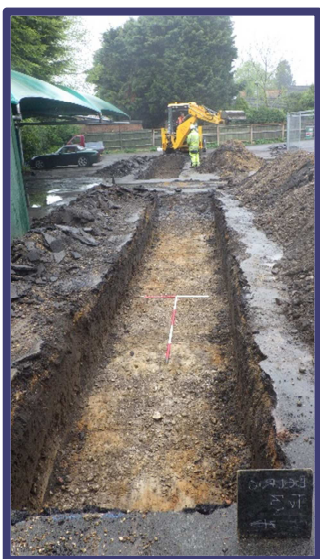


38-58 London End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



June 2016

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Issue No: V1

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Date: 16/06/16
Prepared by: Carl Champness, Senior Project Manager
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Signature:

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38-58 London End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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illustrations by Conan Parsons*

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Summary

In April 2016 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological evaluation prior to the submission of a planning application for potential development at 38-58 London End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, centred on NGR SP 431 184. The work is being undertaken as part of a proposed redevelopment of the site for new residential and commercial properties. The site is located within the conservation area of the historical town and to the rear of properties along the high street, with the potential to contain medieval and post-medieval remains.

The evaluation consisted of five trenches excavated along the proposed development area. The trenches revealed a general sequence of late post-medieval to Victorian topsoils sealed underneath modern make-up deposits and surfaces. A few modern pits were identified to the west of the area and a service trench in the east that truncated these deposits, but otherwise the natural sequence was undisturbed.

The evaluation did not identify any archaeological remains or any significant truncation of the sequence. Based on the results of the evaluation the site is considered to have negligible archaeological potential.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank CgMs Consulting for commissioning this project. Thanks is also extended to Philip Markham who monitored the work on behalf of for their advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Carl Champness. The fieldwork was directed by Mariusz Gorniac, who was supported by Neil Holbrook. Survey and digitizing was carried out by Conan Parsons. Thanks is also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Leigh Allen and 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 CgMs to undertake a trial trench evaluation on a plot of land to the rear of 38-58 London End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. The work was undertaken as part of the proposed redevelopment of the site for new residential and commercial properties.
- 1.1.2 The site lies within Beaconsfield Old Town Conservation Area, and Nos 40-44 and Nos 46-58 London End are all listed buildings. Further listed buildings are located elsewhere along London End and within the conservation area. The site has the potential of below-ground archaeological evidence for medieval and post-medieval occupation for surviving. The site is located to the rear of a series of potential medieval and post-medieval tenement plots which fronted onto one of the main streets of the town, although the available historic mapping indicates that the plots became amalgamated into a single unit at some time prior to the middle of the 19th Century.
- 1.1.3 The Site evaluation strategy provides for a two phase approach to the trial trenching. Phase 1 involved the excavation and investigation of five trial trenches to the rear of the properties. The results of this stage of evaluation will inform the requirement for Phase 2 of the programme, a further five trenches closer to the street frontages subject to confirmation and review in consultation with the Planning Archaeologist. Should this phase of evaluation be required, the works will be undertaken after the demolition of the extant buildings on the site.
- 1.1.4 The work was undertaken to support a Planning application (planning ref. 15\02000\FUL) to further inform the Planning Authority in advance of the development. A brief was set by the County Archaeologist for Buckinghamshire and a written scheme of investigation was produced by CgMs (2016) detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process. This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.
- 1.1.5 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' 'Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation' (revised 2008) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies to the eastern part of Beaconsfield town centre, in Buckinghamshire, to the rear of properties on London End. It is currently split with approximately two thirds being used as a vehicle repair garage and one third as a Medical Centre car park. The site is approximately 0.3 hectares in area and is centred at National Grid Reference SU 9470 9000 (Fig 1).
- 1.2.2 The site is relatively flat at approximately 50m above Ordnance Datum, but does slopes gently from north-west to south-east. Ground investigation of the site in 2014 (Delta Simons; Report 14-0422.01) recorded topsoil to a depth of 0.65 and 2.2m below ground level, overlying a subsoil between 1m – 2.1m below ground level.

- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped by the British Geological Survey (BGS 1:50,000) as clay, silt and sand of the Lambeth Group. This is overlain by sand and gravel deposits belonging to the Beaconsfield Gravel Formation.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site is discussed in the desk-based assessment (CgMs 2015) and only a brief summary of the key points is reproduced here:

Prehistory (10,000 BC-AD 43)

- 1.3.2 Only a small number of prehistoric finds are recorded within the area, and the site is located within the historic core of the town, which may indicate possible truncation of earlier phases of activity, and suggest low archaeological potential for this period.

Roman and Saxon (AD 43-1066)

- 1.3.3 There is only a small amount of remains dating to the Roman and Saxon periods, indicating that it was not a significant settlement during these periods. Evidence of agricultural activity and land division pre-dating the establishment of the medieval market town could conceivably be present.

Medieval period (AD1066-1800)

- 1.3.4 The earliest mention of Beaconsfield comes from the 12th Century (BCAS 2008: 27), although it is likely that there was some form of dispersed settlement based around small groups of farms preceding the town. The medieval town focused on the crossroads and market place, with the principal areas of medieval higher status development along the main London road (i.e. the east-west road) rather than the north-south arms of the crossroads. The earliest area of settlement probably focused around the market place, church and manorial area at the crossroads (c.150m west of the present site). London End is thought to have developed as a high status area leading towards a separate early settlement focus at Wilton Green (around 180m east of the site).
- 1.3.5 The site lies within the rear of plots on the south side of London End. Post-medieval buildings occupy the street frontage of plots 28-32 and 40-42 London End. These are described as in the HER as a 'seventeenth century timber framed house, with nineteenth-century shop front' (28-32 London End HER ref 1212208000); and a Late sixteen or seventeenth-century timber framed house' (40-42 London End. HER 1212209000). The Swann Inn (HER 1212211000), immediately east on London End is described as a late sixteenth or seventeenth-century inn.
- 1.3.6 The site lies within the historic core of the settlement, and may occupy the rear part of a series of medieval and post-medieval tenement plots which fronted onto London End. The site is therefore considered to have a high potential for the presence of medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation, as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2016), were:

- i. To identify the presence and/or absence of archaeological material at the site that will be impacted by the development;
- ii. To characterise and define the nature of any archaeological activity identified at the site
- iii. identify the depth and density of any archaeological features or artefacts across the site;
- iv. To provide baseline information to help inform any further mitigation strategies for the site;
- v. Disseminate the results through the production of a site archive for deposition with Buckinghamshire County Museum Service and to provide information for accession to the Buckinghamshire HER.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The first phase of the archaeological works comprised five 10m long trenches laid out in the parking and yard areas at the rear of the properties. The trenches were positioned to avoid services and also to provide a good general coverage of the site.

2.2.2 All trenches were broken out and excavated using a 360 mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Machining continued in spits down to the top of the undisturbed natural geology or the first archaeological horizon depending upon which was encountered first. Once archaeological deposits were exposed, further excavation proceeded by hand.

2.2.3 A sample of each feature was excavated and recorded. Sufficient excavation was undertaken to resolve the principal aims of the evaluation. All fieldwork and recording was undertaken in accordance with the WSI (CgMs 2016) and standard OAS recording practices (Wilkinson 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches which contained any potential remains. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data and spot dates are tabulated in Appendix B.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence in all trenches was fairly uniform. The natural geology varied between sand and sandy gravel, representing gravel terrace outcrops of the Beaconsfield Gravel Formation. This was overlain by natural buried soil sequence that was sealed by modern make-up deposits.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the trenches remained relatively dry throughout.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 No significant archaeological deposits were encountered during the evaluation. Two modern pits were encountered to the west of the development area in Trenches 1 and 2.

3.4 Area 1; Trenches 1 and 2 (Plates 1-2)

3.4.1 Area 1 comprised a gravel area at the edge of the Medical Centre Car park. Both trenches were excavated in their proposed locations with only slight modifications to their positions to avoid site obstacles and buried services.

3.4.2 The natural deposits were encountered in the base of Trench 1 at a depth of 1.01m. A buried subsoil (103) and soil (102) horizons were encountered at a depth of 0.80m. The soil horizon produced fragments of post-medieval CBM and charcoal. This was sealed by two deposits of modern ground make-up deposits (101) and the present gravel surface (100).

3.4.3 The cut of a modern pit (105) was identified in the southern end of the trench dug through soil horizon (102) and the modern make-up deposits (See figure 3). The pit was rectangular in plan with steep sides and a flat base. It was filled with yellowish brown sandy deposit with modern finds including a modern metal bucket, frogged bricks and iron straps. The finds from the pit were not retained.

3.4.4 A similar sequence of deposits including a buried topsoil horizons sealed by modern make-up deposits were recorded within Trench 2. The natural gravel deposits (204) were encountered at the same depth. This sequence was sealed by modern make-up deposits (201) and the current gravel surface (200).

3.4.5 Another potential modern rubbish pit (205) was identified in the north of the trench dug through the buried soil horizon (202). The pit was circular with steep sloping sides

and a shallow concave base. The pit fill produced a fragment of white glazed willow pattern pottery.

3.5 Area 2; Trenches 3-5 (Figure 3 and Plates 3-5)

- 3.5.1 The three trenches in Area 2 produced the same sequence of deposits. One modern service trench was identified within Trench 5, but no potential archaeological remains were identified.
- 3.5.2 The natural gravel deposits were encountered on average at a depth of 0.77m. A similar sequence of buried soil horizons was identified at a depth of 0.54m to 0.60m, sealed by modern make-up deposits and the modern tarmac surface of the garage area.
- 3.5.3 The buried soil horizons (302, 402 and 502) produced a small assemblage of late post-medieval/Victorian pottery and clay pipes, sealed by the more recent make-up deposits.

3.6 Finds summary

- 3.6.1 A very small quantity of artefactual material was recovered from the features and buried soils recorded in the evaluation. The range of material included pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), clay pipe and metal objects. A fuller description of the finds can be found in Appendix B.
- 3.6.2 The pottery assemblage consisted of 2 sherds (33g) of late post medieval/Victorian pottery recovered from pit (205) and buried soil (402). In addition, there were two fragments of 19th century clay pipe found from the buried soils in Trenches 3 and 5 (302 and 502).
- 3.6.3 Post-medieval/modern ceramic building materials and iron horse shoe were recovered from the modern make-up deposits (201) in Trench 2.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The trenches were excavated in reasonable weather conditions and visibility was sufficiently good in all of the trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is therefore felt that the recorded absence of archaeological features provides an accurate representation of the evaluation area as a whole.
- 4.1.2 While no archaeological features were observed, it should be noted that buried soil deposits were identified preserved underneath the modern make-up deposits, with the potential to preserve archaeological remains.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The evaluation was able to achieve the main aims of the evaluation to provide good coverage of the site and characterise the sequences in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site.

4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 Only modern features were observed and only limited artefactual material was recovered during the course of the works, the absence of any significant archaeological remains within the site boundary was successfully determined.
- 4.3.2 The evaluation identified no significant archaeological remains. No features were found to pre-date the late post-medieval/Victorian periods and modern rubbish pits were recorded towards the west of the site. Based on these results the site is believed to have negligible archaeological potential.

4.4 References

CgMs 2016 Merritts Development, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigations (Trial Trenching).

CgMs 2015 Merritts Development Land at the Rear of 38-58 London End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Archaeological desk-based assessment.

BCAS, 2008. Beaconsfield. Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Assessment Report Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, September 2008

Wilkinson, D 1992 Oxford Archaeology Fieldwork Manual, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992).

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		NNW-SSE
Trench set up in the western part of the investigated area. No archaeology. One modern pit excavated.				Avg. depth (m)		1
				Width (m)		1.7
				Length (m)		10.3
Contexts						
Context	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
100	Layer	> 1.7	0.24	A gravel car park surface with a compact gravel and sand hardcore layer. Truncating and sealing deposit-101.		Modern
101	Layer	> 1.7	0.32	A friable, very dark brownish grey silty sand with a moderate amount of modern CBM pieces, fragments of burnt coal, and a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces of flint. Overlaying 102	Pieces of brick and tile	Modern
102	Layer	> 1.7	0.3	A friable, dark brown, silty sand with moderate amount of small-small/medium sized flint gravel, occasional pieces of charcoal, and small fragments of CBM. Overlaying 103	Flecks of CBM	Post-medieval/Victorian
103	Layer Natural geology	> 1.7	0.15	A firm, flint gravel (small-small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces) no inclusions; natural deposit. Overlaying 104		-
104	Layer Natural geology	> 1.7	> 0.1	A friable, mottled light brown and light yellowish brown sand with no inclusions; natural deposit		-
105	Cut of pit	> 0.65	1.3	Extending eastwards beyond southern part of Tr 1; within the trench sub-rectangular, 1.8m long, with steep sides, a gradual break of slope, and a slightly-concave base, filled with 106; cut into deposits 102, 103, and 104. Rubbish pit.		Modern
106	Fill of pit	> 0.65	1.3	A heterogeneous deposit made of lenses of redeposited natural geology 104, and redeposited soil from layers 101 and 102 with frequent pieces of modern rubbish material – broken metal buckets, frog bricks, iron straps. Fill of 105 rubbish pit	Metal buckets, frog bricks, iron straps	Modern

Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		NNW-SSE
Trench set up in the western part of the investigated area. No archaeology. One natural feature (tree-throw) – not excavated; one modern pit – excavated				Avg. depth (m)		1.1
				Width (m)		1.65
				Length (m)		10
Contexts						
Context	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
200	Layer	> 1.7	0.25	A gravel car park surface with a compact gravel and sand hardcore layer. Truncating and sealing deposit-201		Modern
201	Layer	> 1.7	0.36	A friable, very dark brownish grey silty sand with a moderate amount of modern CBM pieces, fragments of burnt coal, and a moderate amount of small-	Pieces of brick and tile	Modern

				small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces of flint. Overlaying deposit 202		
202	Layer	> 1.7	0.29	A friable, dark brown, silty sand with moderate amount of small-small/medium sized flint gravel, occasional pieces of charcoal, and small fragments of CBM. Overlaying deposit 203	Flecks of CBM	Post-medieval/ Victorian
203	Layer Natural geology	> 1.7	0.15	A firm, flint gravel (small-small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces) , no inclusions; natural deposit. Overlaying deposit 204		-
204	Layer Natural geology	> 1.7	> 0.2	A friable, mottled light brown and light yellowish brown sand with no inclusions; natural deposit		-
205	Cut of pit	> 0.75	0.55	Extending eastwards and northwards beyond northern part of Tr 2; within the trench sub-rounded; +1.0 x + 0.75m; with moderately steep, symmetrical sides, an imperceptible break of slope, and a concave base, filled with 206; cut into deposits 202, 203, and 204. Pit of non-defined function.		Modern
206	Fill of pit	> 0.75	0.55	A homogeneous, friable, very dark brownish grey sandy silt with moderate amount of flint pieces, single fill of pit 205.	One piece of white glazed pottery	Modern

Trench 3						
General description				Orientation		ENE-WSW
Trench set up in the central part of the investigated area. No archaeology.				Avg. depth (m)		0.85
				Width (m)		1.7
				Length (m)		11.3
Contexts						
Context	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
300	Layer	> 1.7	0.23	A gravel car park surface with a compact gravel and sand hardcore layer Truncating and sealing layer 301.		Modern
301	Layer	> 1.7	0.31	A friable, very dark brownish grey silty sand with a moderate amount of modern CBM pieces, fragments of burnt coal, and a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces of flint. Overlaying deposit 302.	Pieces of brick and tile	Modern
302	Layer	> 1.65	0.2	A friable, dark brown, silty sand with moderate amount of small-small/medium sized flint gravel, occasional pieces of charcoal, and small fragments of CBM. Overlaying deposit 303.	Flecks of CBM	Post-medieval/ Victorian
303	Layer Natural geology	> 1.65	0.1	A firm, flint gravel (small-small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces) , no inclusions; natural deposit. Overlaying deposit 304.	A piece of clay pipe in the lower part of the deposit	-
304	Layer Natural geology	> 1.65	> 0.1	A friable, mottled light brown and light yellowish brown sand with no inclusions; natural deposit		-

Trench 4						
General description				Orientation		ENE-WSW
Trench set up in the south-eastern part of the investigated area. No archaeology.				Avg. depth (m)		0.75
				Width (m)		1.7

					Length (m)	11.5
Contexts						
Context	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
400	Layer	> 1.7	0.19	A gravel car park surface with a compact gravel and sand hardcore layer Truncating and sealing layer-401.		Modern
401	Layer	> 1.7	0.23	A friable, very dark brownish grey silty sand with a moderate amount of modern CBM pieces, fragments of burnt coal, and a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces of flint. Overlaying deposit 402.	Pieces of brick and tile, metal gardening fork	Modern
402	Layer	> 1.65	0.23	A friable, dark brown, silty sand with moderate amount of small-small/medium sized flint gravel, occasional pieces of charcoal, and small fragments of CBM. Overlaying deposit 403.	Flecks of CBM, a piece of pottery	Post-medieval/ Victorian
403	Layer Natural geology	> 1.65	0.11	A firm, flint gravel (small-small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces) , no inclusions; natural deposit. Overlaying deposit 404.		-
404	Layer Natural geology	> 1.65	> 0.05	A friable, mottled light brown and light yellowish brown sand with no inclusions; natural deposit		-

Trench 5						
General description					Orientation	ENE-WSW
Trench set up in the north-eastern part of the investigated area. No archaeology.					Avg. depth (m)	0.73
					Width (m)	1.7
					Length (m)	10
Contexts						
Context	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
500	Layer	> 1.7	0.24	A gravel car park surface with a compact gravel and sand hardcore layer Truncating and sealing layer-501.		Modern
501	Layer	> 1.7	0.23	A friable, very dark brownish grey silty sand with a moderate amount of modern CBM pieces, fragments of burnt coal, and a moderate amount of small-small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces of flint. Overlaying deposit 502.	Pieces of brick and tile	Modern
502	Layer	> 1.65	0.26	A friable, dark brown, silty sand with moderate amount of small-small/medium sized flint gravel, occasional pieces of charcoal, and small fragments of CBM. Overlaying deposit 503.	Flecks of CBM, one fragment of clay pipe	Post-medieval/ Victorian
503	Layer Natural geology	> 1.65	0.13	A firm, flint gravel (small-small/medium sized, rounded and sub-rounded pieces) , no inclusions; natural deposit. Overlaying deposit 504.		-
504	Layer Natural geology	> 1.65	> 0.1	A friable, mottled light brown and light yellowish brown sand with no inclusions; natural deposit		-
505	Modern service trench	0.3	0.33	North-south running cut with plastic sewage pipe, cutting context 500 and 501		Modern

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

Identified by John Cotter

Context	Description	Date
206	1 cream ware (CREA DEV) jug rim, 3g	1760 - 1830
402	1 sherd post medieval red ware (PMR), 31g	18 th - 19 th century

Discussion and recommendations.

The pottery assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work.

B.2 Clay pipe

Identified by John Cotter

Context	Description	Date
302	1 clay pipe stem, 3g	19 th century
502	1 clay pipe stem, 5g	19 th century

Discussion and recommendations.

The clay pipe assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work.

B.3 Ceramic building material

Identified by John Cotter

Context	Description	Date
201	1 corner fragment of large, very thick quarry tile (45mm) in red fabric, 1 fragment peg tile, 1900g	19 th century Post medieval

Discussion and recommendations.

The ceramic building material assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work.

B.4 Iron

Identified by Ian Scott

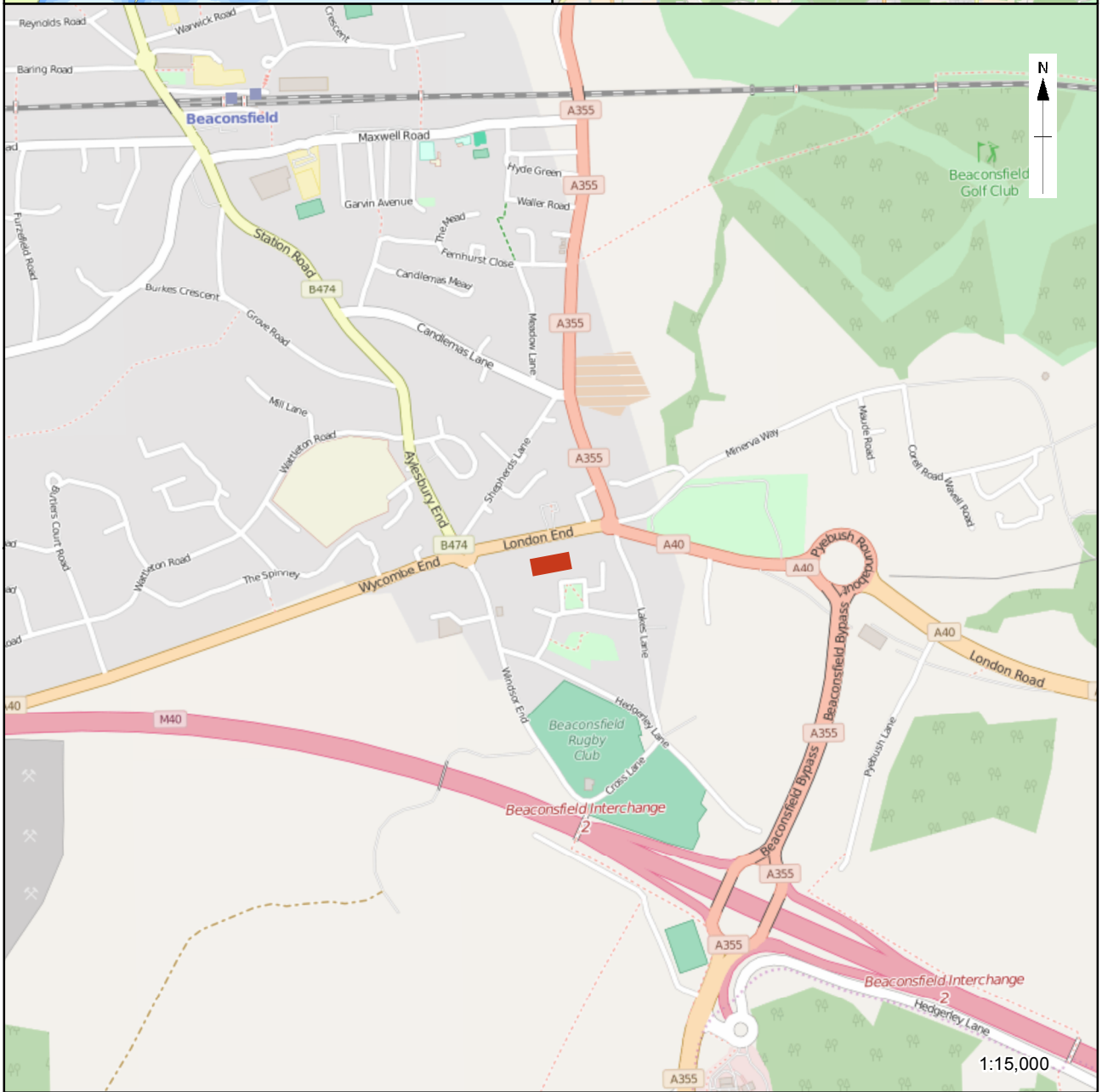
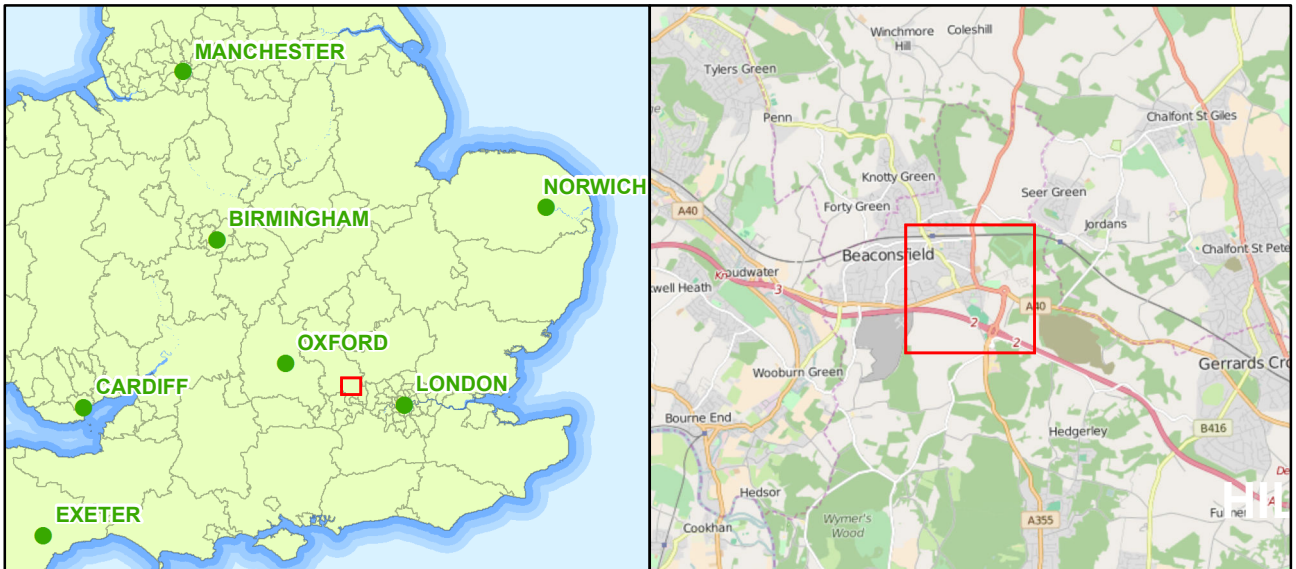
Context	Description	Date
201	1 horseshoe, 618g	Post medieval

Discussion and recommendations.

The iron assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work.

APPENDIX C SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

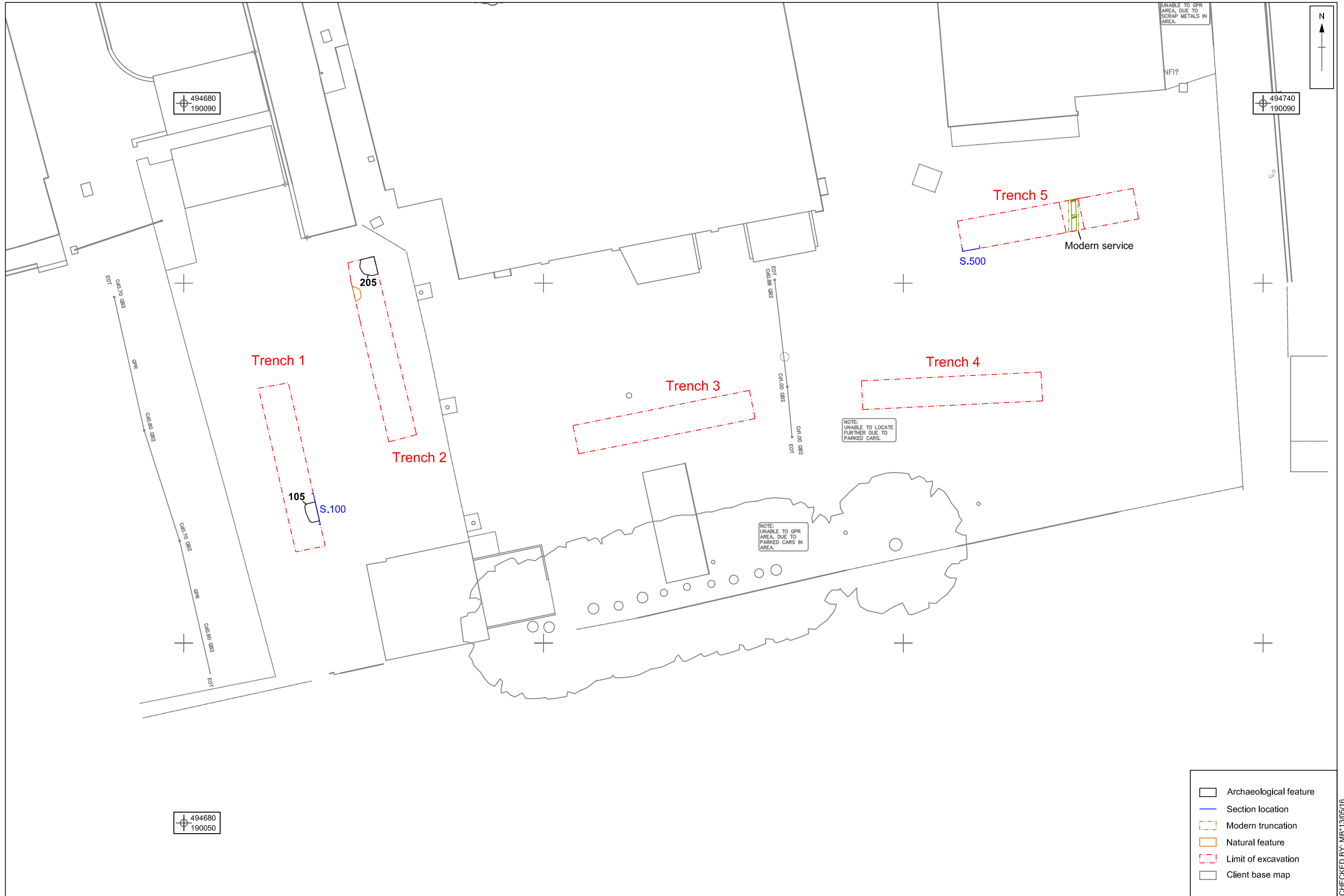
Site name:	38-58 London End, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire
Site code:	BEL16
Grid Reference	SU 9470 9000
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	9-11 th May 2016
Summary of Results:	<p><i>The evaluation consisted of five trenches excavated along the proposed development area. The trenches revealed a general sequence of late medieval to post-medieval topsoils sealed underneath modern make-up deposits and surfaces. A few modern pits were identified to the west of the area and a service trench in the east that truncated these deposits, but otherwise the natural sequence was undisturbed.</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation did not identify any archaeological remains or any significant truncation of the sequence. Based on the negative results of the evaluation the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.</i></p>
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum in due course, under the following accession number: BEL16.



N:\B_invoice codes\BELREVBELREV-Fig-1.mxd\charles.rousseau*13/06/2016

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Figure 1: Site location



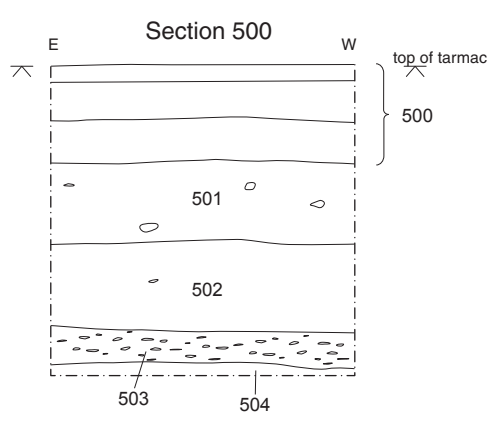
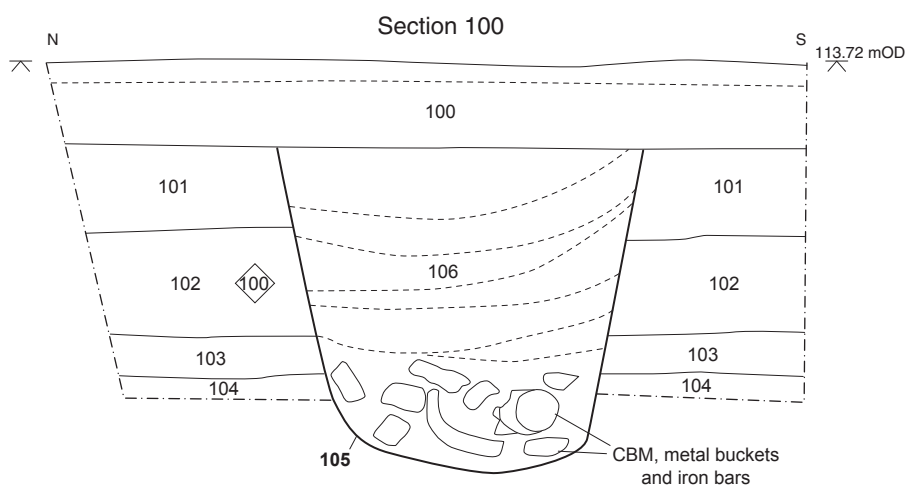


Figure 3: Sections 100 and 500



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking south



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking north (1 x1m and 1x2m scale)



Plate 3: Trench 3 looking east
(scale 1x1m and 1x2m)



Plate 4: Trench 4 looking east



Plate 5: Trench 5 looking east



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