Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evalution

Land at Church Road, Witherely, Leicestershire

Heritage Archaeology

November 2026

Client	OS Holdings LTD	
Site name	Land at Church Road, Witherely, Leicestershire	
Report type	Written Scheme of Investigation	
Report reference	P00328.02.01	
Report date	November 2026	
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Revision history	V1	Client draft

Executive Summary

This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared to support the proposed development at Land at Church Road, Witherley, Leicestershire. The Site lies within the historic settlement core and has potential for Roman and medieval archaeological remains.

The evaluation will comprise three trenches, each measuring 2m × 30m. The archaeological fieldwork will be undertaken by Mason Evans in accordance with the methodology set out in this WSI. This document sets out the procedures for fieldwork, reporting and archiving in accordance with relevant planning policy, CIfA standards and current archaeological best practice.

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MASON EVANS
GEO-ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS
A PHENNA GROUP COMPANY

Land at Church Road, Witherely, Leicestershire

Written Scheme of Investigation

Client: Heritage Archaeology

Site Name: Land at Church Road, Witherley, Leicestershire

Date: 03/11/2026

Ref: P26-087

Accession Number: X.A134.2026

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TIMELINE USED IN THIS REPORT

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	14,000 - 10,000 BC
Mesolithic	10,000 - 4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 - 2,200 BC
Bronze Age	2,200 - 700 BC
Iron Age	700 - AD 43

Historic

Roman	43 - 410 AD
Early Medieval	410 AD - 1066
Late Medieval	1066 - 1540
Post Medieval	1540 - 1750
Industrial and Modern	1750 – Present Day

Executive Summary

Contents	Summary
Site Location	Land at Church Road, Witherley, Leicestershire, CV9 3NA, NGR: SP32499741
Proposals	Erection of a single self-build dwelling and detached garage (Use Class C3)
Scope	Three, 2m × 30m archaeological evaluation trenches are to be excavated. The Site has potential for remains relating to Roman and medieval activity to be present. This WSI is a design document that outlines the approach to fieldwork, reporting, archiving and dissemination. It conforms to the requirements of current national and local planning policy and has been designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice.
Archival	The digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) following their standards for deposition.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Scope

This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) sets out the scope and methodology for a trial trench evaluation Land at Church Road, Witherley, Leicestershire, CV9 3NA (the Site) (Figure 1).

The Site lies within the Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council Area. The Council are advised on archaeological matters by the Leicestershire County Council (LCC) Archaeology Team.

The work is being undertaken to support an application for Full Planning Permission for the Erection of a single self-build dwelling and detached garage (Use Class C3) at the Site (Ref: 25/01231/FUL).

Three, 2m × 30m archaeological evaluation trenches are to be excavated, two within the proposed footprint of the house and one within that of the garage.

This WSI is a design document that outlines the methodology for fieldwork, reporting, archiving and dissemination of the results of the work. It conforms to the requirements of current national and local planning policy (including National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2026) and has been designed in accordance with current best archaeological practice: the Standard for archaeological field evaluation (CIfA 2023a), and the Universal guidance for archaeological field evaluation (CIfA 2023b).

1.2. Location, Topography and Geology

The Site comprises an area of grassland bounded by hedges and trees (Figure 2). To the north are gardens and a tennis court, with residential properties to both the north and south sides, to the east the Site is bounded by Church Road and to the west by the River Anker. The Church of St Peter lies to the south of this.

The British Geological Survey (BGS 2026) records that bedrock geology comprises Gunthorpe Member-Mudstone. These sedimentary rocks are fluvial, lacustrine and marine in origin and formed between 237 and 247.1 million years ago in the Triassic period. There are superficial River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel that formed in the Quaternary period.

2. Archaeological and Historical Background

This section comprises the historical development of the Site and the surrounding area. This summarises a historic environment desk-based assessment previously completed for the Site (Heritage Archaeology 2025). This concluded that the Site has potential for remains relating to Roman and medieval activity to be present.

2.1 Prehistoric and Romano-British

Neolithic to Bronze Age worked flints have been noted on both sides of the River Anker, whilst undated cropmarks may be an indication of late prehistoric settlement in the area, which would have been considered an advantageous location, adjacent to the river.

This area was of importance during the Roman period due to the location on Watling Street. South of Witherley is the site of a Roman camp at Mancetter, and to the east of this is the Manduessedum Roman villa, settlement and industrial complex.

Recent archaeological work identified features of Roman date immediately adjacent to the Site (see Section 2.5 below).

2.2 Early Medieval and Medieval

There is evidence for the villa of Manduessedum having continued to be used into the early medieval period. The name Witherley is derived from the Anglo-Saxon meaning "woodland clearing of a woman called Wigthryth" and so may have been settled at this time, though it is not until the 13th century that it was first documented.

St Peter's Church to the south of the Site is of medieval date and sat at the heart of the village. The Site lies within the historic settlement core of Witherley, and it is possible that medieval settlement extended into the Site, especially on the street frontage to the east. Features dated to the medieval period were found during an evaluation immediately south of the Site (see Section 2.5 below).

2.3 Post-medieval and Modern

The Site is recorded on the 1848 tithe map as within an area with "Hall Orchard, house, garden, cottage and out offices, pasture" and appears to have been used as a paddock from the 19th and into the 20th centuries.

2.4 Previous Archaeological Investigations

An appraisal of LiDAR imagery conducted as part of the historic environment desk-based assessment noted no features of interest.

In 2021, an evaluation was undertaken immediately to the south of the Site. Three trenches were excavated and a Roman ditch and three post holes were identified, along with two possible medieval linear features, a substantial medieval ditch and a modern land drain. Redeposited clay was also noted in all trenches (Heritage Archaeology 2025).

3. Aims and Objectives

2.1. Aims

The aim of the field evaluation is to achieve an understanding of archaeological remains within a designated area through intrusive fieldwork. It seeks to determine the presence or absence of significant features, structures, deposits, artefacts, or ecofacts. This comprehensive evaluation will extend to assessing the nature, extent and preservation status of these archaeological elements, with the goal of understanding their historical and cultural significance (CIfA 2023a, CIfA 2023b).

2.2. Objectives

The objective of a field evaluation is to follow a precise project design for the implementation of a programme of intrusive fieldwork methods for the systematic identification, recording and documentation of archaeological deposits, providing detailed information on the nature, extent, and preservation status of identified archaeological remains, and the subsequent analysis of recorded data to evaluate the significance of findings in the context of historical and cultural importance. The outcomes will be encapsulated in a comprehensive report and supported by the establishment of an accessible archive for future research (CIfA 2023a, 2023b).

2.2.3. Research Framework

In addition to the general objectives noted above, the results of the work have the potential to contribute to the following questions outlined in the East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework:

Romano-British

5.4.1: How did the Conquest impact upon rural settlements and landscapes?

5.4.4: How did field and boundary systems relate to earlier systems of land allotment, and how did these boundary networks develop over time?

5.4.5: What patterns can be discerned in the location of settlements in the landscape?

Medieval

7.7.1: Can we shed further light upon the origins and development of the open-field system and its impact upon agricultural practices?

4. Health and Safety

The work will be carried out pre-construction and is not subject to Construction (Design and Management) regulations (CDM 2015) as outlined by the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME 2020).

A Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS) will be completed for the works prior to commencement. Specific risks associated with the programme of works may include: the presence of livestock; slips, trips, and falls; the potential for buried services/utilities; and working around plant equipment. There are no known services/utilities in the Site, although there remains the potential for unknown buried services to be present.

4.1 Access

Safe site access will be arranged by the client or their representative at least one week before site work commences. The archaeological contractor will be notified if access arrangements change prior to or during the archaeological works. If areas expected to be accessible are not available for any reason, the LCC Archaeology Team will be informed as soon as possible.

4.2 Other Constraints

The client or their agent will provide up to date information on ecological and other constraints a minimum of two weeks prior to commencement of work.

Should there be a requirement for an Ecological Clerk of Works or precautionary method statements, for example relating to ground nesting birds or translocation of protected species such as Great Crested Newts, these will be provided by the client and the LCC Archaeology Team will be informed as soon as possible.

5. Methodology

5.1 Trial Trench Evaluation

Work will be conducted in accordance with CIfA's Standard and Guidance (2023a and b) and Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (Historic England 2015a).

Three 30m x 2m trenches will be opened down to the first archaeological horizon under archaeological supervision using a back acting mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Thereafter all excavation work will be undertaken by hand, where it is safe to do so. Care will be taken to ensure that the machining does not impact any shallow archaeological remains. Trenches will be ramped at one end to enable wildlife to exit the trenches should they enter them.

The location of the excavated area and features within it will be planned with hand-drawn plans. These will be drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at a scale of 1:10. All plans and sections will include the Ordnance Datum (OD) height of principal features and will be tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

For linear features 1m wide sections will be excavated across their width to a total of 10% of the overall length. Discrete features, such as pits and postholes, will have 50% of their fills excavated. Complex structures (e.g. buildings, kilns) will be cleaned, planned and recorded, but where possible left in situ.

All exposed archaeological deposits and features will be recorded by context using a proforma recording system compatible with the single context recording methods of the Museum of London (MoLAS 1994). A stratigraphic matrix will be produced for the site, where appropriate.

Registers will be kept of all photographs, levels, plans, sections, finds and samples taken in the field.

In the unlikely event that remains of very high significance warranting preservation in situ are identified, the LCC Archaeology Team will be informed immediately, and appropriate measures will be taken to protect such remains from any damage or deterioration.

Take this from the WSI, amending the tense as the work has now been done.

5.2 Photography

Digital colour photography of features will be undertaken with a minimum resolution of 12 megapixels and in line with relevant guidance (Historic England 2015). Photographs will include a scale bar and north arrow as appropriate. General record images to show site progress will also be taken.

5.3 Scientific Dating

Where suitable material is recovered, samples will be taken for radiocarbon dating. The use of other dating techniques will be considered in discussion with the Regional Scientific Advisor for Historic England if appropriate.

5.4 Paleoenvironmental Sampling

Where paleoenvironmental potential is identified, bulk samples of 20 litres for wet and 40–60 litres for dry contexts of will be taken. Industrial residues and waste from craft and manufacturing processes will also be sampled. Samples will be collected from the fills of stratigraphically secure features and deposits only. Sampling methods will follow relevant guidelines (Historic England 2025).

5.5 Finds

Finds will be carefully recovered by hand and bagged or boxed according to type, with a label indicating the site code, find type and context reference number. Particularly notable artefacts will be recorded in three dimensions. Artefacts will be removed from the site to a secure location at the end of the working day.

Initial conservation and storage will follow First Aid for Finds (Leigh et al 1998) and the CIfA 'Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials' (CIfA 2020b). If necessary, an appropriately qualified and experienced archaeological conservator will be appointed to advise and assist in the lifting and storage of fragile materials.

The recovery and retention of finds and samples will be reviewed on-site to ensure retention is guided by their ability to inform the evaluation report, and material may be discarded following discussions with an appropriate specialist.

Finds will be washed and then marked in accordance with the project archive repository guidelines. All finds of objects definable as 'treasure' under the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the procedures of the Treasure Act 1996 and the Treasure (Designation) Order 2002. The client and the LCC Archaeology Team will also be informed.

The landowner has ownership of any finds discovered on the site (this does not include human remains) and must therefore give permission for the donation of any finds to the repository in which the project archive is deposited. This enables the repository to curate the finds, in perpetuity, as part of the project archive.

Permission will be confirmed by the completion of a Deed of Transfer form. The Client (or their agent) will arrange for the landowner to sign a Deed of Transfer Form before completion of reporting.

Subject to availability the following specialists will be called upon where relevant finds or other archaeological materials are recovered:

Table 5-1: List of post-excavation specialists to be used on this project

Specialist	Material
Charlotte Britton	Finds; Ceramics
Claire Rainsford	Animal Bone
Lisa Gray	Environmental Analysis
Rebecca Deveney	Flint
Natasha Powers	Human Bone
Declan Lancaster	Shellfish; Coarse Stone

5.6 Human Remains

Human remains are not expected.

If burials (inhumations or cremations) are encountered, they should be cleaned sufficiently to enable an assessment of type and preservation and left in situ unless there is a danger that they will be damaged, or a security risk.

Where removal of the burials cannot be avoided, a licence will be obtained from the Ministry of Justice (in accordance with Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857). The client and LCC Archaeology Team will be informed and, if required, the attendance of an osteologist will be arranged to agree a strategy for recording and excavation in line with current standards and guidance (Historic England 2018). The project osteologist will also be informed at the earliest opportunity to provide guidance for the site team.

5.7 Reporting

All reports will include a non-technical summary, project design or appropriate references to it, details on aims, objectives, and methods used (including any deviations from the project design), results aligned with the research aims, illustrations, plans, and essential technical details providing accurate spatial information, conclusions with a confidence rating on techniques used, recommendations for further work, archive locations (if known), a bibliography and a list of all sources used (CIfA 2023b).

5.8 Monitoring

LCC Archaeology Team be given two weeks' notice in writing of the commencement of fieldwork and will be allowed access to the site at all reasonable times. Key decisions on excavation strategy and any variance in the scope of work from that outlined in this WSI will be made in consultation with LCC Archaeology Team. Visits will be arranged so that they are satisfied that the works are conducted to professional standards.

5.9 Publication and Dissemination

A digital copy of the final report will be submitted to LCC Archaeology Team for approval, prior to its submission.

Recommendations for publication, presentation of results in non-academic publications and/or for updates on social media will be made following completion of the site works. The nature and extent will be dependent on the nature and significance of the results of the work.

If appropriate, provision will be made for presentation of results in non-academic publications and/or for updates on the results to be provided via website or social media. A summary of the findings will be provided to the 'Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society'.

5.10 Archival

Upon completion of reporting, the archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museums under accession number: X.A134.2026.

Materials will be selected with reference to the CIfA Archive Selection Toolkit as appropriate. The site archive will be quantified, ordered and indexed and will be prepared according to the following standards and guidance:

- The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire County Council Museum Collections (Leicestershire County Council 2025).
- Archaeological Archive Forum (2011) Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation transfer and curation
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020a) Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives
- Society for Museum Archaeology (2020) Standards and Guidance in the Care of Archaeological Collections
- United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (1990) Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage
- United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (2001) Excavated Artefacts and Conservation

The digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) following their standards for deposition and the guidelines of LCC (2025).

An OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS) form will be completed for this project. After validation by the HER the project report will become a publicly accessible document.

6. References

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BGS. 2026. Geoindex Onshore Viewer. British Geological Survey. https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html

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United Kingdom Institute for Conservation. 1990. Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation. 2001. Excavated Artefacts and Conservation

APPENDIX 1: Figures





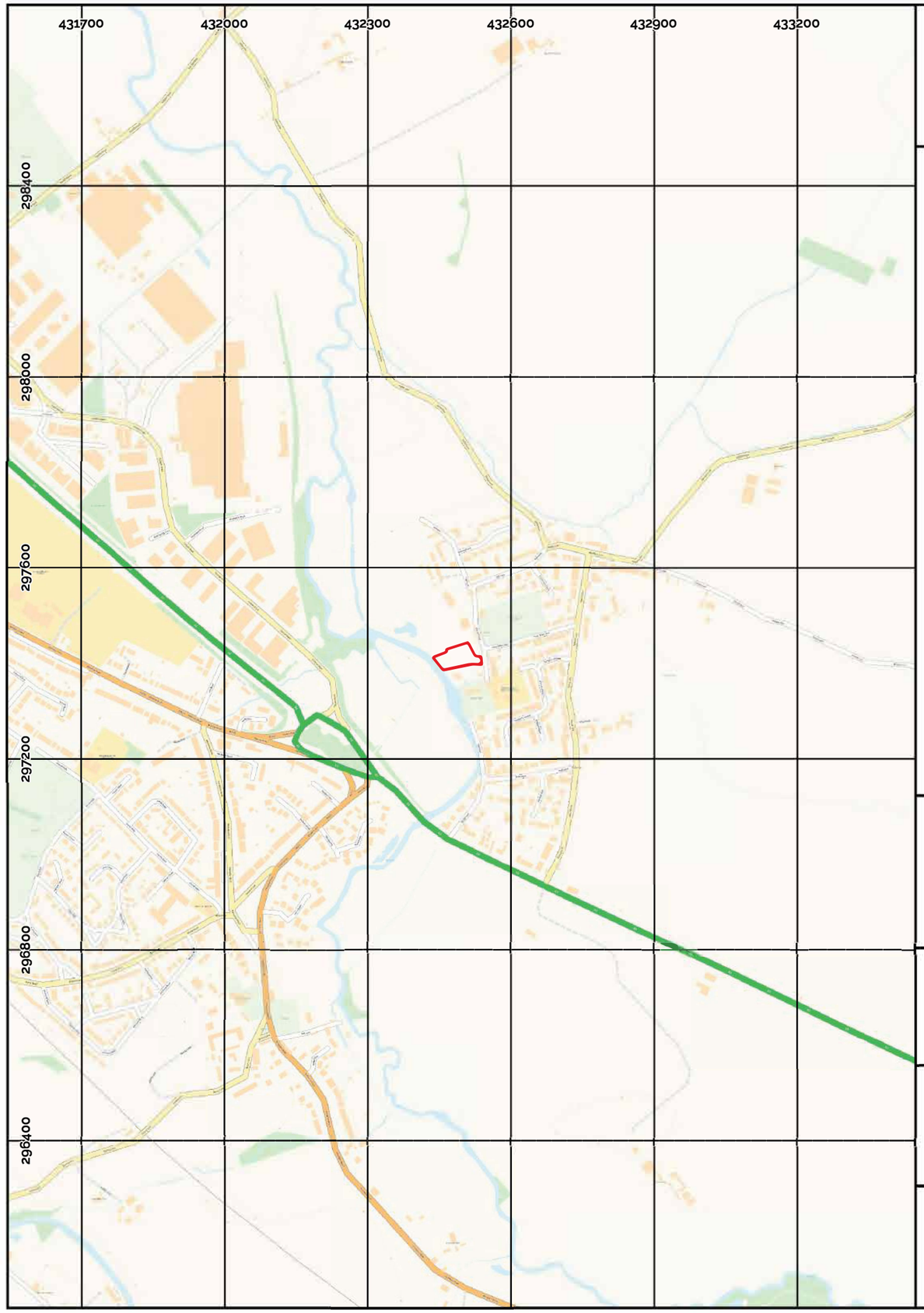

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

PN: 15070
Drawn by: DL
Rev: 01
Date: 19/10/2026

Legend:

Site Boundary

RammSanderson
A PHENNA GROUP COMPANY

For: Mason Evans Partnership

Basemap:
© Crown copyright and/or database right OS
(Open Government Licence)

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Figure 2: Trench Plan

PN: 15070
Drawn by: DL
Rev: 01
Date: 30/10/2026

Legend:

Site Boundary

Trench Plan

RammSanderson
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For: Mason Evans Parternship

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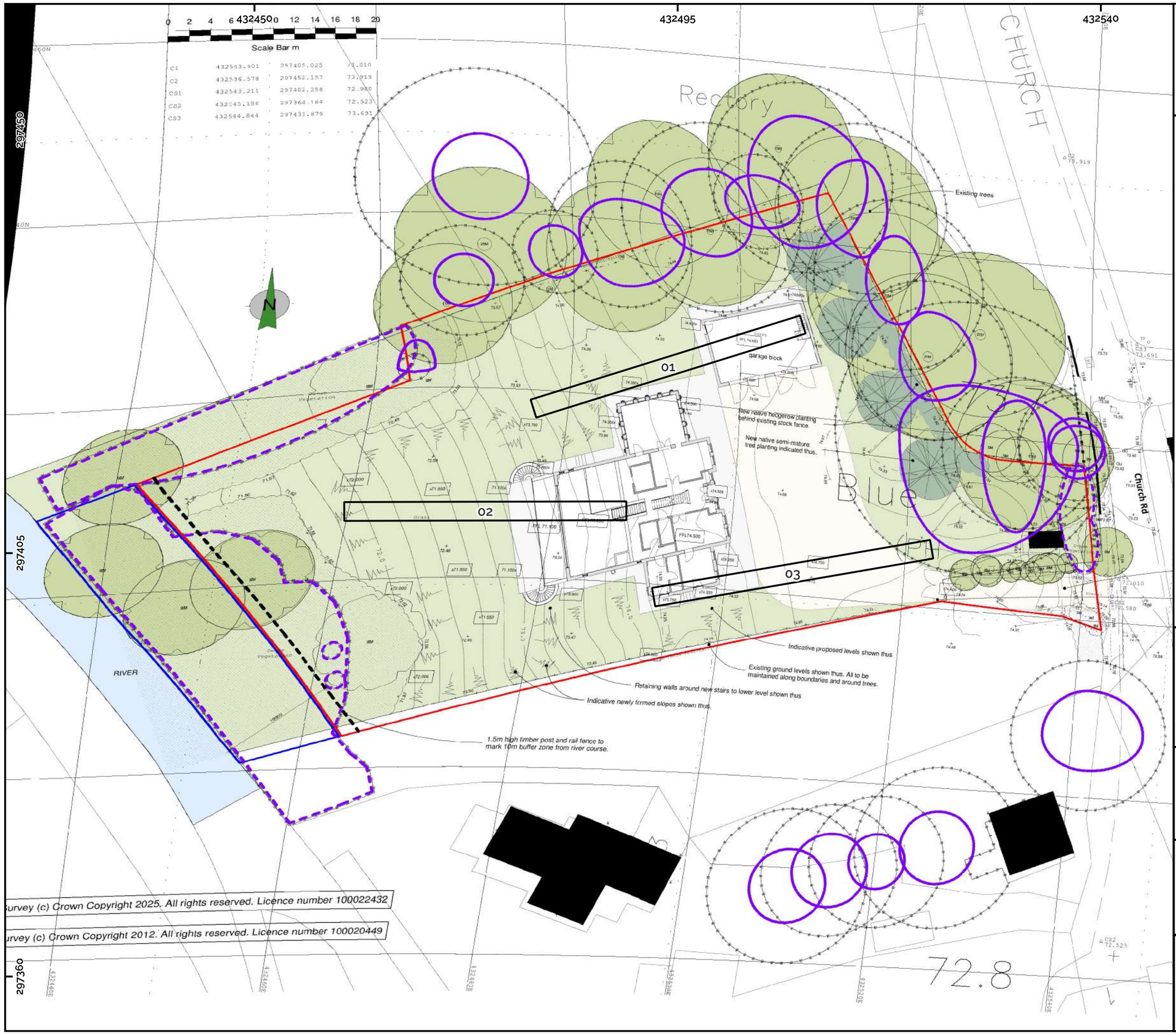

Figure 3: Proposed Development

PN: 15070
Drawn by: DL
Rev: 01
Date: 30/10/2026

Legend:

- Site Boundary
- Trench Plan

RammSanderson
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For: Mason Evans Parternship

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