produce a detailed method statement which will be agreed with the Local Authority Archaeologist prior to works being undertaken.
- 1.5 This document has been prepared, pre-consent, to support the planning application and includes for a programme of archaeological mitigation work in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Planning Background

- 1.6 The OxSRFI proposals meet the statutory definition of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This means that rather than preparing a planning application for determination by the Local Planning Authority (the District Council) an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) is being prepared. This will be examined by the Planning Inspectorate (known as 'PINS') before being determined by the Secretary of State for Transport.
- [1.7](#) The Proposed Development responds directly to the growing market demand for increased use of rail freight, and the demand for large scale warehouse space, with the opportunity now and in the future to utilise rail. The vision for the proposals is to provide a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange in response to a range of national and local economic and policy drivers. In particular the proposals seek to respond to the objectives set out in the National Networks National Policy-[4.7](#) Statement (referred to as the 'NPS') and fully accord with the requirements and criteria for SRFI's defined in that Policy.
- 1.8 The OxSRFI Main Site is in a strategically attractive and significant location for distribution and logistics activity being located along the M40 between London and Birmingham and with the Chiltern Main Line – part of the strategic rail freight network – running adjacent to it. The OxSRFI location means it is within 4.5 hours of a large proportion of the UK population, which is a key locational requirement for the logistics sector. The location is therefore well placed to expand the existing network of SRFIs, with good access to both Midlands and South-Eastern markets and distribution networks.
- 1.9 The main components of the Proposed Development are listed below:
- An intermodal rail freight terminal, including rail connections and improvements to the Chiltern Main Line including works to Ardley Tunnel, rail sidings, container storage, HGV parking and associated buildings;
 - Up to 603,850 sqm (approx. 6.5 million square feet) of warehousing and ancillary buildings, plus up to 201,283 sqm of additional floorspace in the form of mezzanines.
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- The retention, rejuvenation and re-use of Ashgrove Farm and associated buildings as part of a 'central hub' to provide estate management, training and communal facilities to serve the site;
- A secure, dedicated HGV Parking area including driver welfare facilities;
- New road infrastructure and works to the existing road network, including improvements to M40 J10 and junctions on the A43 provision of the principal site access and associated works on the B430, a bypass to the village of Ardley linking the site directly with M40 J10, a relief road around the north eastern side of the village of Middleton Stoney, a link road connecting the B430 to Camp Road, improvements to M40 J9 and other highway improvements at junctions on the local highway network and related traffic management measures;
- New and improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure both on the Main Site and in the surrounding area connecting the Main Site to local communities;
- Demolition of existing structures and earthworks to create development areas, construct the rail freight terminal and connections to the Mainline and form landscape screen mounding
- The retention of key landscape features together with new strategic landscaping, general planting and biodiversity enhancements.
- On and off-site works associated with utilities including for foul drainage connections.

Site Location, Topography and Geology

Geology

- 1.10 The underlying bedrock is largely composed of Jurassic limestone of the White Limestone Formation.
- 1.11 No superficial deposits are recorded across the site.
- 1.12 The soil across the whole site is described as Soilscape 18 – Freely draining lime-rich loamy soils, in the Landis Soilscales system (landis.org.uk/soilscales).

Topography

- 1.13 The site lies on the eastern edge of the Upper Heyford Plateau, which forms part of a belt of upland Oolitic limestone, with the landform dominated by a valley running broadly NNE-SSW. The high western edge lies at approximately 125 metres AOD (Above Ordnance Datum), falling to approximately 108 metres AOD in the valley bottom. The land rises again to a height of approximately 115 metres AOD to the east, adjacent to the B430. Beyond the B430 and to the south there extends a gently rolling limestone landscape occupied by mixed farmlands and woodland interspersed with 18th century parkland.
- 1.14 Given the topography of the site and the surrounding landscape, the availability of views into and from the site is varied. Views west are limited by the Upper Heyford Plateau and largely take in the edge of the airfield and development just within its perimeter. Despite its closeness, there is also little intervisibility between the site and the village of Ardley.
- 1.15 A watercourse forms a small valley running through the site from north to south.
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Archaeological Background

- 1.16 The site has been the subject of archaeological desk-based assessment ([RPS Tetra Tech 2025](#)), geophysical survey (Sumo 2022) and trial trench evaluation (Archaeology Warwickshire 2023).

Prehistoric

- 1.17 Previous geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation has recorded Prehistoric remains within the site.
- 1.18 Features of this date within the site include a series of enclosures, pits and ditches predominantly dating to the Iron Age (HER MOX23331, MOX28723, MOX23379, MOX4862, MOX28724, MOX48861, MOX23330). The locations of these within the study site are shown on Figure 2a.
- 1.19 A number of Banjo Enclosures have also been recorded within the site. These are labelled on Figure 2a as HER MOX4860, MOX23329, MOX4867 and MOX4873).
- 1.20 Several Prehistoric non-designated heritage assets are also present in the wider local landscape. These are not elaborated upon here given the presence of known Prehistoric assets on the site itself.
- 1.21 Based on comprehensive information from the site itself as well as information in the local landscape provided by the HER, a high potential is identified for Prehistoric activity within the site.

Roman

- 1.22 Previous geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation has recorded Romano-British remains within the site.
- 1.23 Several of the Iron Age enclosures identified on the site during field evaluation showed evidence of continued use, or at least a later re-use of the same location, in the Romano-British period (HER MOX28723, MOX23330, MOX4861, MOX4862).
- 1.24 The HER also records the recovery of fragments of Roman pottery (HER MOX4817) and Roman cremations (HER MOX4818) within the site.
- 1.25 Based on comprehensive information from the site itself as well as information in the local landscape provided by the HER, a high potential is identified for Roman activity within the site.

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

- 1.26 The trial trench evaluation identified a single feature interpreted as being of an Early Medieval/Anglo-Saxon origin.
- 1.27 In Trench 162, a large, ovoid pit with moderately steep edges and an irregular base (3.97m by 3.05m wide and 0.26m deep) was interpreted as a Sunken Feature Building (HER MOX28725). No structural features, such as postholes, were apparent in the expanded trench but 86 pottery sherds were recovered from its brown silty clay fill.
- 1.28 An extensive Anglo-Saxon cemetery (HER MOX28706) was identified at Dewar's Farm Quarry, close to the site's eastern boundary. One hundred and twenty-eight inhumation burials were revealed, including two rare *bed burials*. A sunken featured building (also referred to as *grubenhaus*) was also recorded. Trial trenches 624-634 were excavated within the site, a short distance from the Anglo-Saxon cemetery. No finds or features of an archaeological origin were identified in these trenches, indicating that the cemetery does not extend into the site.
- 1.29 In the wider study area, the villages of Ardley and Middleton Stoney are recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Ardley was established prior to the Norman conquest, as was Middleton Stoney.
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- 1.30 The Iron Age boundary feature Aves Ditch (MOX4830) appears to have retained some role as a feature in the landscape during the Early Medieval period, with some evidence of recutting of the ditch (EOX6403).
- 1.31 Middleton Stoney Castle (MOX60), 1km south of the site, is regarded as originally being a Saxon aristocratic residence. An enclosure to the south-east of the castle is dated to the Saxon period (MOX360, MOX4995).
- 1.32 Within the wider study area, the Early Medieval settlements at Middleton Stoney and Ardley were further developed during the main Medieval period. In Middleton Stoney, the motte and bailey castle (MOX60, SM 1015164) was constructed soon after the Norman Conquest, and was embellished with a stone tower, prior to destruction in the early 13th century. Other Medieval assets recorded in Middleton Stoney include traces of another DMV (MOX4963).
- 1.33 The village of Ardley was dominated by a moated manor house, the Ardley Wood Moated Ringwork, now a Scheduled Monument on the south-west fringe of the modern village (MOX318, SM 1015554). The other Medieval elements of Ardley, such as the church, lie further to the north of the moated site.
- 1.34 The pattern of Medieval settlement continues that seen in the Early Medieval period. Lying between the villages of Ardley, Middleton Stoney, Bucknell and Chesterton, the site formed part of the agricultural hinterland of these settlements during the Medieval period.
- 1.35 The trial trenching has identified a single focus of significant Anglo-Saxon and/or Medieval activity within the site. Given the extensive and comprehensive fieldwork, it is considered unlikely that further significant activity unrelated to the Sunken Featured Building is present.

Post Medieval & Modern (including map regression exercise)

- 1.36 Within the site, the farmstead at Ashgrove Farm (MOX27753, MOX4868) was developed as a post-inclosure farm in the 18th century. This is representative of the landscape pattern post-inclosure, with strongly nucleated settlement within the established villages and isolated farmsteads across the agricultural land in between the settlements.
 - 1.37 The archaeological fieldwork undertaken within the site identified multiple Post Medieval field boundaries, as well as modern rubble deposits. Stone foundations for a structure were visible in Area 17.
 - 1.38 Mapping from the 18th century onwards has been examined and used to understand the historical development of the site.
 - 1.39 One of the earliest maps to provide detail on the history of the site is a c. 1700 map of fields in Ardley, which is annotated with the names of the individuals recorded in a *Deed of Inclosure of Ardley Common Fields* dated 12th February 1700. Middleton Stoney was inclosed in 1709, Chesterton in 1768, the remainder of Ardley in 1770, and Bucknell was inclosed in 1780. Ashgrove Farm is first shown in Richard Davis' 1797 map of Oxfordshire.
 - 1.40 The 1839 Ardley Tithe Map and the 1841 Middleton Stoney Tithe Map show that the site was agricultural land, divided into a large number of fields. Ashgrove Farm was the main development within the site at this time.
 - 1.41 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1875-1880 shows a very similar pattern for the land use within the site. The only clear changes are that the number of fields within the site has been reduced, and the construction of Ashgrove Cottages by the B430 to the south-east of Ashgrove Farm. To the south in Middleton Stoney, the development of the formal parkland around Middleton Park is made clearer in this map.
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- 1.42 The OS map of 1919-1923 shows the same situation, with the exception of the railway line running through the site. This railway, built in 1910, in its deep cutting provided a very strong separation between the site and Ardley village.
- 1.43 The subsequent mapping up to the present day show that the site has remained largely as agricultural land, with a number of significant developments in the surrounding area.
- 1.44 The 1980-1985 OS map shows RAF Upper Heyford adjoining the western boundary of the site. A number of changes are apparent to the boundaries of the field parcels within the site. Other changes include: new agricultural buildings at Ashgrove Farm; the demolition of the farmstead at Scotland Barn; the introduction of tanks towards the north-west edge; a new caravan park off Chillgrove Drive; and, the construction of a reservoir on the south side of the unnamed lane connecting Camp Road to the B430.
- 1.45 Modern mapping shows that further changes to the site's surrounds are evident, including the construction of the large Viridor Ardley Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) to the east, and a quarrying facility immediately south of the Viridor ERF. In more recent years the re-development of RAF Upper Heyford has also begun, which will eventually see more than 1000 homes, a primary school, social facilities and a 'creative city' developed on the former air base. Within the site itself, a green power composting facility was built adjacent to the reservoir in c. 2009, but no other significant changes are apparent.
- 1.46 The development of the Upper Heyford airfield to the west of the site began in the First World War and was expanded during the 1920s. At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 the airfield consisted of a core of hangars and maintenance buildings, residential buildings, and a grass airfield to the north. RAF Upper Heyford saw service as a training base during WWII and was provided with a concrete runway during the winter of 1943-44. However, its present form is owed to its role as a Cold War United States Air Force (USAF) Strategic Air Command base from 1950-1994.
- 1.47 Parts of the Upper Heyford airbase have been designated as a Scheduled Monument (SM 1021399, MOX23278), and comprise the Special Bomb Stores at the north-east corner of the airfield, 600m west of the site; the Quick Response Area in the north-eastern part of the airbase, 1.5km west of the site, and two isolated buildings, the Avionics building and the Control Centre, 2km and 1km west of the site respectively.
- 1.48 The mapping evidence indicates that the site has been agricultural land during the Post Medieval and most of the modern periods. Archaeological evaluation in the site has identified evidence of former agricultural activity and a stone structure.
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2 SCOPE OF WORKS AND ITS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Scope of Works

- 2.1 This mitigation strategy presents a scope for archaeological strip, map and sample (excavation) and evaluation trenching. The excavation and trial trenching will be undertaken in accordance with the methodologies outlined in Section 3 of this document.

Excavation

- 2.1.1 2.2 Eleven areas have been identified for archaeological strip, map and sample excavation. These areas are as follows:

- **EA 1** – an area of 0.37ha focused on the eastern end of a Banjo Enclosure as identified in evaluation trenches 726-728.
- **EA 2** – 0.54ha over predominantly Iron Age features recorded in evaluation trenches 898, 899 and 900.
- **EA 3** – 0.23ha targeted on a sub-circular Iron Age feature, identified in evaluation trenches 831 and 893.
- **EA 4** – 0.05ha centred on a sub-circular feature with moderately breaking sides and undulating base, 3.97m long, oriented east to west, 3.05m wide. Recorded in evaluation trench 162 and interpreted as Early Medieval.
- **EA 5** – 3.29ha targeted on the complex of Iron Age, Romano-British and undated features identified in evaluation trenches 209-218.
- **EA 6** – 1.22ha centred on the Iron Age enclosure recorded in evaluation trenches 24, 25a and 25b, and the undated cremations recorded in evaluation trench 26.
- **EA 7** – 2.29ha over the Romano-British and undated enclosures recorded in evaluation trenches 383, 397, 398, 399, 400, 403 and 657.
- **EA 8** – 1.99ha over the Iron Age/Romano British Banjo Enclosure located in the western part of the site.
- **EA 9** – 3.93ha of Iron Age, Romano British and undated features recorded in evaluation trenches 454-468.
- **EA 10** – 0.37ha centred on a complex of Iron Age, Roman and undated features identified in evaluation trenches 571 and 572.
- **EA 11** – 1.31ha targeted on Iron Age, Roman and updated features.

Evaluation

- 2.1.2 **EA 12** – A phase of post consent evaluation trenching will be undertaken in order to ascertain the need for mitigation in the eastern part of the site. Each of the six evaluation trench will measure 30m x 1.8m.

- 2.1.3 Trenches 1000 – 1003 target the area of possible Roman cremations identified by
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2.1.4 Trenches 1004 and 1005 target a linear feature possibly related to pits as identified by the HER (MOX23334). It is noted that no evidence of this was identified in the predetermination trenching. Grid references for each end of the trenches are as follows:

~~**2.1.5** Grid references for each end of the trenches are as follows:~~

- **T1000** - 453673, 225782 and 453667, 225753
- **T1001** - 453651, 225743 and 453681, 225739
- **T1002** - 453663, 225731 and 453657, 225702
- **T1003** - 453690, 225750 and 453684, 225721
- **T1004** - 453725, 225745 and 453751, 225761
- **T1005** - 453750, 225697 and 453775, 225713

2.1.6 The location and length of the trial trench may have to be adjusted on site to allow for constraints.

~~2.1.7~~ A written summary of the results of the trial trenching will be required to establish whether a further excavation area will be necessary. In the unlikely event that highly significant remains are identified, there may be a requirement for preservation-in-situ. [The scope/area of archaeological excavation, if needed, will be agreed with OCAS.](#)

Aims and Objectives

~~2.2.3~~ The objective of the trial trench evaluation is to identify the presence of archaeological remains in part of the site that was not previously trenched in order to determine the requirement for detailed strip, map and sample excavation in that area. The presence and character of any archaeological remains encountered within this area will inform the scope of any subsequent excavation, if necessary.

~~2.3.4~~ The objective of the archaeological excavation is to investigate and record any archaeology on the site, create an ordered archive and present and disseminate the results of the archaeological work through an appropriate report, prior to its loss through development.

~~2.4.5~~ Given the widespread presence of archaeological activity, research aims will be in line with the Solent-Thames Research Framework (Hey and Hind 2014). Four particular aims are identified below:

1. Is there any evidence for a pit alignment in the eastern part of the site (trial trench area)
2. Is there any evidence for Roman cremations or inhumations in the eastern part of the site (trial trench area)
3. Is the triangular arrangement of ditches in EA7 a late banjo enclosure derivative dating from the Roman period?
4. Is the Anglo-Saxon SFB an isolated feature, or is other Anglo-Saxon activity present close by?

~~2.5.6~~ The archaeological contractor's method statement may identify further aims and objectives. Additional aims may arise during the fieldwork itself.

3 METHOD STATEMENT

General

- 3.1 In order that the investigation supplies information of the required quality, the Codes, Standards and Guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) form a requirement of this specification (*Archaeological Excavation 2023, Archaeological Field Evaluation 2023*). The reasonable requirements of the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services will also be adhered to.

Methodology

3.2 This methodology applies to the excavation areas and evaluation trenches.

~~3.23.3~~ All areas requiring archaeological excavation will be undertaken in accordance with this strategy and will be stripped ahead of development.

~~3.33.4~~ All topsoil and sub-soil (overburden) will be stripped mechanically under archaeological direction. Care will be taken not to machine into archaeological features or deposits, but it is important that the archaeological level is reached and not still covered by overburden. Where potential structural remains may be encountered, further testing of the depth of adjacent overburden by hand will be implemented in order to help to ensure that appropriate levels have been reached without compromising any structural components. It is hoped that general hand cleaning can be kept to the minimum, so machine stripping needs to be well supervised and of a high quality.

~~3.43.5~~ During this operation all earthmoving and other vehicles will avoid travelling on the freshly stripped surface of the area of archaeological investigation.

~~3.53.6~~ Stripping will be carried out using a wide, toothless bucket. Machinery would be required to work back from one or several fronts, but not track over the surface exposed.

~~3.63.7~~ A site grid is to be established using a total station or GPS, and this is to be tied into the national grid, at the outset of the project.

~~3.73.8~~ Following stripping of overburden, priority will be given to the cleaning of archaeological features as required to produce a pre-excavation site plan. The stripped surface will be kept clean and free of loose spoil. Spoil arising from the stripping will be stored at a safe distance from the excavation area.

3.9 Stripped areas will be subject to metal detecting.

~~3.83.10~~ Areas containing particularly significant or sensitive archaeological remains should be protected, i.e. not left open to the weather.

~~3.93.11~~ Data-capture for site plans will be by electronic distance measurement, GPS survey, measured survey or a combination of these measures; data-capture for site plans will as standard be capable of reproduction at a scale of 1:100; more complex features or areas of complex archaeological remains will be recorded at greater resolution (for reproduction at 1:10, 1:20, or 1:50 as necessary). The site grid will be established relative to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and all levels taken will be relative to Ordnance Datum.

~~3.403.12~~ The archaeological team is to be structured to ensure that the hand-cleaning and planning operations run in close sequence. The initial site plan should be updated as new features become apparent.

~~3.443.13~~ All sampling and investigation of archaeological features is to be by hand unless otherwise agreed in advance by the Local Planning Authority's archaeological advisor.

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~~3.12~~3.14 The excavation strategy will be justified against the stated aims and objectives of the project and/or any other appropriate criteria. The site will be excavated stratigraphically. The various types of features and deposits revealed following the removal of non-significant overburden will be subject to the following sampling levels:

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- All structural features or those relating to a specialised activity will be subject to a 100% sample.
- All post and stake holes that relate to specialised activities will be subject to a 100% sample. Others will be subject to a 50% sample.
- All pits will be half sectioned. In some instances, 100% excavation may be requested depending on the nature of the feature/deposit.
- A minimum of 20% or 10 metres, whichever is greater, of all linear features will be sampled.
- All kilns and hearths etc. will be sampled and fully excavated.
- Occupation deposits/stratified layers – needs to identify hand excavation of any stratified layers in 2.5m or 1m systematic and gridded squares to be agreed on the basis of the complexity/extent of such layers with County Archaeological Services. This should include for provision for on-site sieving of occupation levels and/or building fills for small artefacts/ecofacts.
- All intersections of features are to be examined in order to fully understand date and phasing.

3.15 The above sampling relates to detailed excavation areas; features uncovered within the trial trenches may be subject to lower levels of sampling to characterise features.

~~3.13~~3.16 Features of possible geological origin should also be sampled until confidence can be established as to their non-archaeological origin. There may be cases when individual features do not merit these sampling levels. Only investigation of the archaeological features and deposits which is sufficient to enable their date, nature, extent and condition to be described should be carried out. Any sampling variations would need to be approved in advance by the Local Planning Authority's archaeological advisor following on-site discussion.

~~3.14~~3.17 Where removal of human remains is necessary, as discussed with the LPA archaeological advisor, it can only take place under appropriate Ministry of Justice (MoJ) licence and environmental health regulations. Such removal must be in compliance with the Disused Burial Grounds Amendment Act 1981 (if appropriate). In the event that such remains are exposed the site archaeologist shall inform the developer, ~~RPS~~Tetra Tech Limited, local Environmental Health Officer and the Local Planning Authority's archaeological advisor in order that appropriate measures can be taken for their recording and removal.

~~3.15~~3.18 The remains will be cleaned with minimal disturbance, prior to recording and removal. Investigation and excavation of human remains will be undertaken by, or under supervision of, suitably experienced specialist staff and in accordance with ClfA Guidelines (*"Excavation and Post-excavation Treatment of Cremated and Inhumed Human Remains"* Roberts, C & McKinley, J 1993 – IFA Technical Paper 13; *"Guidelines to the standards for recording human remains"* ed. Brickley, M & McKinley, J 2004 – IFA Paper 7, updated by Mitchell and McKinley, ClfA 2017). Assessment of excavated human remains will be undertaken in line with current English Heritage Guidelines (*"Human Bones from archaeological sites: Guidelines for the production of assessment documents and analytical reports"* Centre for Archaeology Guidelines 2004).

~~3.16~~3.19 Finds discovered by the Archaeological Contractor that could be deemed as "treasure" will be dealt with in accordance with The Treasure (Designation) (Amendment) Order 2023 of the Treasure Act 1996. The County Archaeological Services, the Coroner and the Finds Liaison Officer will be informed.

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~~3.17~~3.20 In order to establish clearly dated stratigraphic sequences, artefacts will be recovered carefully from feature intersections. Where artefact assemblages are concentrated, the percentage of sampling will be increased to ensure maximum retrieval and recording of this material.

~~3.18~~3.21 Spot dating of pottery will be implemented on a weekly basis and the results fed back to the site team to inform the on-going site investigation strategy.

~~3.19~~3.22 Hand-recovery of artefacts will be supplemented by appropriate environmental sampling. This sampling will not normally be from feature intersections.

Archaeological Mitigation Strategy

- ~~3.20~~3.23 The sampling excavation strategy set out above will be reviewed continuously and, if necessary, amended in order to take account of changing circumstances. Any changes or amendments will be agreed with ~~RPS~~[Tetra Tech](#) Limited and the Local Planning Authority's archaeological advisor.
- ~~3.24~~3.24 Deposits must be sampled for retrieval and assessment of the preservation conditions and potential for analysis of all biological remains. A strategy for the recovery and sampling of environmental remains from the site should be agreed with an appropriate specialist, in advance of the project (see *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*: English Heritage/Centre for Archaeology Guidelines 2011): the sampling strategy should include a reasoned justification for selection of deposits for sampling, and should be developed in collaboration with a recognised bio-archaeologist.
- ~~3.22~~3.25 In the unlikely event that any munitions or unexploded ordnance is uncovered, all works shall cease within the area and this will be fenced off. Its presence will be immediately reported to the local Police authority, ~~RPS~~[Tetra Tech](#) Limited and the client. No works will continue in the area until it has been made safe.

Recording Systems

- ~~3.23~~3.26 All structures, deposits and finds are to be recorded according to accepted professional standards. The stratigraphy in any sections is to be recorded, even where no archaeological deposits have been identified.
- ~~3.24~~3.27 The site archive will be so organised as to be compatible with other archaeological archives produced in Oxfordshire. Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated or exposed 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. This requirement for archival compatibility extends to the use of computerised databases.
- ~~3.25~~3.28 A plan to indicate the location of the boundaries of the excavated area and the site grid is to be drawn at a scale of 1:1250. Plans to indicate the locations of archaeological features are to be drawn at a scale of 1:100, with more detailed plans and sections as necessary. Detailed plans shall normally be drawn at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 and sections at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 depending on the complexity of the feature. All detailed plans and sections are to be related to the 1:100 plans. All plans are to be related to the site grid.
- ~~3.26~~3.29 All archaeological sections will be on drawing film and will include context numbers and OD spot heights for all principal strata and features. Representative sections of trenches will also be recorded, showing the stratigraphy, even if no archaeology is present.
- ~~3.27~~3.30 All archaeological contexts are to be recorded individually on context record sheets. A further, more general record of the work comprising a description and discussion of the archaeology is to be maintained as appropriate.
- 3.31 A full photographic record of the work is to be kept. All digital photography will be high resolution uncompressed TIFF format with a minimum 20 megapixel image capture. Image capture, storage and metadata standards as set out in the English Heritage (Historic England) Guidance note on Digital Image Capture and File Storage (Draft) are to be followed. The photographic record is to be-

Archaeological Mitigation Strategy

~~3.28~~ regarded as part of the site archive and will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

~~3.29~~ 3.32 The archaeological contractor shall allow project records to be inspected and examined at any reasonable time, during or after the excavation work by the local planning authority's archaeological advisor.

~~3.30~~ 3.33 All artefacts recovered during the excavations on the site are the property of the landowner. They are to be suitably bagged, boxed and marked in accordance with the *United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines nos. 2*.

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- ~~3.34~~[3.34](#) All identified finds and artefacts will be retained, although certain classes of building material can sometimes be discarded after recording if an appropriate sample is retained. No finds will, however, be discarded without the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority's archaeological advisor.
- ~~3.32~~[3.35](#) Assessments of artefacts will be made by appropriately qualified named specialists.
- ~~3.33~~[3.36](#) All metal objects, other than late post medieval objects, will be X-rayed unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority's archaeological advisor.
- ~~3.34~~[3.37](#) All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner and to the standards of the UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines. They will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the UK Institute for Conservation "Conservation Guideline No 2". Appropriate guidelines set out in the Museums and Galleries Commissions "Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (1991)" will also be followed.
- ~~3.35~~[3.38](#) Oxfordshire County Museums Service shall be notified of the fieldwork and an accession number will be obtained in advance of the commencement of fieldwork. The museum will be informed within one month of the commencement of fieldwork of the expected time limits for deposition of the archive. The accession number will be included in all versions of the fieldwork reports.
- ~~3.36~~[3.39](#) On completion of the fieldwork the site archive will be prepared in the format agreed with Oxfordshire County Museums Service. The archive will be prepared to the minimum acceptable standard defined in Historic England Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (MoRPHE, 1991), in line with local and SMA Guidelines Selection, Retention & Dispersal of Archaeological Collections (1993). The integrity of the archive will be maintained.
- ~~3.37~~[3.40](#) The full integrated site archive including all finds will, with the agreement of the owners, be deposited after completion of post-excavation work with the Oxfordshire County Museums Service. A transfer of Title form must be signed by the land owner and the report should clearly indicate whether or not this has been done. The appropriate deposition will be accompanied by appropriate funding equivalent to the current HBMC Box Storage Grant. Costs for depositing archives will be calculated in accordance with the procedures set out in "Charge for Archaeological Archives Deposited with Oxfordshire Museums" Oxfordshire Museums 1995'.

Report and Archive

- ~~3.38~~[3.41](#) All post-excavation procedures, archiving and report production (including publication) will be in accordance with ClfA Standards and Guidance and the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) English Heritage 2006.
- ~~3.39~~[3.42](#) A Post-Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design will be required. In this instance and following confirmation with the Local Planning Authority's archaeological advisor, a standard archive report with summary note is to be provided within 6 months of completion of the on-site works. Details of style and format of this report, and any Stage 1 report, are to be determined by the archaeological contractor. However, as in any event it should include:
- a non-technical summary;
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- an introduction:
 - the site location;
 - a methodology;
 - a description of the project's results;
 - an interpretation of the results in an appropriate context;
-

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- a summary of the contents of the project archive and its location (including summary catalogues of finds and samples);
- site layout plans on an OS base, with the location of the trenches etc;
- scaled plans of each trench/area of investigated works and each area in which archaeological features were recognised;
- trench sections and feature sections (with OD heights);
- site matrices where appropriate;
- a consideration of evidence within its wider context;
- a summary table and descriptive text showing the features, classes and numbers of artefacts located, and soil profiles, with interpretation;
- an evaluation of the methodology employed and the results obtained (i.e. a confidence rating);

~~3.40~~3.43 Publication of the results will be required, even if negative. Reports with no archaeological findings will be included as a note in a local journal (such as South Midlands Archaeology).

~~3.41~~3.44 Reports that do not provide sufficient information or that have not been compiled in accordance with the relevant sections of this specification will be returned to the Archaeological Contractor for revision and resubmission.

~~3.42~~3.45 The finds recovered during the course of the investigation will be described, quantified and assessed by artefact type within the report. The report will also indicate the potential of each category of artefact for further analysis and research. For each category of artefact the report will describe the method of processing, any sub-sampling, conservation and assessment undertaken. Where appropriate local reference collections will be referred to for descriptive and analytical consistency. Any implications for future archive, conservation or discard of the artefacts will also be detailed.

~~3.43~~3.46 The report will include a table showing the contexts, classes and quantity of artefacts recovered, together with their date and interpretation.

~~3.44~~3.47 The report will include an assessment of the environmental potential of the site. Details will be provided of any environmental sampling undertaken in connection with the fieldwork and the results of any processing and assessment of the samples. The report will describe the method of processing, any sub-sampling and assessment. Any potential for future analysis of the samples or environmental remains recovered from the investigation will be described. Implications for future archive, conservation or discard of environmental samples or remains will be detailed.

~~3.45~~3.48 The report will include, as appropriate, tables summarising environmental samples taken, together with the results of processing and assessment.

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~~3.46~~3.49 Any results from the application of archaeological scientific techniques e.g. specialist dating will be included in the assessment report.

~~3.47~~3.50 The report will include an assessment of the results of the archaeological investigations and their potential to address both the original research aims and objectives of the project and any further research objectives identified during the course of the on-site and post excavation works.

~~3.48~~3.51 The report will include a detailed proposal for any further analysis necessary on the project records, artefact and environmental assemblages to achieve the research potential of the site. A justification will be included for each analysis proposed.

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- ~~3.49~~3.52 All report illustrations must be fully captioned and scale drawings must include a bar scale. Standard archaeological drawing conventions must be used. Plan and section illustrations must include the numbers of all contexts illustrated. North must be included on all plans. Sections must indicate the orientation of the section and the Ordnance Datum height of the section datum.
- ~~3.50~~3.53 Black & White or Colour photographs will be included to illustrate the archaeology of the site, the development operations or the range of soil profiles encountered. All photographs will be appropriately captioned.
- ~~3.51~~3.54 The report will be submitted to the local planning authority's archaeological advisor in digital format. The digital copy will be supplied for preference in .pdfa format or alternatively in .rtf format accompanied by digital copies of images, plans and maps in .bmp, .tif or .jpg format.
- ~~3.52~~3.55 A draft of the report will be submitted to the local planning authority's advisor for initial comment/approval prior to completion and submission. Copies of the finalised publication report will be distributed to the Oxfordshire HER, Historic England Archive, the client and ~~RPS~~Tetra Tech Consulting. A further copy of the publication report will be required to form part of the project archive.
- ~~3.53~~3.56 Details of the project are to be submitted to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological investigations) database, along with a digital version of the completed publication report, within 12-18 months of the completion of all archaeological site investigations.
- ~~3.54~~3.57 The site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the project, is to be prepared in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*. Arrangements for the deposition of the site archive will be agreed in writing with the Oxfordshire Museums Service.
- ~~3.55~~3.58 The integrity of the site archive should be maintained. The archive of all records and finds must be prepared consistent with the principles set out in the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) English Heritage 2006. It will include all materials recovered (or the comprehensive record of such materials) and all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent. It will also contain a site matrix, a site summary and brief written observations on the artefactual and environmental data.
- ~~3.56~~3.59 Prior to formal deposition of the archive, it will be required to be temporarily stored by the Archaeological Contractor in a suitable location and condition, such to ensure that no part of the archive will suffer degradation. The archive is to be deposited promptly with the receiving museum as and when their capacity to receive such is established, following which it will then become publicly accessible.
- ~~3.57~~3.60 Any digital archive generated by the archaeological works will be compiled in accordance with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) standards and guidelines. It will consist of:
- All relevant born-digital data (images, survey data, digital correspondence, site data collected digitally etc.); and;
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- Digital copies made of all other relevant written and drawn data produced and/or collected during fieldwork and as part of the subsequent post-excavation analysis phase.

~~3-58~~ 3.61 The digital archive will be deposited with the ADS within three months of acceptance of the final report/publication.

~~3-59~~ 3.62 Any spatial data generated will be submitted to the HER in a suitable GIS format (shapefile, Mapinfo, TAB etc.).

Data Management Plan

~~3.60~~[3.63](#) The archaeological contractor undertaking the fieldwork will provide as part of their method statement a Data Management Plan. The Data Management Plan will describe the type of data that will be acquired and/or generated during the project, the way the data will be managed and stored, and the mechanisms to be employed to preserve and share the data.

Provisional Programme

~~3.61~~[3.64](#) A detailed timetable for site works has not yet been agreed. The LPA's Archaeological Advisor will be notified at least two weeks prior to commencement of work on site.

Monitoring

~~3.62~~[3.65](#) Reasonable access to the site is to be arranged for the LPA's Archaeological Advisor (or their representative), to make site inspections to ensure that the archaeological investigations are progressing satisfactorily. Two weeks' notice will be given to the LPA Archaeological Advisor to arrange a site visit. No parts of the excavation area will be handed back to the developer until they have been signed off by the LPA Archaeological Advisor.

~~3.63~~[3.66](#) An up-to-date site plan will be provided prior to site meetings.

~~3.64~~[3.67](#) Arrangements for all meetings will be made by ~~RPS~~[Tetra Tech](#).

Public Benefits

~~3.65~~[3.68](#) As ClfA accredited archaeologists, *"we have accepted a responsibility to conserve the historic environment, to use it economically to provide reliable information and to disseminate the results of our work. We have also made an ethical commitment to promote the value of the historic environment and to engage with the public to include, inform and inspire"* (ClfA). Some examples of public benefits can include:

- Involve community groups, period or thematic research groups, metal detecting clubs, Young Archaeologists, local schools etc. in fieldwork, finds or archive work
 - Training programmes for local groups and volunteers
 - Site tours and/or open days
 - Community talks
 - Site blog, website, newspaper articles, podcasts
 - Site noticeboard with details of latest discoveries
 - Local exhibitions
 - Community newsletter
 - Popular publications, leaflets, interpretations panels
 - Reconstruction drawings
-

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- Heritage trails
- Web-based publication, open access
- Facilitated access to archives

3.663.69 An outreach strategy will be agreed with OCAS prior to the final sign-off of the project.

Opportunities for public benefits, such as the examples above, will be explored during the project pending the results of the works, and taking into consideration the site's accessibility and health and safety implications.

4 GENERAL SITE REQUIREMENTS

Archaeological Contractor

- 4.1 The Archaeological Contractor will be a ClfA Registered Archaeological Organisation.
- 4.2 The field team deployed by the Archaeological Contractor will include only full time professional archaeological staff. All staff in supervisory positions should be members, at an appropriate level, of the ClfA.
- 4.3 The Archaeological Contractor's method statement will include a list of specialists which may be drawn on for their expertise. Any additional specialists will be agreed with OCAS.
- 4.3.4 The composition of the project team must be detailed and agreed in advance with **RPS**Tetra Tech (this is to include any subcontractors).
- 4.4.5 The following statutory provisions and codes of practice are to be adhered to where relevant:
- all statutory provisions and by-laws relating to the work in question, especially the Health and Safety at Work *etc* Act 1974;
 - the ClfA Code of Conduct;
 - the ClfA Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology;
 - the Country Code.

Copyright

- 4.5.4.6 It is recognised that the copyright of written, graphic and photographic records and the report rests with the originating body. However, **RPS**Tetra Tech and their client require an agreement to facilitate the copying and use of any or all materials resulting from this project.

Variations

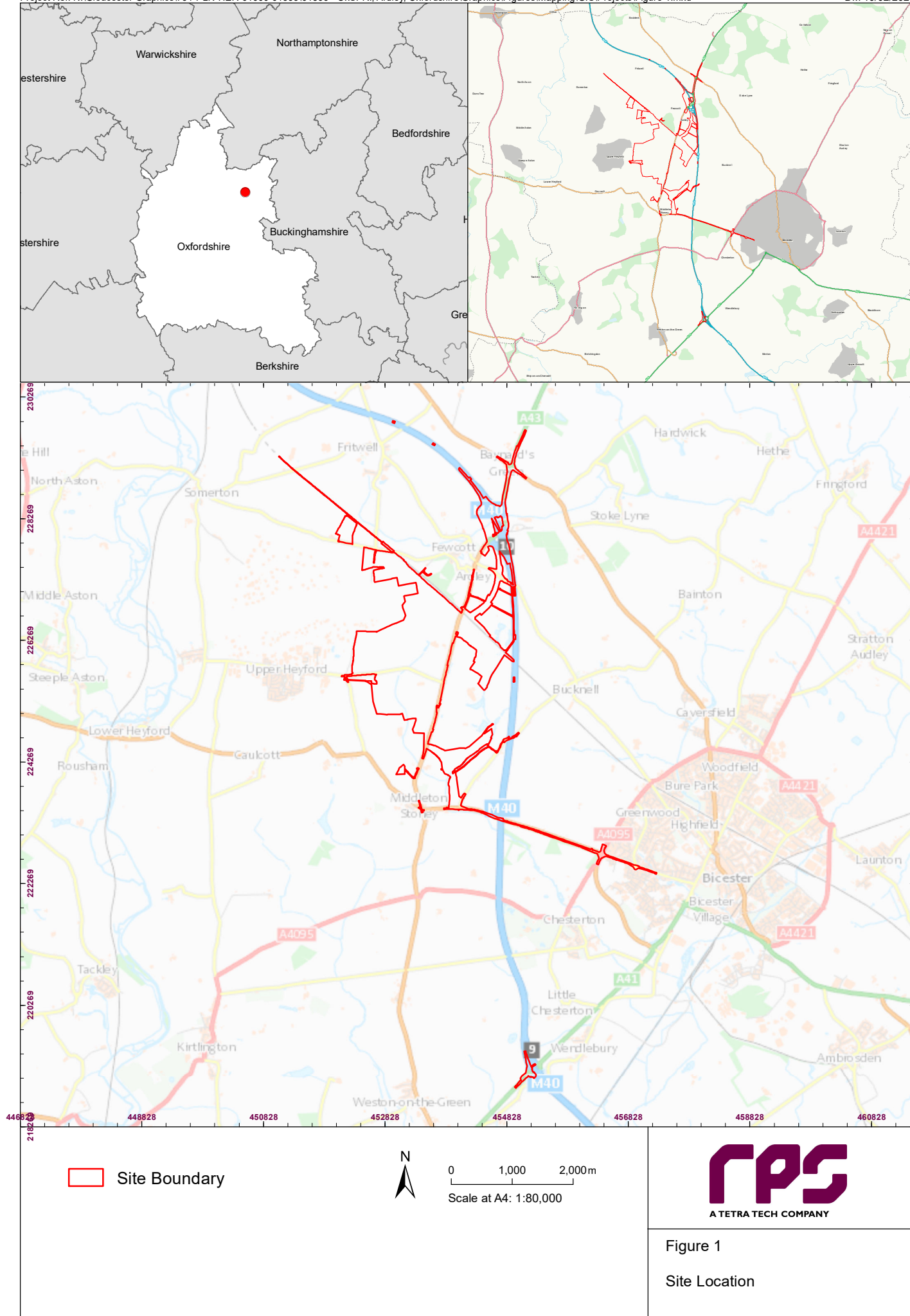
- 4.6.4.7 Variations to this Written Scheme of Investigation that the Archaeological Contractor may wish to make must be approved, in advance, by **RPS**Tetra Tech, the client, and the LPA's Archaeological Advisor.

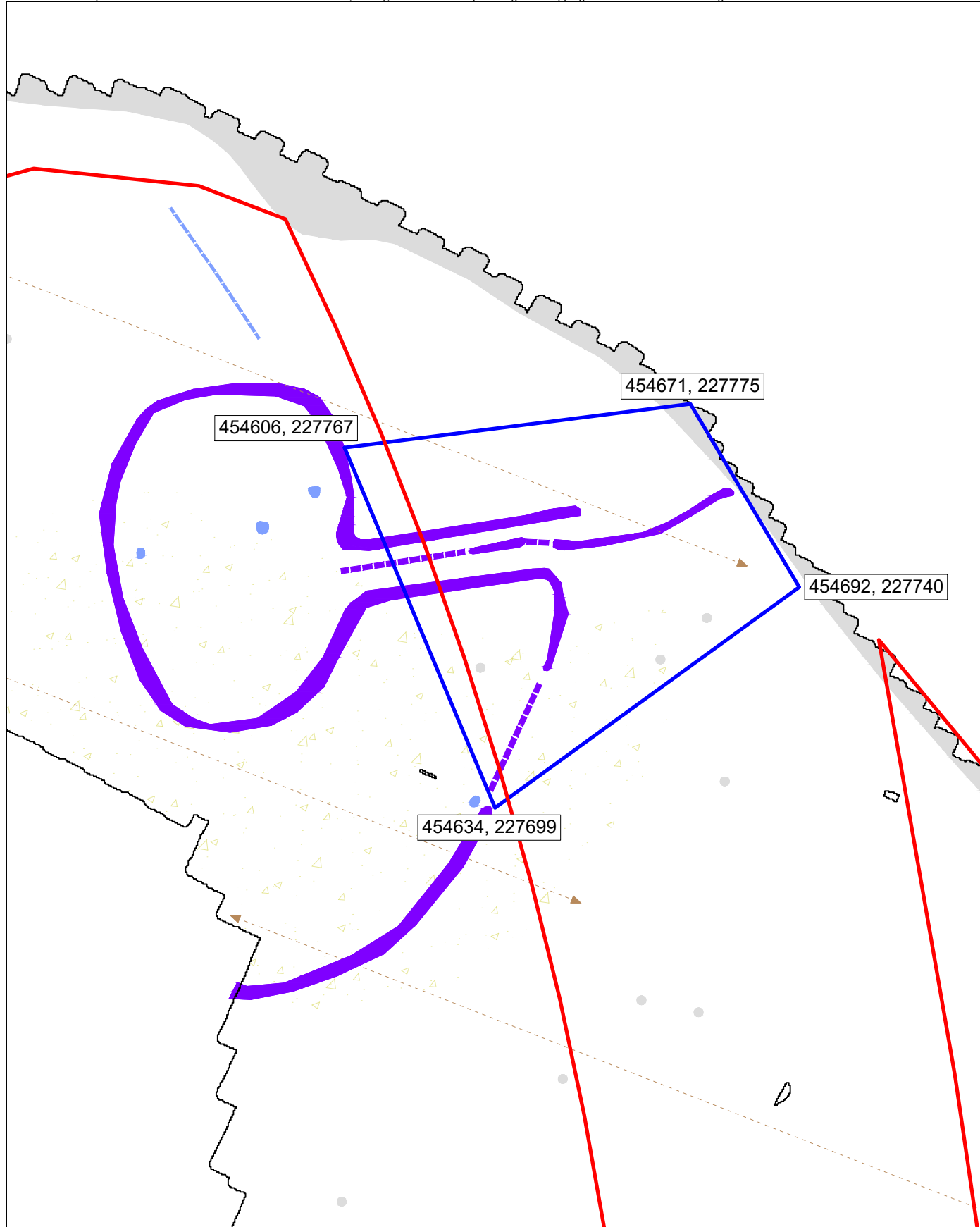
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5 HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 All relevant health and safety regulations must be followed including, but not exclusively:
- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974),
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999),
 - Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002),
 - The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (2015), and
 - The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (2013).
- 5.2 A risk assessment will be prepared by the archaeological contractor and a copy will be sent to [RPS Tetra Tech](#) and the client prior to commencement of the contract. Where a site is operating under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (2015), all works will be implemented in accordance with a Construction Phase Plan prepared by a Principal Contractor.
- 5.3 Machinery will be kept away from unsupported edges and access routes will be supervised and controlled. Hi-visibility plastic mesh and warning notices will be installed as appropriate. Safety helmets, safety footwear and high visibility jackets are to be used by all personnel as necessary.
- 5.4 The client will supply all necessary information to the archaeological contractor concerning live services on the site. Where live services may be suspected, on the basis of this information, within the area of the site to be stripped, this area will be scanned with a CAT Scanner prior to and during topsoil and subsoil removal works. Extreme care will be taken to ensure that any services located are avoided.
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Archaeological Mitigation Strategy





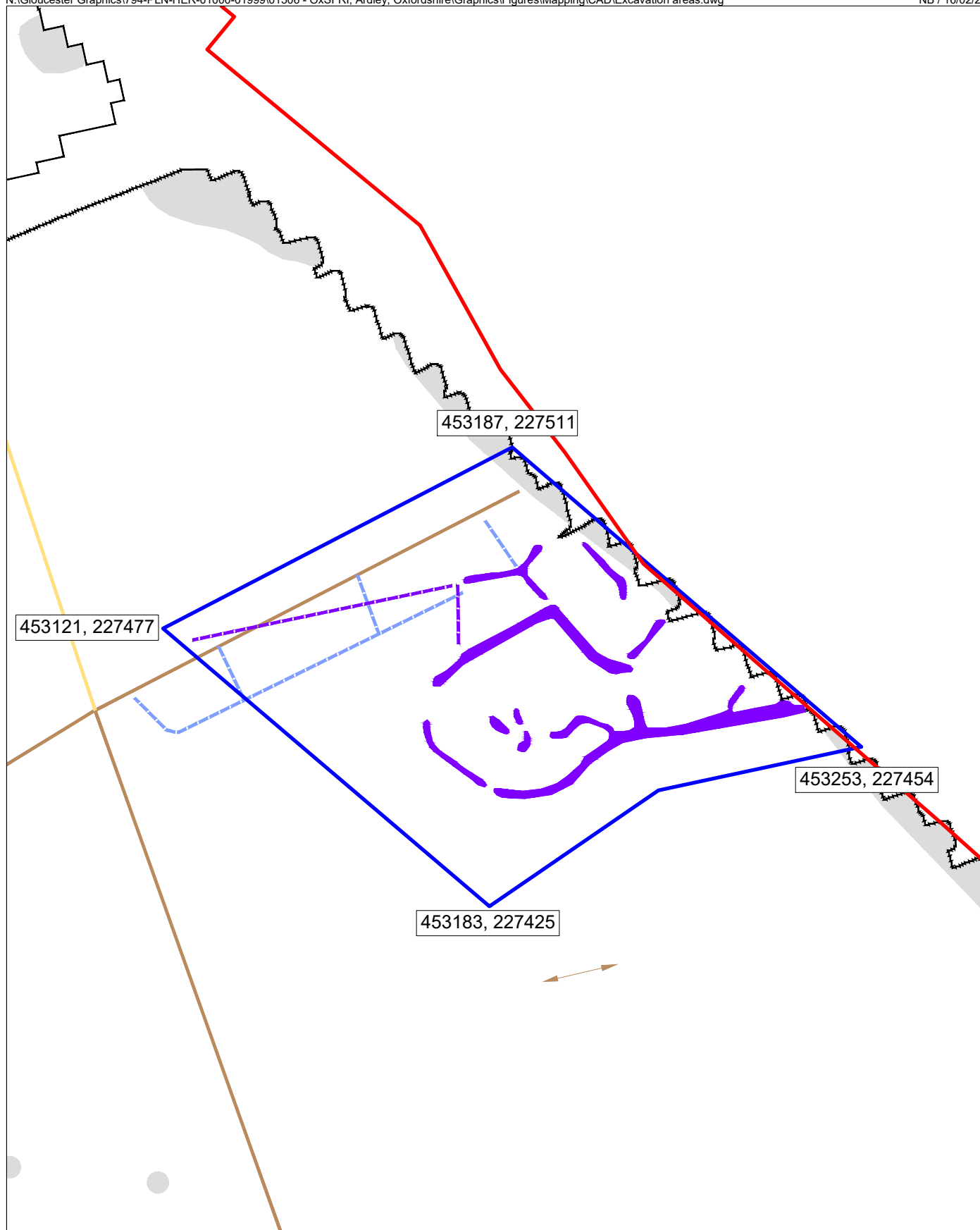
- Site Boundary
- Excavation Area



0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 2
Excavation Area 1



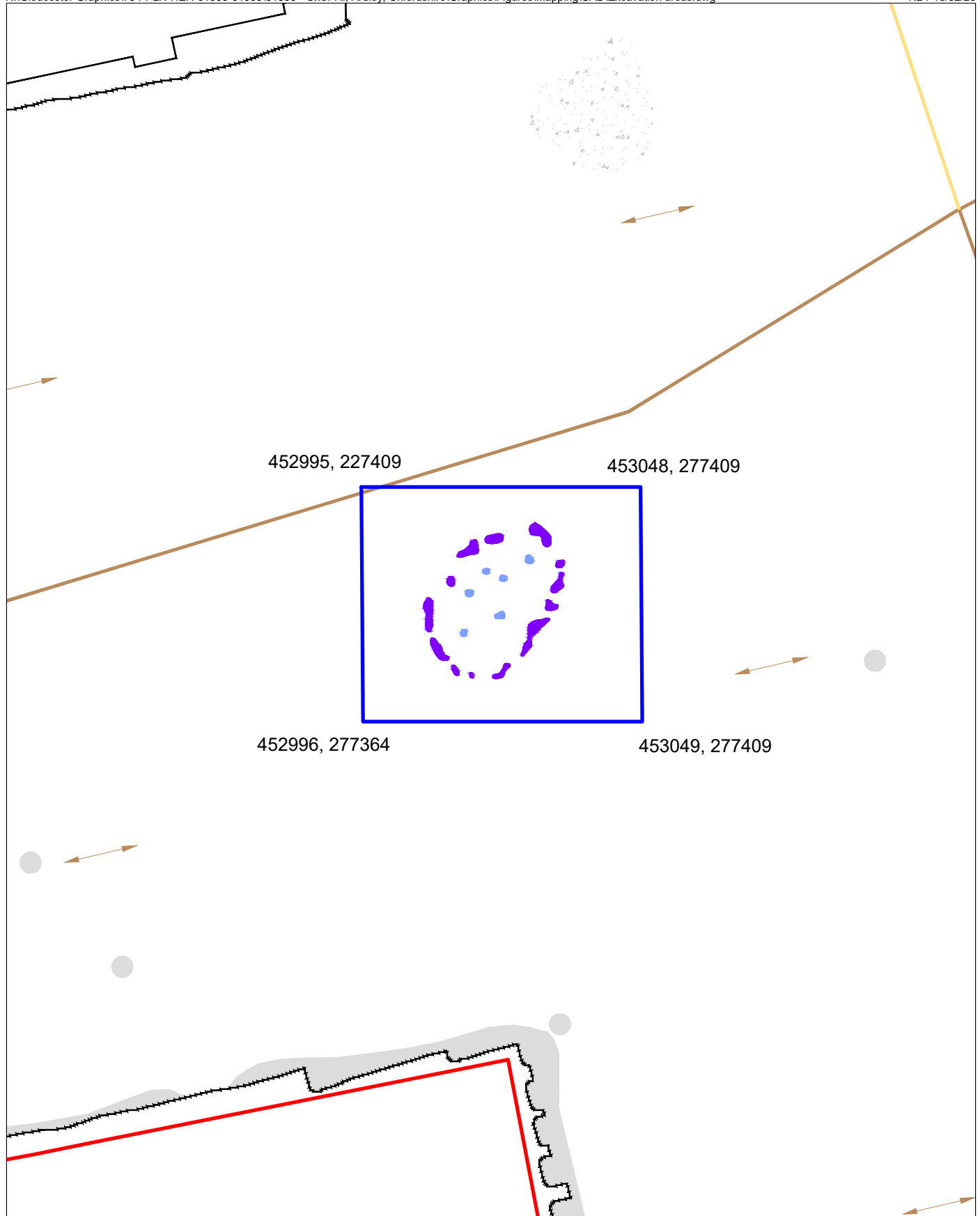
 Site Boundary
 Excavation Area



0 10 20m
 Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 3
Excavation Area 2



- Site Boundary
- Excavation Area

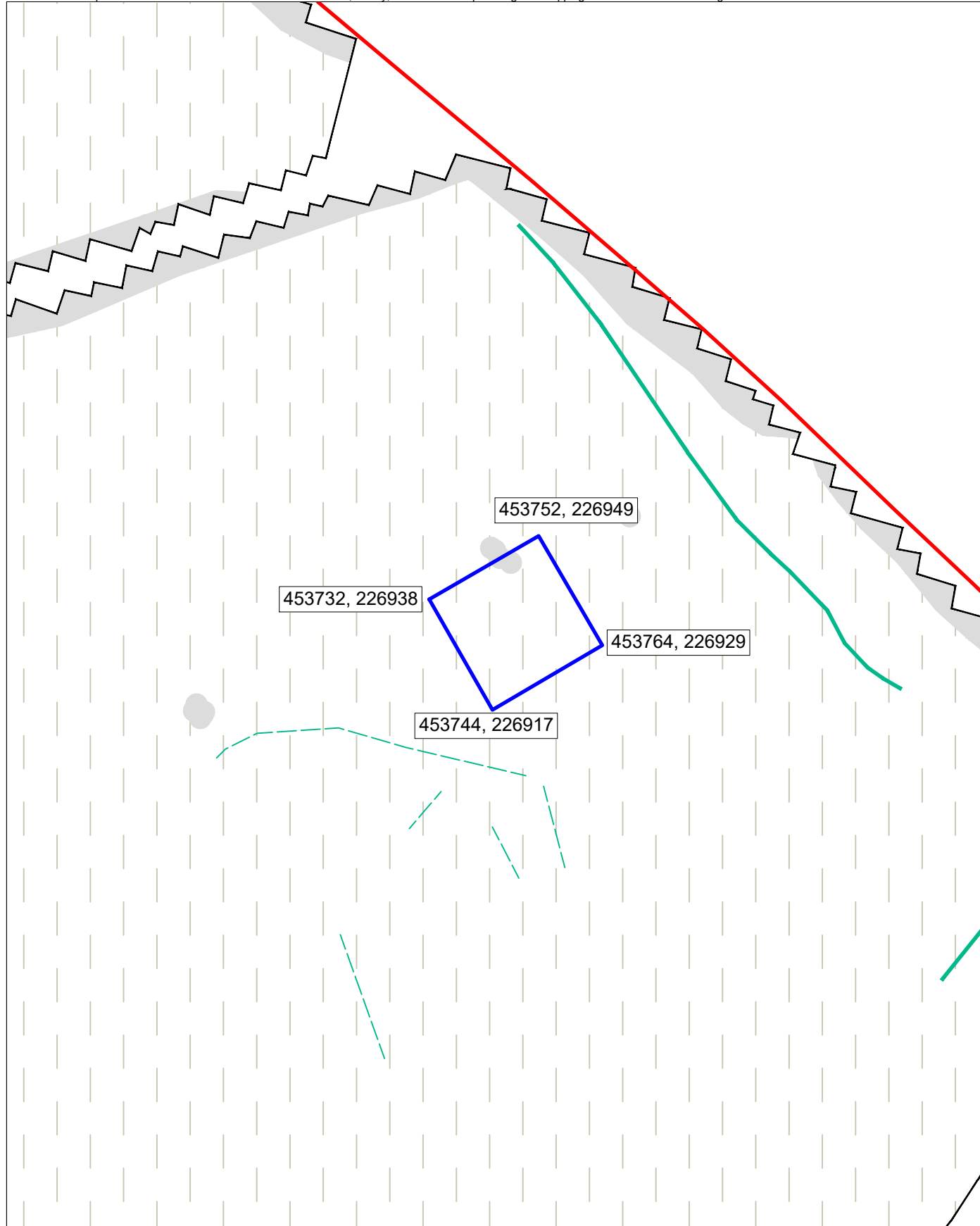


0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 4

Excavation Area 3



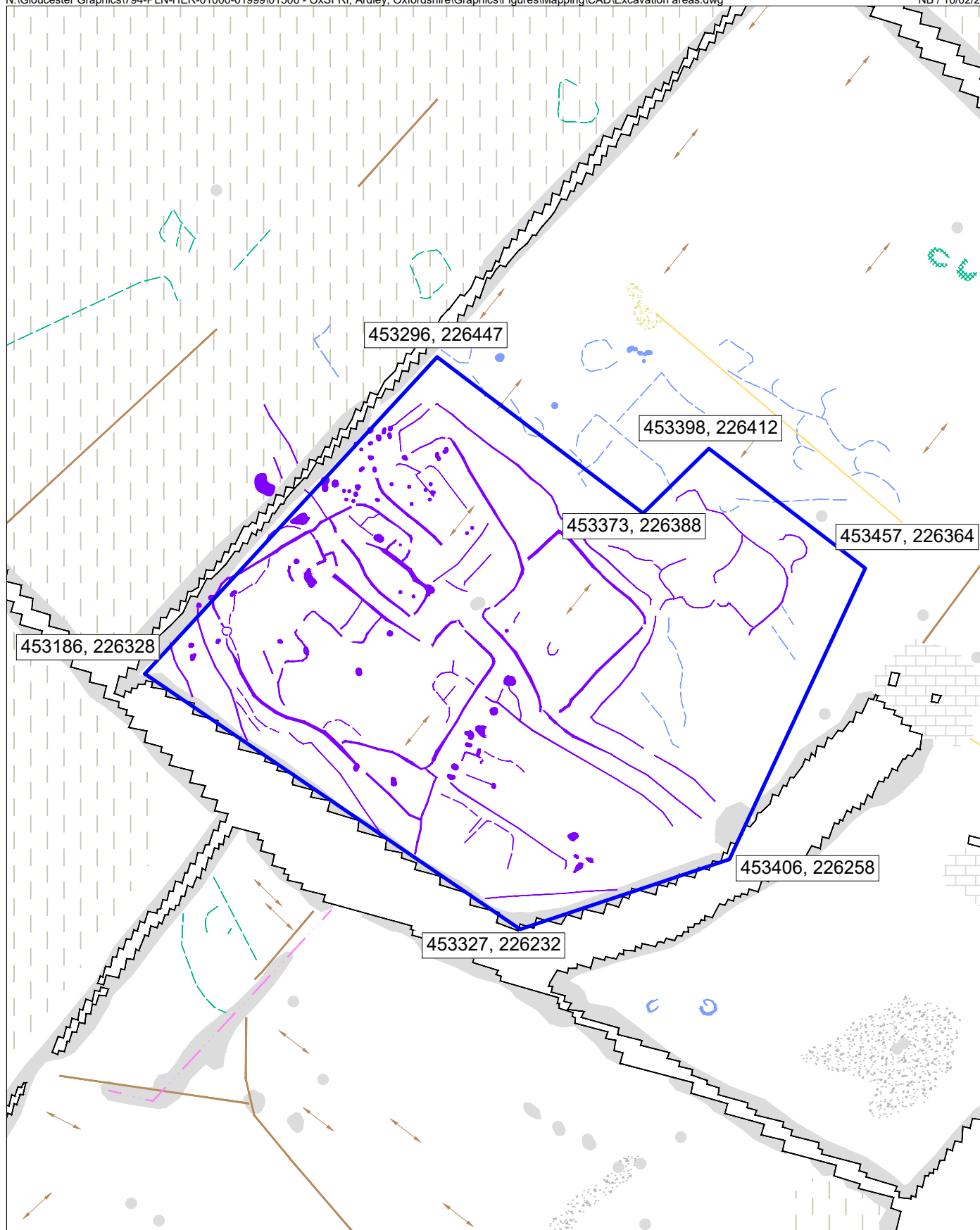
- Site Boundary
- Excavation Area



0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 5
Excavation Area 4



- Site Boundary
- Excavation Area

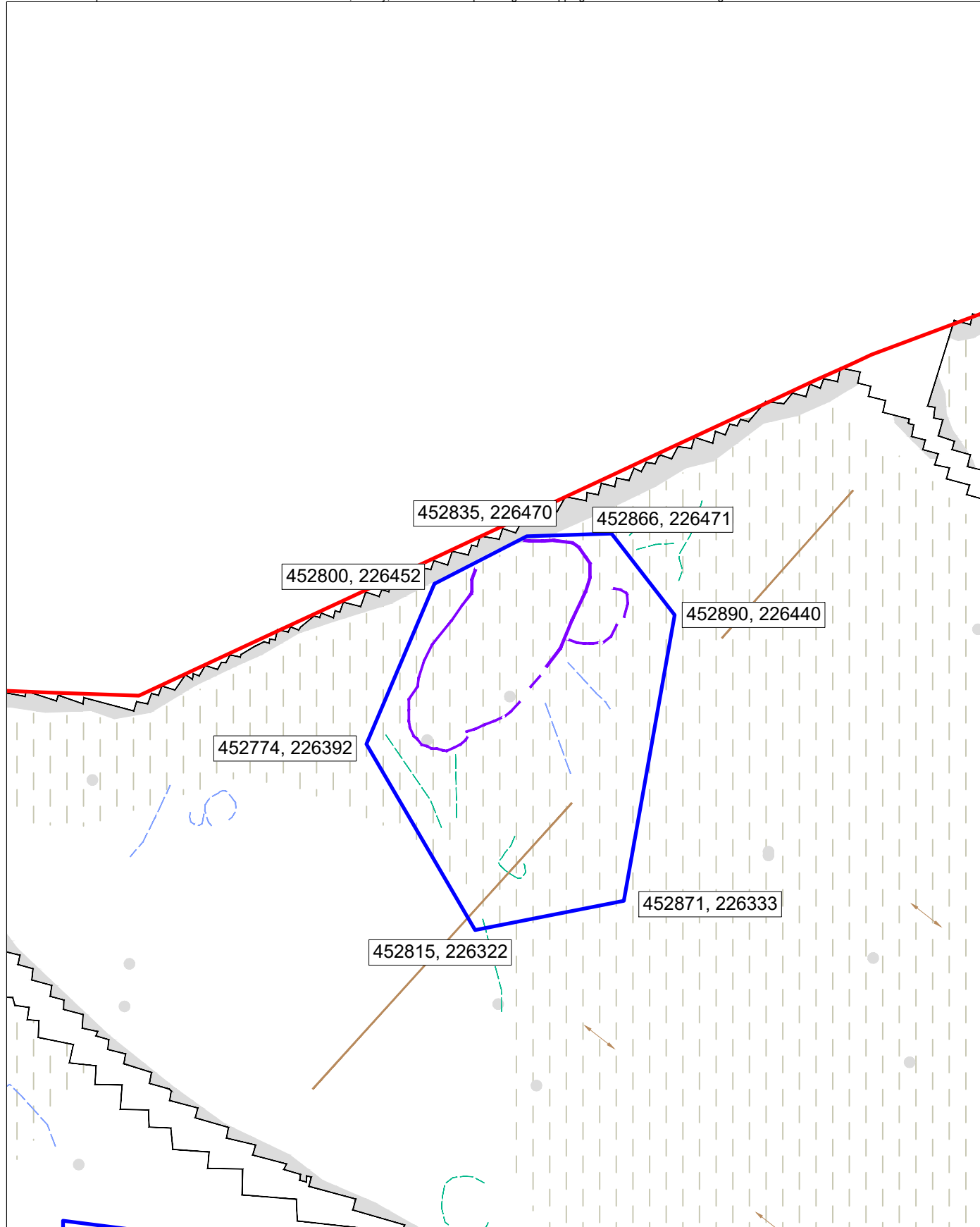


0 10 20 30 40 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,000



Figure 6

Excavation Area 5



-  Site Boundary
-  Excavation Area

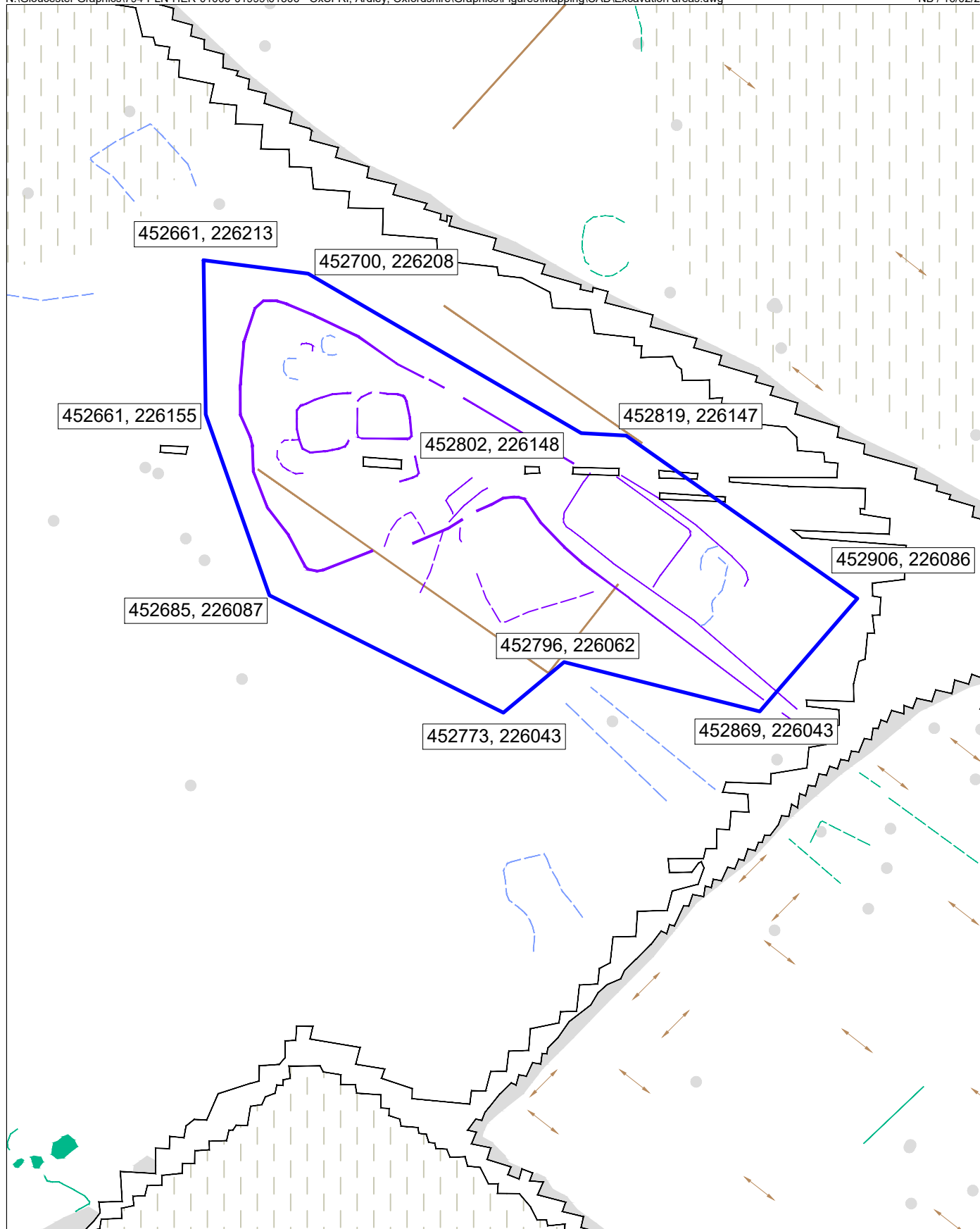


0 10 20 30 40 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,000

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Figure 7

Excavation Area 6



- Site Boundary
- Excavation Area

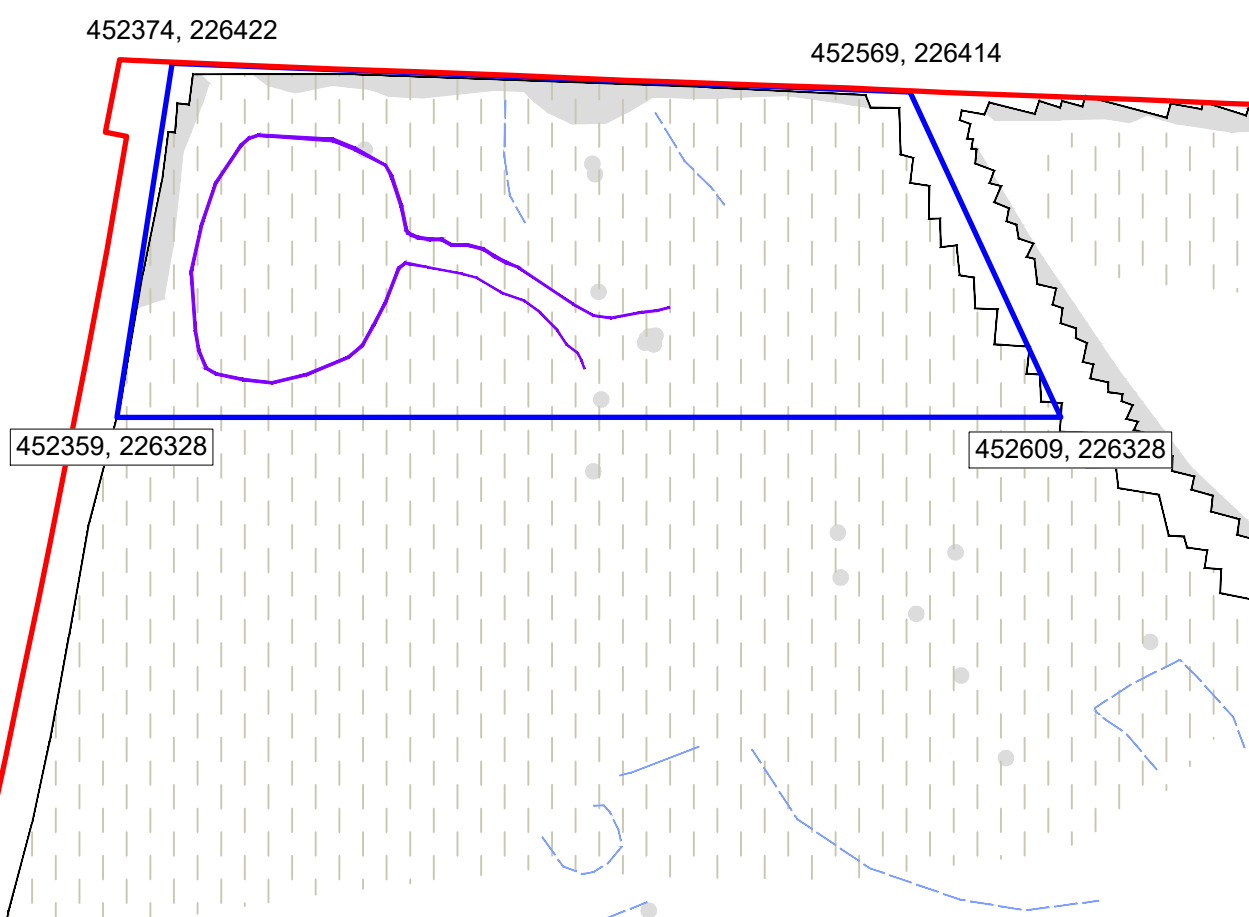


0 10 20 30 40 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,000



Figure 8

Excavation Area 7



 Site Boundary

 Excavation Area



0 10 20 30 40 50m

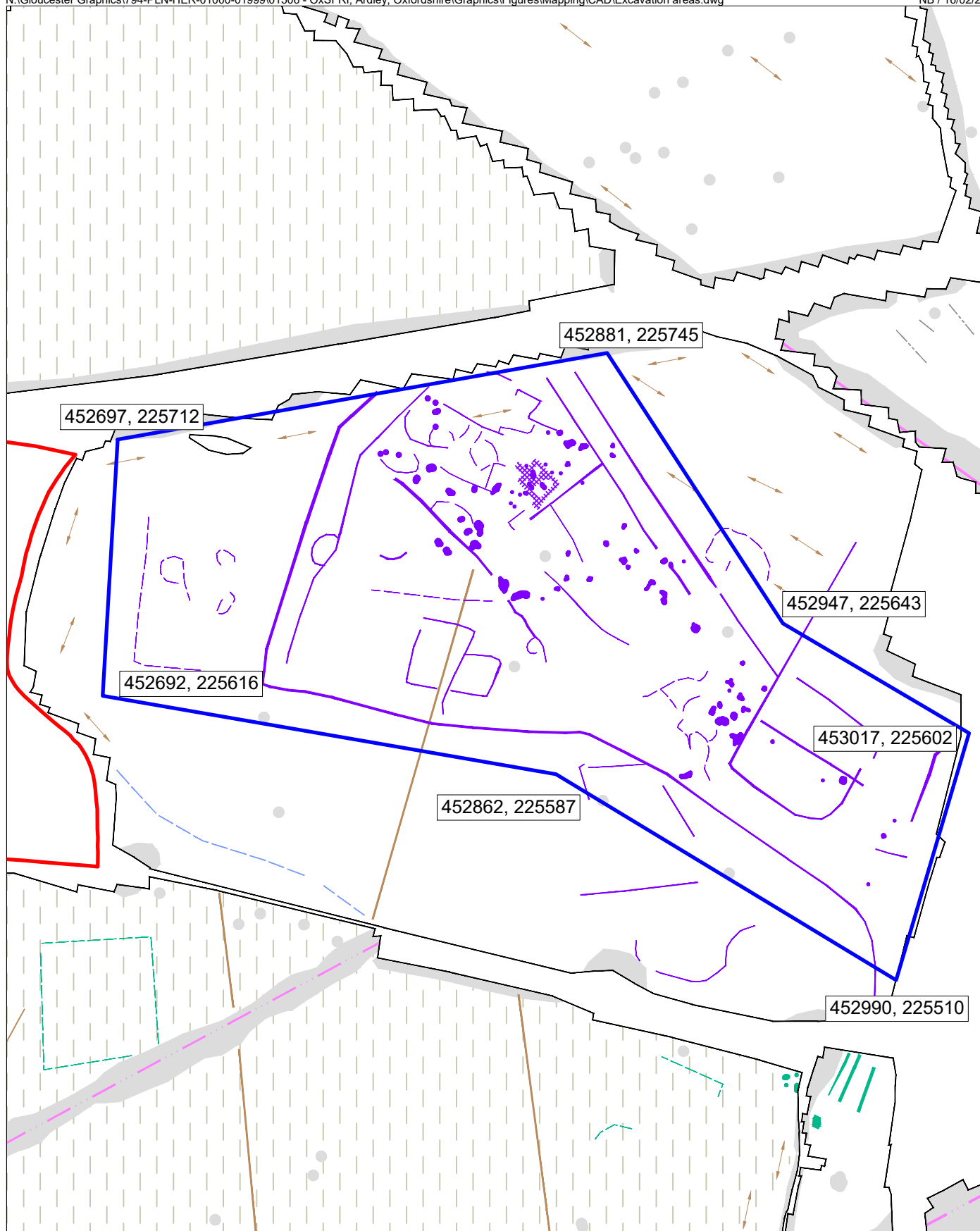
Scale at A4: 1:2,000

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Figure 9

Excavation Area 8



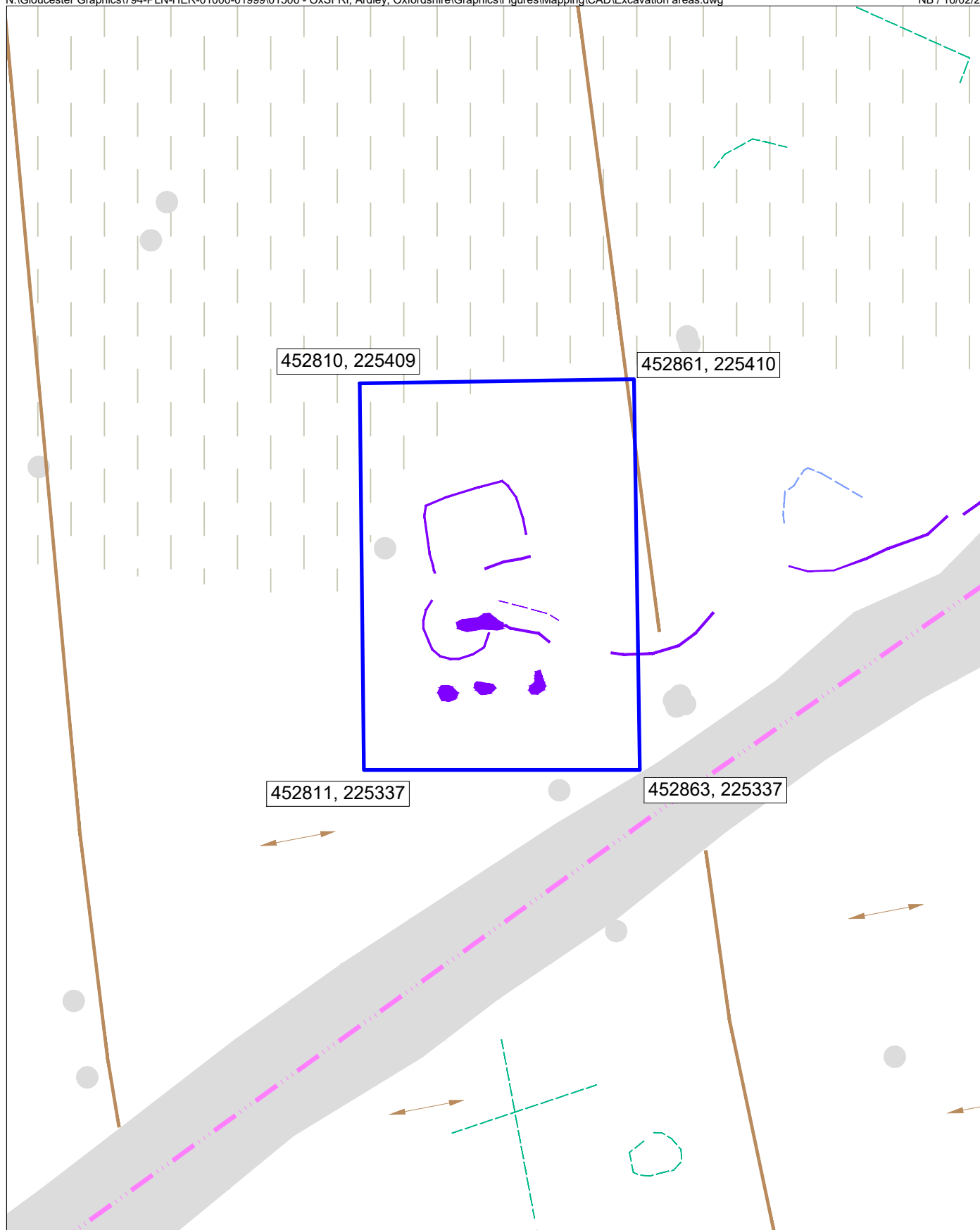
- Site Boundary
- Excavation Area



0 10 20 30 40 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,000



Figure 10
Excavation Area 9



- Site Boundary
- Excavation Area

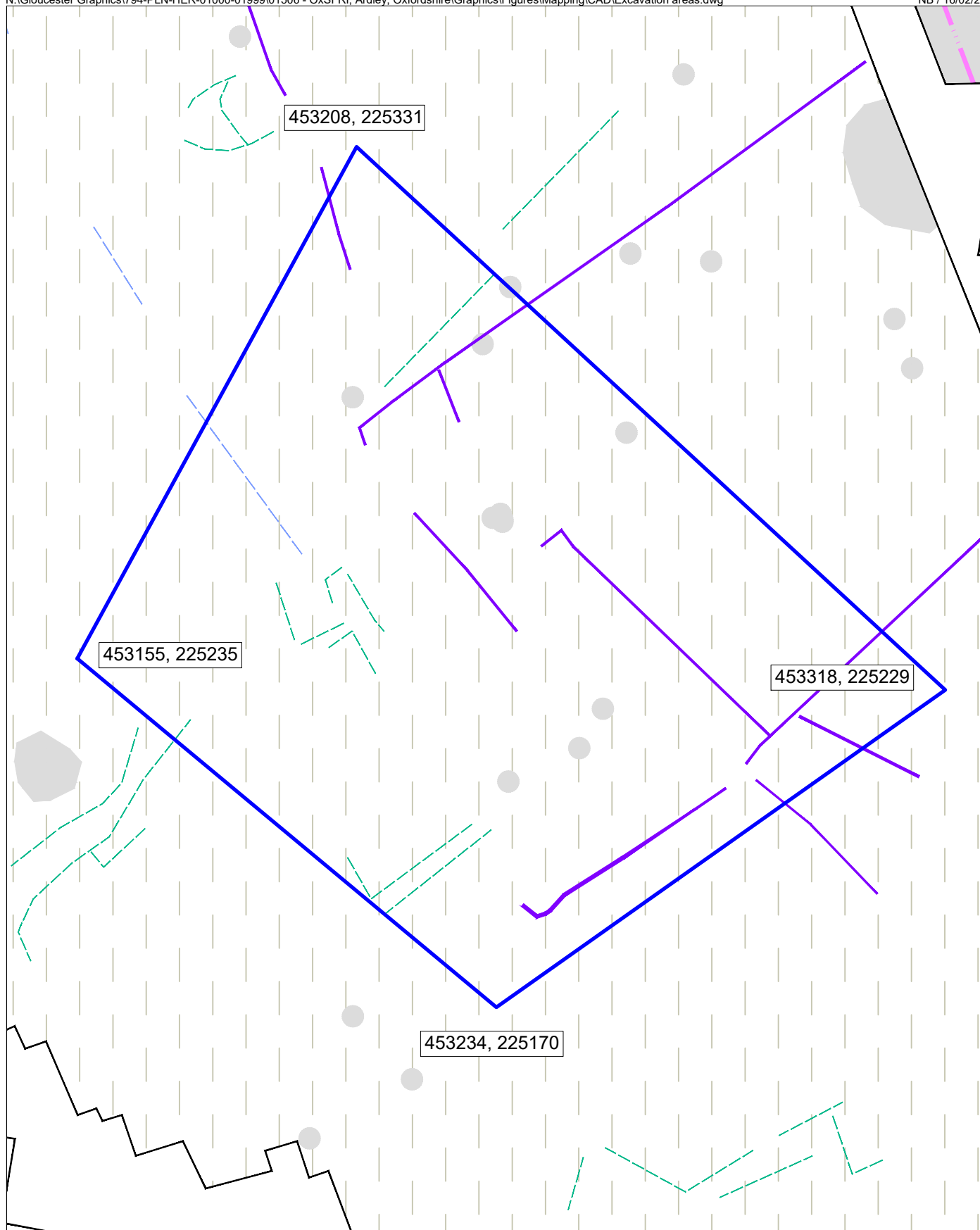


0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 11

Excavation Area 10



- Site Boundary
- Excavation Area

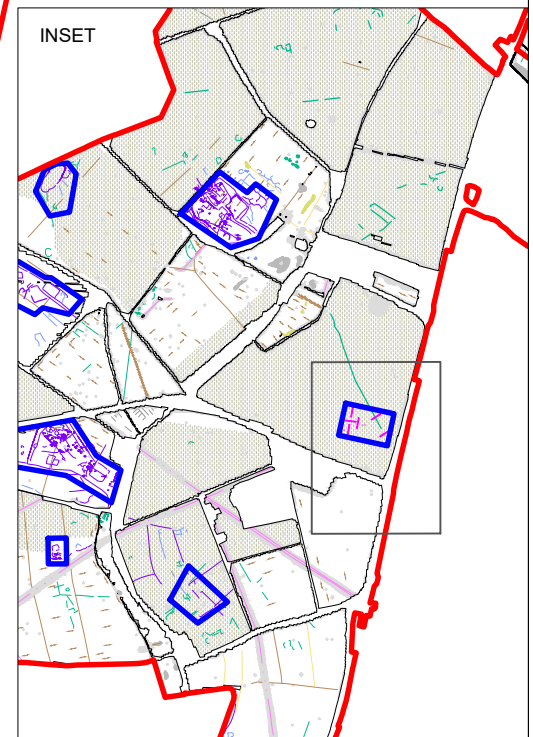
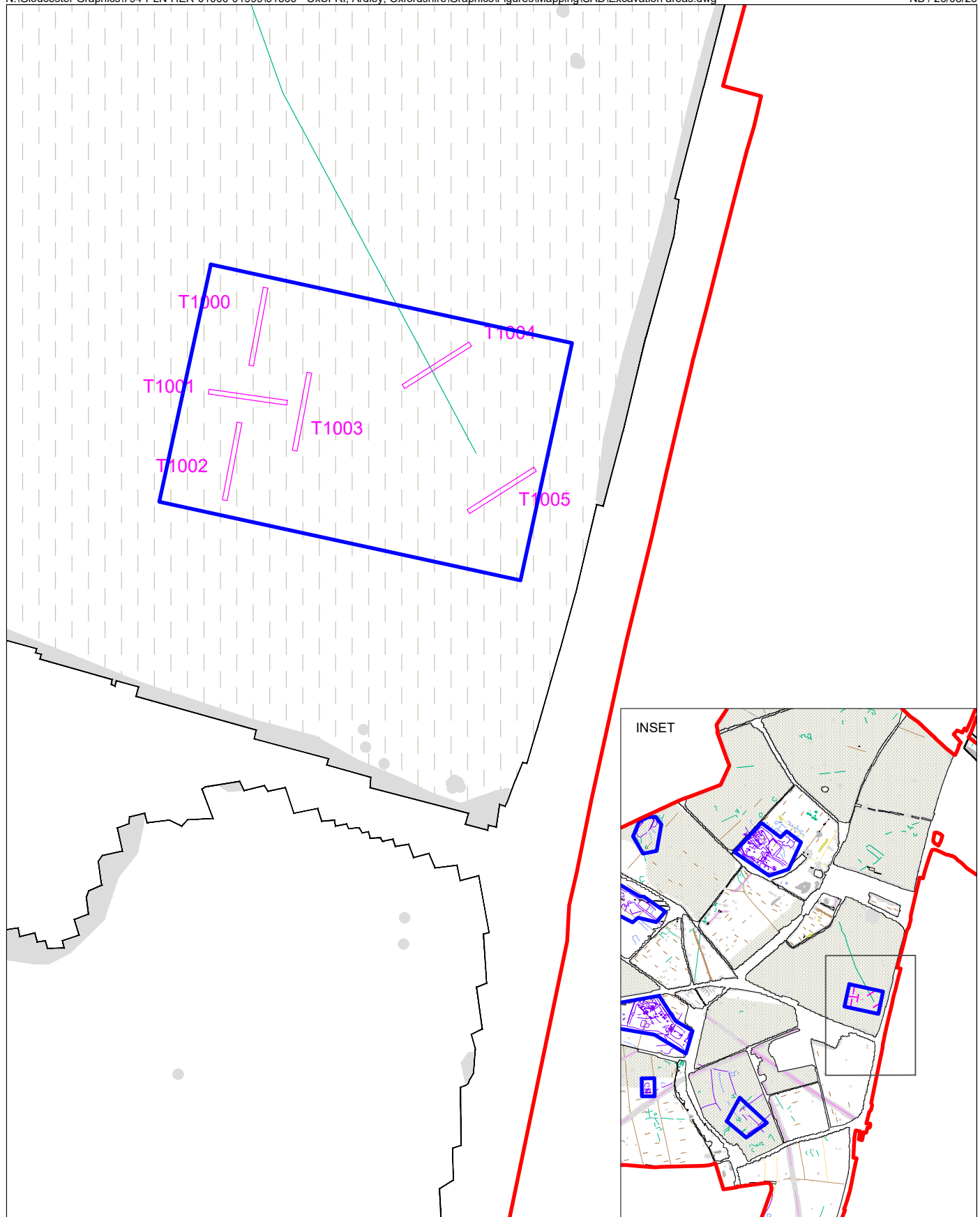


0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 12

Excavation Area 11



-  Site Boundary
-  Trial Trench (30m x 1.8m)
-  Excavation Area



0 10 20 30 40 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,000

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Figure 13

Proposed Trial Trenching