

Archaeology Wales

Written Scheme of Investigation

**For Archaeological Strip, Map and Excavate and Watching
Brief prior to and during the construction of housing on
land adjacent to Feidr Eglwys, Newport, Pembrokeshire**

**Prepared for:
Harries Design and Management**

Project No: 1055

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This specification details the proposal for archaeological strip, map and excavate and watching brief prior to and during groundworks associated with the construction of 35 residential units, new roads, public open spaces and allotments on five fields to the north of Feidr Eglwys, Newport Pembrokeshire (Planning Application No. NP/15/0194/FUL). This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been produced Archaeology Wales for Harries Design and Management.

1. Introduction

The proposed development is located on the eastern side of the town of Newport, Pembrokeshire. It lies 200m to the ENE of the Castle and 120m to the east of St Mary's Church, between Goat Street, Feidr Bentick and Feidr Eglwys. The site covers approximately 4.5 acres and is currently under pasture (fig. 1).

This WSI is being prepared in accordance with Condition 10 of Planning Permission NP/15/0194/FUL. Areas of Watching Brief monitoring and Excavation (Strip, Map and Sample) are proposed. It is envisaged that the initial phase of works will take place in December 2016 and comprise Watching Brief monitoring during groundworks in the central southern part of the development site (fig 4 – the blue area).

The proposed development lies within the modern town of Newport, which has its origins in the medieval period. Excavations within the town have revealed evidence for burgrave plots containing street-fronting houses, and the medieval layout of the town is visible in the modern street plan.

In 2011, an archaeological evaluation was carried out on the proposed development site to investigate the potential of the archaeological resource. The evaluation followed a detailed desk-based assessment which revealed that the site had been occupied in the medieval period. A geophysical survey was subsequently carried out to investigate the possibility of buried archaeological remains, and this was followed by an intensive programme of evaluation. A total of 14 evaluation trenches were excavated, totalling 650m in length, across four of the five fields on the site (the fifth was not accessible). The evaluation revealed evidence for single phase, and probably short-lived, medieval occupation at the northern end of the site. This comprised the ephemeral remains of four structures, boundary ditches and a rubbish pit thought to be associated with the burgrave plots laid out along Goat Street in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. A double ditch ran along the eastern edge of the site. This pre-dated the burgrave plots and may have functioned as a defensive feature associated with the earliest phase of the medieval town of Newport. Tentative evidence for earlier, possibly prehistoric, occupation of this part of the site was also revealed. At the southern end of the site there was limited evidence for post-medieval occupation and agricultural activity, but no indication that medieval burgrave plots fronted Feidr Eglwys was found. The evaluation allowed the fields to be divided in to zones of High, Medium and Low archaeological potential (see fig. 2)

As a result of the evaluation a mitigation strategy was devised to ensure a level of excavation and recording appropriate to the archaeological resource could be implemented prior to and during development on the site. The mitigation strategy involves the following work:

1. A programme of strip, map and excavate on ground proposed for development within the area of high potential at the northern end of the site.
2. An archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the development across the rest of the site.

This specification has been prepared by Mark Houlston (MIfA), Managing Director, Archaeology Wales Ltd (henceforth - AW) at the request of Harries Design and Management. It provides information on the methodology that will be employed by AW during the archaeological work at the site.

The purpose of the strip, map and excavate investigation and the watching brief is to provide the local planning authority with sufficient information regarding the nature of archaeological remains on the site of the development, the requirements for which are set out in Planning Policy WALES 2014. The work is to ensure that all buried artefacts and deposits are fully investigated and recorded if they are to be disturbed or are revealed as a result of activities associated with the development.

All work will conform to Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (CIfA 2016), and be undertaken by suitably qualified staff to the highest professional standards.

2 Site description and historic background

The proposed development site lies on the south-eastern edge of the modern town on the eastern edge of a low ridge at approximately 50m AOD. To the east of the site boundary the ground drops sharply to Feidr Bentick, while on the west side it is bounded by the Afon Ysgolheigion. The geology of the local area is Ordovician sedimentary rock overlain by a thick deposit of glacial till, gravel and sand.

An archaeological desk-based assessment, walkover survey and geophysical survey revealed that the proposed development site had archaeological high potential. Documentary sources revealed that there were 14 burgage plots fronting Goat Street in 1434, held by eight Burgesses. The burgage plots apparently extended the full width of the site east/west and from Goat Street in the north to the southern boundary of Field 3 in the south. By 1595, all but two of the burgage plots on Goat Street had fallen out of use. This reflects the general history of the town as, by the seventeenth century, only the area along the southern end of Long Street and St Mary's Street, close to the castle, remained occupied. The earliest cartographic depiction of Newport dates to 1758, and shows the extent to which the town had changed since the fifteenth century. Burgage plots survived along St Mary's Street, but had been replaced by larger open fields in much of the rest of the town, including in the proposed development area. The Tithe map of 1844 reveals that the proposed development site had been divided into several large fields used for arable and pastoral agriculture, together with two narrow strips of land accommodating houses and gardens. The early OS maps reveal that the modern field layout has been in existence since the late nineteenth century.

3 Site specific objectives

The primary objectives of the work will be to locate and describe, by means of a strip, map and excavate investigation and an archaeological watching brief, all

archaeological features that may be present within the development area. The work will elucidate the presence or absence of archaeological material, its character, distribution, extent, condition and relative significance.

The work will include a comprehensive assessment of regional context within which the archaeological evidence rests and will aim to highlight any relevant research issues within national and regional research frameworks.

The work will result in a report that will provide information of sufficient detail to allow informed planning decisions to be made which can safeguard the archaeological resource.

4 The proposed archaeological work

The proposed archaeological monitoring will be carried out during all phases of groundworks on the site.

The aim of the work will be to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site. The work will include the following elements:

- A strip, map and excavate investigation of the high archaeological potential zone at the northern end of the site (Stage 1)
- A watching brief during construction work throughout the remainder of the site (Stage 2).
- The production of an illustrated report and the deposition of the site archive (Stage 3)

5 Method Statement for a Strip, Map and Excavate Investigation (Stage 1)

A strip, map and excavate investigation will be carried out on the ground to be developed within the high archaeological potential zone at the northern end of the site. The aim of the investigation is to ensure that any features that could be impacted by the proposed development are fully investigated, sampled and recorded prior to their removal.

The archaeological Project Manager in charge of the work will satisfy herself that all constraints to ground works have been identified, including the siting of live services, Tree Preservation Orders, ecological constraints and public footpaths.

The plough-soil and subsoil will be carefully removed by mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision. Once the archaeological horizon, or the natural till, has been revealed the surface will be cleaned manually by archaeologists. All archaeological features revealed will be mapped, photographed and drawn, with each being assigned a context number. The mapping will involve the use of an EDM Total Station tied to the OS National Grid to record the precise location, form and extent of the features. Scaled high resolution digital photographs will be taken of each feature, and a site plan will be drawn at a scale of 1:50.

Each of the identified features will then be manually excavated. All features will be excavated to maximise the recovery of artefacts, dating materials and information regarding use.

- Linear ditches – all linear features will be excavated by cutting a series of slots to reveal the stratigraphic profile of the ditch fills. Where multiple fills are present the excavation will be by context, and all contexts containing charcoal will be sampled. The excavated sections will be photographed, drawn and recorded, with monolith and other samples taken where appropriate. The remainder of the ditch fills will then be removed through careful excavation.
- Pits and postholes – all pits and postholes will initially be investigated by half-section, removing one half of the feature to reveal a stratigraphic profile through the fills. Where multiple fills are present the excavation will be by context, and if charcoal is present in the fill it will be 100% sampled. Revealing the stratigraphy in section will allow for the identification of post-pipes and other multiple fill features, and enable monolith samples to be taken where appropriate. The section through the pit fills will be photographed, drawn, recorded and sampled before the remainder of the pit fill is removed through careful excavation.
- Stakeholes – all stakeholes will be 100% excavated with the 100% of the fill sampled. The feature will be recorded and photographed, with the profile drawn.
- Other features – all other features will be excavated to a sufficient degree to allow a full understanding of their morphology and for decisions to be made regarding further investigation or sampling.

All section drawings will be undertaken at 1:10 scale, with plans at 1:20 scale. All photographs will contain a scale, a north arrow and a board displaying the context number(s). Written records will use AW's own recording system, following a continuous numbering system for contexts. All excavated features will be recorded using the EDM total station tied to the OS National Grid.

6. Method Statement for a Watching Brief (Stage 2)

A watching brief complying with the CIfA Standards and Guidance on Watching Briefs (2016) will be completed during all ground disturbances on the remainder of the site.

The watching brief is intended to identify any buried remains that exist within the development area and to ensure they are fully investigated and recorded.

As defined by the CIfA (2016) 'the Watching Brief will provide an opportunity for the archaeologists present to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard'.

Should archaeological remains be revealed, sufficient excavation will be carried out to determine their morphology, extent and, if possible, date. All finds will be recorded by context and a full written, drawn and photographic record made. Preservation in situ will be advocated in the first instance.

If preservation in situ is not possible representatives of Dyfed Archaeological Trust – Heritage Management (DAT-HM) and Harries Design and Management will be informed and a site meeting organised as appropriate. If, as a result of the meeting,

DAT-HM recommend that further work is undertaken, for example the excavation of specific areas or features, AW will prepare a Specification for the work and an estimate of all associated costs.

7. Monitoring

DAT-HM will be contacted approximately two weeks prior to the commencement of the both the strip, map and excavate investigation and the watching brief, and subsequently once the work is underway.

Any changes to the specification that AW may wish to make after approval will be communicated to DAT-HM for approval on behalf of Planning Authority.

Representatives of DAT-HM will be given access to the site so that they may monitor the progress of the watching brief. DAT-HM will be kept regularly informed about developments, both during the site works and subsequently during the post-fieldwork programme.

8 Method statement for the production of an illustrated report and the deposition of the site archive (Stage 3)

Report preparation

The report will contain the following:

- A fully representative description of the information gained from Stages 1 and 2 above, even if there should be negative evidence.
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results. This can be presented in Welsh to meet any Welsh language policy requirements.
- At least one plan showing the site's location in respect to the local topography, as well as the position of all excavated areas.
- Suitably selected plans and sections of significant archaeological features. All plans and sections should be related to Ordnance Datum.
- Written descriptions of all features and deposits excavated and their considered interpretation.
- A summary report on the artefactual and ecofactual assemblage and an assessment of its potential for further study, prepared by suitably qualified individuals or specialists.
- A statement of the local and regional context of the archaeological remains identified.

Copies of the report will be sent to Harries Design and Management, DAT-HM, and for inclusion in the HER. Digital copies will be provided in pdf format if required.

A summary report of the work will be submitted for publication to a national journal (eg Archaeology in Wales) no later than one year after the completion of the work.

The site archive

A project archive will be prepared in accordance with the National Monuments Record (Wales) agreed structure and be deposited within an appropriate local museum on completion of site analysis and report production. It will also conform to the guidelines set out in 'Management of Archaeological Projects Two, Appendix 3' (English Heritage 1991).

Arrangements will be made with the local museum before work starts. Wherever the archive is deposited, this information will be relayed to the HER.

Although there may be a period during which client confidentiality will need to be maintained, the report and the archive will be deposited not later than six months after completion of the work.

Other significant digital data generated by the survey (ie AP plots, EDM surveys, CAD drawings, GIS maps, etc) will be presented as part of the report on a CD/DVD. The format of this presented data will be agreed with the curator in advance of its preparation.

7 Resources and timetable

Standards

The watching brief will be undertaken Archaeology Wales staff using current best practice.

AW is a CIfA Registered Archaeological Organisation and consequently all work will be undertaken to the standards and guidelines of the CIfA.

Staff

The project will be managed by Phil Poucher (a CV is available upon request) and carried out by suitably qualified AW staff.

Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

Timetable of archaeological works

The work will be undertaken at the convenience of the client. No start date has yet been agreed.

Insurance

AW is an affiliated member of the CBA, and holds Insurance through the CBA insurance service.

Health and safety

All members of staff will adhere to the requirements of the *Health & Safety at Work Act*, 1974, and the Health and Safety Policy Statement of AW.

If AW has sole possession of the site, then AW will produce a detailed Risk Assessment for approval by the client before any work is undertaken. If another organisation has responsibility for site safety, then AW employees will be briefed on the contents of all existing Risk Assessments, and all other health and safety requirements that may be in place.

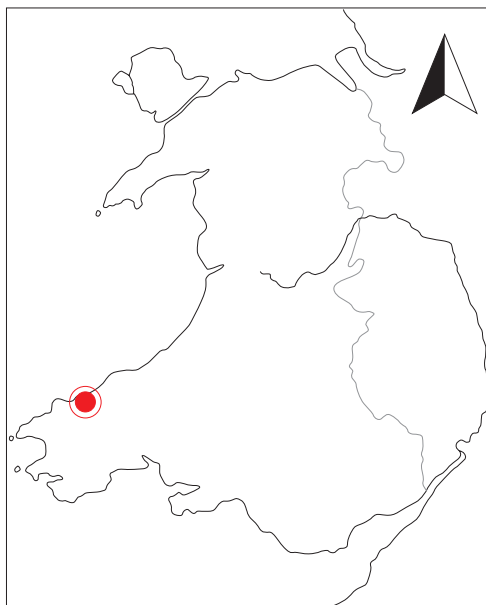


Fig. 1
Location of
proposed
development
site

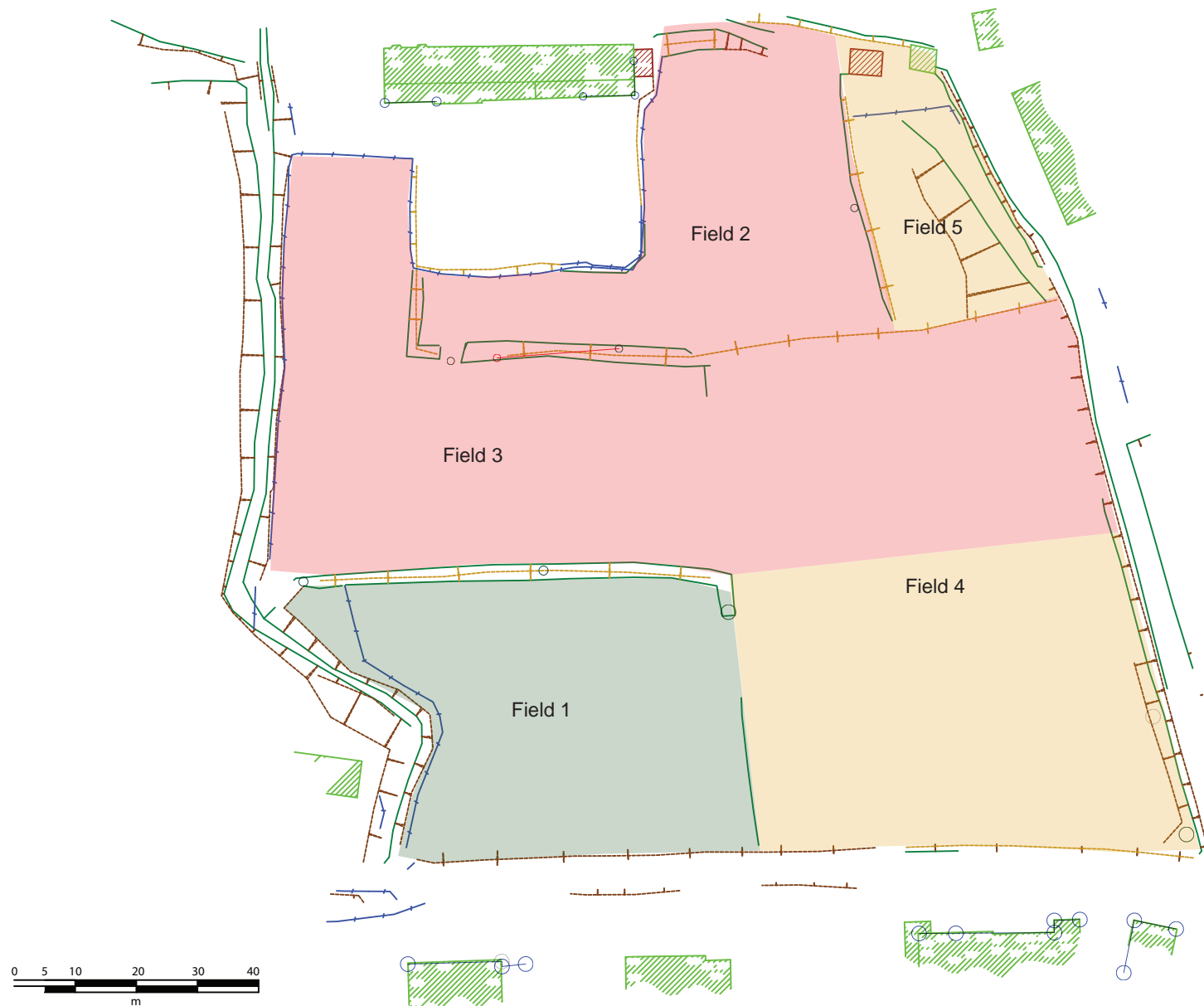
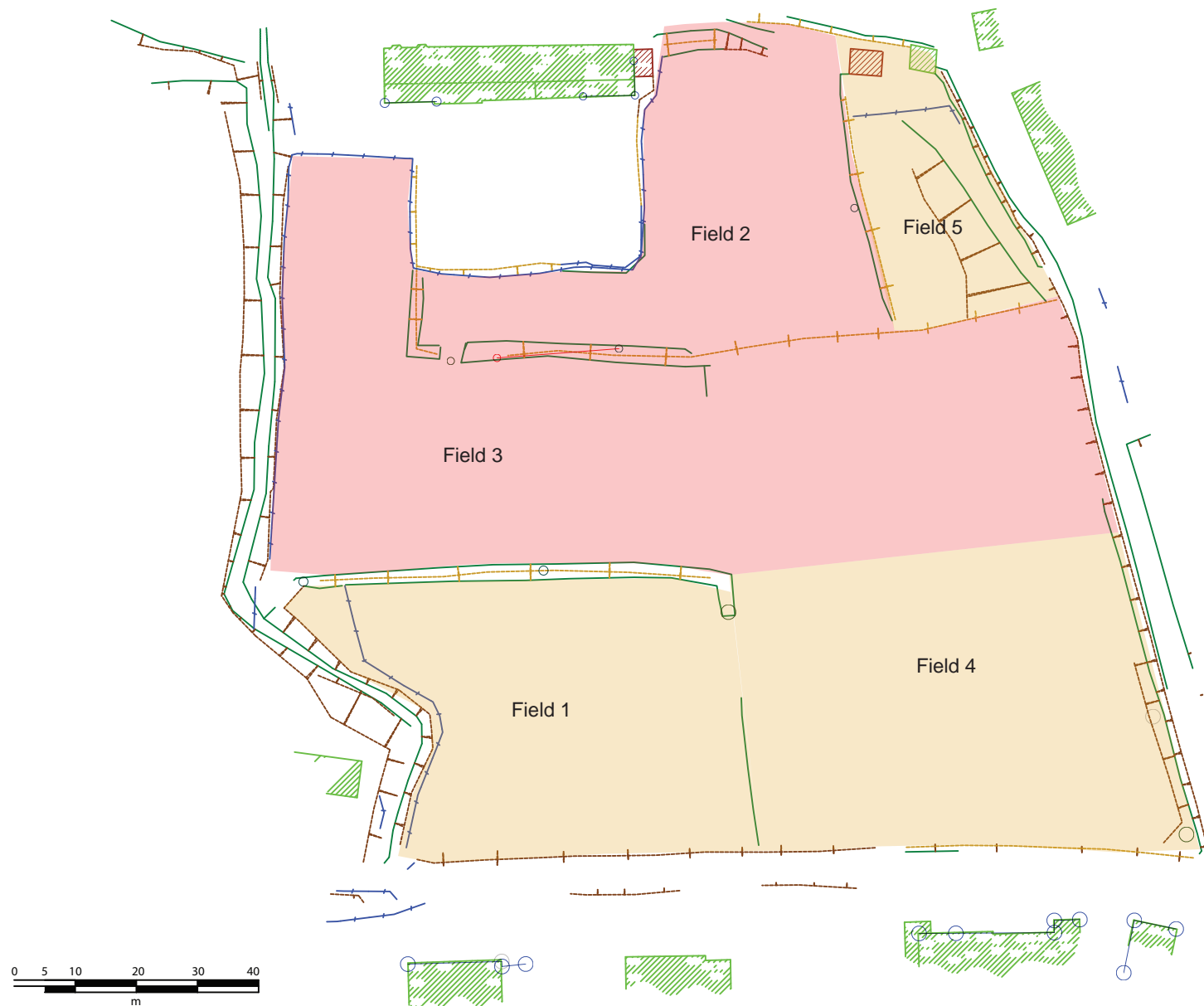


Fig. 2
Zones of
archaeological
potential across
the site



- Strip, Map and Excavate
- Watching Brief

Fig. 3
Proposed archaeological mitigation across the site

