

# Chesterton Station Guided Busway Connection Cambridge



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



March 2014

**Client: Balfour Beatty for  
Cambridgeshire County Council**

OA East Report No: 1606  
OASIS No: oxfordar3-173743  
NGR: 547102, 261064

## **Chesterton Station Guided Busway Connection, Cambridge**

### *Archaeological Watching Brief*

*Site Code: CAMGBC14*

*CHER No.: ECB 4137*

*NGR: 547102, 261064*

*Date of Works: 5th to 7th March 2014*

*Report No.: 1606*

*Author: Louise Bush*

*Client: Balfour Beatty for Cambridgeshire County Council*

*Report Date: March 2014*

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## **Summary**

*Between the 5th and 7th March 2014, Oxford Archaeology East carried out an archaeological watching brief along the proposed route of the Guided Busway (547102, 261064). The monitoring was carried out during the excavation of eight slip trenches along the c.700m long disused railway line. No preserved archaeological deposits were seen. Modern made-ground was encountered in every trench to a depth of approximately 1.2m below modern ground level.*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted along a disused railway track which is the proposed route of the Cambridge Guided Busway (547102, 261064) (Fig. 1).

This archaeological watching brief was carried out under the request of Andy Thomas of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET), supplemented by a Specification written by OA East (Macaulay 2014).

- 1.1.2 The work was designated to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.3 The site archive is currently held with OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county store in due course.

### 1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located on the north-east side of Chesterton village, 3.5km north-east of Cambridge railway station and 0.9km south of the A14. The site is around 18m wide and runs for approximately 700m from Milton Road in a south-east direction to the site of the new Chesterton Station (Plate 1) and lies at a height of around 6m OD.
- 1.2.2 The superficial geological deposits on the site consist of river terrace sands and gravels. These overlie a solid geology of Gault Formation Mudstone (British Geological Survey <http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer>).

### 1.3 Archaeological Background

- 1.3.1 The following archaeological summary is taken from the Chesterton Station Sidings Desk-Based Assessment (Clover 2012):

#### ***Palaeolithic to Neolithic (700,000 BC to 2000 BC)***

- 1.3.2 A number of flint artefacts (such as had axes, flakes, blades and arrowheads) have been found in the vicinity of the site. These include at the Milton Road gravel pits (HER 05224), on Milton Road (MCB 19188 and HER 15219) and just across the river on Ditton Meadows (HER 05450 and HER 15451).

#### ***Bronze Age (2000 BC to 700 BC)***

- 1.3.3 There is evidence for Bronze Age activity all around the site. Two Late Bronze Age hoards were found in 1927 and 1931 within 200m of each other at Brown's gravel pit (HER 05452) close to the site. A Bronze spearhead was dredged up in 1930 from the river to the south of the site (HER 05228) and a Bronze Age pit was recorded during excavation on the site of the former Yorkshire Grey Public House in 2001 (HER 13018).

#### ***Iron Age (700 BC to AD 43)***

- 1.3.4 Evidence for Iron Age activity in the area around the site comes mainly from pottery finds. Several Belgic urns (one of which contained a cremation burial) were found at a gravel pit to the south-east of the site (HER 05539). Iron Age pits have also been

recorded at Brown's gravel pit (HER 05452A) 0.6km to the west of site. Belgic pottery is also recorded at being found in Stourbridge Common before 1929 (HER 04699).

### ***Roman (AD 43 to AD 410)***

- 1.3.5 The site lies 3km north-east of the Roman centre of Cambridge and 1.5km east of the Roman Road of Akeman Street/Mere Way. Between Akeman Street and the Railway sidings is the site of a Roman villa, now under Kings Hedges School. It would therefore be expected, especially given the sites proximity to the River Cam, that Roman settlement existed in the vicinity of the site.
- 1.3.6 Pottery of probably Roman date was found in a gravel quarry in the late 19th or early 20th century near the site (HER 05539A). More pottery has also been found in Stourbridge Common, near the railway bridge, in 1914 (HER 05227). An evaluation in 2006 at the Old Paper Mill on Ditton Walk (HER 17486) revealed a dense series of pits and ditches indicating possible Roman and Saxon occupation.

### ***Anglo-Saxon (AD 410 to 1066)***

- 1.3.7 There is only a small amount of evidence relating to the Anglo-Saxon period in the vicinity of site. An evaluation at the Former Yorkshire Grey Public House on Chesterton High Street in 2001 revealed Saxo-Norman property boundaries, land divisions, domestic pitting and the establishment of the front street (HER 13018). The earlier and later medieval periods were also seen on the site.

### ***Medieval (1066 to 1500)***

- 1.3.8 The site is situated between two medieval settlements – Chesterton and Fen Ditton. In Chesterton itself, pottery of a medieval date has been recovered from archaeological works at the Former Yorkshire Grey Public House (HER 13018) and from along the High Street (MCB 19703).
- 1.3.9 There is evidence still standing of medieval buildings in Fen Ditton, namely, the Church of St Mary the Virgin (HER 00325), the Old Rectory (HER 05293) and a 16th century barn (HER 05530), all of which are Grade II\* Listed Buildings. A medieval shaft well has also been found in the grounds of a pub (HER 05307). Earthworks of medieval house platforms (HER 05535) have been recorded to the north of Fen Ditton, showing evidence for the shrinkage of the original medieval village. Additionally, evidence for two medieval wharfs (HER 05305 and 05303) have been recorded in the River Cam.
- 1.3.10 There is no evidence of medieval settlement on the site itself and is likely to have been fields during this period. This is reinforced by the discovery of ridge and furrow (MCB 15918) at an evaluation in the adjacent Science Park in 1999.

## **1.4 Previous Archaeological Works**

- 1.4.1 In September 2012 OA East carried out a watching brief on Ground Investigation works at Chesterton Station Sidings (to the immediate south-east of site). A total of 30 were monitored. These did not reveal any preserved archaeological deposits. Modern made ground was encountered in every hole to a depth of between 0.8m and 2m below modern ground level.
- 1.4.2 Following this, in December 2012 OA East also carried out a series of test pits across the Sidings. The test pits measured 1.5m wide and between 2 and 2.4m long. Natural geology was encountered in three of the test pits in the south of the site, at a depth of 1.2m; no archaeological features were present. Two of these test pits contained layers

near the base which may have been the remnants of subsoil, which could pre-date the use of the site as railway sidings. The remaining test pits either flooded due to a high water table or contained made ground to a depth greater than 1.2m. Two further test pits which should have brought the total number to sixteen, were not excavated due to services or cables in the vicinity (Bush & Phillips 2013).

## **1.5 Acknowledgements**

- 1.5.1 The author would like to thank Balfour Beatty who commissioned the archaeological work and to Cambridgeshire County Council for funding it. Particular thanks go to Richard Torgbor of Balfour Beatty for his cooperation on site. The project was managed by Stephen Macaulay.

## **2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Aims**

- 2.1.1 The objective of this watching brief was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

### **2.2 Methodology**

- 2.2.1 Andy Thomas of CCC HET, as part of the works associated with the redevelopment of Chesterton Station, requested that monitoring be carried out during the excavation of slip trenches across the length of the site. These consisted of eight trenches, approximately 0.75m wide and 1.5m long with varying depths of between 1.5m and 4.5m.
- 2.2.2 During the excavation of the slip trenches, the environmental engineer took soil samples and recorded the strata encountered. Following this, the slip trenches were filled with water to ascertain the soakage potential.
- 2.2.3 Due to the great number of services and disused railway sleepers across the site, it was decided that the first 0.5m of each slip trench would be hand dug. The remainder was excavated by JCB.



### 3 RESULTS

- 3.1.1 During the watching brief, a total of eight slip trenches were monitored (Fig. 2). All of the trenches revealed modern made-ground throughout (Plate 2). This was made up of five separate layers of gravel mixed with ash and clinker with modern debris throughout. Natural blue clays were encountered beneath the modern make-up at an average depth of 1.2m below ground level. No finds were recovered.

### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The slip trenches suggest that the site is covered by modern make-up varying between 1.2m and 1.3m in thickness. No archaeological features or deposits which pre-date the use of the site as a railway were identified, the modern made-ground was seen to overlie directly upon the clay natural.
- 4.1.2 This would suggest that either no archaeological remains are present or that any archaeological remains, even if they had been present, have been truncated by later activity on the site.

## APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- British Geological Survey Available: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>  
Accessed 10th March 2014
- Bush, L. & Phillips, T. 2013 *Chesterton Station Sidings, Cambridge: Archaeological Watching Brief and Test Pit Evaluation*. OA East Report No. 1401.  
Unpublished
- Clover, K. 2012 *Chesterton Station Interchange, Chesterton Sidings, Cambridge*.  
OA East Report No. 1353. Unpublished
- Macaulay, S. 2014 *Specification for Archaeological Monitoring: Guided Busway Connection, Chesterton Station*. Unpublished

## APPENDIX B. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-173743			
Project Name	Chesterston Station guided busway connection, Cambridge			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	05-03-2014	Finish	07-03-2014
Previous Work (by OA East)	Yes	Future Work	Unknown	

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	CAMGBC14	Planning App. No.	
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	oxfordar3-136307

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt: Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5

### Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

### Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
N/A	None		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	South Cambridge	Disused railway off Milton Road Cambridge	
Parish	Milton		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	8,150 sqm	National Grid Reference	547102, 261064

## Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Andy Thomas
Project Design Originator	Stephen Macaulay
Project Manager	Stephen Macaulay
Supervisor	Louise Bush

## Project Archives

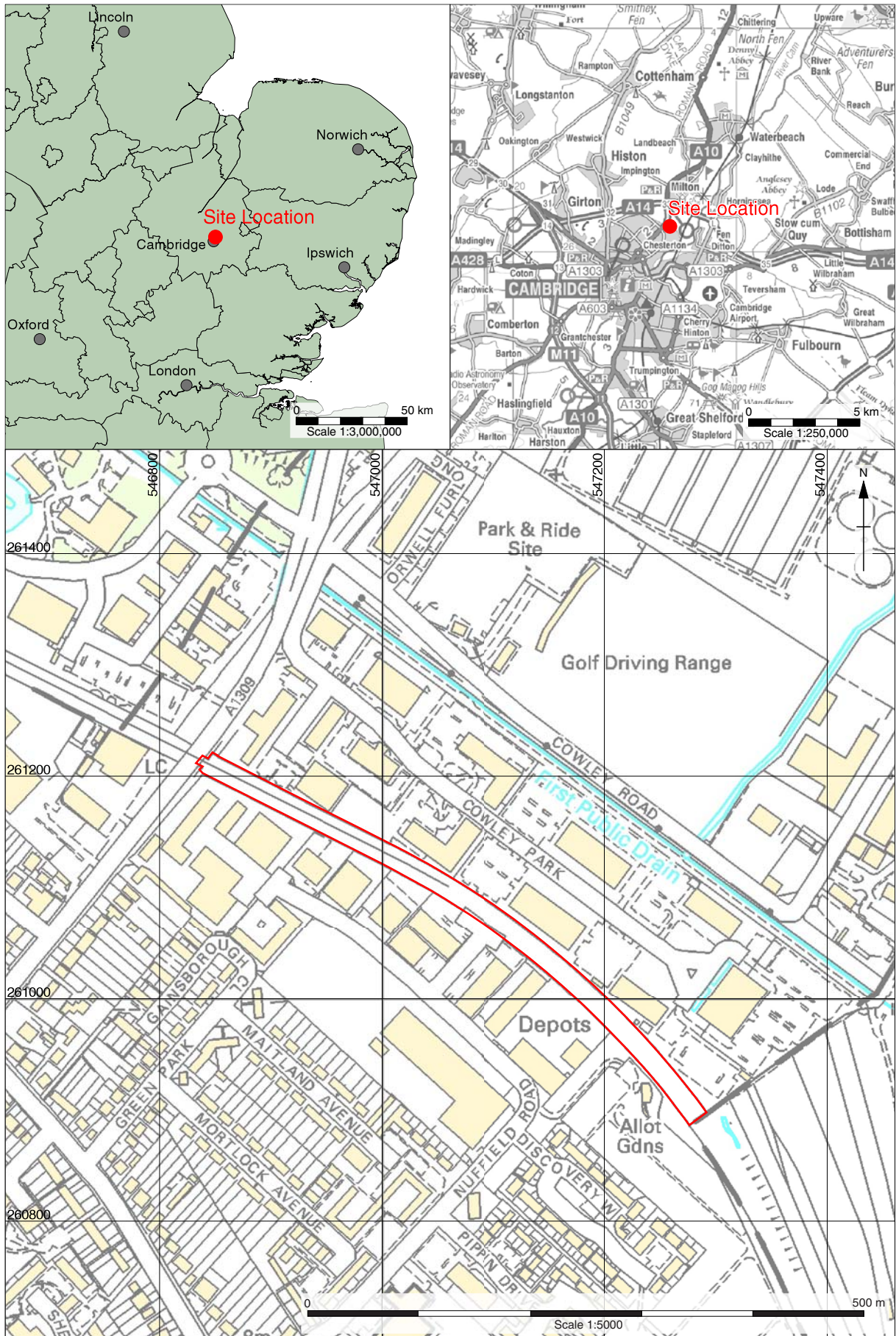
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CCC County Store	OA East	CCC County Store
CAMGBC14	CAMGBC14	CAMGBC14

## Archive Contents/Media

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

### Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location showing the development area outlined (red)

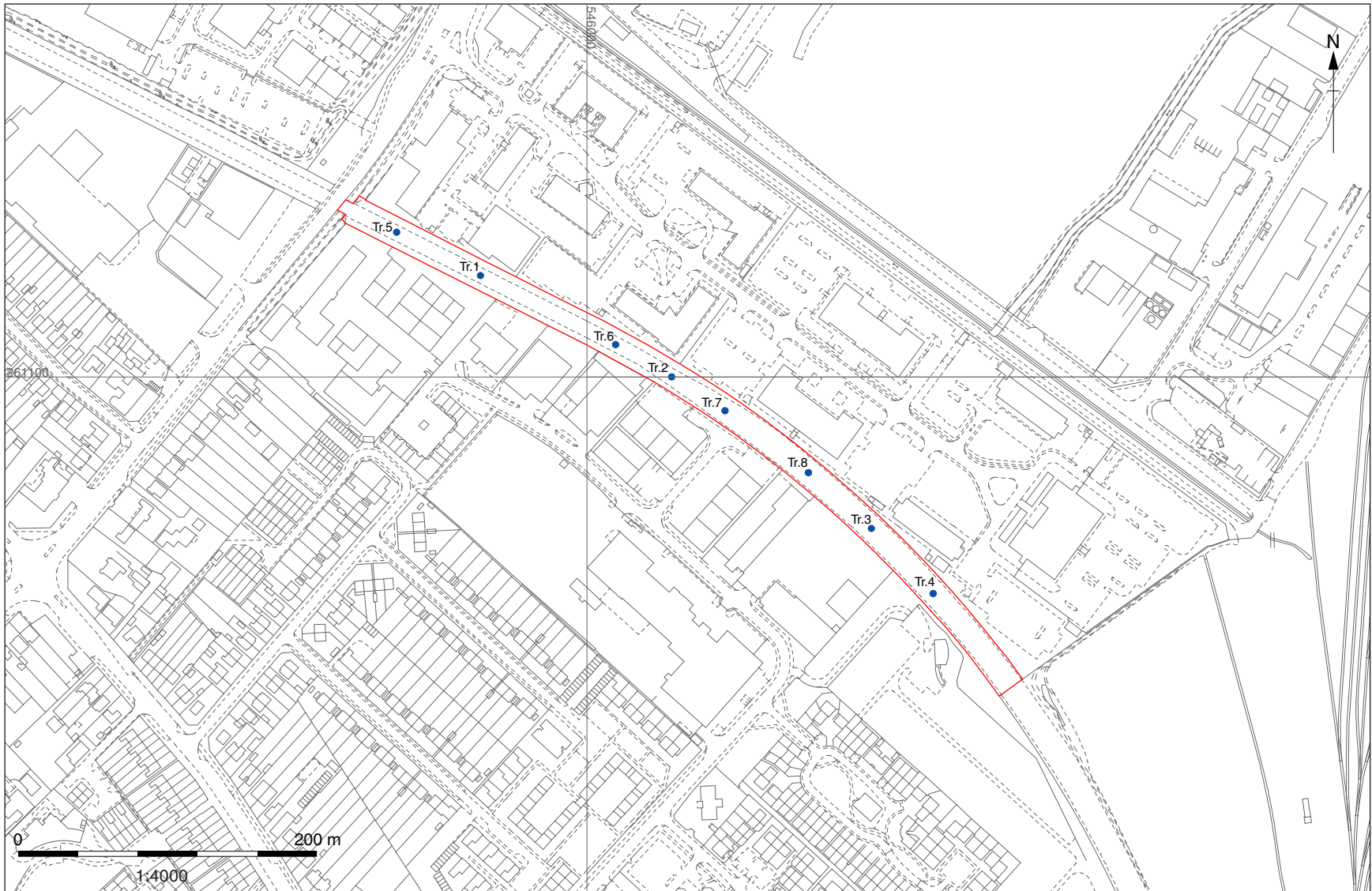


Figure 2: Plan of Slip Trench locations

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Plate 1: View down site (looking south-east)



Plate 2: Slip Trench 4



### **Head Office/Registered Office/ OA South**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800  
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496  
e: [info@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto:info@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

### **OA North**

Mill 3  
Moor Lane  
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000  
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606  
e: [oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

### **OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way  
Bar Hill  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500  
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



**Director:** Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MIFA  
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