

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Pulloxhill Water Treatment Works



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



May 2013

Client: Anglian Water

OA East Report No: 1466

OASIS No: oxford3-149352

NGR: TL 0803 3353

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Pulloxhill Water Treatment Works

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Report Date: May 2013

Report Number: 1466
Site Name: Pulloxhill WTW
HER Event No: -
Date of Works: April 2013
Client Name: Anglian Water
Client Ref: -
Planning Ref: -
Grid Ref: TL 0803 3353
Site Code: XBDPUL13
Finance Code: XBDPUL13
Receiving Body: Luton Museum
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Summary

On the 18th of April 2014 Oxford Archaeology East were commissioned to monitor and record three geological machine excavated test pits located on extant ridge and furrow cultivation on the site of the Anglian Water treatment works at Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire. One small east west linear ditch was noted in test pit three and modern disturbance in the area of test pit one.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at Pulloxhill water treatment works, Sandy Lane Pulloxhill, Bedfordshire TL 0803 3353
- 1.1.2 This archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken in accordance with advice from Martin Oake of Central Bedfordshire Council and a written Scheme of Investigation prepared by OA East.
- 1.1.3 The work was designed 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 *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by Central Bedfordshire Council, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies predominantly on Gault Formation Grey Mudstone overlain to the south-east of the site by alluvial deposits and along the south-west by Head deposits (BGS 1992). Sloping from north to south, the site lies at a maximum height of 57m OD, falling to 53m in the south-east corner. The River Flit runs west to east 4km to the north.
- 1.2.2 The proposed development area lies in the east of the parish of Pulloxhill, 1.5km to the south of the village of Silsoe. It consists of a field aligned north-west to south-east encompassing a total area of 1.68ha, separated into two plots, front and rear, by a fence. The site is bounded to the north-west by Sand Lane, to the north-east by New Inn Farm and to the south-east and south-west by a brook which forms a natural boundary with the surrounding farm land.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOURCES

2.1.1 Historical and archaeological background has been taken from the Earthwork Survey and Desk-Based Assessment produced for the site (Rees 2012)

2.2 Historical Sources

2.2.1 The site lies at the eastern limit of the parish of Pulloxhill but in the medieval period it is likely to have fallen in to the lands of the now deserted village that lies at Kitchen End (HER17015), 0.5km to the south-west. There is no historical evidence making direct reference to the site, however the place name, which appears in the 13th century as *Kechyng*, may have an Anglo-Saxon origin, deriving from *Cyccingas*, the followers of *Cuca* (HER787). Historical reference to the nearby manor of Upbury (HER244) appears for the first time after the Dissolution as part of the lands of Dunstable Priory, but is likely to have had an earlier origin as the manor of Pulloxhill, recorded in the Domesdays survey (Page 1908).

2.3 The Historic Environment Record (HER)

2.3.1 A search was carried out of the Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record for all records within 1km of the site (Figure 2). All of the records identified in this area relate to the medieval period or later with no evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity thus far having been recorded.

Deserted medieval villages

2.3.2 Three deserted medieval villages lie within 1km of the current site. The site of Faldo (HER241), 775m to the south-west, survives as earthworks, whilst those of Gagmansbury (HER17014), 700m to the the north-west, and Kitchen End (HER17015; HER4351; HER12852; HER 1488) 500m to the east, survive primarily as cropmarks seen on aerial photographs.

2.3.3 These villages probably had their origins in the 9th to 11th century when widespread nucleation of settlement occurred across the *champion* land of central England (Jones and Lewis 2012: 190). These nucleated villages typically had a series of planned rectangular fields associated with them. Abandonment of the villages appears to have occurred from the mid 14th century onwards although field systems may have remained in use.

Manors

2.3.4 The moated site of Upbury Manor (HER244), which is a scheduled monument (24416), survives as substantial earthworks adjacent to the remains of the Gagmansbury deserted medieval village, whilst cropmarks indicate that another moated site may lie 340m to the north-north-east of the current site (HER15089). It is likely that it was these manors which controlled the land which lies within the current site in the medieval period.

Ridge and Furrow

2.3.5 Medieval agricultural use of the land in the proposed development area has been identified in the form of ridge and furrow cultivation (HER3322; Section 3 below). This type of cultivation has been recorded by aerial photography on ten other sites in the search area and is particularly prominent in the fields adjacent to the north-east and south of the site, where 'S' shaped ridges typical of medieval 'open field' cultivation can be seen. This type of cultivation most commonly originated around the time of village

nucleation at the beginning of the medieval period (Edgeworth 2007:93; Williamson 2003: 65).

Listed Buildings

- 2.3.6 Two listed buildings exist within 500m of the site. Both Kitchen End Farmhouse (HER13814; 19/89) and New Inn Farmhouse (HER3790; 347/5/125) date to the post-medieval period.

Other sites

- 2.3.7 The Pulloxhill waterworks buildings themselves are recorded in the HER (HER16307; Plate 1).
- 2.3.8 The modern A6 road runs north to south 175m to the east of the site. This road (HER19561) was built as part of the turnpike toll road system in the early 18th century and was used as such until the later 19th century. It was probably due to the construction of this road that the *New Inn* was built directly to east of the current site. A designated ancient woodland stands 800m to the north of the site at Buckle Grove (HER13237). The site of a demolished post-medieval barn lies adjacent to the turnpike road to the north of the site (HER7798). A post-medieval wheelhouse (HER15314) is situated 300m south-east of the site. A brooch dating to the medieval period has been recovered from a field to the north-east of the site.

Archaeological Excavations

Cranfield University, Silsoe (Thatcher 2011)

- 2.3.9 No archaeological excavation have been carried out within 1km of the site, but extensive excavations at Cranfield University in Silsoe (TL 0791 3550), 1.5km to the north, have uncovered evidence of occupation dating from the Late pre-Roman Iron Age up to the post-medieval period. The majority of the features on the site appeared to date to the medieval period (AD1066 – AD1500).
- 2.3.10 A portion of a putative relict Roman field system lay in the northern part of the site, in close proximity to an Early - Middle Saxon Sunken Featured Building with associated pits, which may represent the re-use of pre-existing land boundaries by the Saxon populace.
- 2.3.11 During the medieval period it appears that the focus of activity shifted to the south with the loci of settlement activity appearing to be West End Road. A series of plot boundaries were recorded on either side of the road and lying within these a number of quarry and cess pits were recorded. In the southern part of the site a metalled surface was recorded that was aligned perpendicular to the road and this may have formed a trackway leading southwards.
- 2.3.12 The site climaxed during the 12th to 14th centuries and it seems that the medieval field boundaries and plots largely fell out of use during the post medieval period.
- 2.3.13 Neolithic and Bronze Age (FDB 8831) artefacts have been recovered elsewhere in the village whilst Roman roof tile, indicative of a substantial building in the vicinity, was recovered from Cranfield University playing field.

2.4 Prehistoric and Roman

- 2.4.1 No evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity has been located within 1km of the site, however the field system uncovered nearby at Silsoe indicates that there was activity in this area during this period. Given the often low-impact character of early prehistoric

activity it is possible that some archaeology of this date exists on the site. Ridge and furrow cultivation, which is present on and around the site, tends to mask earlier features leading to an under-representation of earlier periods in areas where this type of cultivation was prevalent. Where earlier periods are present preservation of features tends to be moderate to good.

- 2.4.2 Furrows located to the west of the western site boundary can be seen to run perpendicular to those identified within the site. This may be an indication that this field boundary pre-dates the ridge and furrow and so the boundary may be prehistoric in origin.
- 2.4.3 In summary prehistoric and Roman activity could be present in any part of the proposed development site but is likely to be on only a small scale.

2.5 Saxon and Medieval

- 2.5.1 Place name evidence from the surrounding villages, including Kitchen End, Pulloxhill and Silsoe indicates a Saxon presence in this area although no direct evidence of Saxon occupation has been uncovered.
- 2.5.2 Medieval archaeology in the form of up to eight 'S' shaped ridge and furrow cultivation strips are the primary remains known to be present on the site. Although disturbance occurred in the mid-late 20th century, earthworks still survive both to the front and rear of the site.
- 2.5.3 In summary evidence of medieval agriculture is present on the site to the east of the front plot and in the western part of the rear plot. The ridge and furrow survives to a maximum height of 0.50m and a maximum length of 89m and is a good example of medieval cultivation of this type.

2.6 Post-Medieval

- 2.6.1 Post-medieval remains relating to the agricultural use of the land (ridge and furrow, field boundaries and drainage works) could be present on any part of the site. However cartographic evidence indicates that no significant changes took place to the site in this period.
- 2.6.2 In summary there is potential for post-medieval archaeology across all undeveloped areas of the site but it likely to relate to agriculture rather than settlement.

2.7 Acknowledgements

- 2.7.1 The author would like to thank Bam Ritchie for the careful machine excavation of the test pits. Aileen Connor managed the project and Severine Bezie produced the illustrations for the report.

3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The archaeological monitoring is required to ensure that any archaeological remains found during the ground investigations are investigated and recorded to an acceptable standard.

3.2 Methodology

- 3.2.1 Three geotechnical investigation pits were located within the development area and were machine excavated to a depth of 3.0m
- 3.2.2 Machine excavation using a wheeled JCB-type excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was carried out by Bam Ritchie, in the presence of an archaeologist.
- 3.2.3 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 3.2.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 3.2.5 Site conditions varied from sunny to overcast .

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Test pits are discussed in numerical order and full dimensions of test pits and deposits are located in the context inventory (appendix A).

4.2 Test Pit 1 (fig 1)

- 4.2.1 Test pit 1 was situated to the east of the existing building and on the ridge of the extant ridge and furrow cultivation. It measured 3m x 0.45m x 3m. A natural geology of firm blue grey gault clay (103) was overlain by a light yellowy brown silty clay subsoil (102) that contained a moderate amount of small stones and flint. The test pit was capped by a dark grey silty top or plough soil and turf line (101). A moderate amount of bitumen and modern brick was noted within this layer. Given the amount of truncation occurring close by. This would have originated from the 20th century construction work carried out on the site.

4.3 Test Pit 2 (fig 1)

- 4.3.1 Test pit 2 was located To the south of the building and adjacent to access road. It measured 2.5m x 0.75m x 3m. The test pit was devoid of archaeology and consisted of a natural geology of firm blue grey gault clay (203) overlaying a light brown silty lay subsoil that contained a moderate amount of stones and flint. (202). The test pit was sealed by a dark grey silty top or plough soil (203) and turf line.

4.4 Test Pit 3 (fig 1)

- 4.4.1 Test pit 3 was located to the south of the building and close to the rear boundary of the water treatment works. I measured 3m x 0.75m x 3.75m. An underlying natural geology of firm blue grey gault clay (305) was overlain by a light yellowy brown silty clay subsoil (304). Cutting into this layer a small but reasonably deep linear feature thought to be a ditch, was noted (303) running on an east-west orientation. It had steeply sloping sides and a flattish bottom. The fill of the feature (302) was similar to 304, and differentiated only in being of a slightly darker hue. The contents of the feature were carefully examined but no evidence was found to date the feature. It did however lie below the ridge and furrow cultivation and must pre date the medieval ploughing. The test pit was capped by a dark grey silty top or plough soil (301) and a turf line.

4.5 Finds Summary

- 4.5.1 Finds consisted exclusively of modern brick and burned bitumen and were not retained.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 The three machine excavated technical investigation pits at the Pulloxhill WTW showed little evidence for archaeological features on the site other than a small east-west oriented ditch noted in test pit three. The extant ridge and furrow cultivation only showed signs of modern disturbance in one area. It is distinctly possible that other archaeological features may exist under the medieval cultivation.

5.2 Significance

- 5.2.1 The watching brief at the Pulloxhill WTW did show that the surviving ridge and furrow cultivation that exists on the site is relatively undisturbed and is potentially masking earlier features.

5.3 Recommendations

- 5.3.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Test pit 1						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Test pit one was situated to the east of the existing building and on the ridge of the extant ridge and furrow cultivation. Disturbed topsoil and subsoil were noted overlying a natural geology of gault clay.					Avg. depth (m)	3
					Width (m)	0.75
					Length (m)	3
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
101	Layer	3	0.48	Dark Grey silty topsoil		Modern brick and bitumen
102	Layer	3	0.65	Light brown silty clay		
103	Layer	2.8	2.1	Natural blue grey gault clay		
Test pit 2						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Test pit 2 was located To the south of the building and adjacent to access road. A silty topsoil and subsoil overlay a natural geology of gault clay					Avg. depth (m)	3
					Width (m)	0.75
					Length (m)	2.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
203	Layer	2.5	0.25	Dark Grey silty topsoil		
202	Layer	2.5	0.4	Light brown silty clay		
203	Natural	1.48	2.5	Natural blue grey gault clay		
Test pit 3						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Test pit 3 was located to the south of the building and close to the rear boundary of the water treatment works. A natural geology of gault clay was overlain by a silty clay subsoil and a silty topsoil. A small shallow feature was noted cutting into the subsoil layer.					Avg. depth (m)	3
					Width (m)	0.75
					Length (m)	3.75
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
301	Layer	3	0.4	Dark grey silty topsoil		
302	Fill	0.9	0.7	Fill of ditch		
303	Cut	0.9	0.7	Cut of ditch		
304	Layer	3.2	0.65	Light yellow brown subsoil		
305	Natural	3.5	2.2	Natural blue grey gault clay		

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- British Geological Survey 1992 *Leighton Buzzard. England and Wales Sheet 220: Solid and drift edition. 1:50,000.*
- Thatcher, C. 2011 *Saxon and Medieval settlement at Cranfield University, Silsoe, Bedfordshire. Post-Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design. OA East PXA report no. 1262*
- Rees, G. 2012 *Medieval Ridge and Furrow Cultivation at Pulloxhill Water Treatment Works. Earthwork Survey and Desk-Based Assessment*

APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxford3-149352		
Project Name	Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Pulloxhill Water Treatment works		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	18-04-2013	Finish	18-04-2013
Previous Work (by OA East)		Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XBDPUL13	Planning App. No.	
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Building Refurbishment/Repairs/Restoration

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

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
Linear feature	Uncertain	Brick	Modern 1901 to Present
	Select period...	Bitumen	Modern 1901 to Present
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Bedfordshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Pulloxhill	Pulloxhill Water Treatment works Sandy Lane Pulloxhill Bedfordshire
Parish	Pulloxhill	
HER	Bedford	
Study Area	15sqm	National Grid Reference TL 0803 3353

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Central Bedfordshire Council
Project Design Originator	Oxford Archaeology East
Project Manager	Aileen Connor
Supervisor	James Fairbairn

Project Archives

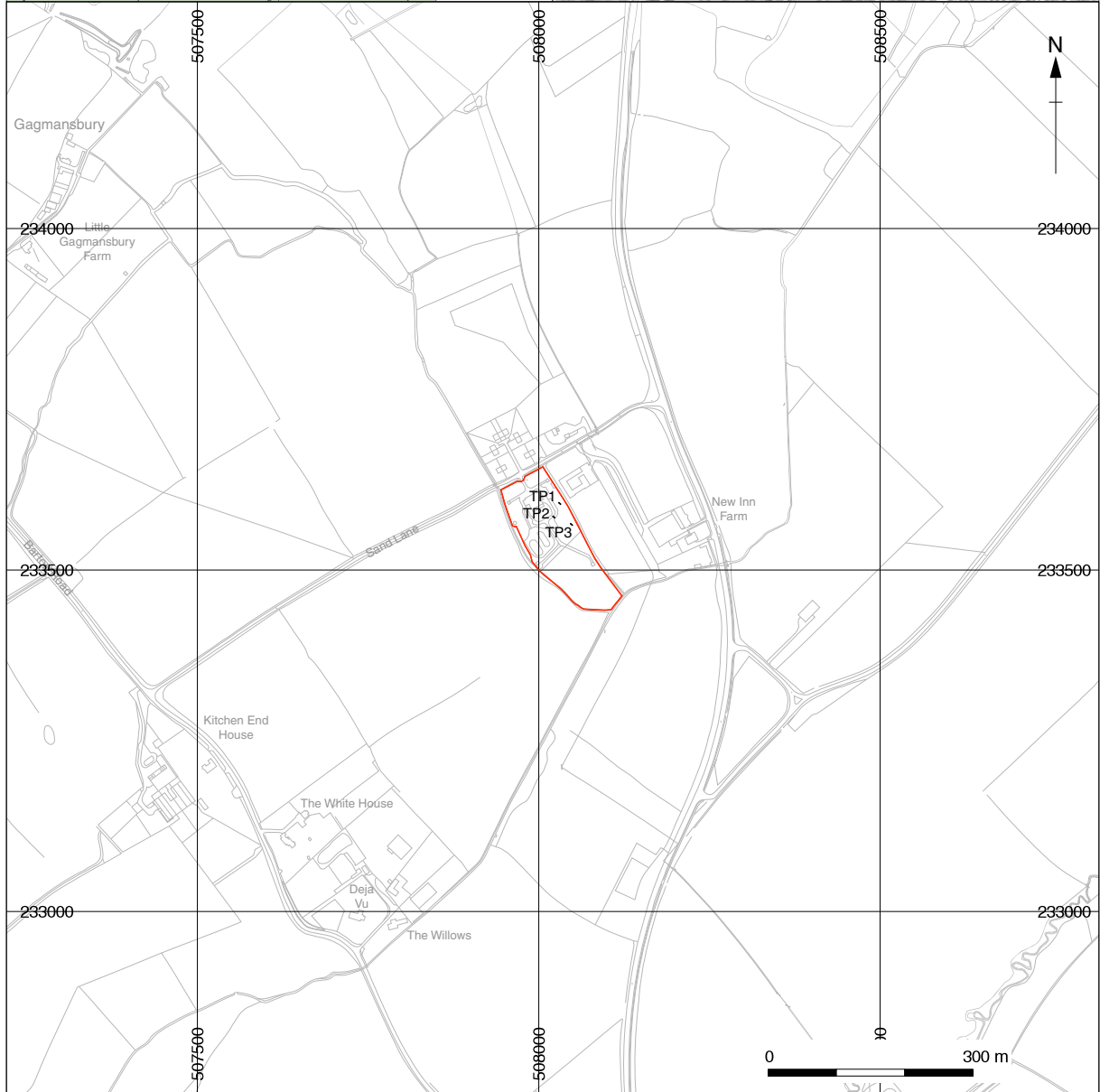
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
OA East	OA East	OA EAst
XBDPUL13	XBDPUL13	XBDPUL13

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location

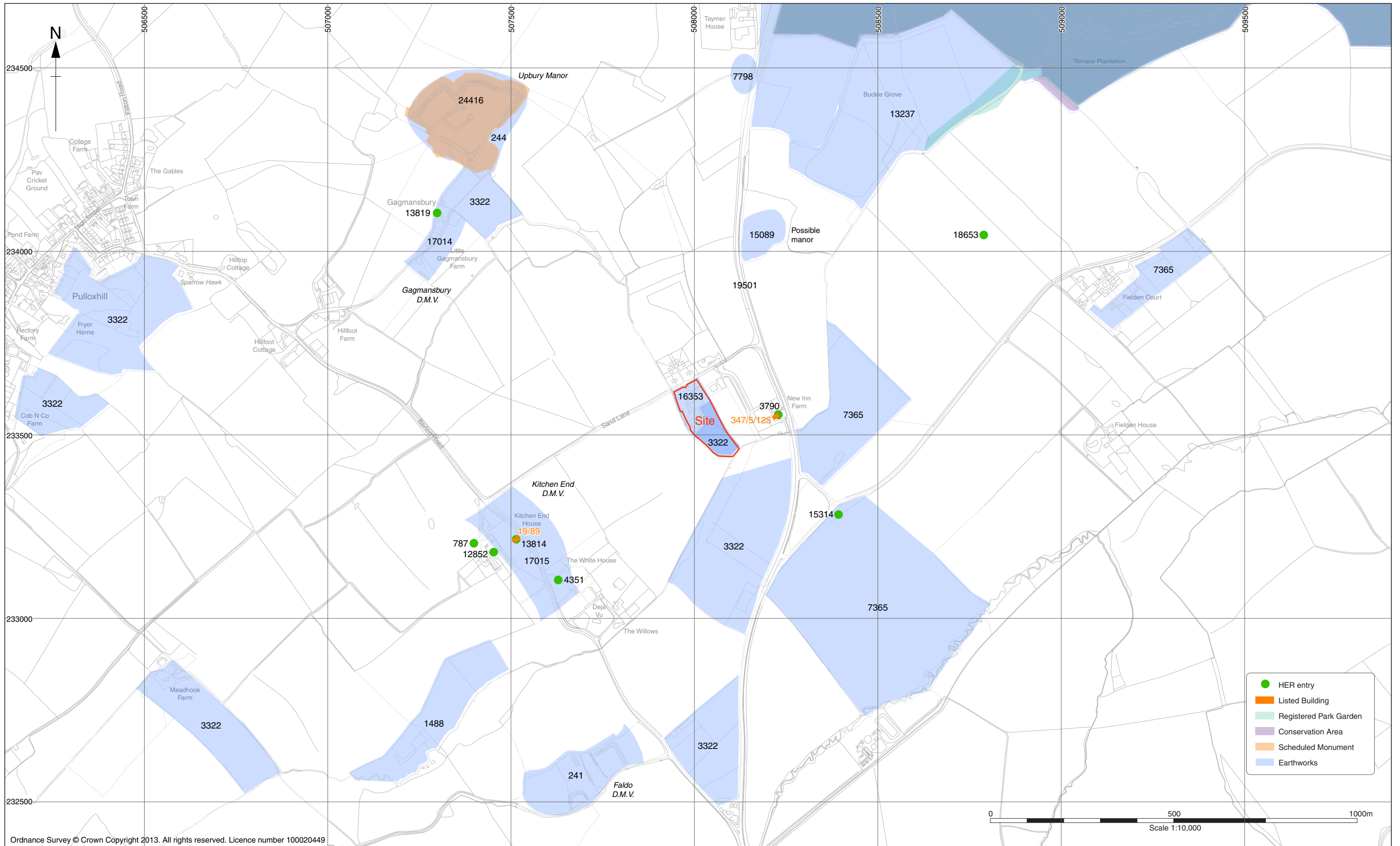


Figure 2: Map showing entries in the vicinity of the site on the Historic Environment Record

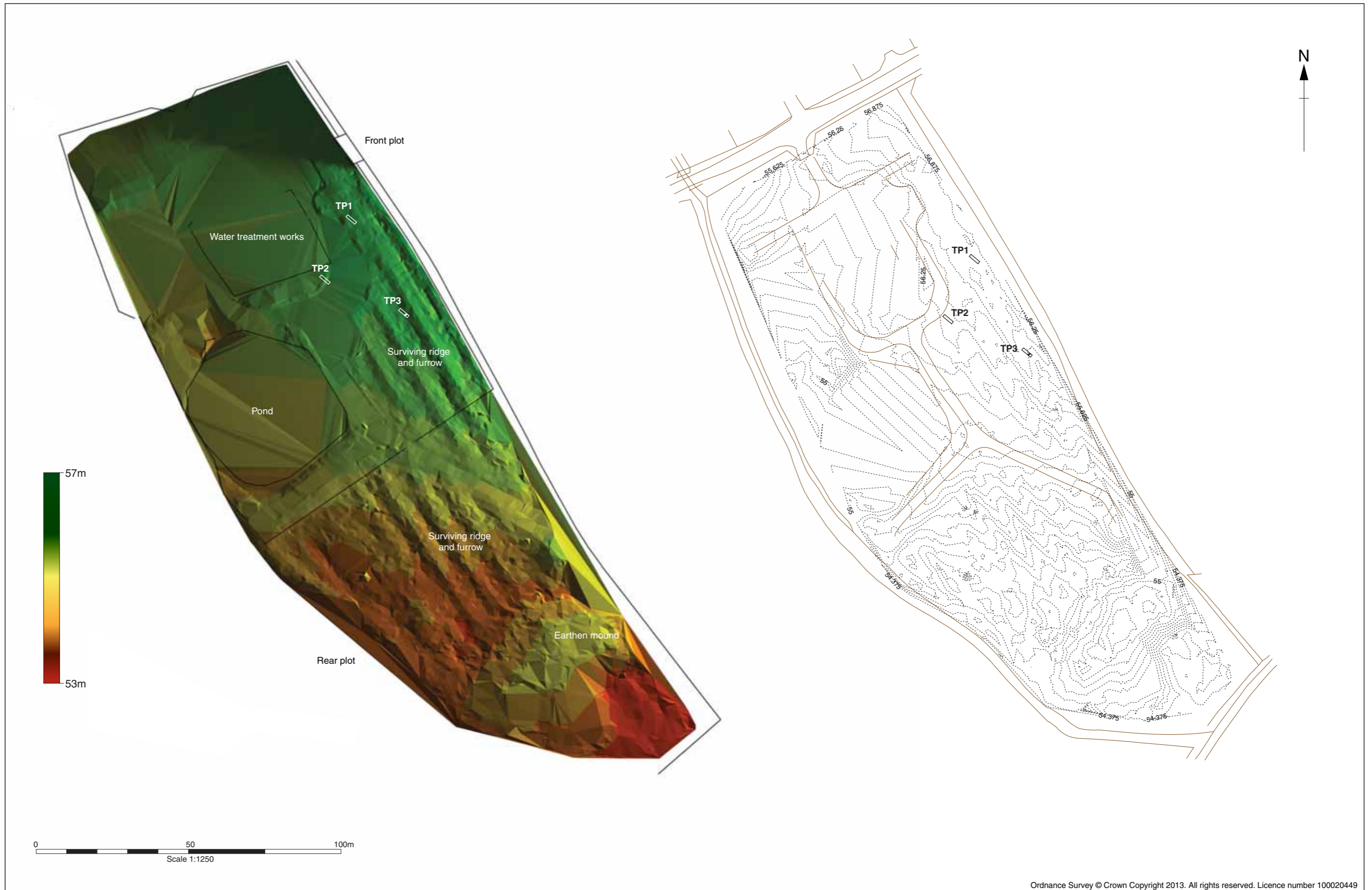


Figure 3: Topographical survey overlay with test pits location

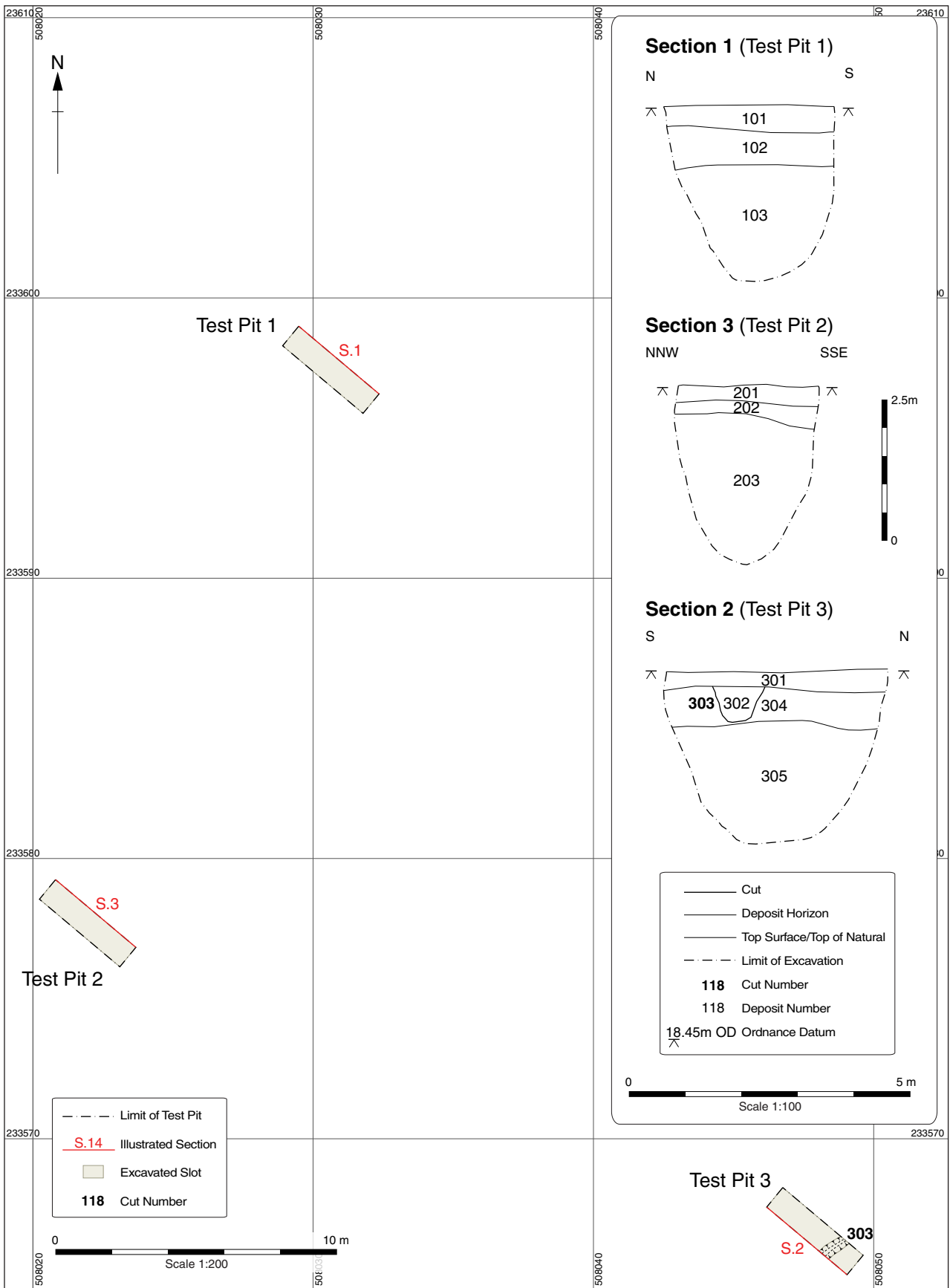


Figure 4: Plans and sections



Plate 1: Test pit 1



Plate 2: Test pit 2



Plate 3: Test pit 3 section



Plate 4: Working shot showing extant ridge and furrow cultivation strip



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