

Land off Shilton Road, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

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Accession No.: X.A69.2026

On behalf of: Class Q

June 2026

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Document Issue Record

<i>Ver</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Reviewer</i>	<i>Approver</i>	<i>Date</i>
1.0	Issue	JR	KM	KM	June 2026
1.1	Revision	KM	WK (LCC)	KM	June 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared by Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) for Class Q, detailing an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at Land off Shilton Road, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire (the Site) prior to a residential development with associated infrastructure (Planning Application 25/01161/OUT). The archaeological work will comply with the relevant standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA; 2020a-b, 2023) and Historic England's best practice documents (1991, 2006, 2008).
- 1.2 This document details a programme of archaeological trial trenching and has been produced to the standards laid down in Historic England's guideline publication Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Managers Guide (2006) and the MoRPHE Project Planning Note 3: Archaeological Excavation (PPN3) (2008). The works specified in this document will be undertaken by ASYWAS who are a Registered Organisation with the CIfA. The project will be managed by a full member of the CIfA. All archaeological work will be carried out using appropriate expertise and the archaeologists undertaking the work will be adequately qualified. Adherence to the required quality objectives and professional standards is achieved by comprehensive staff training and the effective monitoring of all stages of work by the Senior Managers.

2. Site Location, Topography and Land-use

- 2.1 The Site occupies an area of c. 5.5 ha of agricultural land, centred on NGR SP 46606 98645. The Site is bounded to the north and east by Shilton Road, to the south by further agricultural land and to the west by a farm lane.
- 2.2 The Site ranges in height from 92m aOD in the northeast to 100m aOD in the southwest where a localised sharp rise is apparent. It also slopes gently west to east with a difference in height of approximately 2m (typically 95m aOD in the west to 93m OD in the east).

3. Geology and Soils

- 3.1 The solid geology is recorded as Gunthorpe Member - Mudstone of the Triassic period. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2026) within the Site. The soils

consist of slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Soilscape 8; LandIS 2026).

4. Archaeological and Historic Background

- 4.1 A desk-based assessment (DBA) of the Site produced by TEP (Bassir 2025) has been used to provide the summary below. The results of a recent geophysical survey by Magnitude Surveys (Johnson 2025) and a consultee response from William Kelly on behalf of Leicestershire County Council (LCC) Archaeology – Historical and Natural Environment team, dated 6th January 2026, have also been considered.
- 4.2 The Site lies within an area of archaeological interest. As noted in the DBA, Roman coins have been found within (HER Ref.: MLE10245) and nearby (MLE9381) the application area, with further prehistoric pottery recovered from a recent evaluation undertaken immediately south of the Site. The relative absence of archaeological information elsewhere within the immediately surrounding area is likely to be due to the fact that very little archaeological investigation has previously been undertaken here.
- 4.3 The results of the geophysical survey have proved inconclusive with no anomalies of clear archaeological origin identified, but several anomalies of indeterminate origin have been noted which may be archaeological. It is noted that some types of archaeological deposit (e.g. prehistoric, early medieval and human burials) can be missed by geophysical prospection techniques.
- 4.4 Historic mapping indicates that the Site has remained in agricultural use from the later 1800s until the present day.

5. Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 The aim of the archaeological trial trenching is to identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date (as far as circumstances permit) of the Site and any archaeological features and deposits which are disturbed or exposed as a result of the investigations in the area of interest.
- 5.3 The Site-specific objectives of the archaeological trial trenching are:

- Examine the undetermined geophysical anomalies (Trenches 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 16)
- Examine the possible former field boundaries (Trenches 11 and 13)
- Examine anomalies that might relate to extraction activities (Trenches 1 and 7)
- Examine the artefact and ecofact potential of archaeological deposits
- Examine the potential for archaeological remains not identified by the geophysical survey (Trenches 2, 6 and 12)

5.4 Site-specific research aims and themes will be developed and refined as the works progress, in line with the research framework for the East Midlands (Cooper 2006; Knight *at al.* 2012).

6. Methodology

- 6.1 All work will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant standards (CIfA 2023; Historic England 1991, 2006, 2008). The works will be managed by an archaeologist holding MCIfA accreditation and the evaluation will be conducted by an appropriately qualified and experienced archaeologist who will be present during all ground works. Sixteen trenches are to be excavated, all measuring 50m by 1.8m. The location of these trenches has been agreed with William Kelly. This represents a 3% coverage of the Site. An additional 1% of contingency trenching might be required by William Kelly, Planning Archaeologist for LCC.
- 6.2 The trial trenches will be opened, and the topsoil and recent overburden removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits of a maximum 0.2m thickness, by the use of an appropriate machine using a wide toothless ditching blade. Under no circumstances will the machine be used to cut arbitrary trenches down to natural deposits. Any machine work will be carried out under direct archaeological supervision and the machine halted if significant archaeological deposits are encountered. The top of the first significant archaeological horizon may be exposed by the machine but will then be cleaned by hand and inspected for features.
- 6.3 Archaeological features/deposits will be manually excavated in an archaeologically controlled and stratigraphic manner, in order to meet the aims and objectives of this WSI.

- 6.4 No archaeological deposits will be entirely removed unless this is unavoidable in achieving the objectives of this evaluation, although all features identified are expected to be half-sectioned and the full depth of archaeological deposits assessed.
- 6.5 Features will be sample excavated employing the following strategy:
- Linear features: sufficient excavation will be carried out to investigate the depth, profile and fills of a ditch or gully and to recover dating and environmental evidence from its fills. Normally this will involve a minimum of 20% sample dispersed along the length of the feature (each sample section to be not less than 1m), With respect to trial trenches, one 1m section will be located and recorded adjacent to the trench edge. Feature intersections will always be excavated in such a way to determine a stratigraphic relationship.
 - Discrete features: pits, post-holes and other discrete features will normally be half-sectioned to determine and record their form with a minimum sample of 50% of discrete features in each area. The complete excavation of such features may be appropriate, but only following consultation with the consultant and NYHER.
- 6.6 A photographic record utilising high resolution digital data capture will be maintained during the course of the fieldwork. All digital photography will be undertaken using a high-quality camera recommended to have no less than an APS-C or DX size sensor of 12 megapixels and to be capable of generating images in TIF (v6) or unprocessed RAW format. Metric scales of appropriate size will be discreetly placed in photographs to preserve a sense scale. A register recording the details of each image will be maintained, including subject, location, date, and photographer.
- 6.7 All excavated archaeological contexts shall be fully recorded by written records, giving details of location, composition, shape, dimensions, relationships, finds, samples, and cross-references to other elements of the record and other relevant contexts, in accordance with best practice. All contexts, and any small finds and samples from them will be given unique numbers. Bulk finds will be collected by context.

- 6.8 All artefacts will be removed from the Site for assessment, and where it is appropriate, their find spots shall, if appropriate, be recorded three dimensionally. Non-modern artefacts from the excavated topsoil and subsoil will be collected. Finds material will be stored in controlled environments, where appropriate. All artefacts recovered will be retained, cleaned, labelled and stored as detailed in the guidelines laid out in the ClfA (2020b). Any necessary conservation work will be undertaken by approved conservators working to UKIC guidelines.
- 6.9 A soil-sampling programme shall be undertaken during the course of the investigation for the identification and recovery of carbonised and waterlogged remains, vertebrate remains, molluscs and small artefactual material. This will comprise the removal of a bulk sample from every securely sealed and hand-excavated context, excepting those with excessive levels of residuality or those with minimal 'soil' content. Bulk samples will comprise representative 40 litre samples. Where a context does not yield 40 litres of material, smaller (100%) samples will be taken. The post-excavation processing of all palaeoenvironmental samples will be undertaken in line with Historic England's Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (2025).
- 6.10 In the event of human remains being discovered they will, in the first instance, be left in situ, covered and protected. The Consultant and the coroner will be immediately informed, allowing them to alert the Client and archaeological advisor accordingly. The removal of human remains will only take place in compliance with the Burial Act 1857. An exhumation licence must be obtained from the Ministry of Justice prior to the removal of any remains.
- 6.11 All finds defined as 'treasure' under the Treasure Act 1996 shall be reported to HM Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996.
- 6.12 Appropriate specialists will visit the Site to advise on sampling strategies, where appropriate, and their suggested strategies will then be implemented. Further contingency provision will also be made for additional specialist advice, e.g. for finds analysis and conservation.

- 6.13 Provision will be made to recover material suitable for scientific dating. Contingency sums will be made available to undertake such dating.
- 6.14 The trenches will be reinstated in reverse order using a mechanical excavator. The arisings will then be lightly compacted by the machine bucket and/or tracks.
- 6.15 The rationale for each trench is provided in Table 1 and shown in Fig. 1.

Table 1. Rationale by trench

Trench	Rationale
1	Test two E-W orientated geophysical anomalies and an area of magnetic disturbance
2	To test an area devoid of geophysical anomalies
3	To test two N-S orientated geophysical anomalies
4	To test a NW-SE orientated geophysical anomaly
5	To test a N-S orientated geophysical anomaly
6	To test an area devoid of geophysical anomalies
7	To test an area of magnetic disturbance
8	To test a NW-SE orientated geophysical anomaly
9	To test a curvilinear geophysical anomaly
10	To test a N-S orientated geophysical anomaly
11	To test a former field boundary and a NE-SW orientated geophysical anomaly
12	To test an area devoid of geophysical anomalies
13	To test a former field boundary

14	To test two NW-SE orientated geophysical anomalies
15	To test a NE-SW orientated geophysical anomaly
16	To test an E-W orientated geophysical anomaly

7. Analysis and Reporting

7.1 Within twelve weeks of completion of the fieldwork (depending on specialist availability), an assessment report will be prepared and submitted to the Client. It will include:

- A signed quality assurance sheet detailing as a minimum: title, author, version, date, checked by, approved by;
- A non-technical summary;
- Site details, including location, OASIS reference, full dates of the work and any relevant details of the project's history;
- A Site location drawing;
- The archaeological and historical background;
- The methodology employed for the evaluation;
- The aims and objectives of the evaluation;
- The results of the evaluation (to include full description, assessment of condition, quality and significance of the remains);
- If human remains are encountered the report will include a statement that addresses the future retention of the material, including if appropriate, options for reburial;
- A statement of the significance of the results in their local, regional and national context, cross-referenced to the Regional Research Framework;
- Assessment and a statement of potential with recommendations for further work and analysis;
- Recommendations for any further mitigation by design or further fieldwork;

- The current and proposed arrangements for long term conservation and archive storage (including details of the accredited repository details);
- A list of all finds that fall within the scope of the Treasure Act and associated legislation;
- A copy of the OASIS summary report form;
- General and detailed plans showing the location of the survey area accurately positioned on an O.S. base map (at an appropriate and recognised scale);
- Detailed plans and sections illustrating archaeological features and relationships between features (at an appropriate and recognised scale);
- Colour photographic plates illustrating the Site setting, work in progress and archaeological discoveries;
- Bibliography;
- An appendix listing all the recorded features & contexts with detailed descriptions, locations and final spot dates or phasing;
- An appendix containing separate finds catalogue by context and find types. Specialist artefact assessment reports, palaeoenvironmental reports, or their equivalent; and
- A cross-referenced index of the project archive.

7.2 Digital copies of the completed draft assessment report (complete with illustrations and plates) in both Word and PDF format will be submitted to the Client (Class Q) for comment. In finalising the report, the comments of the Client and William Kelly will be taken into account. A copy of the report will also be submitted to the HER in pdf/a format, for archival purposes.

7.3 Upon completion of the work, ASWYAS will make their work accessible to the wider research community by submitting digital data and copies of reports online to OASIS (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>), in line with Leicestershire Museum Service archiving guidelines. In addition, the Site archive will be deposited with a local museum. The archiving will be undertaken in line with the guidelines outlined within The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire County Council Museum Collections (Leicestershire County Council 2024), in addition to other appropriate professional guidelines.

- 7.4 If further fieldwork is required, the results of the evaluation will be integrated into an overall report encompassing all stages of work. However, if a different contractor is employed by the Client to undertake subsequent works, then a full, formal evaluation report should be prepared and accepted by William Kelly at LCC before further fieldwork commences.
- 7.5 Results of the project, even if negative, should be submitted for publication in appropriate academic journals. As a minimum a summary of findings should be submitted to the 'Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society'.

8. Copyright, Confidentiality and Publicity

- 8.1 Copyright in the documentation prepared by ASWYAS and specialist sub-contractors should be the subject of additional licences in favour of the repository accepting the archive to use such documentation for their statutory educational and museum service functions, and to provide copies to third parties as an incidental to such functions.
- 8.2 Under the Environmental Information Regulations 2005 (EIR), information submitted to the HER becomes publicly accessible, except where disclosure might lead to environmental damage, and reports cannot be embargoed as 'confidential' or 'commercially sensitive'.
- 8.3 Requests for sensitive information are subject to a public interest test, and if this is met, then the information has to be disclosed. ASWYAS will initially inform CSA Environmental of EIR requirements and ensure that any information disclosure issues are resolved before completion of the work. Intellectual property rights are not affected by the EIR.
- 8.4 Unless the Consultant wishes to state otherwise, the copyright of any written, graphic or photographic record and reports will rest with the originating body (Archaeological Services WYAS).

9. Health and Safety

- 9.1 ASWYAS has its own Health and Safety policy which has been compiled using national guidelines. These guidelines conform to all relevant Health and Safety legislation.
- 9.2 In addition each project undergoes a 'Risk Assessment' which sets project specific Health and Safety requirements to which all members of staff are made aware of prior to on-site work commencing. Health and Safety will take priority over archaeological matters. Necessary precautions will be taken over underground services and overhead lines at the outset of the project. This includes an appropriate utility line search in advance on on-site works commencing.

10. Insurance

- 10.1 ASWYAS is covered by the insurance and indemnities of the West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee. Insurance has been effected with: Zurich Municipal, Zurich House, 2 Gladiator Way, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 6GB (policy number QLA-03R896-0013). Any further enquiries should be directed to: Head of Finance, Wakefield Council, Wakefield One, PO Box 700, Wakefield, WF1 2EB.

11. Monitoring

- 11.1 Access to the Site will be arranged through the Client.
- 11.2 To ensure that archaeological work is conducted in accordance with the agreed WSI, fieldwork and post-fieldwork analysis will be monitored by the William Kelly at LCC. Notification of commencement will be sent to William Kelly at least one week prior to the commencement of the fieldwork.
- 11.3 It is anticipated that at least one monitoring meeting will be held on the Site with the Client, William Kelly and ASWYAS during the course of the fieldwork. This meeting will be arranged by the Consultant. All trenches will fulfil the objectives of the WSI prior to backfilling.
- 11.4 If appropriate, the advice of the Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science at Historic England will be called upon.

- 11.5 ASWYAS will ensure that any significant results are brought to the attention of the Client and William Kelly as soon as is practically possible.

12. Resourcing

- 12.1 Key project personnel:

Project Management:	Kevin Moon
Project Supervisors:	TBC

- 12.2 Post-excavation specialists:

Prehistoric pottery:	Dr Blaise Vyner
Roman pottery:	Ian Rowlandson
Medieval pottery:	Dr Chris Cumberpatch
Ceramic building material	Dr Kevin Hayward
Flint specialist:	Ann Clarke
Environmental:	Dr Diane Alldritt
Faunal analyst:	Dr Jane Richardson
Human bone:	Malin Holst MA
Metalwork:	Gail Drinkall
Artefact conservation:	Scarlett Crow

- 12.3 The list of Archaeological Services WYAS project personnel may be subject to change depending on workload and availability.

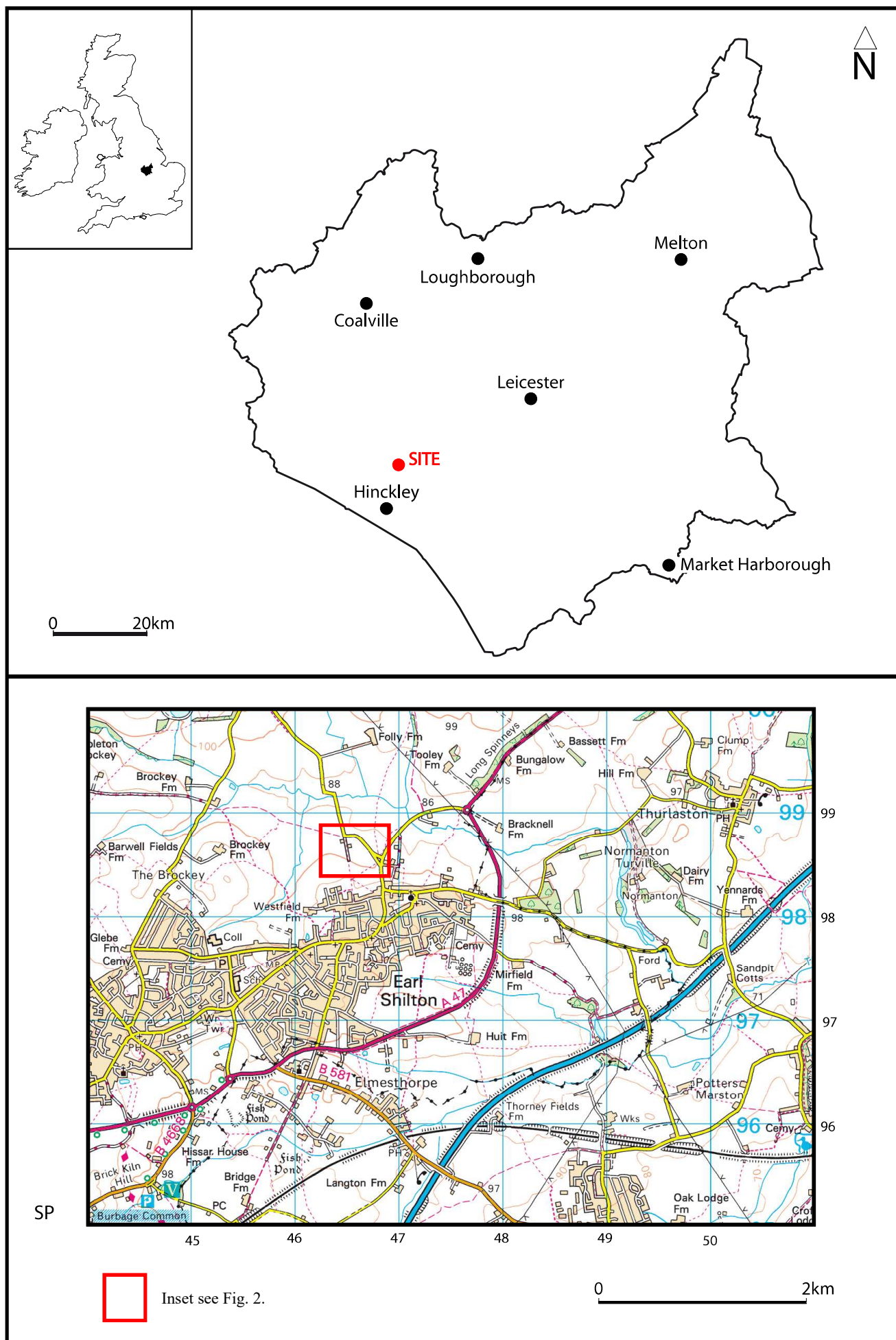
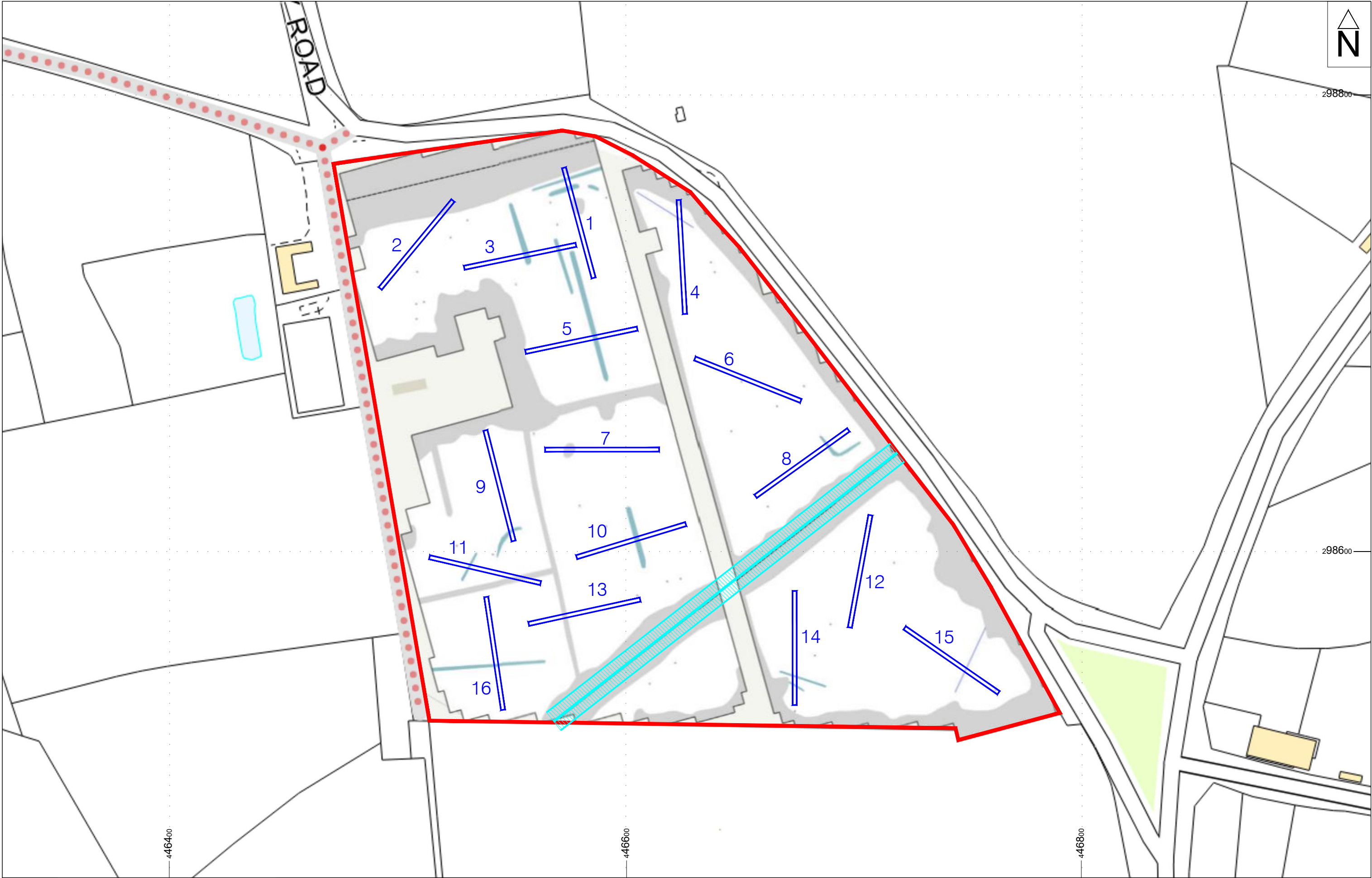


Fig. 1. Site location

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 © ASWYAS 2026. Archaeological Services W Y A S, Nepshaw Lane South, Morley, LS27 7JQ Tel: 0113 535 3007 Email: archaeology@wyjs.org.uk www.aswyas.com	Project No. XU70		SITE BOUNDARY				0  50m 1:1500 @ A3
	Fig. 2.		TRIAL TRENCH				
	Site plan		SERVICE				

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