

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Mitigation: Strip, Map & Sample

Gray's Lane, Foxholes, Pirton Road, Hitchin
Hertfordshire, SG5 2HW

Project Reference
794-PLN-HER-01810

Version 1

Date: 15th July 2025

Project Information	
Site name	Gray's Lane, Foxholes, Pirton Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2HW
Report type	Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Mitigation: Strip. Map and Sample
Site address	Gray's Lane, Foxholes, Pirton Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2HW
NGR	TL 17431 29123
Local planning authority	North Hertfordshire District Council
Planning reference	22/03092/FP
Commissioning client	RPS Group Consulting
Project dates	July 2025
Archive site code	HGLF25

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Reissued report version:		
Reason for reissue:		
Project Manager approval:		



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) has been commissioned by RPS Group to undertake an archaeological Strip, Map and Sample (SMS) as a mitigation exercise ahead of the development of land at Gray's Lane, Foxholes, Pirton Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2HW. The site is located within the administrative control of North Hertfordshire District Council (

- 1.2 **Figure 1).**
- 1.3 The site is centred around National Grid Reference TL 17431 29123. The site is a broadly rectangular shaped plot which lies adjacent to Foxholes Care Home, on the corner of Crow Furlong and Pirton Road on the west edge of Hitchin. It covers 4.2ha, c 1.9ha of which, the southern half, is mature woodland to be retained. The site is bounded to the south and east by the aforementioned roads, to the west by a private road servicing the neighbouring properties and agricultural land, and to the north by Gray's Lane. The full site boundary generally comprises hedge and mature trees, whilst the ground cover consists of grassland/parkland with occasional mature trees and areas of scrub.
- 1.4 Geophysical survey has been undertaken within the northern part of the site and has identified a number of anomalies indicative of linear archaeological features as well as some linear features possibly relating to allotment boundaries (Arkley 2017).
- 1.5 An archaeological evaluation undertaken in 2017 (MOLA 2017), which comprised the excavation of sixteen trenches positioned to target anomalies in the geophysical data, recorded ditches, pits and postholes which were encountered in ten of the sixteen trenches and produced mixed results when viewed in comparison with the results of the geophysical survey. The archaeology was distributed across the entire evaluation area but the greatest concentration of features was found on the higher ground at the centre of the site between trenches 7 and 13. These features were dated to the mid to late Iron Age and Roman period. Continuations of the Roman activity can also be found in the form of ditches extending towards the west and southwest of the site. In addition to this within the north east of the site where the ground level drops sharply evidence of post-medieval quarrying have been found. Trenches 1, 2, 4, 9, 14 and 15 contained no archaeological remains.
- 1.6 The archaeological adviser to the local planning authority, Alison Tinniswood of Hertfordshire County Council, has stated that mitigation works are required and has agreed a mitigation scope with RPS Consulting Services Limited, acting as archaeological consultants to the client. This will see the implementation of SMS fieldwork within one area targeting foci of activity, measuring 4,213m² (**Figures 2 & 3**). These areas are designed to allow investigation and preservation by record of the archaeological remains identified within the evaluation.
- 1.7 This document forms the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which designs the mitigation work. If archaeological remains of a notable density or significance are identified within the limits of the proposed investigation area, then it may be necessary to enlarge the area. This will be agreed in consultation with HCC, RPS Consulting Services Limited and the client.
- 1.8 The works will be undertaken by a full-time archaeological supervisor and other archaeological staff working for PCA. The works will be undertaken following a site-specific RAMS prepared by PCA which will outline the safe working practises which will be followed.
- 1.9 All works will be undertaken in accordance with the following documents:
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- This Written Scheme of Investigation (pending approval from the Archaeology Advisor to the Local Planning Authority)
 - Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England. East Anglian Archaeology (Medlycott (ed.) 2011, Occasional Papers 24)
 - Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003)
 - *MoRPHE* (Historic England, 2015).
 - 'Standard for archaeological excavation' (ClfA 2023)
 - 'Universal guidance for archaeological excavation' (ClfA 2023)
 - Site-specific RAMS (as mentioned above)
- 1.10 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (number 23) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and will operate within the Institute's 'Code of Practice'.
- 1.11 PCA has the following accreditations:
- ISO9001 registration
 - Construction Line registration
 - SMAS SSIP registration
 - Achilles registration
- 1.12 PCA carries the following insurance policies:

Policy	Limit of Indemnity	Policy Number	Insurer
Public & Products Liability	£10,000,000	PC007887 & 000133	Zurich Insurance & Ecclesiastical Insurance Office
Employers Liability	£10,000,000	000133	Ecclesiastical Insurance Office
Professional Indemnity	£5,000,000	RG BDX 7059494/TG0103	AXA Insurance UK
Hired in Plant & Equipment	£500,000	100757713ENG	Aviva Insurance

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Development at the site is subject to planning guidance and policies contained within:
- The National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
 - North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031 (adopted November 2022)
- 2.2 The proposed development comprises:
- Residential development of 47 dwellings and associated car parking, open space, landscaping and creation of access off Grays Lane (as amended).*
- 2.3 Planning permission has been granted for the development by the Local Planning Authority, North Hertfordshire District Council under reference 22/03092/FP. The permission included the following condition requiring archaeological works:

19. A) No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:

- 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording*
- 2. The programme for post investigation assessment*
- 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording*
- 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
- 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
- 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.*

B) The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation www.hertfordshire.gov.uk approved under condition (A)

C) The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of an appropriate archaeological investigation, recording, reporting and publication, and the protection and preservation of archaeological features of significance, in accordance with North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policy HE4 and Section 16 of the NPPF 2021.

- 2.4 An archaeological evaluation was previously undertaken on the site in 2017 (MOLA 2017) and has resulted in the Archaeology Advisor to HCC requiring further work, comprising a strip, map and sample, around a series of features located within the central area of the site as outlined in Figures 2 and 3. This strip, map and sample area has been created by RPS Group, and approved by Alison Tinniswood of Hertfordshire LEADS, who advises the local planning authority. This mitigation fieldwork by PCA will be followed by a full programme of post-excavation assessment, analysis and publication as specified in condition 19.

3 SITE BACKGROUND

The following background is reproduced with acknowledgement from the archaeological evaluation report previously prepared for the site by MOLA (MOLA 2017).

3.1 Geology and Topographical Background

3.1.1 The British Geological Survey indicates that the geology of the area comprises a sequence of chalk strata concealed beneath a drift of fluvioglacial sand and gravel (BGS 2017).

3.1.2 The previous archaeological evaluation undertaken on the site (MOLA 2017) recorded natural deposits which varied between chalky clay, gravels and sands which are mixed across the site and in some places giving a banded appearance, however towards the north western half of the site the sands are the dominant type, giving way to a further gravel layers with the occasional chalky clay patches towards the middle and south east. The subsoil was mid greyish brown clayey silt across the site with thickness ranging from 0.10m to 0.54m. The deeper areas were focused on the northern edges of the site where the landscape drops off and shallowest at the crest of the hill around trenches 7 and 8. The topsoil, for the most part was a mid greyish brown silt, which was between 0.19m and 0.35m thick and followed the trend of the subsoil.

3.1.3 The site slopes downwards from north to south between 95m Ordnance Datum (OD) and 90m OD.

3.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

Palaeolithic

3.2.1 Significant quantities of Lower Palaeolithic flintwork, mainly handaxes, have been recovered from the area surrounding Hitchin. Most of the finds were made in the 19th century from brick pits located immediately south of the town centre (Bryant 2011a). Whilst no evidence of in-situ flint working sites has been identified, the condition of the flint suggests that such activity was taking place nearby (ibid). Palaeolithic flint implements have been recorded 100m to the east and again 1km to the east of the proposed development area (HHER281, 282).

Mesolithic and Neolithic

3.2.2 Limited Mesolithic activity is recorded in the HER data for the area around the site. Late Mesolithic or Neolithic blades and scrapers, as well as a perforated stone axe, are recorded immediately to the east of the site at Crow Furlong. In addition, a pebble macehead with an hourglass perforation is recorded from Hitchin, though no precise location is given (HHER6453).

3.2.3 A number of findspots are recorded for Neolithic material to the north and east of the proposed development area. A polished stone axe of black basaltic rock is recorded approximately 500m north-north-west of the site (HHER289). Approximately 900m to the east of the site, a group of six polished flint axeheads and a gouge dated to the Neolithic period

were found (HHER290). In addition, a leaf shaped arrowhead was recovered from the fill of a medieval rubbish pit, excavated in the centre of Hitchin (HHER18276).

Bronze Age

- 3.2.4 Archaeological evidence dated to this period is limited within the area, with only a few spot finds for which no accurate location other than 'Hitchin' exists. These include an early Bronze Age beaker (HHER300) and a fragment of stone axe (HHER4867). An undated cropmark (HHER 4493) approximately 950m south of the proposed development area has been interpreted as a possible plough razed barrow ditch, though its proximity to 'Windmill Cottage' may suggest that the ditch relates to a medieval or post-medieval windmill mound. Archaeological excavations at Upper Tilehouse Street in Hitchin identified a boundary ditch (HHER12858), tentatively dated to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age period (Saunders 2005).

Iron Age

- 3.2.5 Activity in the Iron Age is dominated by recorded spot finds of Iron Age coinage including a bronze stater of Tasciovanus found in 1937 (HHER131) and a number of other gold staters (HHER131; 4872; 4873). Evidence for habitation within the area for the Iron Age period is limited. The number of spot finds indicates clearly that activity must exist in the area though it most likely lies beneath modern day Hitchin town centre. A possible roundhouse was identified during archaeological works undertaken in 2004 c 900m to the east of the site at Foxholes, though its date remains inconclusive (HHER12582; Butler and Hawkins 2004). Iron Age pottery has also been found in a group of postholes (HHER18273) not far from the aforementioned roundhouse (Saunders and Winter 2009). In addition, abraded Iron Age pottery was recorded in a number of features dated to the Roman period.

Roman

- 3.2.6 Evidence for this period, as with the Iron Age, is largely limited to features identified through archaeological work in the present day town centre and finds without known locations. Roman pottery, building material and other evidence for occupation is recorded in the town centre, approximately 900m to the east of the site (HHER1419; 11793; 12583).
- 3.2.7 Despite the apparent concentration of activity beneath Hitchin town centre, immediately to the east of the proposed development area, in the land surrounding 'Foxholes', further activity dated to the Roman period has been identified. A single Roman pit (HHER10912) was excavated which contained pottery dated from the middle-late Iron Age to the 2nd century AD (Bescoby and Vaughan 1998). In addition a Romano-British cemetery (HHER1184) containing several inhumations and a number of cremation deposits was excavated in 1880. Associated finds included Samian ware, 1st-century AD fibulae and other domestic objects. It remains unclear whether the cemetery extends into the present development area.

Anglo-Saxon

- 3.2.8 By the middle Saxon period Hitchin seems to have supplanted the Roman town of Baldock as the local administrative centre and appears to have controlled a small kingdom in North Hertfordshire and Southern Bedfordshire (Bryant 2011b, 35). By the later Saxon period Hitchin probably fell under the control of the Mercian King Offa as a royal estate (ibid, 36). A rare silver coin depicting King Offa was found approximately 500m to the south-west of the site (HHER1181).
- 3.2.9 A large ditch (HHER12584) running north-north-east to south-south-west across one of the plots between Bucklersbury and Paynes Park was excavated in 2004 (Boyer 2005). Its dimensions were up to 4.25m wide and 2.41m deep, with steeply sloping sides. Its date appears to be late Saxon, as the fill contained a small amount of prehistoric material at the base and small amounts of Roman pottery and tile together with late Saxon and early medieval finds in the upper fills. The late Saxon date is not entirely certain, as the ditch might possibly be Roman, but on balance the later date appears more likely. The shape and dimensions suggest a defensive role, or at least that of a major boundary such as a burh. An alternative is that it is the boundary of the Saxon minster precinct, and it could have served both functions.
- 3.2.10 Approximately 720m south-east of the site an elaborate gold ring of probable Saxon date has been recorded (HHER4901). Set into the ring is an intaglio of jasper quartz depicting Mars with a spear and shield and dating to the 2nd or 3rd century AD.

Medieval

- 3.2.11 A number of medieval features have been identified in the centre of Hitchin, to the east of the proposed development area. These included evidence for burgage plots, post-built structures and rubbish pits between Bucklesbury and Paynes Park, which produced pottery dated from 1000-1400 AD (HHER12585; Boyer 2005).
- 3.2.12 Evidence related to the medieval tile industry in Hitchin has been recorded during excavations along Tilehouse Street (HHER18275). This included several pits containing tile and pottery wasters dating from 1000 to 1400 AD (Saunders and Winter 2009).
- 3.2.13 The site of a Carmelite priory (HHER4392), founded in AD 1317 is located approximately 1km to the south-east of the site, at the northern edge of Priory Park (HHER12686).
- 3.2.14 Immediately north-east of the proposed development area lies the location of a former medieval deer park, Punfold Park (HHER12679). Part of the original medieval boundary may be preserved along its western and southern edges.

Post-medieval

- 3.2.15 There are a number of records within the search area for this period relating to the continued tile and pottery production within Hitchin town centre, the details of which are not reproduced here.

- 3.2.16 A large house built in the Tudor Gothic style was present on land immediately to the west of the proposed development area (HHER13218). It was demolished in 2011 following a programme of detailed building recording (Hillelson and Ashworth 2011).

Previous Site Investigations

- 3.2.17 A geophysical survey has been undertaken within the northern part of the site and identified a number of anomalies indicative of linear archaeological features as well as some linear features possibly relating to allotment boundaries (Arkley 2017). Archaeological evaluation undertaken in the walled kitchen garden, associated with 'Foxholes', did not find any further evidence for the Romano British cemetery excavated in 1880 (Pugh 1996).
- 3.2.18 An archaeological evaluation in 2017 (MOLA 2017), which comprised the excavation of sixteen trenches positioned to target anomalies in the geophysical data, recorded ditches, pits and postholes which were encountered in ten of the sixteen trenches and produced mixed results when viewed in comparison with the results of the geophysical survey. The archaeology was distributed across the entire evaluation area but the greatest concentration of features was found on the higher ground at the centre of the site between trenches 7 and 13. These features were dated to the mid to late Iron Age and Roman period. Continuations of the Roman activity can also be found in the form of ditches extending towards the west and southwest of the site. In addition to this within the north east of the site where the ground level drops sharply evidence of post-medieval quarrying have been found. Trenches 1, 2, 4, 9, 14 and 15 contained no archaeological remains.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

- 4.1 All research is undertaken within the priorities established in the *East of England Regional Research Framework* 2011, and current online version, reviewed 2018-20, live 2021 ([East of England Regional Research Framework - East of England Research Framework](#)). The general aims and objectives for the strip, map and sample are as follows:

- To undertake initial assessment of archaeological potential and significance of archaeological features and deposits;
- Identify archaeological features and deposits of interest;
- Excavate, record, and sample any identified archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance;
- Undertake sufficient post-excavation analysis to confidently interpret archaeological features and phasing identified during site works;
- Undertake sufficient post-excavation analysis of artefacts and samples to interpret their significance;
- Report the results of any field investigations and subsequent post-excavation analysis and place these results within their local and regional context; and
- Compile and deposit a site archive at a suitable repository.

4.2 Specific research aims and objectives of the mitigation include the following:

- Is there any evidence for Bronze Age, or earlier activity, pre-dating the identified mid to late Iron Age activity?
- Can the nature and density of the Iron Age activity be better defined?
- Is the Iron Age activity continuous into the early Roman (transition) period, or is there a hiatus?
- To better define the nature of Roman activity at the site, which was suggested by the evaluation to be of agricultural function on the periphery of more intensive settlement. Can further investigation confirm the agricultural nature of the features?
- Is there any more definitive evidence for Roman structural remains and settlement evidence? If so, is it related to the agricultural activity?
- Does the archaeological record indicate the nature of the agricultural activity?
- Is there any evidence for industrial activity on site dated to the Roman period?
- Can an accurate chronology be identified for the phases of Roman activity on the site? Does the nature of Roman activity change over time?
- Is there any evidence for well-preserved environmental remains which can provide information on activity on the site?
- Can the retrieved artefactual assemblage provide further clarity regarding the nature of activity on site, agricultural or otherwise?
- Is there any evidence for late Roman activity on site post-dating AD350?
- Is there any evidence for post-Roman activity?
- Can any undated features recorded during the evaluation be reinterpreted and dated from the mitigation works?

5 SITE METHODOLOGY

5.1 'Strip, Map & Sample' Excavation

- 5.1.1 A single area will be excavated on the site in the location which yielded archaeological features in high concentration during the evaluation (Figures 2 & 3). This area will measure approximately 4,213m².
- 5.1.2 If archaeological remains of a notable density or significance are identified within the limits of the proposed investigation area, then it may be necessary to enlarge the area. This will be agreed in consultation with HCC, RPS Consulting Services Limited and the client.
- 5.1.3 All attendances to the archaeological works will be provided by PCA.

- 5.1.4 Excavation will be carried out by a mechanical tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The excavation will be undertaken under a strict PCA's supervision.
- 5.1.5 Machine excavation will continue in spits of 100mm at a time until either significant archaeological strata are found or natural ground exposed, whichever is encountered first.
- 5.1.6 A CAT scanner will be used by PCA prior to the machine excavation of the SMS area to identify and avoid any potential live services. CAT scanning will be continuous at intervals of c. 3000mm until the desired depth is reached.
- 5.1.7 All arisings will be carefully inspected to ensure that any artefacts are recovered.
- 5.1.8 The excavation area and spoil heaps will be scanned with a metal-detector at regular intervals to enable finds recovery.
- 5.1.9 If human remains are present within the excavation area, then their investigation, lifting and recording would be expected, unless it can be demonstrated that preservation in situ is a meaningful option (see 5.2.4 for more details).

5.2 Investigation and Recording Techniques

- 5.2.1 All archaeological features (stratigraphical layers, cuts, fills, structures) will be excavated by hand tools and recorded in plan at 1:20 or in section at 1:10 using standard single context recording methods. The following minima will be followed:
 - excavation by hand of sections across all junctions or intersections of cut features;
 - excavation by hand of 1 metre to 2 metre-wide sections through linear cut datable and ancient features, and linear features manifestly rich in ancient palaeo-environmental remains, at 10-metre intervals or up to a total of 25% of the length of the linear cut feature (whichever is the greater) with sampling of termini of linear features;
 - complete excavation (100%) of all discrete datable and significant cut features of less than two sq. metres plan area, and discrete features manifestly rich in artefacts and/or ancient palaeo-environmental remains. Excavation may involve more rapid collection of all artefacts and samples from the second half of discrete features by context or spit where appropriate and following standard recording of the section and first 50% of the feature;
 - complete (100%) excavation of all post holes, hearths, beam slots, ring gullies, pits internal to structures, where part of a structure;
 - complete (100%) excavation of the ditches of small mortuary enclosures of less than 25 sq. m enclosed area, with a sliding scale of reduced sampling of larger enclosures;
 - 100% excavation of graves and pits containing urned or unurned burial remains (cremation urns to be lifted wherever practicable for microexcavation in laboratory environment), and pits or immediate environments of structured/ placed deposits;
 - Discrete cut features containing "special" deposits or finds of locally/ nationally unusual character or date will normally be completely excavated

- On sites with complex stratigraphy, all horizontal deposits will be recorded and removed by hand, using heavy or small tools as appropriate, down to the natural subsoil, unless otherwise stated.
- 5.2.2 Any variations to these sampling levels will be agreed in writing the Local Authority's Archaeological Adviser/s.
- 5.2.3 The strategy for sampling archaeological and environmental deposits and structures will be developed by PCA as necessary. If appropriate, HCC and the Historic England Regional Archaeological Science Advisor will be consulted.
- 5.2.4 If articulated human remains or cremation burials are identified, the client and HCC will be notified immediately. If it is deemed that they can be left in situ, this will be the preferred option. The removal of human remains can only take place following the issuing of appropriate licenses from the Ministry of Justice. Should the removal of human remains not pose a risk to the completion of the work and should further archaeological mitigation be necessary at the site, then any remains will be left in situ, with the agreement of the HCC. However, if to complete the project objectives exhumation is unavoidable, or if additional information is needed concerning dating/significance then agreement will be sought from all necessary parties to excavate/remove burials (cremations or inhumations). Assuming that this is agreed then PCA will apply on behalf of the overall client for a Burial Licence to the Ministry of Justice. If this is granted, human remains must be excavated in the manner specified in the licence and screened from public view. Human remains will be excavated within the area of proposed impact only. Burials will not be 'chased' beyond the edges or base of the trench, beyond construction impact depth. Excavation will be carried out in accordance with the English Heritage *Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* (2005), *The Role of Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project* (Historic England 2018), *Updated Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains* (ClfA 2017) and *Large Burial Grounds: Guidance on sampling in archaeological fieldwork projects* (APABE 2015). Burials will be excavated by hand and recorded using standard recording techniques. A rectified photograph of the excavated burial will be taken to assist in digitisation in post-excavation. Charnel will be collected by hand and its location noted.
- 5.2.5 All gold and other precious metals will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.
- 5.2.6 RPS will notify HCC of the commencement of the fieldwork at ;least on week in advance.
- 5.3 **Access and Safety**
- 5.3.1 A site-specific Risk Assessment will be produced prior to the commencement of the of the work.
-

- 5.3.2 Site security is the responsibility of the client.
- 5.3.3 Access to the site will be granted to representatives of the client, advisory bodies or local planning authority who wish to be satisfied, through site inspections, that the archaeological works are being conducted to proper professional standards and in accordance with the agreements made. Full access is also provided for the client and its agents.
- 5.3.4 All relevant health and safety legislation, CDM, COSHH regulations and codes of practice will be respected. This requirement constitutes one of the non-archaeological requirements on the excavation design. PCAs H&S Policy Statement (v20) and Site Rules (v13) will be followed at all times. A site-specific Risk Assessment will be prepared; this will be reviewed and updated daily by the site supervisor.
- 5.3.5 There is a duty of care for the overall client to provide all information reasonably obtainable on contamination and the location of live services before site works commence. Should services be encountered during excavation, it will be the assumption of PCA that they are live and will be avoided at all costs.
- 5.3.6 All trench locations will be scanned using a cable-avoidance tool (CAT) by PCA in advance of any breaking out or excavation. Scanning of the trench will be continuous at intervals of approximately 300mm until excavation of the trench is completed.
- 5.3.7 Welfare and toilet facilities will be provided by PCA, suitable for the anticipated team size.
- 5.3.8 Minimum PPE for work on the site will comprise safety helmet, safety boots and high-visibility vest. Gloves shall be kept at the ready. Contamination-appropriate PPE (such as disposable suits, impermeable gloves, wellington safety boots and dust masks (P3 or half-filter)) will be available if suspected contaminants are encountered.
- 5.3.9 If asbestos material (suspected or confirmed) is encountered during the excavations its location will be marked, photographed and left in situ. The client will be informed as soon as possible. PCA will not remove any asbestos from site.
- 5.3.10 If during the course of the archaeological investigation items are observed or found which are considered to be potential UXO objects, all work in the vicinity of the excavation will cease and the client / Groundworks Contractor will be informed immediately. They will notify relevant bodies and arrange for appropriate attendance from specialists and/or emergency services.
- 5.3.11 CSCS has now classed archaeology as a non-construction related occupation and as such are not expected to carry a card. Furthermore, CSCS have stopped issuing cards for Archaeologists (both Professionally Qualified Person and Academically qualified Person cards) from 1st May 2024. We have been advised by CSCS that existing card holders can continue to use their card until expiry. Most of PCAs current field team have current CSCS cards, however this change means that archaeologists whose cards have expired are no longer able to obtain a new one.

6 RECORDING SYSTEMS

6.1 Site Code

- 6.1.1 A unique-number site code **HGLF25** was created for the site by PCA, and will be continued to identify all elements of the site archive.

6.2 Site Records

- 6.2.1 The recording systems adopted during the investigations will be fully compatible with those most widely used elsewhere in the County of Hertfordshire, which is those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual and presented in Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.'s *Operations Manual 1* (Taylor 2017). No alternative recording system will be adopted without prior agreement with the Archaeology Advisor to the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.2.2 The site archive will be so organised as to be compatible with the other archaeological archives produced in the Local Authority area. Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and exposed will be entered onto prepared *pro-forma* recording sheets which include the same fields of entry as are found on the recording sheets of the Museum of London. Sample recording sheets, sample registers, finds recording sheets, accession catalogues, and the photography record cards will follow the Museum of London equivalents. This requirement for archival compatibility extends to the use of computerised databases.
- 6.2.3 A 'site location plan' indicating the site north and based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared. This will be supplemented by a trench plan at 1:200 (or 1:100), which will show the location of the areas investigated in relation to the investigation area and National Grid Reference. All sections should be located on plan with OS co-ordinates. The location of the OS benchmarks used and the site TBM will also be indicated.
- 6.2.4 A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits as revealed in the investigation will be made either using digital GPS or on polyester-based drawing film at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. 'Single context planning' will be used on site, and hand-drawn information will be digitised for eventual CAD application. Hachures will be used when recording all features and deposits.
- 6.2.5 At least one long section will be drawn or a representative part including a profile of the top of the natural deposits (extrapolated from cut features etc., if the trench has not been fully excavated). Other sections, including the half-sections of individual layers or features may be drawn as appropriate to 1:10 or 1:20.
- 6.2.6 The AOD height of all principal strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections.

6.3 Stratigraphic Matrix

- 6.3.1 A 'Harris Matrix' stratification diagram will be used to record stratigraphic relationships. This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the excavations. Spot dating should be incorporated where applicable during the course of the excavation.

6.4 **Survey**

- 6.4.1 A digital GPS will be used to record trench positions, baselines, datums and discreet archaeological features. If complex or intercutting remains are found then hand-planning will be used, tied to baselines located by GPS.

6.5 **Photographic Record**

- 6.5.1 An appropriate photographic record of the investigations will be prepared. This will consist of high quality, colour digital photographs taken in jpeg and RAW formats by an appropriately trained individual, illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The cameras utilised will be: Nikon D7100 Digital SLR with Nikon DX AF-S Nikkor 18-135mm 1:3.5-5.6G ED lens or Canon EOS 1200D Digital SLR with Canon EFS 18-55mm Macro lens. Digital photographs will be taken of all archaeological features and deposits and black and white film photographs will be taken when considered appropriate by the excavator and supervisor. The photographs will contain individual shot info (site code, context numbers, date, etc. and north arrow) presented on a chalk board. Appropriate 0.5m, 1m and 2m scales will be included within all shots, except those deemed as 'working shots' as below. Where appropriate smaller scales may be utilised depending on the photograph. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. The digital images will be preserved on a dedicated and backed up server. The RAW files will be converted to high quality tiff images for eventual preservation by the receiving museum.

- 6.5.2 A full digital photographic record of the investigations will be prepared.

7 **TREATMENT OF FINDS AND SAMPLES**

7.1 **General**

- 7.1.1 All processing will take place at PCA's Brockley premises, or, if appropriate, those of our environmental consultants.

7.2 **Environmental**

- 7.2.1 Different sampling strategies may be employed according to the perceived importance of the deposit or feature under investigation. Close attention will be given to sampling for date, structure and environment. Sample size should take into account the frequency with which material is likely to occur. Bulk sieving should be employed both for recovery of environmental evidence to ensure that complete samples of artefactual evidence are collected for significant deposits. All bulk samples should be 40l as a minimum, if the sample size is smaller, the

feature will be 100% sampled. All environmental sampling will follow Historic England Guidelines (Historic England 2011).

- 7.2.2 The strategy for sampling archaeological and environmental deposits and structures (which can include soils, timbers, pollen, diatoms, animal bone and human burials) will be developed in consultation with the Archaeology Advisor to the Local Planning Authority and, if necessary, the Historic England Regional Archaeological Science Advisor. Subsequent on site work and analysis of the processed samples and remains will be undertaken by our own consultants and specialist sub-contractors.
- 7.2.3 A high priority will be given to sampling river and other anaerobic deposits, such as peat, where organic materials may be preserved. Organic samples will be subject to appropriate specialist analysis.
- 7.2.4 If exhumation of human remains is required, inhumations and cremations, associated samples such as stomach contents may be required. PCA's in house osteologist will advise on relevant samples to take, including sample quantities. All sampling of human burials, and subsequent off site processing, will be in accordance with: English Heritage Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England (2005), 'The Role of the Human Osteologist in an Archaeological Fieldwork Project' (Historic England 2018) 'Updated Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains' (ClfA 2017) and 'Science and the Dead, destructive sampling of archaeological human remains for scientific analysis' (APABE 2023) and 'Large Burial Grounds: Guidance on sampling in archaeological fieldwork projects' (APABE 2015).

7.3 **Artefactual**

- 7.3.1 All fieldwork and post-excavation finds retrieval policies of PCA will be adopted and all identified finds and artefacts will be retained or discarded according to the PCA retention and discard policies appropriate to the material type and date (Brown, G, Butler, J, Faine, C, & Riddler, I (2018) PCA Operations Manual 2: A Manual for the retrieval, Processing and Care of Finds from Excavations). Any finds identified for discard will be catalogued and discarded upon approval of the report by the archaeological adviser. No finds will be discarded during the fieldwork stage without consultation with the relevant PCA in-house specialists, and consultation with the archaeological advisor, and the implementation of regular specialist visits for on site cataloguing and discard advice.
- 7.3.2 All finds will be treated in a proper manner and to standards agreed in advance with the recipient museum. They will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation's 'Conservation Guidelines No.2' and the Museum of London's 'Standards for the Preparation of Finds to be Permanently Retained by the Museum of London'. All metal objects will be x-rayed and then selected for conservation (except in those cases where the Archaeology Advisor to the Local Planning Authority agrees that this will not be necessary).

All fines must also be cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Hertfordshire Archive Standards – A countywide standards for the creation, completion and transfer of Archaeological Archives in Hertfordshire (2023).

- 7.3.3 Ceramic (pottery, clay tobacco, building material fabric and brick form) reference collections, housed at the Museum of London should be referred to for descriptive and analytical purposes in order to ensure that terminology is consistent. The post-Roman pottery will be recorded using a system of mnemonic codes based on common name, following those set out in 'Saxon and Medieval pottery fabric codes for Hertfordshire'. Examples of the fabrics can be found in the Ceramic Type Series held at St Alban's Museum, in the archives of PCA and/or the Museum of London.

8 ARCHIVES AND REPORTS

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 All fieldwork and results will be fully recorded and a report prepared. Copies of the report will be forwarded to the client via RPS, for onward supply to HCC.
- 8.1.2 The project resource agreed between PCA and our client allows for the production of an assessment report, to include CAD illustrations and artefact assessment as necessary.
- 8.1.3 Upon completion of the mitigation fieldwork the post-excavation assessment will commence. This is expected for issue within 9-12 months of the completion of site work.
- 8.1.4 The report will include the following items:
- Non-technical summary;
 - Introduction;
 - Planning Background;
 - Previous archaeological work relevant to the project;
 - Topography of the site;
 - Research objectives;
 - Methodology;
 - The results of the fieldwork and their significance;
 - An assessment of the results against original expectations and a review of the effectiveness of the fieldwork strategy;
 - The value of the data to local, regional and national research priorities;
 - A review of the data in the context of the questions posed in the WSI;
 - New research questions arising from the data collection;
 - Conclusions and recommendations, if appropriate;
 - Specialist reports
 - Publication Synopsis
 - Illustrations, drawn and photographic, including site location, trench location and plans,

feature plans and sections, trench sample sections, results against historic maps and Lidar data, photographs of each of the trenches and general views of the site;

- Quantification of the archaeological archive;
- Bibliography;
- Acknowledgements;
- HER summary sheet.
- OASIS form.

8.2 Analysis and Publication

8.2.1 An appropriate estimation is agreed with our client for the analysis and publication of the site, and for the deposition of the archive although the client understands that these items are estimated and may be subject to review upon completion of the mitigation fieldwork.

8.2.2 Upon approval of the assessment report the analysis and publication can commence. This is expected for completion within 36-60 months of the completion of site work. Appropriate dissemination is anticipated to be publication to an appropriate regional journal.

8.3 Site Archive Destination

8.3.1 Following the completion and approval of the fieldwork and post-excavation work associated with this project, the resulting archive comprising such items as finds, samples, paper and digital records, photographs and digital data will be transferred by PCA to a local museum or repository which will curate the archive thereafter, in this instance **North Hertfordshire Museum**. PCA will contact the stated local repository prior to the commencement of the fieldwork and confirm they would be willing to accept the archive when ready for deposition. If they confirm they will not accept the archive, then an alternative will be sought by PCA.

8.3.2 The custodial transfer of the finds archive will be enabled by means of a Deed of Transfer, issued by the local repository which must be signed by the landowner.

8.3.3 The landowner or, if PCA is commissioned by a third-party on their behalf, the commissioning client, agrees, by approval of this document, to donate all finds and archives to the aforesaid repository.

8.3.4 PCA will liaise with the local repository to arrange for a Deed of Transfer to be signed by the landowner authorising the transfer of the finds archive.

8.3.5 PCA hereby requests that the landowner, or their agent on their behalf) completes the Landowner form at Appendix 1.

8.4 Site Archive Standard

8.4.1 The integrity of the site archive will be maintained. The finds and records will be available for public consultation. Appropriate guidance is set out in the Museum and Galleries Commission's *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (1992) and *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive. The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to*

Museums: Guidelines for Use in England, Northern Ireland Scotland and Wales (SMA 1995). For deposition Hertfordshire, The Hertfordshire Museums document *Hertfordshire Archaeological Archive Standards – A countywide standard for the creation, completion and transfer of Archaeological Archives in Hertfordshire* (2023) will be followed.

- 8.4.2 The client agrees, by approval of this document, to donate all finds and archives to the appropriate local repository, to be confirmed (see Appendix 1). If finds are not to be transferred to the appropriate local repository, arrangements will be made for a comprehensive record of all relevant materials (including an associated indexed spreadsheet, detailed drawings, photographs and descriptions of individual finds), which can instead constitute the archaeological archive. The level of this record will be agreed in consultation with Hertfordshire LEADS.
- 8.4.3 The minimum acceptable standard for the site archive is defined in the *Management of Archaeological Recording Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE 2015). It will include all materials recovered, (or the comprehensive records of such materials as referred to above) and all written, drawn, and photographic records, including a copy of all reports relating to the investigations undertaken. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed, and internally consistent before transfer to the appropriate local repository. It will also contain a site matrix, a site summary and brief written observations on the artefactual and environmental data.
- 8.4.4 United Kingdom Institute for Conservation guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage (1990) will be followed.
- 8.4.5 A short summary of the results of the work, even if negative, will be bound into the client report for submission to the LPA and the Hertfordshire HER as soon as possible after the completion of archaeological works.
- 8.4.6 Minimum requirements for public dissemination is for OASIS report forms to be submitted to the OASIS Project as soon as possible or within six months of completion of fieldwork, and the provision of a short paragraph summary of the results for publication in the local journal. Such publications will meet the minimum requirements set out in *Appendix 7, Management of Archaeological Recording Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE 2015). There is a need to format reports so that the details of the proposed development impact can be separated from the information and enable all archaeological information to be made available to the Hertfordshire HER within six months of the completion of fieldwork. A copy of the client report will be sent to the Local Studies Library.
- 8.4.7 Where the mentioned 'phase 2' review indicates the need for further assessment and analysis the recommendations set out in the *Management of Archaeological Recording Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE 2015) will be followed.

9 SIZE AND STRUCTURE OF EXCAVATION TEAM

- 9.1 The day-to-day direction of the fieldwork will be undertaken by a member of staff who has
-

considerable experience of working in similar archaeological settings and sites. A CV of the supervisor will be issued to the Hertfordshire Archaeological Officer prior to the commencement of the fieldwork.

- 9.2 The excavation team will be selected from current staff and will comprise the supervisor and an appropriate number of archaeologists to adequately excavate the site. Appropriate specialists may also be called upon to visit the site for specific advice.
- 9.3 A standard working day is 08.00 - 16.15. A morning and afternoon tea break and 45-minute lunch break are included within this period. Any workings outside of these times are considered to be overtime.

10 PROGRAMMING

- 10.1 The fieldwork is intended to start in August 2025, following approval of this document by the Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority. The on-site fieldwork is programmed to take around 5-6 weeks to complete, inclusive of machining.

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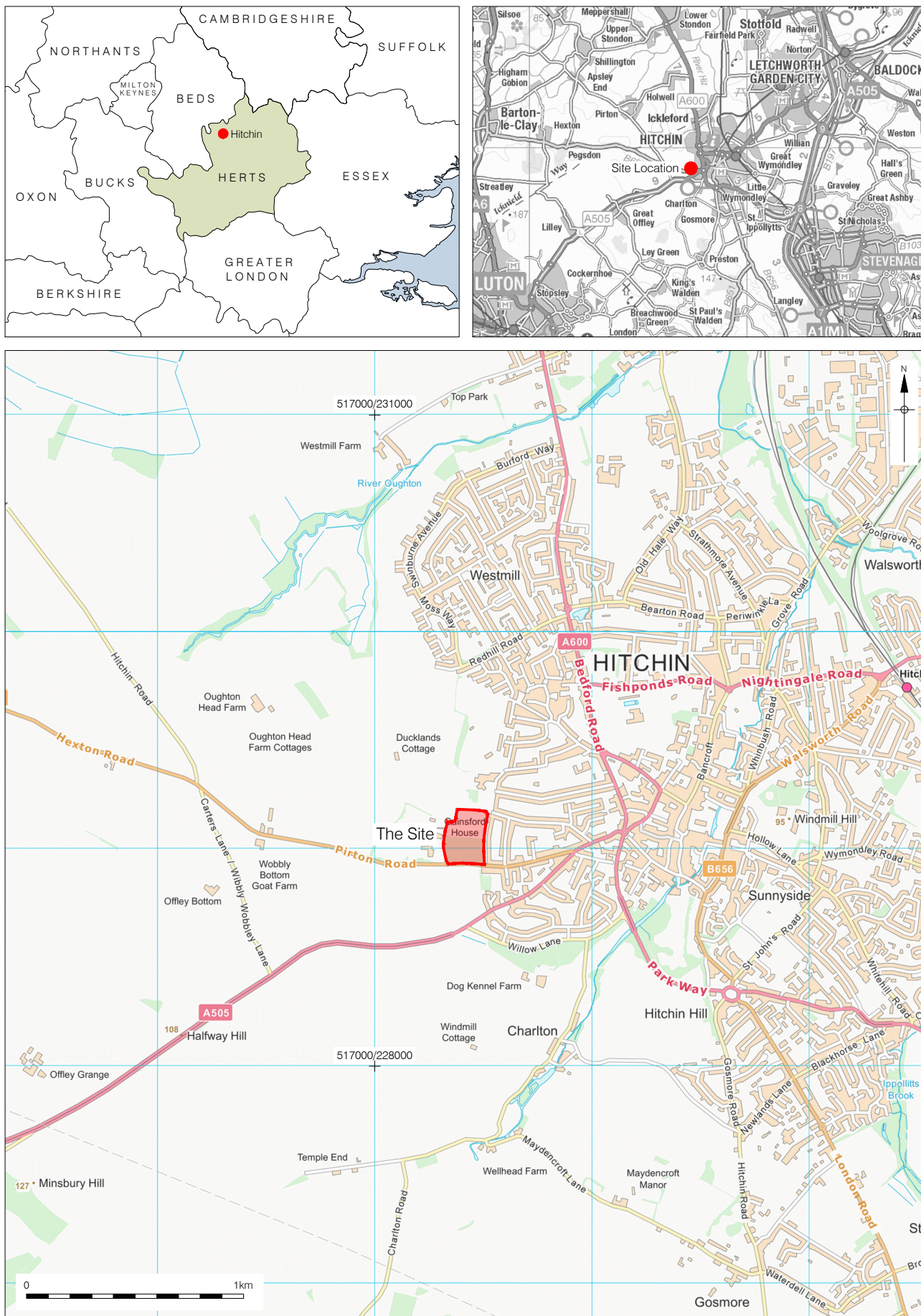
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[East of England Regional Research Framework - East of England Research Framework](#)





0 100m

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14/07/2025 MR

Figure 2
Detailed Site Location showing
Proposed Excavation Area
1:2,500 at A4

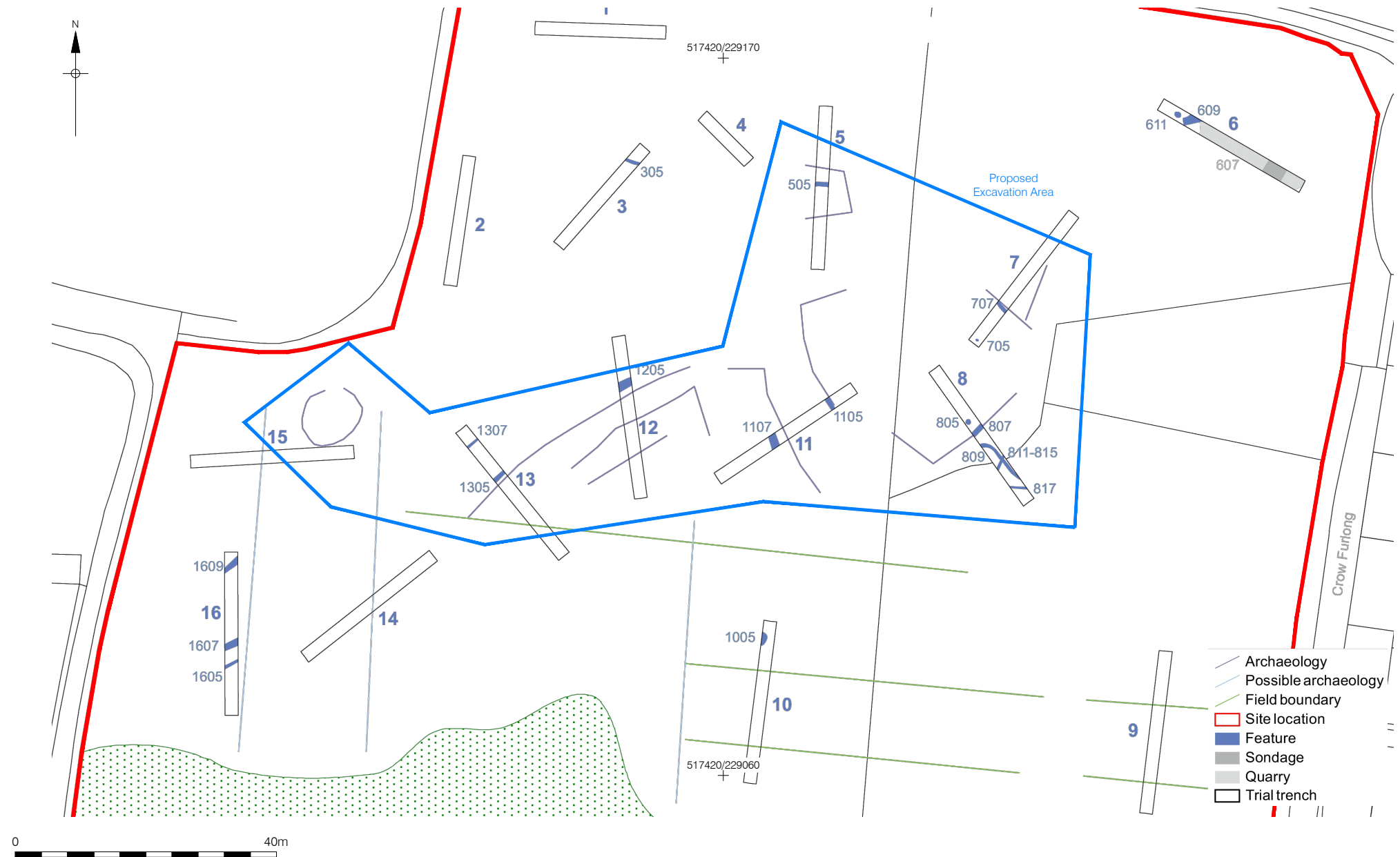


Figure 3
Proposed Excavation Area overlain on a Plan showing Evaluation
Trenches and Features with Geophysical Survey Results
1:800 at A4

APPENDIX 1: LAND OWNERSHIP DETAILS



PCA London Office

Unit 54 Brockley Cross Business Centre, 96 Endwell Road, Brockley, London, SE4 2PD

t operations: 020 7732 3925
administration: 0207 358 2197
post-excavation services: 020 7639 9091

e london@pre-construct.com
w www.pre-construct.com

PCA Ltd is **due to carry** out an archaeological investigation on the site below:

Site name: Land at Gray's Lane, Foxholes, Hitchin
Site Address: Land at Gray's Lane, Foxholes, Pirton Road, Hitchin,
Hertfordshire, SG5 2HW
Site Code HGLF25

We have been instructed / commissioned for the work by **RPS Group**

Following completion of the site, the full site archive including artefacts worthy of retention will be deposited by PCA with a museum or repository who are committed to curate this archive.

To action this, PCA requires the name and address of the Landowner so that a Transfer of Title can be arranged for the deposition of the archive, by Deed of Transfer between the recipient museum or repository and the Landowner.

Therefore could you please complete the details below and return this letter by post or e-mail to the following:

Neil Hawkins

nhawkins@pre-construct.com

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Unit 40, Brockley Cross Business Centre
96 Endwell Road, London SE4 2PD

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SITE OWNER / FREEHOLDER

Name: _____
Address: _____

COMPANY REGISTRATION NO. (Required for sites in Greater London)



Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Registered in England: No 3534122

Registered Office: Unit 54, Brockley Cross Business Centre, 96 Endwell Road, Brockley, London, SE4 2PD



APPENDIX 2: DIGITAL DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Section A: Project Information			
HER# (Site Code):	HGLF25	Other Site Codes	n/a
Site Full Location	Land at Gray's Lane, Foxholes, Pirton Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 2HW		
OASIS ID:	tbc	PCA K-Code:	K9835
Museum Acc. #	tbc	NGR #	TL 17431 29123
Planning Ref #:	22/03092/FP	Planning Authority	North Hertfordshire District Council
DMP Written	14/07/2025	DMP Last Updated	n/a
Project Manager/ Primary Contact:	Neil Hawkins	Project Type:	Strip, Map and Sample
Client:	RPS Group	Site Supervisor:	tbc
Data Sharing Agreement in Place?	no		
Data Management Responsibility	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited	Who will take possession of the generated data at the end of the project	Archaeology Data Service (ADS)

Section B: Estimated Volume of Data			
File types generated as part of the project archive by PCA:			
Data Type	Format	Estimated Volume	Details/Comment

Spreadsheets	Excel (.xlsx), .csv	Tbc		
Database	Access (.accdb)	Tbc		
Text/Documents	.pdf, Word (.docx)	Tbc		
Images	.jpeg, .png, .DNG	Tbc		
Graphics	.dwg,	Tbc		
GIS	.shp	Tbc		
Will existing or external data be utilised?			YES	
If yes, list type of data and source: External specialist reports, external images				
Data Type	Format	Estimated Volume	Source	Details/Comment
Images	.jpeg, .png, .DNG	Tbc		
Graphics	.dwg,	Tbc		
GIS	.shp	Tbc		
Text/Documents	.pdf, Word (.docx)	Tbc		

Section C.: Data Acquisition, Processing, and Analysis
What methods and data standards will be undertaken?
Field data will be collected through digital and analogue means as set out within the project design. All data that will be collected will aim to work to best practice guidelines as outlined by CIFA and the ADS, as well as any specific London guidelines, whenever possible and will be updated as the project progresses, or as guidance is modified.
What file naming/structure is in place and how will version control be maintained? Display example below.

Example file name: PCA_HGLF25_Land at Gray's Lane, Hitchin, post-excavation assessment_NH_rev1

Key: PCA (Organisational identifier) HGLF25 (site code) Land at Gray's Lane, Hitchin (Site name) post-excavation assessment (report type) NH (author identifier) rev1 (version control identifier)

The project archive will be stored in a project specific folder, with sub folders being utilised to further sub-classify data as appropriate (e.g. databases, photos, reports, etc.).

What Quality Assurances of the data are in place?

All digital instruments used to capture data on site and during post-ex (e.g. cameras, GPS/RTK units, etc.) will be appropriately calibrated and checked to be in full working order prior to fieldwork and subsequent analysis to ensure accurate data capture. Site records and data will be reviewed during project delivery to guarantee all digital data is both secure and correct.

Section D: Documentation and Metadata:

How can the data be read?

Data collected during the course of the project will include standard formats as listed within section B.

What documentation and metadata will be provided when the data is archived?

A catalogue of the digital archive, material archive, paper archive, and the supporting metadata will be provided to the digital repository

Section E: Ethics and Legal Compliance:

How can the identity of individuals be protected if required

Personal data will be removed from the digital archive prior to deposition, and permission to include personal data will be gained during the project if required.

Is the data GDPR 2018 compliant?

All digital archive data is compliant with GDPR as outlined within PCA's GDPR policy.

Who owns the data generated during the course of this project?

Copyright for all data generated or collected by the project team belongs to PCA. However, if external data is utilised, formal permission or licences will be obtained prior to use, and correct citation given during reporting and when archived. Any licences agreed with external parties will be included within the project archive.

Section F: Storage and Backup:

Is sufficient storage in place?

All project data will be held on a server based at our London office. The server has sufficient space to hold all data generated during the project.

What backups are in place?

Project data will be stored on a companywide intranet and on servers located at our London office.

What data security is in place?

All project data is restricted by permission-based access and single factor authentication. The only exception to this is when external finds or data specialists are consulted, with only files pertinent to their role are shared directly.

Section G: Selection and Preservation:

Which data will be selected for inclusion within the project archive?

Selection of data that will be included within the project archive will be informed by the WSI, Project Brief, research aims, and specialist recommendations. All data selected for preservation will be logically named, identified, and structured, and will adhere to the formats listed in section B. Any deselected data will be deleted after deposition with the ADS or relevant archival repository.

What is the long-term preservation plan for the project dataset?

The digital archive will be deposited with the ADS.

If this is a larger project, has the ADS been contacted regarding accession of the project dataset?	NO
Has the Museum or depository been contacted	NO

Section H: Data Dissemination:

How will the dataset or parts of it be shared?

The final project report will be uploaded to the HER via OASIS and subsequently released onto ADS's report library. Additionally, the report will be published either through a full publication, or as a note in the regional archaeological journal. After deposition of the digital archive, the ADS and relevant depository are able to share the data under licence.

Section I: Responsibilities:

Who will manage the data?

The project manager will be responsible for implementing the data management plan and its security.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Action	Responsible Person(s)	Details/Comment
Field Data	Field team	Including initial storage and backup
Data Analysis and Interpretation	Site Supervisor/Project Manager	
Data Archiving	Archives Officer	
Data Dissemination	Project Manager/Archives Officer	Archives officer will be responsible for uploading report onto OASIS.
GDPR Compliance	Project Manager/Archives Officer/ IT Specialist	

General backup	Data	IT Specialist/Archives Officer	
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