



# Plot 91, Estcourt Road, Gloucester

## Archaeological Excavation Report

February 2021

Client: RPS on behalf of Miller Homes Ltd

Issue No: 1

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NGR: SO 83981 19743





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**Plot 91, Estcourt Road, Gloucester**  
***Archaeological Excavation Report***

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## Summary

This small excavation was mainly over the footprint of a recently demolished building. The only archaeological feature uncovered was the edge of a 19th century pit. The results suggest the area is on the periphery of the Roman activity known in the vicinity of the site, although shallow archaeological remains of this date may have been disturbed by the recently demolished building on the site.

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## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Nick Cooke of RPS for commissioning this project on behalf of Miller Homes Ltd. Thanks are also extended to Andrew Armstrong who monitored the work on behalf of Gloucester City Council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by John Boothroyd. The fieldwork was carried out by Ashley Strutt and Louie Parfitt. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the supervision of Leigh Allen, and prepared the archive under the supervision of Nicky Scott.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

1.1.1 An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology (OA) in late November and early December 2020 at Plot 91, Estcourt Road, Gloucester, centered on SO 83981 19743. A single 19th century pit was found. The site is part of a larger development comprising other archaeological works. The work was commissioned by RPS Consulting on behalf of Miller Homes Ltd on the site of a proposed residential development.

1.1.2 Planning permission (ref: 20/00608/FUL) for the development was granted in August 2020. Condition 11 of the Decision Notice states:

*No development, other than demolition to ground floor level of the existing building only, shall take place within the application site until the applicant, or their agent or successors in title, has secured the implantation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the application and approved in writing by the local planning authority.*

1.1.3 Discussions between Nick Cooke of RPS Consulting and Andrew Armstrong, City Archaeologist for Gloucester, established the scope of work required; this document outlines the results of the excavation.

1.1.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Guidance (CIfA 2014 revised 2020).

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies to the north of Gloucester city centre, Gloucestershire, NGR: SO 83981 19743.

1.2.2 The excavation was undertaken in the garden and footprint of a recently demolished domestic dwelling and covered an area of 144m<sup>2</sup>. The site was enclosed to the east, south and west by residential properties that front onto Estcourt Road, which runs on a broadly east-west alignment 80m to the south of the site. The proposed development forms part of the much larger redevelopment of the former Bishops College which lies to the north of the site.

1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation, Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 183 to 210 million years ago in the Jurassic and Triassic Periods. Superficial deposits of Cheltenham Sand and Gravel, formed 3 million years in the Quaternary Period, are recorded across the site (BGS Online). The natural encountered in the site was a yellow-brown gravel.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the wider development has been described in detail in a heritage desk-based assessment (CA 2015a), and will not be reproduced here. A summary is provided to place these works in context.

- 1.3.2 Prehistoric activity within the area is very sparse. Apart from occasional finds of Neolithic worked flint to the east of the site, no Bronze Age or Iron Age activity has been recorded.
- 1.3.3 Between 1983 and 1985 an unpublished large Roman cemetery was partially excavated at Gambier Parry Lodge approximately 400m to the west of the site. Over 300 burials, mostly inhumations of 2nd–4th century AD date, were excavated. An earlier 1st century AD polygonal building, interpreted as a shrine, was also recorded, along with gravel extraction pits. Roman burials have also been recorded along the route of Estcourt Road to the south of the site (Gloucestershire HER).
- 1.3.4 The site is located beyond the limits of the medieval city, some 900m north-east of the city walls, in an area believed to be occupied by agricultural land and small hamlets.
- 1.3.5 The 1780 Estate Map depicts the site as being within an enclosed field known as Pedmoor or Pedmarsh Field. The later 1885 Ordnance Survey Map shows the development of a farmhouse, Pedmarsh Cottage, and several associated outbuildings. The present structure within the site, known as the Knoll, is believed to date to the late 19th century and it is likely to be the same structure as the one shown on the 1885 map. Part of a medieval trackway, likely an access route to Pedmarsh Field, was identified during the laying of a driveway to the Knoll, which lies outside the site boundary.
- 1.3.6 Previous archaeological work within Bishops School has identified Roman remains (Fig. 2). This includes discoveries prior to the present redevelopment in 1967 and 1995, as well as a series of more recent evaluations (CA 2015b; OA 2015; OA 2016), and an evaluation and strip, map and sample excavation (OA 2018a), and excavation (OA 2018b). A large amount of modern disturbance and truncation was found in trenches located in the footings of the Bishop’s College School buildings and their environs.
- 1.3.7 A trial trench evaluation was undertaken within the area of and around the present excavation (OA 2020a). The works comprised the excavation of two trenches, both of which contained archaeological remains. The remains comprised two broadly parallel NNE-SSW aligned ditches, a north-south aligned ditch and a suspected cremation burial. Artefactual evidence was limited with only animal bone recovered from the ditches, however, pottery recovered from the surface of the cremation burial was dated to 1st-2nd century AD.

## 1.4 Aims and objectives

- 1.4.1 The aims of the excavation were to determine and understand the nature, function and character of the archaeological remains within their cultural and environmental setting. This was to mitigate the impact of the proposed housing development on the archaeological remains present.
- 1.4.2 Other aims were to date any remains present; to establish the extent, date and longevity of the remains identified by the recent evaluation; contextualize the finding within the local and regional landscapes, and in particular their relationship to the remains previously identified immediately to the north at former site of Bishops School; and to make available the results of the excavation.

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## 1.5 Fieldwork methodology

- 1.5.1 The methodology stated in the WSI was followed. Prior to archaeological work, the existing structure was demolished and the ground slab removed.
- 1.5.2 The overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. A sample of the single archaeological feature was hand excavated.
- 1.5.3 The excavation was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (2014a) *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation*. The general research parameters and objectives were followed, defined by *The South West Archaeological Research Framework, Resource Assessment And Research Agenda* edited by C J Webster (2007). The excavation also followed national planning policies, and the WSI (OA 2020b).

## 2 STRATIGRAPHY

- 2.1.1 Prior to the excavation the existing structure present on part of the site was demolished, and its ground slab removed. No archaeological features were found under the footprint of the house.
- 2.1.2 A single feature, probably a pit, was partially exposed on the south-eastern corner of the excavation area (Figs. 3 and 4; Plate 1). The feature was 1.50m in length and had an exposed width of 0.50m but continued past the excavated area to the west. The feature had near vertical sloping sides and a concave base, and was 0.49m deep. The single fill contained a piece of 19th century chimney pot, a lump of iron slag, and animal bone.

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## 3 ARTEFACTS

### 3.1 Ceramic building material *by John Cotter*

3.1.1 A single piece of ceramic building material (weight 356g) was recovered from context 1004, fill of pit 1003. This is spot-dated to c 1840-1900. This is from the rim of a 19th-century chimney pot in a cream-coloured fireclay. The chimney pot is of thick-walled cylindrical form with two heavy architectural-style mouldings below the rim occupying the upper 80mm of the item. The maximum height of the fragment is 125mm. Above the moulding the (chipped) rim itself is plain and vertical with a flattened top. The rim has a diameter of c 260mm and the expanded upper moulding has a maximum diameter of c 280mm. The upper moulding is roughly semi-circular in cross-section while the lower one is flatter with a rounded lower end where it tapers into the cylindrical shaft. The pot may have been machine-made, perhaps pressed into a mould, or possibly wheel-turned but finished with a former or template. The internal surface is heavily soot-blackened from use and this extends outside and over the top moulding. The cream-coloured fabric and simple architectural style of the item is typical of mass-produced chimney pots of the mid- to late-19th century.

### 3.2 Slag *by Geraldine Crann*

3.2.1 A single lump of iron slag, weighing 467 grams, was recovered from context 1004, fill of 19th century pit 1003.

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## 4 ENVIRONMENTAL AND OSTEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

### 4.1 Animal bone *by Rebecca Nicholson*

- 4.1.1 Only two animal bone fragments, weighing 36g, were recovered from the excavation, from context 1004. Both are fragments of large mammal rib, probably cattle, in fairly good condition. The larger fragment has been sawn through and also exhibits a fine oblique knife cuts, butchery marks indicative of the preparation of the joint and removal of the meat.
- 4.1.2 The bone has no further research value and retention in the archive is not recommended.

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## 5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The excavation suggests that the area was on the periphery to the Roman activity known in the locality of the site. Two undated ditches were identified in Trench 1 during the evaluation Trench 1 (OA 2020a). When exposed in wider open area of the excavation it became apparent that both features related to geological variations and were not of anthropogenic origin. Much of the area was disturbed by the recently demolished structure and this may have truncated any shallow archaeological remains. Another undated ditch was found in evaluation Trench 2, alongside a probable early Roman unurned cremation burial that was left *in situ*. The present excavation was located approximately 8m to the north of Trench 2 (Fig. 2) and nothing relating to these remains were found during this phase of work.
- 5.1.2 The single feature, dating to the 19th century, is presumably related to the use of the site as a domestic dwelling and garden from the late 19th century to the early 21st century. This is of no archaeological or heritage significance.

## **6 PUBLICATION AND ARCHIVING**

### **6.1 Publication**

6.1.1 The excavation revealed no features of archaeological importance and will not be subject to further publication or post-excavation work. A copy of this report will be available in the Gloucestershire HER and the OA library at: <https://library.thehumanjourney.net/>

### **6.2 Archiving, retention and disposal**

6.2.1 The site archive will be deposited with Gloucester City Museum and Art Gallery.

6.2.2 The finds are 19th century in date, are fully reported on here and have no archeological significant. All finds can be disposed of.

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## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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**APPENDIX A****SITE SUMMARY DETAILS**

<b>Site name:</b>	Plot 91, Estcourt Road, Gloucester
<b>Site code:</b>	OAGLEREX
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SO 83981 19743
<b>Type:</b>	Excavation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	November and December 2020
<b>Area of Site</b>	144m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, and will be deposited with Gloucester City Museum & Art Gallery in due course, under the following accession number: TBC.
<b>Summary of Results:</b>	This small excavation was mainly over the footprint of a recently demolished building. The only archaeological feature uncovered was the edge of a 19th century pit. The results suggest the area is on the periphery of the Roman activity known in the vicinity of the site, although shallow archaeological remains of this date may have been disturbed by the modern building on the site.

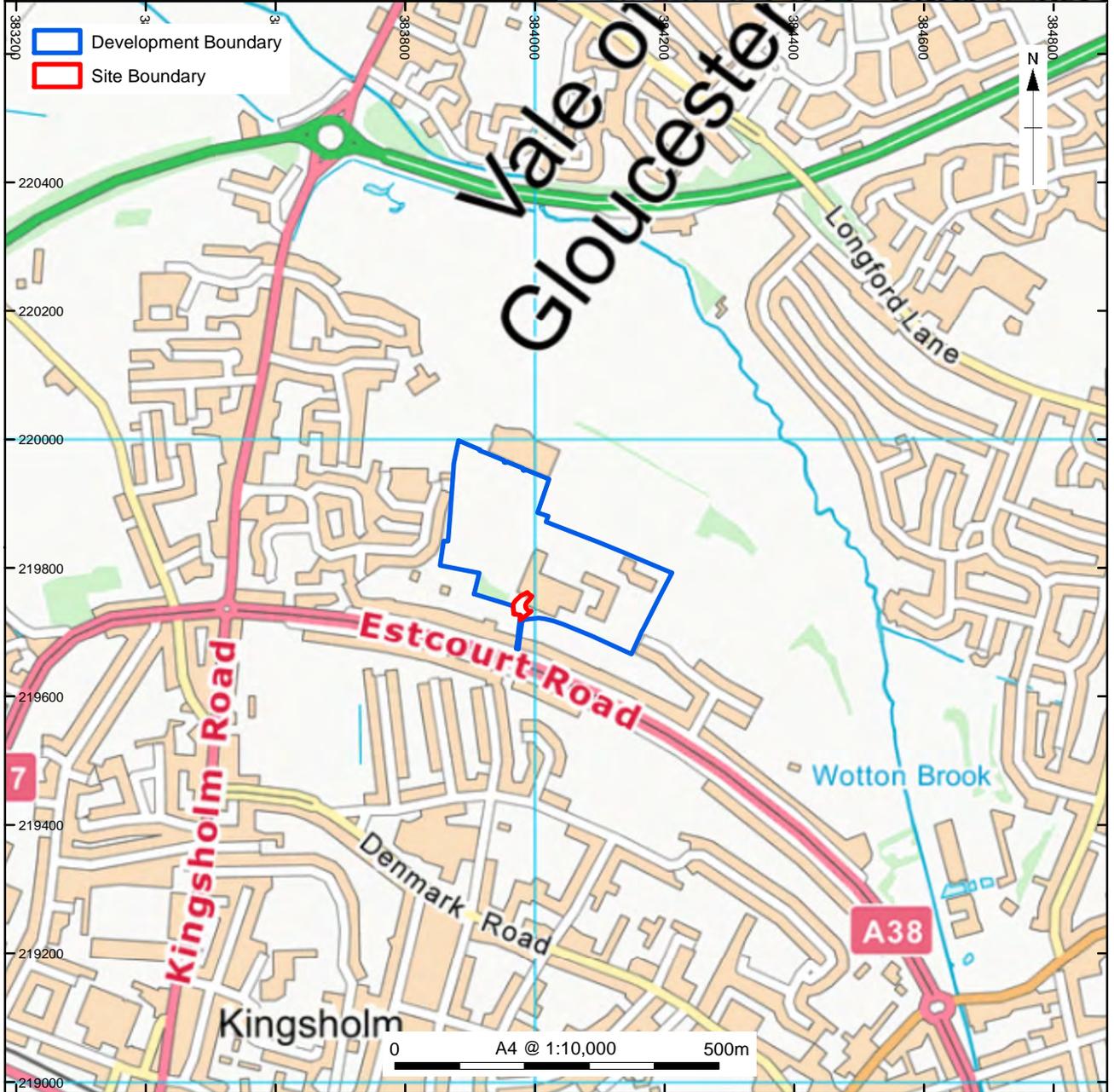
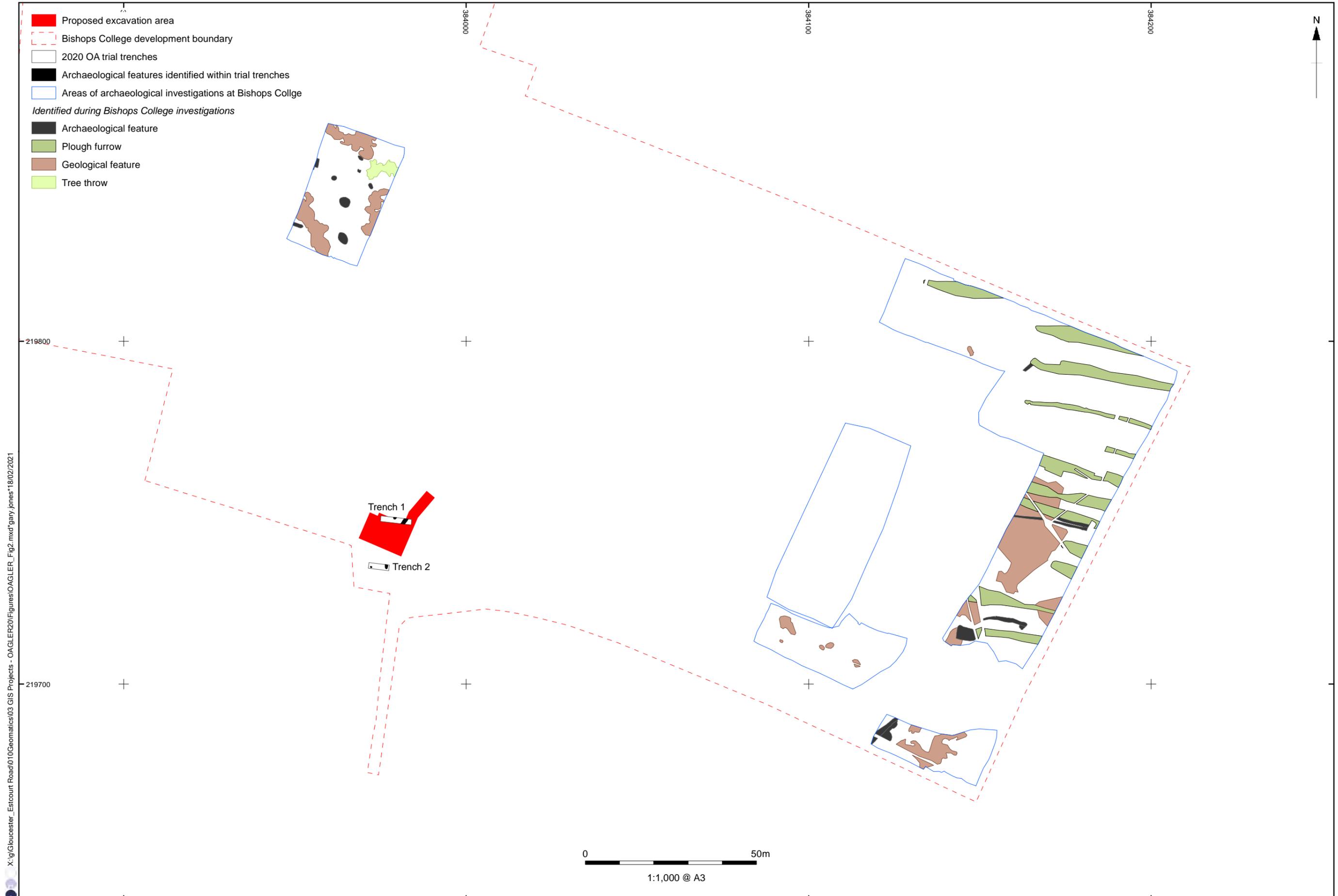


Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 2: Proposed excavation area and previous investigations

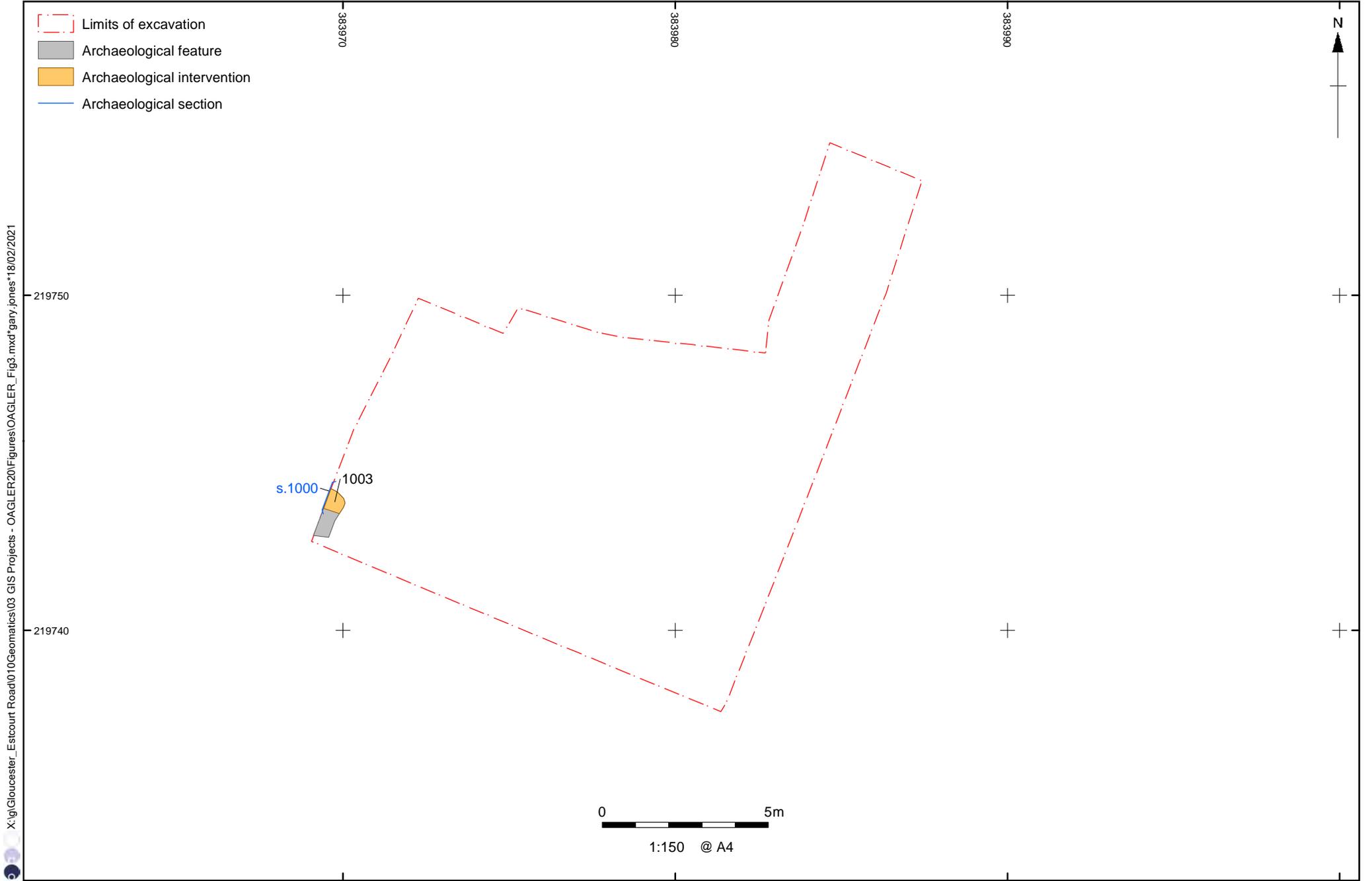


Figure 3: Excavation area - results

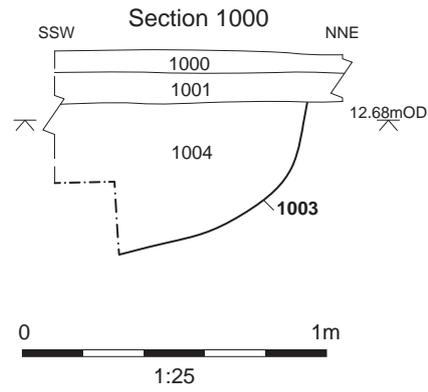


Figure 4: Pit 1003, section 1000



Plate 1: Pit 1003, view to NW



Plate 2: General shot, view to SW



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