



# Effluent Disposal Project, Hughenden Manor, Buckinghamshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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# Effluent Disposal Project, Hughenden Manor, Buckinghamshire

## Watching Brief Report

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## Summary

Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the installation of an effluent pipe disposal system within the National Trust landholding of Hughenden Manor. The pipe ran in a broadly south-westerly direction from Hughenden Manor to Coates Lane. The watching brief was carried out between January and April 2018.

A brick wall was recorded to the south of the south gate to Hughenden Manor, which is suspected to be of 19th century origin. No other archaeological features or deposits were observed.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Scope of work**

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the installation of a new effluent disposal system at Hughenden Manor.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of planning permission (planning ref: 17/05861/FUL). Although the Local Planning Authority did not set a brief for the work, discussions between Gary Marshall, Regional Archaeologist for the National Trust, and Philip Markham, Senior Planning Archaeologist for Buckinghamshire County Council, established the scope of work required. OA produced a written scheme of investigation detailing these requirements (OA 2017a). The results of these works are presented below.
- 1.1.3 The work was undertaken in accordance with national and local planning policies, and are covered by National Trust event number ENA9091.

### **1.2 Location, topography and geology**

- 1.2.1 The site lies within the National Trust landholding of Hughenden Manor. The Manor is located in the civil parish of Hughenden, approximately 2km north of the town of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1; NGR SU 85967 95248).
- 1.2.2 The route of the effluent pipe runs in a broadly south-westerly direction from Hughenden Manor to Coates Lane, crossing areas of agricultural land and woodland before running south along the western edge of Coates Lane (Fig. 2).
- 1.2.3 At the northern end of the route, nearest the Manor, the geology of the area is mapped as Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, sedimentary bedrock formed c 86-94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. To the south-west, and along the majority of route, the underlying geology changes to the New Pit Chalk Formation, formed c 90-94 million years ago (BGS Online).

### **1.3 Archaeological and historical background**

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site have been described in detail in a desk-based assessment produced by Oxford Archaeology (OA 2017b). A summary is provided below to place these works in context.
- 1.3.2 A possible Roman settlement has been recorded to the east of the site and earthworks associated with Romano-British field systems have been recorded across the area.
- 1.3.3 Hughenden was described in the Domesday Survey as a mixture of agricultural land and woodland, with the (now deserted) medieval settlement being located to the south-west of the site. There is a possibility that the settlement area may have extended into the area to be impacted by these works.
- 1.3.4 From the 16th-17th centuries, Hughenden Manor was owned by the Dormers of West Wycombe. In the mid-18th century ownership passed to the Savage family, who extended the existing farmhouse, which was set in the existing agricultural landscape. In 1847 the manor estate was purchased by Benjamin Disraeli, who extended the

parkland and had a formal garden created to the south of the house, which has later been Grade II listed. The site lies directly to the west of the registered park and garden

- 1.3.5 The Grade I listed Hughenden Manor house and the Grade II listed stables, both dating from the 19th century, lie within 50m of the effluent pipe trench. The area to south-west of the manor complex is in use for agricultural purposes and parkland.
- 1.3.6 During the Second World War, Hughenden Manor was used by the Royal Observer Corps as a secret intelligence base. This caused minimal changes to the buildings, although the Ice House was used as a photography dark room. The notable building construction during this period includes an air raid shelter 30m north of the site and a small privy outbuilding further north again.

### ***Geophysical Survey***

- 1.3.7 A geophysical survey was carried out in 2016 along section of the pipe trench that cross arable land to the west of the Manor House (MOLA 2016). The survey identified two modern services and no anomalies indicative of archaeological remains.

## **2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Aims**

2.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to mitigate the impacts of installation of the pipe on any buried archaeological remains. This was done through the recording of any archaeological features and deposits present by written, drawn and photographic record.

### **2.2 Specific aims and objectives**

2.2.1 The specific aims and objectives of the watching brief were:

- I. To mitigate the impacts of the proposed effluent pipe on any buried archaeological deposits or features;
- II. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- III. To better understand the past land use and economy through the analysis of environmental remains;
- IV. To contextualize the finding within the local and regional landscapes;
- V. To make available the results of the watching brief.

### **2.3 Methodology**

2.3.1 The effluent pipe trench was excavated to a depth of between 0.4m and 1.1m and a width of between 0.5m and 1.2m using a toothed bucket on a 2 tonne 360° excavator. All area of excavations was monitored by an OA Supervisor.

2.3.2 Two segments of the pipe were installed through horizontal boring. These areas were not subject to archaeological monitoring (Fig. 2).

2.3.3 Provision was made by the groundworks contractor to enable the attending archaeological to investigate potential archaeological features and record the deposit sequences observed.

2.3.4 All recording was undertaken in accordance with OA's standard methodologies as detailed in the written scheme of investigation (OA 2017a).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 General soils and ground conditions

- 3.1.1 The natural geology of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation was generally overlain by a subsoil, which in turn was overlain by ploughsoil. Layers of modern made ground, including brick and stone rubble, were recorded within the vicinity of Hughenden Manor.
- 3.1.2 Ground conditions throughout the watching brief were generally good and the pipe trench excavation remained dry throughout. As such, it is believed that if archaeological features had been present they would have been easy to identify.

### 3.2 Description of deposits

#### *Walled garden and access drive*

- 3.2.1 The walled garden is located to the north of Hughenden Manor House (Fig. 2) and adjacent to the stable buildings. The pipe trench passed through the gateway and followed the access drive in a south-westerly direction.
- 3.2.2 The 9m of trench within the walled garden measured 0.6m across and between 0.55m and 0.64m deep. The excavation in this area reached the natural geology. A made ground deposit (1002) overlay the mid yellowish brown silty clay natural (1000). The deposit, measuring 0.36m in depth, comprised a friable mid greyish brown silty clay with some fragmented modern brick. Overlying this was modern made ground (1001) 0.45m thick and consisting of a loose, dark brownish black silty clay with frequent brick, tarmac, and stone inclusions. This was overlain by the existing stone pathway.

#### *The access road*

- 3.2.3 The pipe trench passed through the gateway and into the tarmacked access road (Fig. 2 and 3) on a NE-SW alignment.
- 3.2.4 To the south-east of the gateway, a wall (1003) was recorded (Fig. 3, Plates 1 and 2). This was constructed of bright orange-red brick in a herringbone pattern, bonded by a pale yellow sandy mortar. The exposed wall measured 0.5m in width and was 0.4m high, although the base or foundation of the wall were not exposed. The construction of the wall closely resembled the construction of nearby walls enclosing the gardens and the adjacent stable buildings.
- 3.2.5 Measuring up to 0.4m in thickness, the previously recorded made ground deposit (1002) was recorded to the north of the wall. To the south of the wall however, a different made ground deposit (1004) was present. This deposit, recorded as directly overlying natural geology, measured c 0.3m thick and consisted of a firm, mid-whitish orangey brown friable silt with frequent chalk inclusions, and contained fragments of broken red house-brick and gravel. This deposit was interpreted as a levelling deposit associated with the construction of the access road.
- 3.2.6 As the pipe trench moved away from the walled garden it turned west-south-west, at which point a 0.6m wide inspection hatch was constructed. Approximately 6m from

the entrance to the walled garden the made ground petered out and the current road surface directly overlay the underlying geology. The pipe continued for a further 50m along the route of the access road.

- 3.2.7 No archaeological features or deposits were recorded within this section of trench. All deposits recorded within the drive were sealed by modern tarmac 0.07-0.1m thick.

### *The car park*

- 3.2.8 The pipe trench continued for another c 20m towards the south-west and entered a car park.

- 3.2.9 The stratigraphic sequence was similar to the previous section of trench, with made ground (1004) underlying the car park surface. An inspection pit was installed at the car park entrance. A further 5.2m of pipe trench was then excavated leading to a large pit excavated in order to fit the effluent pipe into an existing brick-built manhole. The pit measured 3.5 x 1.2m and 2.4m deep. The section of this pit revealed 2m of natural chalk bedrock, 0.2m of made ground (1004) and 0.2m of modern car park surface.

### *Upper drilling pit*

- 3.2.10 The next segment of pipe, c 75m in length, was bored underground through woodland and consequently was not subject to archaeological monitoring. In order to facilitate these works a 1.5m by 1.5m drill pit (Fig. 3) was excavated in the car park to a depth of 0.6m. Within the pit chalk geology was overlain by a subsoil and topsoil, both measuring c 0.1m in depth.

### *East and west of Coates Lane*

- 3.2.11 Beyond the drilled segment of the pipe, the route crossed arable land. Broadly aligned N-S, the route of the pipe followed the eastern field boundary for c 275m before turning south-west towards Coates Lane.
- 3.2.12 At this point the final section of the route crossed under Coats Lane before turning to the south, extending parallel to the lane before being tied into the main sewer network.
- 3.2.13 Prior to the excavation of the pipe trench within this area, the ploughsoil (1013) was removed from a 7m wide corridor along the route (Plate 3).
- 3.2.14 The geological horizon (1011) was encountered at a depth of c 0.4m and was overlain by a subsoil (1012) 0.2m thick. Both deposits were sealed by the previously removed ploughsoil.

## **3.3 Finds summary**

- 3.3.1 A selection of ceramic building material (CBM) and a single fragment of glass vessel were recovered from the topsoil (1013). The CBM consisted entirely of fragmented roof tiles, three of which retained evidence of peg holes. The finds were recovered over the course of c 1km.
- 3.3.2 The CBM dates to the 18th-19th centuries. The glass fragment dates to the 19th century.

## **4 DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Reliability of field investigation**

4.1.1 With the excavation of the bored sections, the whole route of the pipe trench was subject to archaeological monitoring, either during or after excavation. Therefore, the watching brief can be considered to be reliable. The absence of archaeological features within the trench is supported by the lack of material culture recovered during the works.

### **4.2 Significance**

4.2.1 No significant archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the course of the watching brief.

4.2.2 Wall 1003, located just beyond the walled garden, is of unknown date, although the materials and form suggest it may be of comparable date to the walled garden, which was constructed in the 19th century. It is likely the wall relates to a former boundary that was removed during Disraeli's programme of remodelling. This is reflected by the variation in make-up deposits on either side of the wall.

4.2.3 The scope of works enabled a long transect to be investigated across the landscape, both immediately around Hughenden Manor and in the wider area. However, the narrowness of the trench limited the potential for archaeological remains, especially discrete features, to be identified. Despite the negative results of the works, the presence of archaeological remains within the vicinity cannot be ruled out, although the absence of material culture, with the exception of that dated to the post-medieval period, and the results of the geophysical survey suggests it is unlikely.

## APPENDIX A ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comments	Finds	Date
1000	Natural	-	-	Compact, mid-orangey brown clay with frequent, poorly sorted flint nodules.	-	-
1001	Layer	-	0.45	A loose, dark brownish black silty clay with frequent, poorly sorted house-brick, stone and tarmac.	-	Modern
1002	Layer	-	0.36	A friable mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent, poorly sorted mixed stone, brick and gravel inclusions.	-	Modern
1003	Structure	0.5	>0.4	A herringbone coursed wall featuring regular rectangular bright orangey-red bricks bonded with a pale yellow sandy cement.	-	19th century
1004	Layer	-	0.3	A firm, mid whitish-brown friable silt with frequent clay nodules and very frequent chalky inclusions, along with house-brick sherds and stony gravel.	-	Modern
1005	Layer		0.2	Topsoil		
1006	Layer		0.36	Subsoil		
1007	Layer		0.1	Topsoil		
1008	Layer		0.15	Subsoil		
1009	Layer	-	-	Chalk geology		
1010	Layer	-	0.7	Weathered chalk geology		
1011	Layer	-	-	Chalk geology		
1012	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil		
1013	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	CBM	Post-medieval

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## APPENDIX B      BIBLIOGRAPHY

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MOLA, 2016 Archaeological geophysical survey at Hughenden Manor, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, Museum of London Archaeology

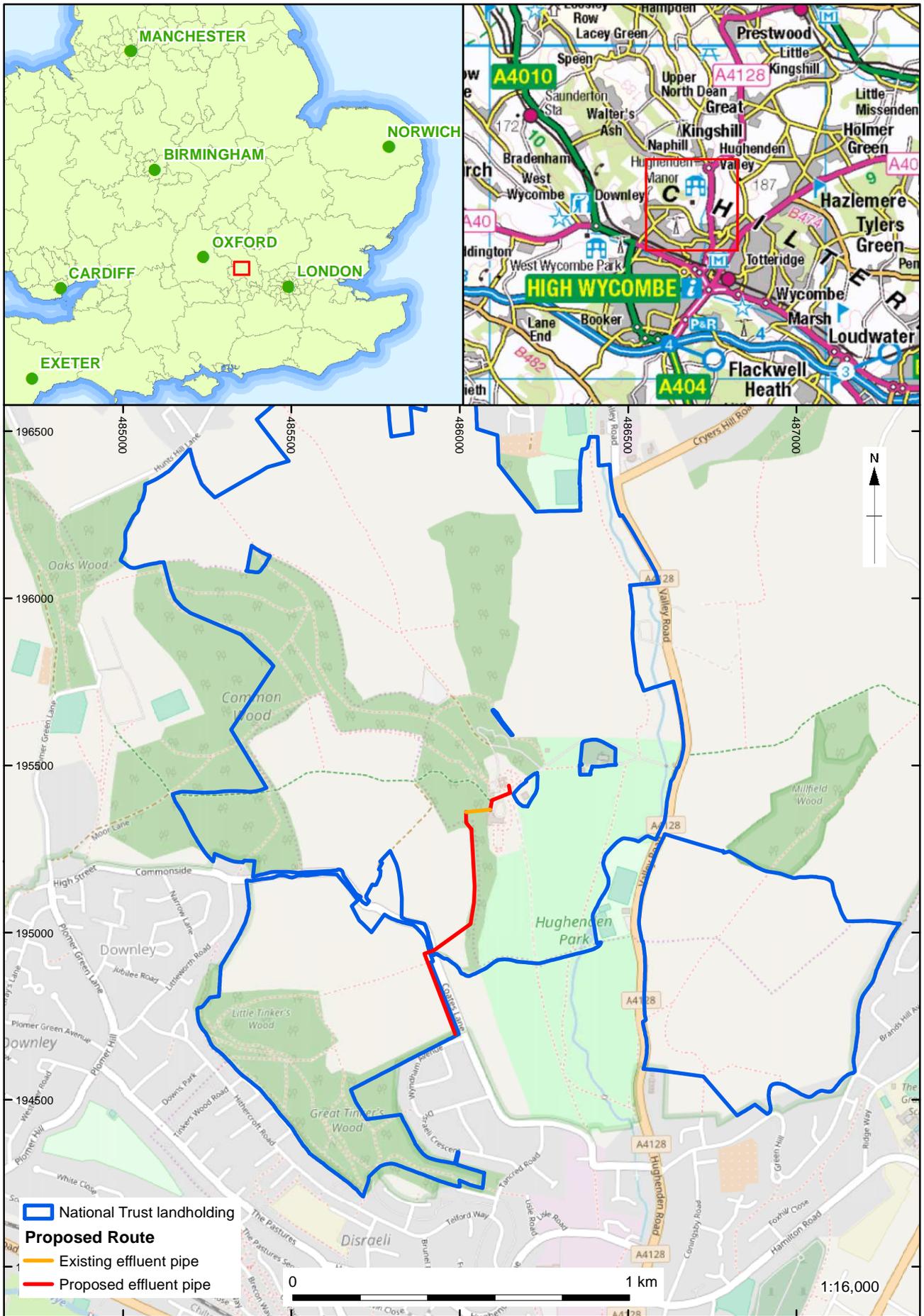
OA, 2017a, Effluent Disposal Project, Hughenden Manor, Buckinghamshire: written scheme of investigation of an archaeological watching brief, Oxford Archaeology unpublished client report

OA, 2017b, Effluent Disposal Project, Hughenden Manor, Buckinghamshire: desk-based assessment, Oxford Archaeology unpublished client report

## APPENDIX C

## SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

<b>Site name:</b>	Watching Brief Report
<b>Site code:</b>	HUFF18
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 85967 95248
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	12th January-20th April 2018
<b>Area of Site</b>	1km
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM:2018.1.
<b>Summary of Results:</b>	A brick wall was recorded to the south of the south gate to Hughenden Manor, which was dated the 19th century. No other archaeological features or deposit were identified.



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Figure 1: Site location

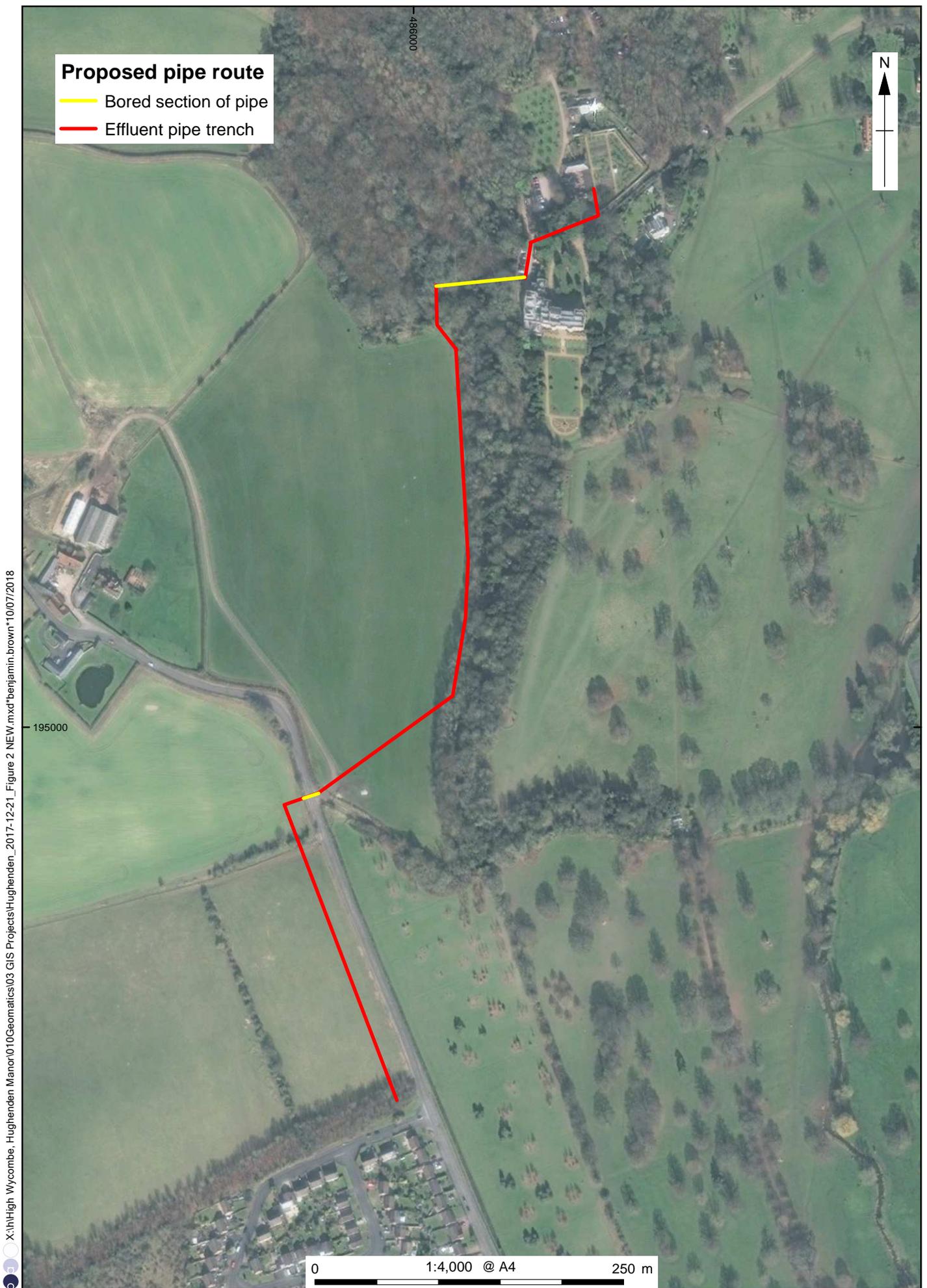
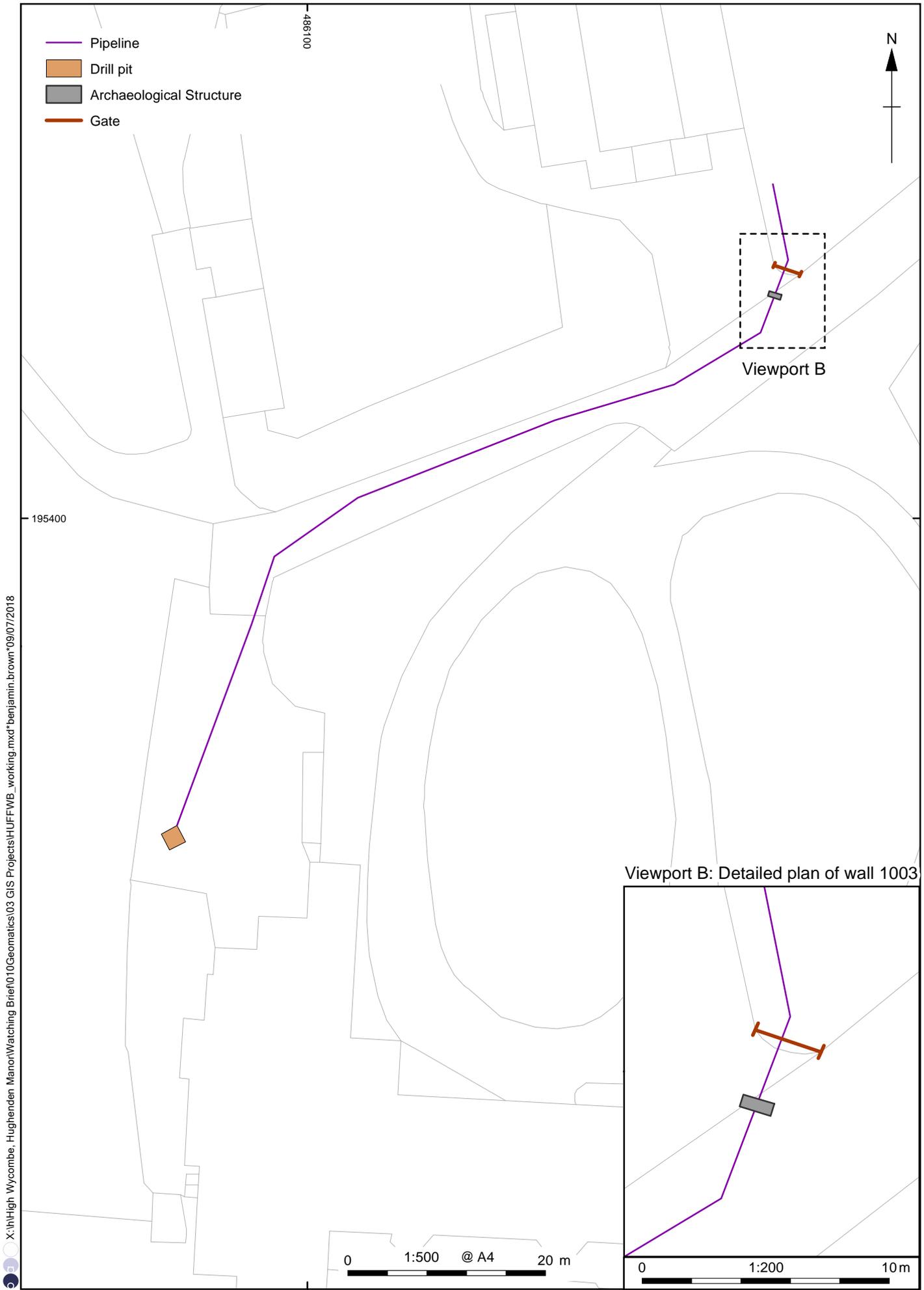


Figure 2: Effluent pipe route



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Figure 3: Location of wall 1003



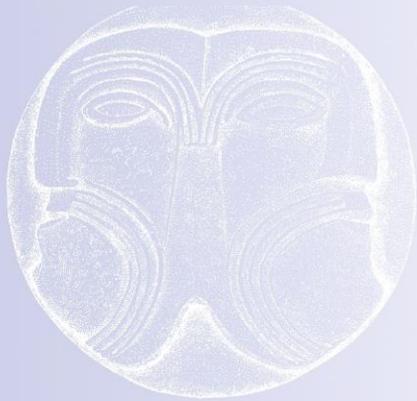
Plate 1: Wall 1003



Plate 2: Entrance to Hughenden Walled Garden



Plate 3: General shot of works



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