



# Area A, Cricket Field Grove, Crowthorne, Berkshire Archaeological Evaluation Report

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## Area A, Cricket Field Grove, Crowthorne, Berkshire

### *Archaeological Evaluation Report*

*Written by Ashley Strutt*

*With illustrations by Charles Rousseaux and Gary Jones*

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## Summary

*Between 22nd and 24th January 2018 Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation on behalf of Barratt Homes on the site of a proposed new housing development at Cricket Field Grove, Crowthorne, Berkshire. Five evaluation trenches (numbered 1-6) were excavated within Area A, an existing sports pitch. No archaeological features were present.*

*The results of trenching in the associated replacement sports pitch development (Area B, Lower Broadmoor Road, Trenches 7-13) are reported on separately (OA 2018).*

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## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Barratt Homes for commissioning this project and arranging the plant and other attendances, in particular Richard Faulkner. Roland Smith monitored the work on behalf of Berkshire Archaeology and is thanked for his advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Stuart Foreman. The fieldwork was directed by Ashley Strutt. Survey and digitizing was carried out by Ashley Strutt and Gary Jones. Thanks are also extended to the OA staff who prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Scope of work**

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Barratt Homes to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of a proposed housing development at Cricket Field Grove, Crowthorne, Berkshire (Area A, Trenches 1-6). The results of trenching in an associated replacement sports pitch development (Lower Broadmoor Road, Area B, Trenches 7-13) have been reported separately (OA 2018).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of planning permission (planning ref.16/00914/FUL). Although no brief was set by the Local Authority, discussions with Berkshire Archaeology established the scope of work required. A written scheme of investigation was produced by OA detailing the requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition (OA 2017). This report outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.

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

- 1.2.1 The site previously formed part of the Broadmoor Hospital Estate (NGR SU 847639). The site is 1.56ha in extent.
- 1.2.2 The site was occupied by sports pitches to the east, with various grassed and tarmac areas to the west. In the western part of the site comprised an area of existing houses, a hostel building and garages. The ground is level in the eastern part and slopes down towards the western boundary.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as sandy heathland soils of the Camberley Sand formation, overlain in places by areas of sand and gravel drift deposits of the Surrey Hill Gravel Member (British Geological Survey Online Viewer). Alluvium is recorded along the former stream channels to the south of the hospital (OA 2010).

## **1.3 Archaeological and historical background**

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report, and is summarised below (LDA Design 2016).

### ***Prehistoric***

- 1.3.2 Archaeological evidence strongly suggests that the area was a marginal area of heathland during the prehistoric period, created by tree clearance for agriculture, possibly starting in the Bronze Age.
- 1.3.3 A 'barrow-like mound' was recorded in Area B in 1968, but in 2000 was reported as modern artificial scarping on a natural hillock, with no sign that there had ever been a Bronze Age barrow. Two verified Bronze Age barrows are recorded within 1km of the site.

A nationally significant Iron Age hillfort, Caesar's Camp, is located c 2.2.km to the north-east.

### ***Roman***

- 1.3.4 The Roman settlement at Wickham Bushes, is situated 1.5km to the north-east and has been interpreted as a possible posting station.
- 1.3.5 The Roman Road from London to Silchester (Akeman Street, known locally as 'The Devil's Highway') lies 250m north of the site.

### ***Medieval***

- 1.3.6 Documentary and map evidence suggest the area was incorporated into a Royal Forest by the medieval period. There is strong evidence from later mapping and environmental evidence that the area around Broadmoor was on the western edge of an extensive tract of heathland which extended across the plateau, dominated by the poorer soils over the Bagshot Beds towards Cobham in Surrey.

### ***Post-medieval and modern***

- 1.3.7 The area in which the Broadmoor Estate lies was used as a military training ground during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and possibly through to the end of World War II. It is possible that remains of former military camps, field fortifications and entrenchments pre-dating 1863, could be present within the estate, as seen to the east, although no evidence has been recorded to date.
- 1.3.8 The landscape of the Broadmoor estate as seen today is based on the country house estate model, established by the mid-19th century. The landscape was originally designed c 1859 and built in the 1860s as an integral part of the hospital. Its ornamental design, character and associated views were a key part of the therapeutic provision for patients. The estate thereafter remained largely unchanged until the 1960s.

### ***Previous archaeological investigations***

- 1.3.9 Past and recent Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments of the Broadmoor Hospital Estate (OA 2010; OA 2016) and its surroundings demonstrated that there was some potential for features and deposits of prehistoric to post-medieval date to be present within the area of proposed development. In addition, prehistoric finds had been discovered along the line of the Crowthorne By-pass (A3095). The heath to the east and north contains evidence of both settlement and ritual activity dating to this period.
- 1.3.10 A geophysical survey was undertaken by Bartlett-Clark Consultancy in 2016 (Bartlett-Clark 2016). In Cricket Field Grove the survey mainly identified drainage pipes and magnetic disturbances associated with the current use as a sports field. One weak linear feature was interpreted as a possible silted ditch or channel, but there was no other associated evidence to suggest the presence of significant archaeological remains.

## **2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Aims**

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive in the Cricket Field Grove site (Area A);
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains;
- iii. To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means;
- iv. To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
- v. To determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy;
- vi. To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape;
- vii. To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive;
- viii. To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity;
- ix. To determine or confirm the likely range and quality of the artefactual evidence present

2.1.2 Specific aims and objectives were:

- i. To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains.
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- iii. To identify any significance archaeological deposits, structures or features that may be encountered during the ground preparation for the construction

### **2.2 Methodology**

2.2.1 Five trenches measuring 30m by 2m were laid out as shown in Figure 2 using a GPS with sub-50mm accuracy. The trench location was scanned using a Cable Avoidance Tool both prior to and during the machine excavation. The trenches were excavated using an appropriately powered mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket under the strict supervision of an archaeologist. Spoil was stored adjacent to, but at a safe distance from the trench edges. Machining was continued in spits down to the top of the undisturbed natural geology. The exposed surface was sufficiently cleaned to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains. Upon agreement with Roland Smith, Berkshire Archaeology, the trenches were backfilled. All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established best practice and the OA Field Manual. Digital photographs were taken of the deposits, features, trenches and evaluation work in general. The trench and sample sections were located using a GPS unit. Co-ordinates relative to Ordnance Survey and Ordnance Datum were obtained for each sampling location.

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Introduction and presentation of results**

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits are presented in Appendix A.
- 3.1.2 Context numbers reflect the trench numbers unless otherwise stated e.g. pit 102 is a feature within Trench 1, while ditch 304 is a feature within Trench 3.

### **3.2 General soils and ground conditions**

- 3.2.1 The soil sequence was fairly uniform in all trenches. The natural geology comprised a mix of light brownish grey silty sand with patches of varying shades of brown, mixed with flint gravel up to 11cm in size. This was overlain by a dark brown grey sandy silt topsoil.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the trenches remained dry throughout.

### **3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits**

- 3.3.1 No significant archaeological features were present in any of the trenches. Trench 4 uncovered the remains of a modern concrete base and steel structure and Trench 5 exposed a modern plastic pipe containing BT cabling and a disused rusted metal pipe.

### **3.4 Finds summary**

- 3.4.1 No finds were recovered.

## **4 DISCUSSION**

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

4.1.1 The evaluation in Area A was carried out in good conditions. Any archaeological features would have been clearly visible if present. Some previous truncation may have occurred during development and use of the sports field.

### **4.2 Evaluation objectives and results**

4.2.1 The aims of the evaluation were to establish the presence or absence of any archaeological features or deposits and, if present, determine their character, date range and significance. In the event, no archaeological remains were present within the trenches.

### **4.3 Significance**

4.3.1 Given the lack of any archaeological features or deposits, the proposed housing development is very unlikely to adversely impact any significant buried archaeological remains.

## APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of silty sand with flint inclusions.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.30
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
100	Layer	-	0.17	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of silty sand with flint gravel inclusions.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.30
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
200	Layer	-	0.16	Topsoil	-	-
201	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of silty sand with flint gravel inclusions.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.30
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
300	Layer	-	0.16	Topsoil	-	-
301	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 4						
General description					Orientation	SWW-NEE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of silty sand with flint gravel inclusions.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.30
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
400	Layer	-	0.17	Topsoil	-	-
401	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 5						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of silty sand with flint gravel inclusions.					<b>Length (m)</b>	30
					<b>Width (m)</b>	2
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.30
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Finds</b>	<b>Date</b>
500	Layer	-	0.16	Topsoil	-	-
501	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

## **APPENDIX B      BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Bartlett-Clark, 2016 Land at Broadmoor, Crowthorne, Berkshire: Archaeological geophysical survey

LDA Design Consulting Ltd, 2016 Cricket Field Grove Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report

Oxford Archaeology, 2010 BHR Estate: archaeological baseline assessment report

Oxford Archaeology, 2017 Land at Lower Broadmoor Road and Cricket Field Grove, Crowthorne, Berkshire: written scheme of investigation for an archaeological evaluation

Oxford Archaeology, 2018 Land at Lower Broadmoor Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire. Archaeological evaluation report

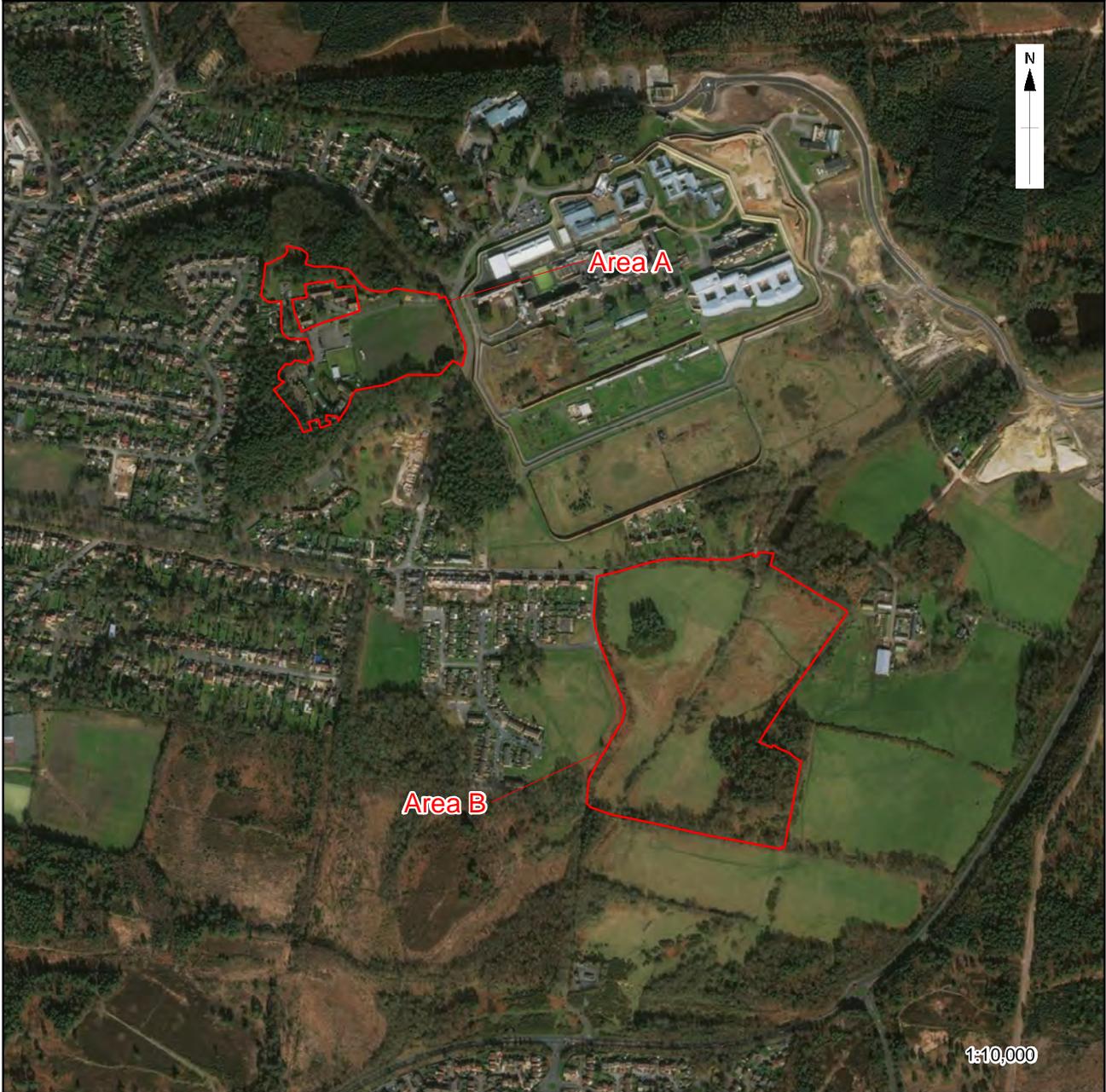
## APPENDIX C

## SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

**Site name:** Area A, Cricket Field Grove, Crowthorne, Berkshire  
**Site code:** CRCRL18  
**Grid Reference** SU 847 639  
**Type:** Evaluation  
**Date and duration:** 22nd-24th January 2018, 3 days  
**Summary of Results:** Between 22nd and 24th January 2018 Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation on behalf of Barratt Homes on the site of a proposed new housing development at Cricket Field Grove, Crowthorne, Berkshire. Five evaluation trenches (numbered 1-6) were excavated within Area A, an existing sports pitch. No archaeological features were present.

The results of trenching in the associated replacement sports pitch development (Area B, Lower Broadmoor Road, Trenches 7-13) are reported on separately (OA 2018).

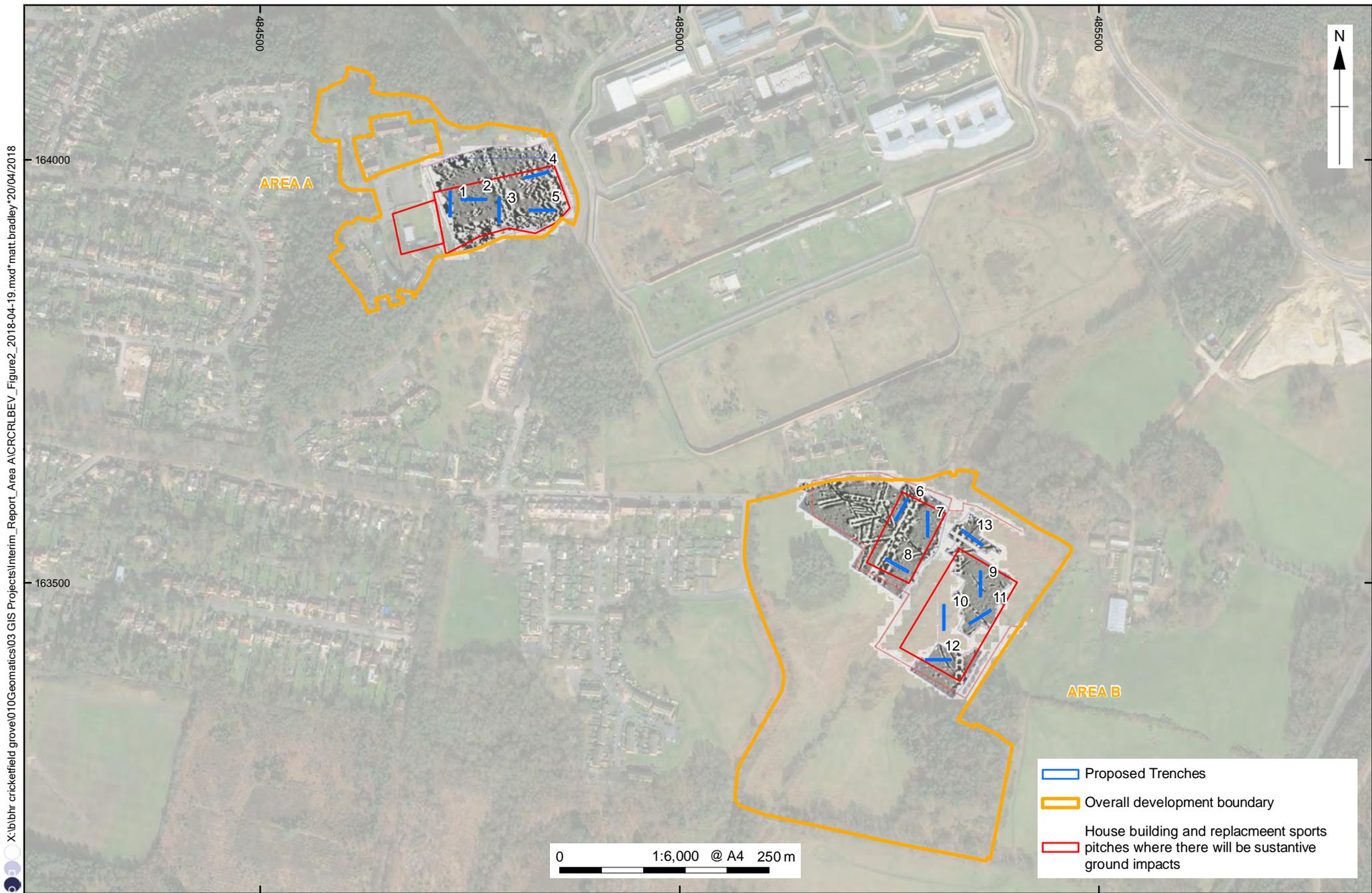
**Area of Site** 1.56ha  
**Location of archive:** The archive will temporarily be stored at Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford and, subject to any necessary security arrangements, the written records made available at <http://library.thehumanjourney.net/>. The archive will be deposited in due course in an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the LPA). Appropriate funds will be allocated in the archaeological budget to secure the deposition of the archive.



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Figure 1: Site location



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Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Figure 2: Proposed trench locations, Areas A and B

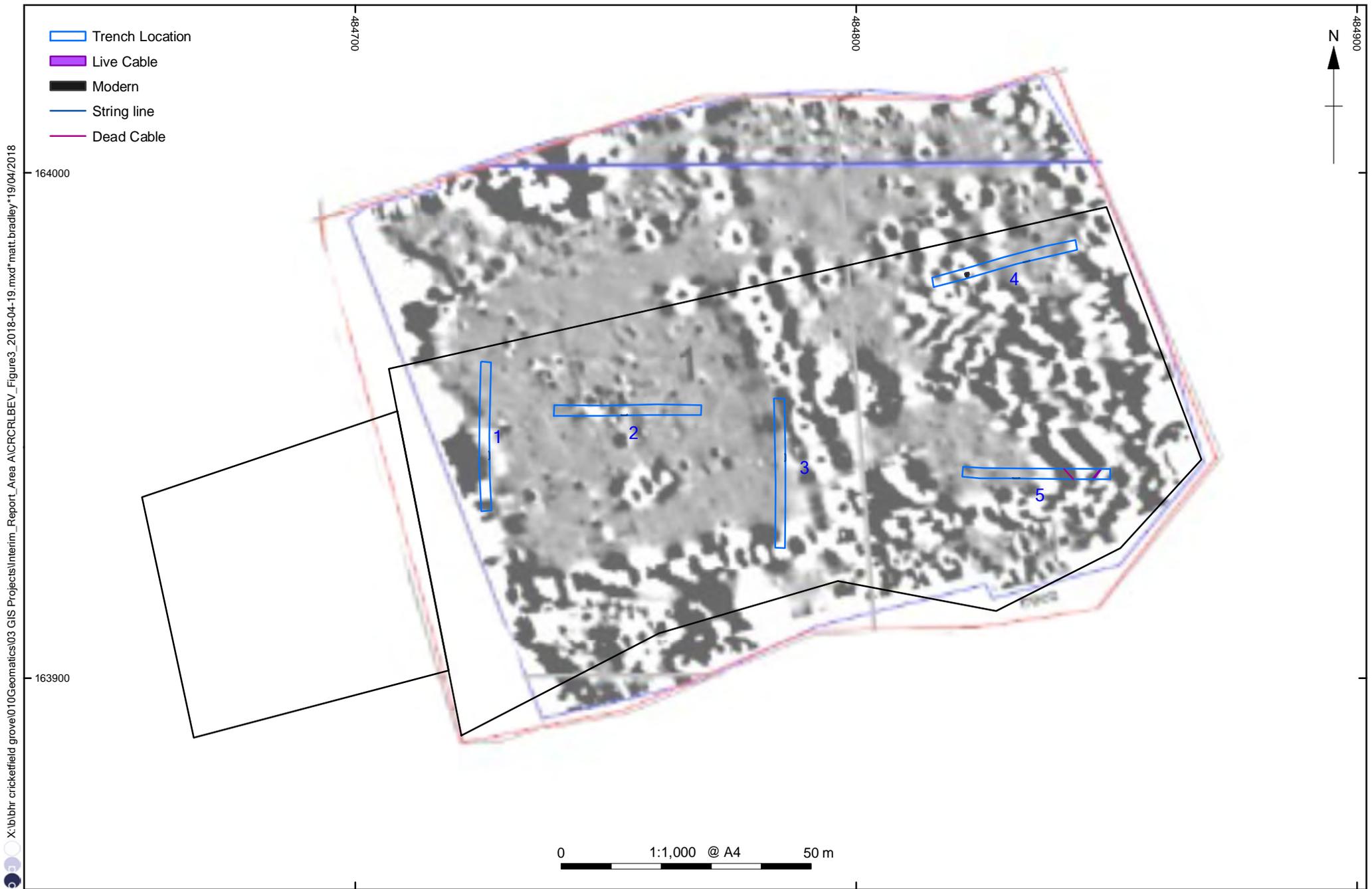


Figure 3: Plan of excavated trenches in Area A, overlaid on geophysical survey results



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north



Plate 2: Trench 1 west facing representative section



Plate 3: Trench 2, looking east



Plate 4: Trench 3, looking south



Plate 5: Trench 4, looking south-east



Plate 6: Trench 4 north-west representative section



Plate 7: Trench 5, looking west



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