



Chipping Warden Sewage Treatment Works, Mill Lane, Chipping Warden, Northamptonshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

September 2018

Client: Thames Water

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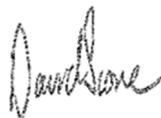
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Chipping Warden Sewage Treatment Works, Mill Lane, Chipping Warden, Northamptonshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

In June 2018 Oxford Archaeology undertook a watching brief on behalf of Thames Water Ltd in the grounds of a sewage treatment works at Mill Lane, Chipping Warden, Northamptonshire. The watching brief was undertaken on trenches excavated for new duct and pipework routes. No archaeological deposits or finds were encountered. Modern truncation and disturbance was observed in several of the trenches.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Claire Hallybone (Archaeologist for Thames Water) for commissioning this project and in particular Christopher Lee (Site Manager) for all the help on site. Thanks is also extended to Lesley-Ann Mather of Northamptonshire County Council, who monitored the work, for her advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Becky Peacock and Carl Champness. The fieldwork was directed by Bernadetta Rzadek. Thanks is also extended to the teams of OA staff that prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Thames Water Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the site of a proposed new tertiary treatment plant and associated duct and pipework at the Chipping Warden Sewage Treatment Works (STW), Northamptonshire. The watching brief was undertaken on topsoil stripping and open cut trenching associated with service runs.
- 1.1.2 Although the Local Planning Authority has not set a brief for the work under Permitted Development guidelines, discussions with the Northamptonshire Planning Archaeologist and a brief set by Claire Hallybone, Archaeologist for Thames Water, established the scope of work required; this document outlines how OA implemented those requirements.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies to the south of the village of Chipping Warden in the parish of Chipping Warden and Edgcote in the county of Northamptonshire (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.2 The area of the proposed development was 0.28ha. It comprised landscaped grounds around a sewage treatment works consisting of concrete tanks and infrastructure buildings, tarmac and concrete paths and access roads with areas of grassland in between.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as Dyrham Formation, Siltstone and Mudstone, Interbedded. This is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 183 to 191 million years ago in the Jurassic Period (BGS 2018).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 There are no known heritage assets within the site boundaries. However, there are heritage assets within a 1km radius of the site, including listed buildings, a battlefield site, conservation area and a scheduled ancient monument (Fig. 2). The archaeological resources map for Thames Water shows a mill close to the site itself and a moated site, medieval settlement and surviving ridge and furrow within 250m of the site (Fig. 3).
- 1.3.2 No archaeological investigations have been carried out within the site itself. There are unsubstantiated reports of a buried structure being uncovered during repair works at the site, but no records were made (Hallybone pers. comm.).
- 1.3.3 Prehistoric flint finds have been made around the village of Chipping Warden, but none have been found near to the site.
- 1.3.4 The scheduled monument is the Iron Age hillfort known as Arbury Camp (SP 494486), which lies south-west of Chipping Warden village. The main enclosure covers just under 3ha and was presumably once bounded by a massive bank and external ditch, perhaps with an original entrance in the south-east corner. The highest surviving part of the rampart is 1.5m (British History 2018).

- 1.3.5 A Roman villa lies south-east of the village, on a valley side close to the River Cherwell. The ploughing of a field in the early 19th century called Black Grounds revealed dark earth deposits, foundations, dressed stone and Roman coins; in 1826 an urn containing human bones was also discovered. Drainage work close to the river in 1849 produced much pottery, including samian, as well as four skeletons without grave goods apart from a small finger ring. This work also led to the discovery of a detached bath house near the river, consisting of three rooms and a stoke hole (British History 2018).
- 1.3.6 The medieval moated site in the area has been almost completely destroyed by ploughing and the ground returned to pasture. From plans made before destruction, the site appears to have been a simple moated enclosure of roughly rectangular form (British History 2018). The deserted village of Trafford lies to the east of the parish. Very little survives of the village.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

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

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 any ground works associated with the sewage plant improvement works on any buried archaeological deposits or features.
- ii. To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present.
- iii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- iv. To better understand the past land use and economy through the analysis of environmental remains.
- v. To contextualize the findings within the local and regional landscapes.
- vi. To make available the results of the watching brief.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 The site specific methodology was as follows:

- i. The watching brief was maintained during the removal of all deposits down to the impact depth of the works, and/or the natural geology.
- ii. Overburden was removed by a mini-excavator machine fitted with a toothless bucket.
- iii. The exposed deposits were sufficiently clean, to allow for the identification of archaeological features or deposits.
- iv. A written watching brief record was made of all the observed areas and all deposits encountered were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established best practice and the OA Field Manual.
- v. All observed areas and sections were marked on a plan tied into the Ordnance Survey data for the area.
- vi. Digital photographs were taken of the representative sections and deposits, and of the watching brief in general.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the watching brief are presented below and include a brief stratigraphic description of the deposits observed. The locations of the recorded sections are shown in Figure 4, and photographs of each section are presented as Plates 1-9. A full description of all the deposits encountered within the sections can be found in Appendix A.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The topsoil was uniform across site, consisting of soft, mid greyish brown, silty sand. No subsoil was encountered across the site. The natural geology was uniform across site, consisting of soft, light greyish yellow sandy clay.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the watching brief were generally good, and the areas observed remained dry throughout. Modern features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology. Contaminated ground was present behind Well 3, on section 004 and in the area of section 008.

3.3 General distribution of deposits

3.3.1 No archaeological features were encountered across the watching brief areas.

3.3.2 Modern features were present and observed in sections 001, 004, 005 and 008. Sections 002, 003, 006, 007 and 009 were devoid of archaeological or modern features and consisted of topsoil and the natural geology.

3.3.3 Section 001 (Plate 1) was located in the southern part of the site in Well 1 and contained two modern leveling layers (002 and 004) and one modern concrete structure (003).

3.3.4 Section 004 (Plate 4) was located in the western part of the site, behind Well 3, and contained one modern levelling layer (006), with contamination from a macerator chamber. This layer was also observed in section 005 (Plate 5).

3.4 Finds and environmental summaries

3.4.1 No finds or environmental samples were recovered.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The excavation was undertaken in dry weather and was not unduly affected by any other environmental conditions. The deposits were easy to distinguish from the surrounding natural geology.

4.2 Watching brief objectives and results

4.2.1 The watching brief was able to establish the absence of any archaeological features or deposits.

4.3 Conclusion

4.3.1 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered. The site had been heavily landscaped for the construction of the sewage works and any archaeological remains in the area are likely to have been truncated or were not impacted by these works.

APPENDIX A DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Section 1						
General description					Orientation	-
Well location devoid of archaeology. Contained two leveling layers and one made ground layer and a concrete structure. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of sandy clay.					Length (m)	2
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	1.43
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
001	Layer	-	0.10	Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid greyish brown, silty sand with small stone inclusions- Topsoil	-	Modern
002	Layer	-	0.38	Fine-grained sediment, soft, light brownish yellow, silty sand with small stone inclusions- modern leveling layer.	-	Modern
003	Structure	-	0.15	Modern concrete structure- made ground structure.	-	Modern
004	Layer	-	0.10	Fine-grained sediment, compact, light yellowish grey, silty sand- leveling layer for concrete structure.	-	Modern
005	Layer	-	>0.70	Fine-grained sediment, soft, light greyish yellow, sandy clay- Natural	-	-

Section 2						
General description					Orientation	-
Well location devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of sandy clay.					Length (m)	10
					Width (m)	0.40
					Avg. depth (m)	1
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
001	Layer	-	0.06	Topsoil	-	Modern
005	Layer	-	>0.94	Natural	-	-

Section 3						
General description					Orientation	-
Well location devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of sandy clay.					Length (m)	10
					Width (m)	0.40
					Avg. depth (m)	0.90
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
001	Layer	-	0.03	Topsoil	-	Modern

005	Layer	-	>0.87	Natural	-	-
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Section 4						
General description					Orientation	NE- SW
Area devoid of archaeology. Contained one leveling layer. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of sandy clay. Contamination was observed.					Length (m)	10
					Width (m)	0.40
					Avg. depth (m)	1.20
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
001	Layer	-	0.15	Topsoil	-	Modern
006	Layer	-	0.40	Fine-grained sediment, firm, mid bluish yellow, silty clay with small stone inclusions- leveling layer.	-	Modern
005	Layer	-	0.65	Natural	-	-

Section 5						
General description					Orientation	NE- SW
Area devoid of archaeology. Contained leveling layer and one construction cut. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of sandy clay.					Length (m)	10
					Width (m)	0.40
					Avg. depth (m)	1.60
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
001	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil	-	Modern
006	Layer	-	0.30	Fine-grained sediment, firm, mid bluish yellow, silty clay with small stone inclusions- leveling layer.	-	Modern
007	Fill	-	0.90	Fill of cut 008. Fine-grained sediment, firm, light brownish yellow, sandy clay with small stone inclusions.	-	Modern
008	Cut	2.30	0.90	Modern construction cut for concrete pipe.	-	Modern
005	Layer	-	>1.10	Natural	-	-

Section 6						
General description					Orientation	-
Well location devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of sandy clay.					Length (m)	5.0
					Width (m)	3.0
					Avg. depth (m)	0.96
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
001	Layer	-	0.17	Topsoil	-	Modern
005	Layer	-	>0.79	Natural	-	-

Section 7						
General description					Orientation	NW- SE
Area devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of sandy clay.					Length (m)	10
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	0.78
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
001	Layer	-	0.05	Topsoil	-	Modern
005	Layer	-	>0.73	Subsoil	-	-

Section 8						
General description					Orientation	-
Well location devoid of archaeology. Contained the edge of footpath and leveling layer overlying natural geology of sandy clay.					Length (m)	2
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	1.14
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
009	Structure	-	0.05	Wooden plank- the edge of modern footpath.	-	Modern
010	Layer	-	0.07	Fine-grained sediment, soft, light yellowish grey, silty sand- leveling layer for modern footpath,	-	Modern
011	Layer	-	>1.02	Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid pinkish, bluish, yellowish brown, sandy clay- the same Natural as 005 but with chemical contamination.	-	-

Section 9						
General description					Orientation	W- E
Area devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil overlying natural geology of sandy clay.					Length (m)	10
					Width (m)	0.40
					Avg. depth (m)	1.15
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
001	Layer	-	0.17	Topsoil	-	Modern
005	Layer	-	>0.98	Natural	-	-

APPENDIX B

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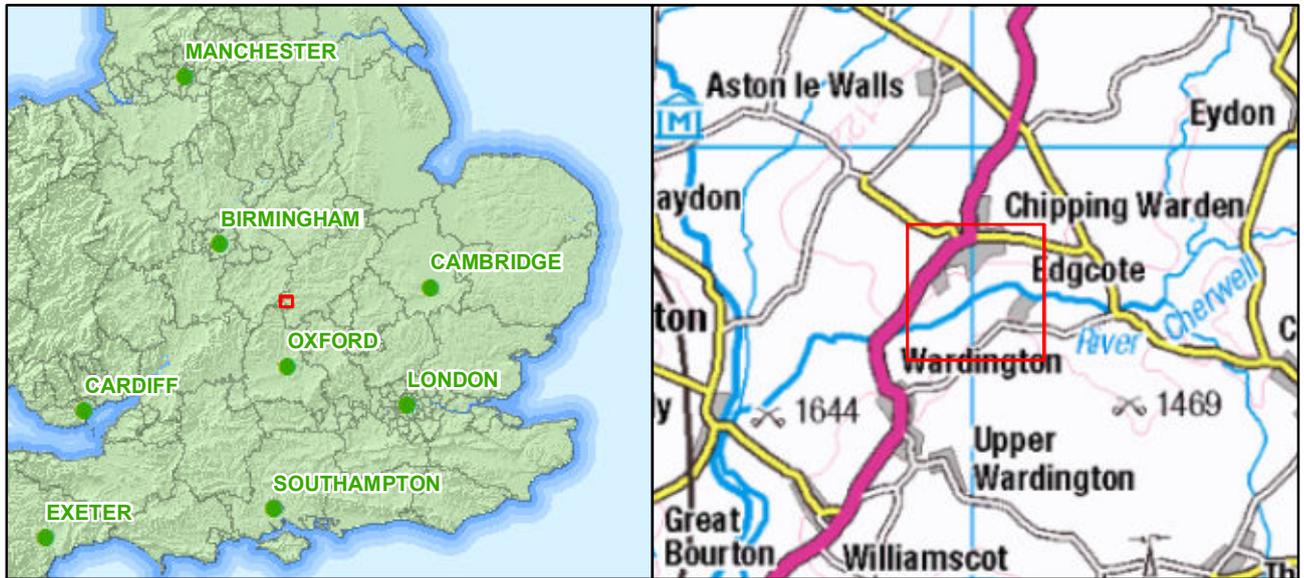
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APPENDIX C**SITE SUMMARY DETAILS**

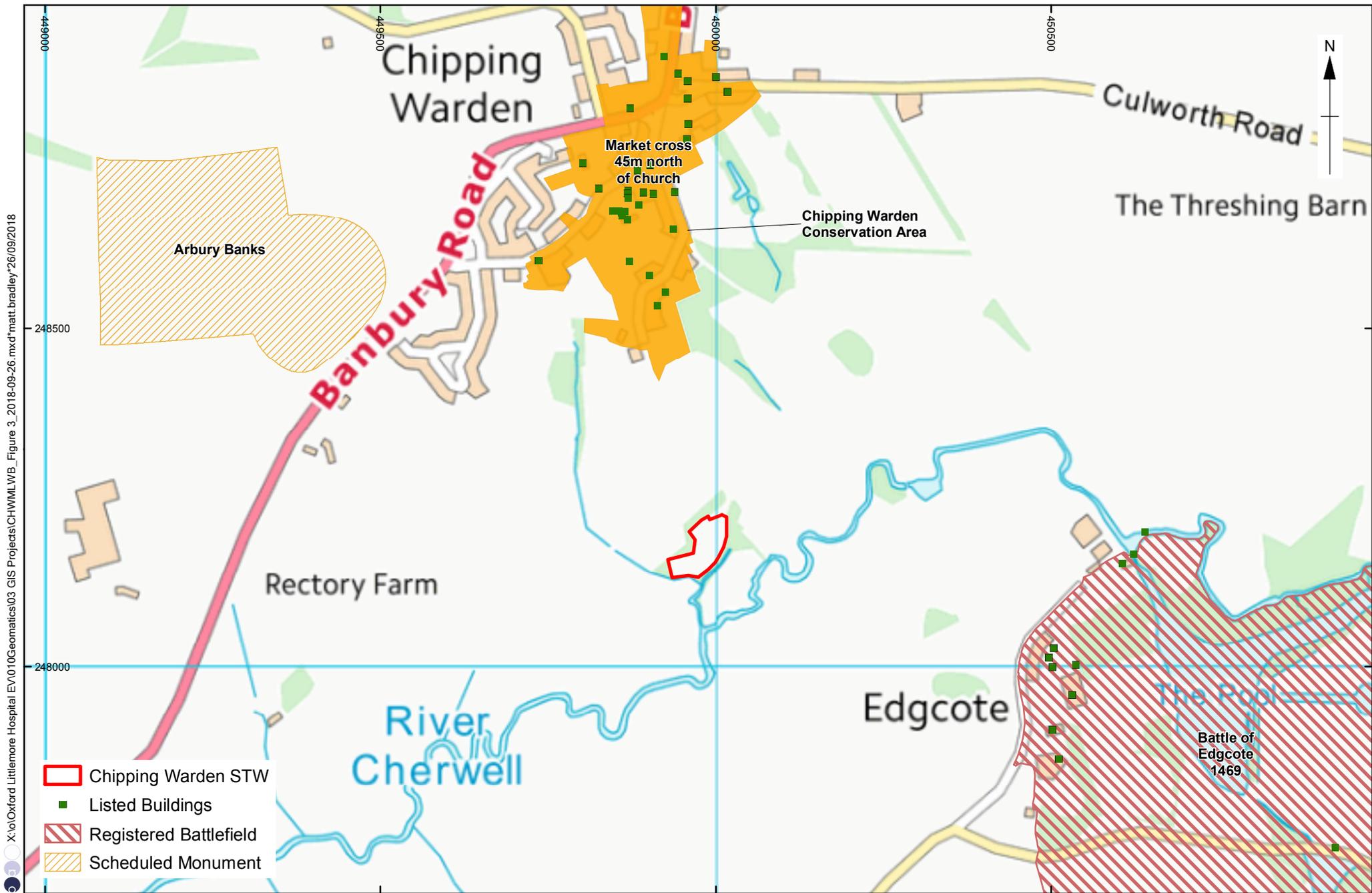
Site name:	Mill Lane, Chipping Warden, Northamptonshire
Site code:	CHWML18
Grid Reference	SP 499481
Type:	Watching brief
Date and duration:	4th-22nd June 2018
Area of Site	0.28ha
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES.

Summary of Results: In June 2018 Oxford Archaeology undertook a watching brief on behalf of Thames Water Ltd in the grounds of a sewage treatment works at Mill Lane, Chipping Warden, Northamptonshire. The watching brief was undertaken on trenches excavated for a new tertiary treatment plant and associated duct and pipework. No archaeological deposits or finds were encountered. Modern truncation and disturbance was observed in several of the trenches.



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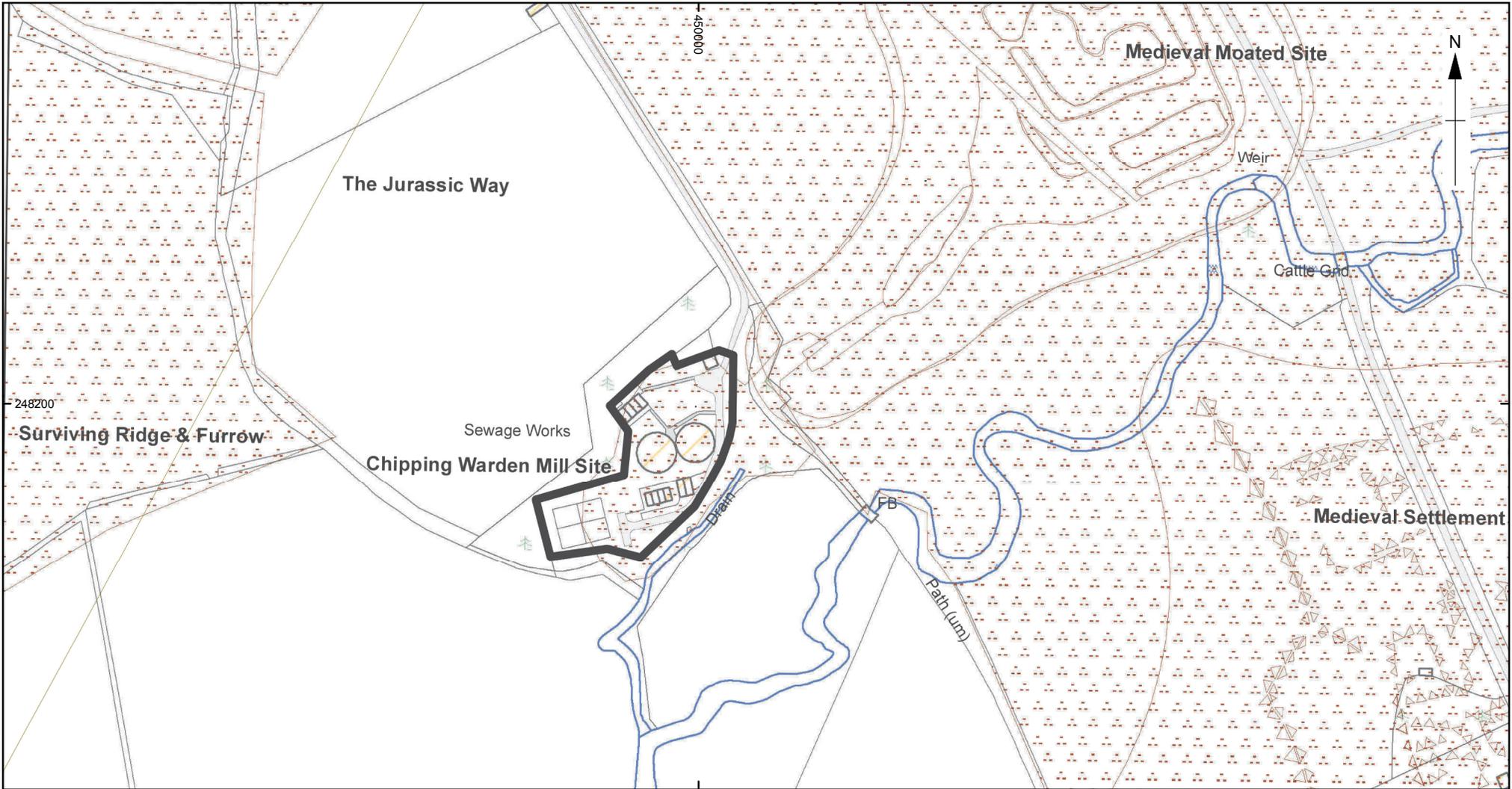
Figure 1: Site location



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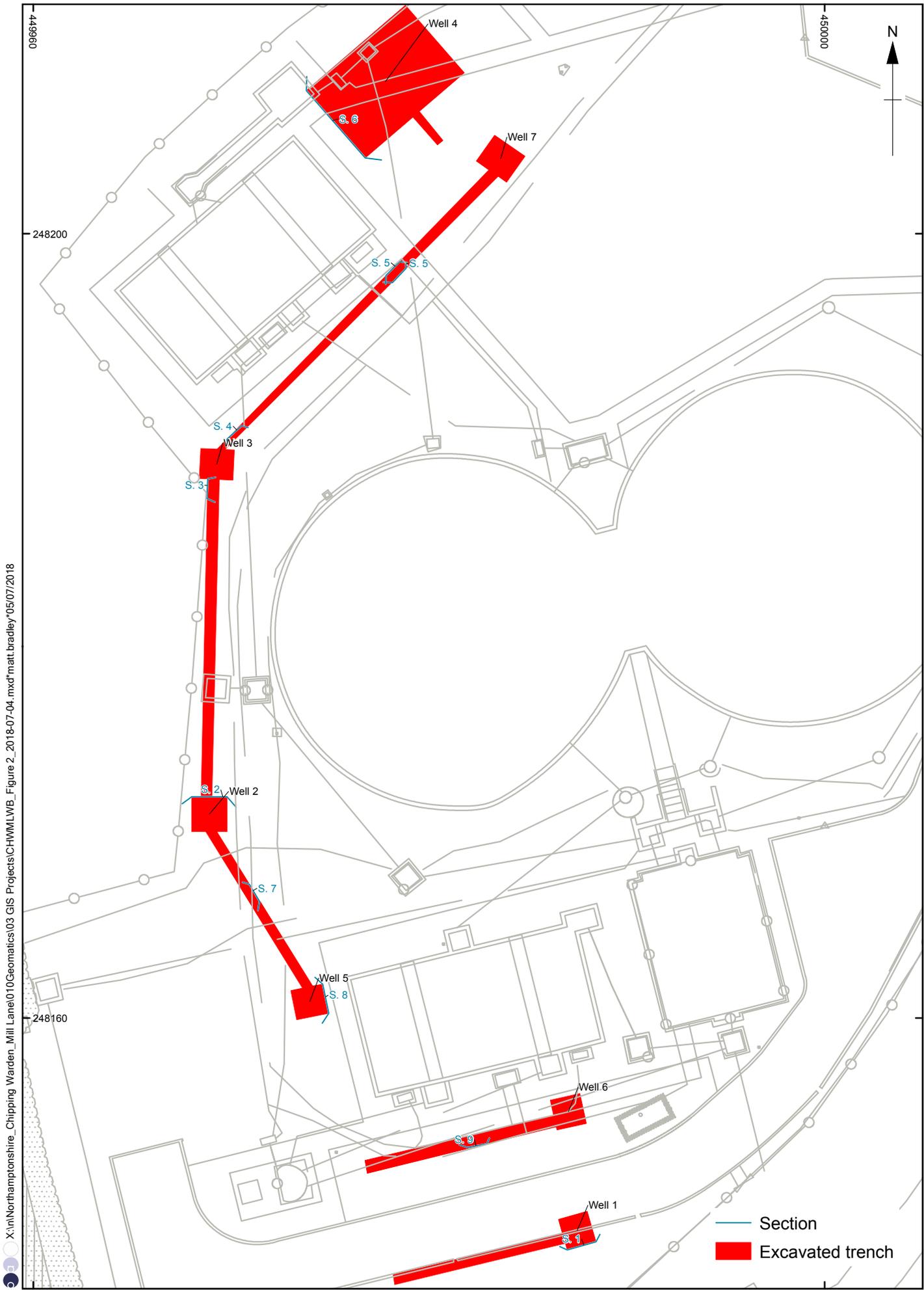


Figure 2: Heritage map



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Figure 3: Archaeological mapping



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Figure 4: Plan of excavated trenches with section locations



Plate 1: Section 001, north facing section



Plate 2: Section 002, east facing section



Plate 3: Section 003, east facing section



Plate 4: Section 004, south-east facing section



Plate 5: Section 005, north-west facing section



Plate 6: Section 006, north-east facing section



Plate 7: Section 007, west facing section

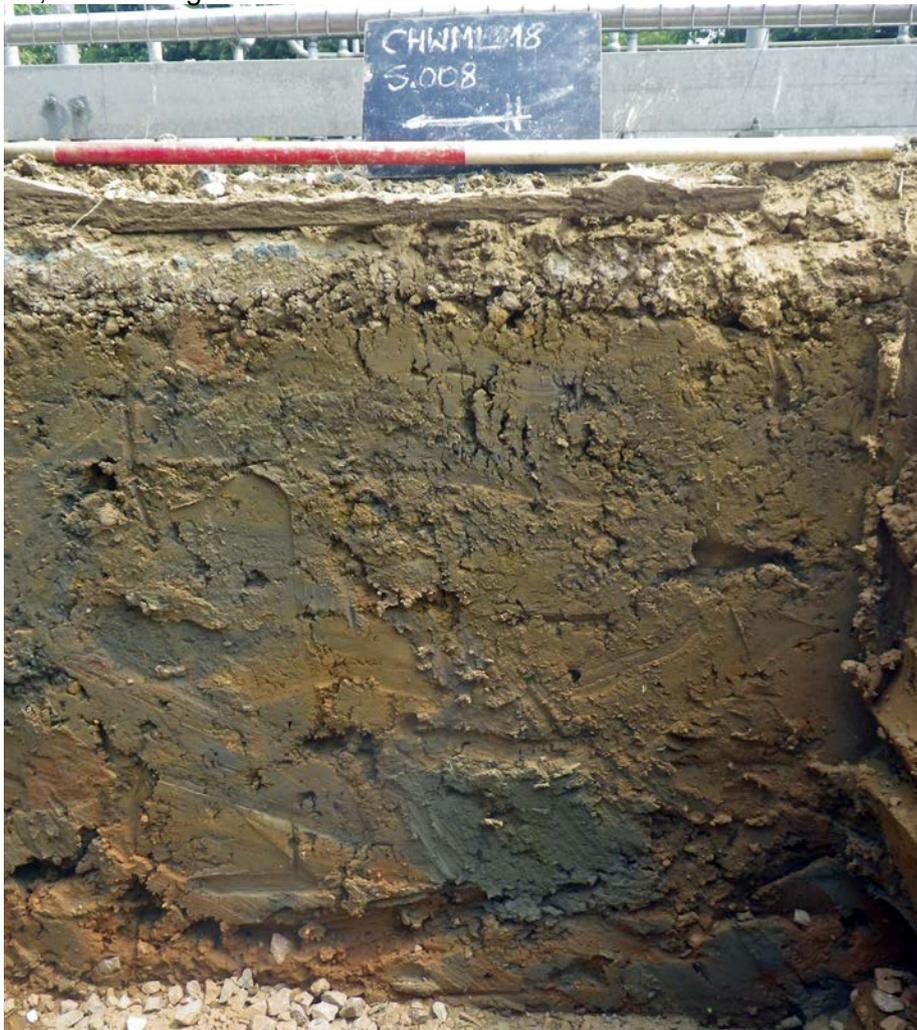


Plate 8: Section 008, west facing section



Plate 9: Section 009, south facing section



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