



Earth Trust Community Excavation

2026 Updated Project Design

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Updated Project Design

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Purpose of document

This document has been prepared as an Updated Project Design for community-based research excavations at the Earth Trust, Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire. The purpose of this document is to provide an outline of planned fieldwork for the 2026 season of excavations, outlining the aims and objectives of the work, and methodology to be employed.

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The project is managed for DigVentures by Brendon Wilkins, with Lisa Westcott Wilkins in the role of Project Executive and Nat Jackson as Site Director.

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Executive summary

This document has been compiled in support of archaeological investigation at Earth Trust, to be undertaken by DigVentures. Previous excavations have been carried out on the site, most recently by DigVentures between 2018 and 2021. This Updated Project Design supports the third season of community fieldwork targeting Roman and Iron Age features discovered during the 2018–21 excavations and further investigated in the community excavations that took place in 2024 and 2025. The approach to this work, comprising of a programme of targeted trenching, is evidenced through the following MoRPHE / PRINCE2 compliant document, outlining key archaeological research questions, roles, procedures, stages and outputs.

The overarching aim of this fieldwork is to provide baseline information to contribute to the future management and research of the site, creating multiple educational and participatory learning experiences for community participants. This will be achieved through a community-based archaeological research project designed in the first instance to understand:

- the extent and layout of the Roman building discovered in the 2018-21 excavations and further excavated in 2024 and 2025,
- the survival of archaeology underlying the Roman building to further refine the chronology of the site,
- the nature, date and survival of archaeology at the site in previously unexcavated areas.

This Project Design provides an outline of methodology and planned intervention to complete:

Targeted excavation Trench 1 will be extended to the west and to the north east (Figure 4). The extensions are to the north of the previously excavated area and to the south of the Earth Trust offices, and will both target the Roman building discovered during the 2018-21 excavations as well as earlier Iron Age activity in the area.

Public engagement The project is supported by a comprehensive learning, engagement and activity plan. An innovative digital recording system will be used to enable volunteers to record on smartphones or tablets in the field; a dedicated project website, underpinned by a digital and audience building strategy, aiming to increase the engagement and participation numbers outlined in the project brief.



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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 The community excavations at Earth Trust are proposed as the third season in a multi-staged research project, encompassing participatory excavation and followed by assessment, analysis and publication. Fieldwork is scheduled to take place between the 13th October and 1st November 2026, which forms the sixth Execution Stage of this project. Results from the excavation will be fully assessed and reported on, informing how the project will progress with an Updated Project Design (see Section 7, Review Point 7).
- 1.1.2 The overarching aim of this work is to build on the previous archaeological works that have taken place over the past twenty years, including archaeological evaluation and excavation delivered as part of the development of the site (Jackson 2024). This new work will further characterise the scale, depth and density of the extant archaeological remains on the site, from prehistory through to the modern day. Dating evidence will be obtained and an interactive digital archive of the excavation produced. Both the physical and digital archive will be made accessible for future research, and the project has an embedded public engagement programme including community-based excavation. The principal driver for this research project is to enhance baseline information to inform the future management of the Site (see Section 4, Business Case), including interpretation and presentation of the Site's regionally and nationally significant archaeology to the public.
- 1.1.3 This document provides a Project Design for delivery of a community-based archaeological investigation at the Earth Trust Visitor Centre, Little Wittenham (hereafter 'the site', Figure 1, NGR SU 5629 925). This document will define how DigVentures intends to deliver a project which provides benefits to the Earth Trust, the local and global community, and all other stakeholders (including Historic England and Natural England).
- 1.1.4 The project is being managed according to Historic England's MoRPHE project model (Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment). This document defines that process, and is divided into two parts: 'Part 1: Description of the Project' provides the project context, including a brief summary of proposed methodology, key sources and activities required to support the delivery of the proposal outcomes. 'Part 2: Resources and Programming' identifies responsibilities of individual project staff members, outlines completion dates for specific tasks, with all costs itemised for transparency.



Part 1: Description of the project

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site description

- 2.1.1 The site is located at NGR SU 56290 92570, and is part of the Earth Trust Centre, which is situated to the southwest of the Wittenham Clumps, off Little Wittenham Road, in the parish of Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire (Figure 1). The Earth Trust Centre occupies the west end of a gently shelving plateau south of the more westerly of the Clumps at around 90m AOD, and the ground drops away more steeply to the west and south. The area of the site has been continuously cultivated for generations (Rhodes 1948), with historic mapping and aerial photography evidence indicating that this began before the 19th century, and possibly into the medieval period (Allen et al. 2010, Plate 1.9; 1843 Tithe Map) (Figure 2). The geology is shown as Upper Greensand – sandstone and siltstone (BGS 2024).

2.2 History and Archaeological Background

- 2.2.1 The site sits to the west and in the shadow of Wittenham Clumps; a cluster of beech trees planted in the 18th century on the twin hills of Round Hill and Castle Hill. The landscape around Wittenham Clumps has remained largely unchanged over the past 200 years, as can be seen from historic maps (Figure 2). The lower of the two hills, Castle Hill, is the location of an Iron Age Hill fort (List Entry No. 100632), although now it is thought to have Late Bronze Age origins. A large ditch enclosing Castle Hill was discovered during excavations in the early 2000s by Oxford Archaeology and local volunteers as a part of an HLF funded project (Allen et al, 2010).
- 2.2.2 Across the river Thames to the north of Castle Hill is the Late Iron Age oppidum of Dyke Hills (List Entry No. 1006364), partially destroyed in the late 19th century (Welch C. 2014). Two large parallel banks form the northern limit of an enclosed site, the west and south bounded by the Thames and the east by the Thame. The cropmarks of an extensive neolithic cursus, and other prehistoric ring ditches and enclosures spread out in the fields south of Dorchester-on-Thames (List Entry No. 1006344). Another oppidum is located on the southern side of the modern town of Abingdon-on-Thames (Allen 1991) on the Thames.
- 2.2.3 Further Iron Age and Roman settlements have been excavated at Barton Court Farm (Miles 1984) and Thrupp House Farm (Everett and Eeles 1999) in Abingdon-on-Thames, and Mount Farm, Dorchester-on-Thames (Lambrick 2010). The Roman town at Dorchester-on-Thames (List Entry No. 1006331) is just over two kilometres away from the site to the northwest. One of only two walled Roman settlements in Oxfordshire, it has been excavated multiple times over the past century, most recently by Oxford University in a series of works carried out between 2007 and 2014 (<https://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/dorchester-thames>). To the north of Dorchester-on-Thames other Roman sites have been identified; two kiln sites, one in Berinsfield, near Mount Farm (Harden 1936), and one slightly further north in Marsh Baldon (List Entry No. 1006337). A Roman cemetery at Church Piece, east of Dorchester-on-Thames, is known from lead and stone coffins discovered from the late 18th century onwards (List Entry No. 1003243).



- 2.2.4 The concentration of activity here may be down to the location. The twin peaks of Wittenham Clumps and the meeting of the Thames and the Thame may have initially set the area apart (Loveday 1999). This juncture led to a long history of people moving in and around the landscape, with prehistoric monuments rubbing shoulders with defensive complexes and domestic settlement. This combines to indicate the presence of a large population here throughout prehistory (Baker 2002).
- 2.2.5 In Long Wittenham and Little Wittenham archaeological work has revealed more of this busy pastoral landscape. An evaluation was carried out in fields to the east of Didcot Road (Thacker 2019, Cotswold Archaeology 2023), adjacent to the Anglo-Saxon Great Hall complex (List Entry No. 1468510). Here they discovered a Roman trackway and field system, and a Roman waterhole, as well as further Early Medieval activity. The earlier Late Iron Age and Roman activity is characterised as a 'planned landscape'. Another evaluation took place to the north of Little Wittenham in 2017 (Dodd 2018), here there were numerous Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age features. In the meander of the Thames an evaluation and excavations took place preceding the River of Life II project (Duensing 2022). Nothing was discovered during this programme of excavation by the banks of the river due to the high water table eroding away any signs of archaeology. In the fields directly south of the river and north of Long Wittenham is the settlement site at Northfield Farm (List Entry No. 1002925). Excavations have been carried out here in the late 1960s (Gray 1977). An attempt to phase the cropmarks was published in *Oxoniensia*, giving four broad chronological periods from the Late Neolithic through to the Roman period (Baker 2002).
- 2.2.6 In the more immediate proximity of Earth Trust, formal excavations first took place at Wittenham Clumps on the area downslope of Round Hill by Rhodes (1948) (SMR Number: 3161); however, the earliest known work was carried out by a local amateur Harry Watts in the 1920s (Allen et al 2010, 9-10). Watts' small-scale excavations on the top of Castle Hill in amongst the trees consisted of some 15 trenches, likely small interventions, where he found fragments of pottery, animal bone, charcoal and burnt human remains. Earlier in the 19th century other human remains had been discovered to the north and west of Castle Hill, as seen on the earliest Ordnance Survey maps (Figure 2). A number of archaeological findspots are known in and around the hillfort (information from the Oxfordshire HER). These include Anglo-Saxon pottery (SMR Number: 9001) and a Roman bracelet (SMR Number: 11605) found immediately within the hillfort, and Iron Age pottery (SMR Number: 27616), a Roman bracelet (SMR Number: 3163) and Roman awl (SMR Number: 3164) found immediately outside it. These artefacts discovered around the site were discussed in a note in the *Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire Archaeological Journal* in 1901 (Cozens 1901). In this note there is mention of large stones which had 'evidently been used for building' (Cozens 1901), along with various coins of Trajan, Gratian, and Arcadius, and a small bronze key found in the area. The field where the large stones were discovered has been identified as a field to the south of Hill Farm (the first footnote in Rhodes 1948).
- 2.2.7 Fieldwalking was carried out in advance of the construction of a gas pipeline that crosses the field (Brooks 1992), and this suggested the presence of Neolithic and Bronze Age activity (SMR Number: 26095), later Iron Age prehistoric activity (SMR Number: 3160) and Roman settlement (SMR Number: 17392) immediately south and east of the Earth Trust Centre. In 1995, a geophysical survey of 2 ha. east and south-east of the Earth Trust Centre revealed a north-south aligned boundary cut by a triple-ditched enclosure (SMR Number: 16818), with internal pits (Price 1995), although geophysical survey along the line of the gas pipeline failed to



identify any significant anomalies (Lingard and Wilson 1995, 2). In 1999, fieldwalking organised by the Northmoor Trust (now the Earth Trust) east of the centre gave similar indications of human activity spanning from prehistory to the Roman era. Further fieldwalking took place immediately to the southwest and south of the Earth Trust Centre in 2002-3 recovered a widespread scatter of worked flint. This suggests a focus of earlier prehistoric activity west of the Earth Trust Centre. An Early Neolithic pit was excavated at the western edge of the present Visitor's Car Park, confirming activity here (Allen et al. 2010, 109). The 2002-3 fieldwalking also confirmed the presence of later prehistoric and Roman pottery close to the Earth Trust Centre on the south and east, but also included a concentration of Roman ceramic building material south-east of the Earth Trust Staff Car Park (SMR Number: 26223). It was thought that this might represent the remains of a Roman building or other structure.

- 2.2.8 A number of incomplete cropmarks (SMR Numbers: 15360, 15361, 15362) (Figure 3) are recorded south of the Earth Trust Centre in the HER, and these and the marks recorded by Price's geophysical survey have now been confirmed and expanded by the more recent geophysical surveys (Allen et al. 2010, figures 5.2 and 5.4). Aerial photographs taken by Stuart Ainsworth of Time Team during 2003 also showed further cropmarks correlating with the geophysical survey results (Allen et al. 2010, plate 5.2). The more recent geophysical surveys covered the area around the Earth Trust Centre for a radius of 200m, and so include all the proposed development immediately adjacent to it. Geophysical survey data showed several small circular, sub-rectangular and trapezoidal enclosures (SMR Number: 28679), the first characteristic of Iron Age roundhouse enclosures, together with a dense spread of pits. It is possible that the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman Pottery found by Dr H. Watts in 1937 from a near ploughed out rampart (SMR Number: 3154) relate to these features. West of the Earth Trust, Saxon and Roman remains including an iron lamp stand, brass key and large cut stones were identified in late 19th and early 20th century excavations while excavating for the foundations of a barn (SMR Number: 3158).

2.3 Previous archaeological investigation at the site

- 2.3.1 An archaeological evaluation of the site was carried out in 2015 by Oxford Archaeology. In the light of the known archaeological background immediately around the Earth Trust Centre, investigation in this area was kept to a minimum. The principal additions to the previously known archaeological background from the watching brief and evaluation (Strutt and Allen 2015) are summarised below.
- 2.3.2 The southern limit of the dense archaeological activity suggested by the geophysical survey was broadly confirmed by archaeological evaluation trenches (Strutt and Allen 2015). A single pit of Roman date was found in Trench 20 south of the Roman trackway crossing Trench 19. No other archaeological features were positively identified to the south of that until Sires Hill, the southernmost field bordering, where a boundary ditch of early post-medieval date was recorded. The evaluation trenches located across dense geophysical anomalies targeted features interpreted as archaeological and successfully located most of these, providing a reasonable degree of confidence in the geophysical survey results (Strutt and Allen 2015).
- 2.3.3 The evaluation trenches also recorded the presence of small pits and postholes, which had been too small to locate by normal geophysical survey. The postholes were concentrated within circular or penannular ditches, supporting the interpretation that the ditches surrounded a series of Iron Age roundhouses and other structures (Strutt and Allen 2015). No trace of a

Roman masonry building was found to the south-east of the Earth Trust Centre, where fieldwalking had indicated a concentration of Roman tile. This lack of a stone building was interpreted as indicating that there had been a wooden building roofed with tile, that a smaller structure (such as a corn-drier) had not been located by the evaluation trench, or that the tile represented an area of disposal of ceramic building materials (Strutt and Allen 2015).

- 2.3.4 Roman activity appeared to be concentrated in the second and third centuries AD, as suggested by the previous fieldwalking and excavation. Some first and fourth century activity was also indicated. Two extended Roman inhumation burials were found, both towards the edge of the area of dense activity, one on the south-west (Strutt and Allen 2015, fig. 3 Trench 14 and plate 4) and the other on the south (ibid., fig. 3 Trench 17 and plate 8). Combined with a later Roman burial found west of the Earth Trust Centre in 2005, they suggest a pattern of peripheral scattered burials in this period, a common phenomenon on rural Roman settlements.
- 2.3.5 In July 2018 a watching brief was conducted during the demolition of the scout hut. The scout hut, along with several trees and shrubs were removed to make way for the development of the Skills and Learning Building. During the watching brief, no archaeological remains were disturbed. In October 2018, the footprint of the former scout hut and nearby area was subject to an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation. The footprint trench was allocated Trench 1. It was roughly rectangular in shape and approximately 30m long and 15m wide and was machine-excavated down to the first archaeological horizon. The trench was then hand-excavated, with archaeological features clarified, excavated and recorded. Between November and December 2019, a total of eight trenches were opened, these eight trenches were split in four main areas. Trenches 2 and 3 were grouped as Area A, Trench 8 as Area B, Trenches 5 and 6 were Area C, and Trenches 4 and 9, Area D. Area A was located closest to the hills of Wittenham Clumps, on the east of the site, Area B was to the north west of site, Area C was in the west of the site and Area D was in the centre (Jackson 2024).
- 2.3.6 The excavations carried out from 2018 to 2021 have increased our understanding of the extent and nature of archaeology at the site, building upon past research and adding more detail to the picture (Jackson 2024). Glimpses of Bronze Age activity were recorded across the site, although the centre of that settlement remains elusive, perhaps to the south of site and to the west of Castle Hill. The Iron Age activity was far clearer; the occupation of the site reached its zenith in the Middle Iron Age but was certainly an important centre in the Early Iron Age. The site was a focus of industry in the early 1st millennium BC, the smithy seen in the centre of site is categorically dated to this period. Other than the smithy, the Early Iron Age was characterised by a series of large ring ditches, the function of which is underdetermined by the evidence, but it seems likely that they were livestock enclosures rather than ditches demarcating areas of habitation.
- 2.3.7 A large enclosure ditch was initially constructed in the Early Iron Age and continued to be used into the Middle Iron Age. This enclosed the earliest settlement around the hill fort at Castle Hill. The settlement then spread west and north in the Middle Iron Age, with numerous features from this phase discovered in the north and west of site. The site likely contracted in the Late Iron Age, with focus shifting away from the hill fort and over the Thames towards the oppida at Dyke Hills. People were still living and dying at the site however, and a burial recovered in the far west of site dated to this period. The Roman period is characterised by a trackway and enclosure ditches seen throughout the site. Burials were excavated in three areas of the site



and were mostly late Roman in date. A building dating to the 3rd century AD was discovered in the centre of the site, to the north of the trackway and within one of the enclosures. Activity on the site diminished entirely in the 5th century, the latest datable features being two burials from the late 4th to early 6th century.

- 2.3.8 The 2018-21 excavation recovered an extensive assemblage of material, including over 15,000 artefacts, much of this being animal bone of which over 8,000 fragments were found. Within this, a mix of cattle, pig, sheep/goat, and equids were recorded, as well as some interesting highlights. A number of dog skeletons from Iron Age and Roman phases, including a decapitated dog in a middle Iron Age pit, and some very small dogs from the Roman phase, one of which was only c.20cm long. The second largest assemblage was the pottery, the earliest vessels dating from the late Bronze Age and the latest being residual post-medieval sherds. Registered finds discovered during these investigations included a late third-century AD coin hoard, three combs, copper alloy objects including brooches, pins and a toilet spoon. One of the more notable finds was a complete early Iron Age tuyère, indicating the presence of a smithy on site. The assemblage reiterates the importance of the site on both a regional basis, but also as a nationally significant site.

2.4 2024 Fieldwork results

- 2.4.1 The first field season of the community excavations took place in June 2024 and consisted of two trenches both investigating the large Roman building identified during the 2018-21 project. Trench 1 targeted the western limit of the building, measured 15m x 8m and was oriented north-south. Trench 2 was located to the north east of Trench 1 in an area which had previously not been investigated with the hope of discovering the northern limit of the building. It measured 10m x 8m and was positioned east-west (see Figure 4).

Trench 1 revealed walls and column bases associated with the building, alongside earlier pits, postholes and ditches. There was a total of six pits, nine ditches and thirteen postholes within the trench. The earliest features excavated included a large ring ditch running through the middle of the trench, this contained numerous fragments of Early Iron Age pottery. All of the pits dated to the Iron Age, two were Early Iron Age, three date to the Middle Iron Age and one is Late Iron Age. The Middle Iron Age pits produced some of the more interesting artefacts including two bone needles and an iron buckle. The full length of a western wall of the building measuring 15m was seen and the northern wall extended across the 8m width of the trench. It was revealed that there were two parallel rows of column bases and four were seen in the trench. This has resulted in the interpretation of the building being that of an aisled barn likely for largescale agricultural storage.

- 2.4.2 The excavations in Trench 2 revealed a less dense area of archaeology, consisting mostly of postholes. A ditch was seen bisecting the trench diagonally, running from the southwest corner to the north east, and probably consisting of two intercutting features, likely representing multiple phases of the same feature. The ditches date to the early Roman period. The earliest feature in the Trench (and the earliest excavated in 2024) was a pit from the late Bronze Age, this contained three sherds of pottery and a single fragment of animal bone. The fill of the feature was noticeably lighter than all others within the trench. A total of 21 postholes were revealed, these were clustered in two areas in the southeast and southwest of the trench. It is unclear whether these features form any structure or fence, and the density of postholes is likely due to the many different phases of activity occurring throughout the occupation of the site.



2.5 2025 Fieldwork results

- 2.5.1 The second field season of the community excavations took place in May and June 2025. The excavations continued Trench 1 from the 2024 season, extending it to the east for 30m and west by 8m to further investigate the limits of the Roman aisled building and the earlier activity beneath it.
- 2.5.2 The excavations revealed numerous features associated with all phases of activity on the site. Additional walls, post pads and a buttress were uncovered, further defining the character of the Roman aisled structure. A possible floor surface was also identified, along with a widespread demolition deposit, a rubble-rich layer of limestone and tile that sealed many of the Roman and earlier features and appears to represent the collapse or deliberate dismantling of the building. A knife was recovered from this demolition deposit, forming part of a wider registered finds assemblage recovered across the trench. A ditch was excavated in the western part of the trench and likely relates to earlier Roman activity on the site. Underlying the Roman features were Iron Age features consisting of pits, postholes, enclosure ditches and ring gullies. A pit cluster in the centre of the trench revealed two partially articulated cow torsos, and a pit in the north of the trench contained a deliberately placed dog burial. This continued a pattern of animal depositional practice already seen at the site during the 2018-21 excavations.
- 2.5.3 In addition to the animal deposits, the trench produced a range of finds including quernstone fragments from wall foundations and pits, glass fragments from the demolition layers, and a small assemblage of iron and copper alloy objects. A tile stack was recorded in the western extension, suggesting the reuse of earlier building materials and adding further evidence for the character of the aisled building and its eventual demolition.

2.6 2026 Fieldwork proposals

- 2.6.1 The previous excavations developed a comprehensive understanding of the site, building on and addressing research questions generated by earlier field teams. However, there are still gaps in our knowledge. The Roman building was only partially excavated so further exploration of this to fully characterise the building would be beneficial; thus it will continue to be the focus of the 2026 excavations. It is known that the building seals earlier archaeological deposits, and this presents an opportunity to further refine the chronology of the site's occupation and to investigate the possible earlier high-status building that predates the aisled structure. Extending the trench in new areas will also inform ongoing management of the site, providing a more detailed record of the buried archaeology in this area.
- 2.6.2 It is proposed that Trench 1 be extended in two directions to further investigate the limits of the Roman aisled building, to look for evidence of the earlier high-status structure that preceded it and Iron Age features associated with the earlier occupation of the site (Figure 4).
- **Trench 1 north east extension**, measuring at least 15m x 10m, will extend Trench 1 to the north east. This will target the northeast area of the aisled building and investigate the character and survival of the structure in that area, as well as looking for evidence of the earlier building that preceded it.
 - **Trench 1 western extension** will be 15m x 8m. This will target an area not previously investigated and will explore the western extent of the aisled building that was seen to extend beyond western baulk in the 2025 excavations.



- 2.6.3 Fieldwork will be delivered as a participatory research project, involving members of the community from the local area and further afield who will be trained in archaeological skills. The project will be widely disseminated both during the investigations and throughout post excavation work and long-term preservation of the archive. Details about the site can be found on the project website: <https://digventures.com/earth-trust>

3 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project model

- 3.1.1 The overarching aim of the project is to define and characterise the physical extent of the site through a programme of non-intrusive investigations and intrusive excavation, obtaining baseline data that will facilitate its future management. This project model is framed as overarching aims and key questions/objectives that provide a framework for the methods, stages, products and tasks set out in Part 2 of this Project Design below.

3.2 Aim 1 – Further characterise the results of the 2018–2021, 2024 and 2025 excavations, specifically regarding the Roman aisled building and evidence for earlier high-status structures, refining the chronology and phasing of the building with a programme of trenching.

- 3.2.1 Following on from the extensive excavations carried out at the site during 2018-2021, and the discovery of a large aisled Roman building further excavated in 2024, this aim will be achieved through targeted trenches to further address the following questions:

- Q1. Can we confirm the full form, character and function of the building discovered in the previous excavations?
- Q2. Can we fully characterise the archaeology to the west of the building, is this the location of the entrance to the building and are there any ancillary buildings in this location?
- Q3. Can we refine the previously established chronology and phasing of the site with regards to the aisled building, earlier Roman archaeology and the underlying Iron Age activity?
- Q4. Can we find further evidence of an earlier building that predates the aisled structure and that may have been incorporated or rebuilt into it?

3.3 Aim 2 – Understand the palaeoenvironmental conditions at the site

- 3.3.1 This aim will be achieved with an assessment of the samples recovered during investigations carried out as part of Aim 1, using appropriate palaeoenvironmental and archaeological techniques to establish preservation and significance and address the following questions:

- Q5: What is the current state of the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental material across the site?
- Q6: How well do deposits and artefacts survive, and how deeply are they buried?
- Q7: Can the palaeoenvironmental data recovered from sampling in the trenches inform us about farming regimes, specialised food processing, industrial or military activities that may have taken place at the site?



- Q8: Can we increase our understanding of the relationships to the local environment during the multi-period occupation of the Site?

3.4 Aim 3 – Making recommendations, analysis and publication

3.4.1 This aim will require all data from Aims 1 and 2 to be collated and assessed in light of any further information recovered from a desk-based assessment of previous archival material. An Updated Project Design will then be produced with management recommendations to research, conserve or enhance the heritage significance of the Site.

- Q9: What can an integrated synthesis of the results of this work with previous remote sensing tell us about the site and its setting?
- Q10: Considering the evidence recovered from this and previous work, can we articulate a link between the multi-phased use of the Site and its different areas?
- Q11: Formulate recommendations for further archaeological and palaeoenvironmental analysis at Earth Trust based on Aims 1-3 and implement a programme to publish and disseminate the results or continue fieldwork into additional seasons.

3.5 Aim 4 – Creating opportunities for people and communities

3.5.1 This aim is integral to the success of the project and sits with equal importance alongside our research aims. The field school programme will offer a range of opportunities for local community members, students, school children and visitors to the area to get involved and learn about the archaeology of the Wittenham Clumps landscape within which the Earth's Trust is situated. Participation opportunities will include excavation, finds processing, photogrammetry, and guided visits of the trenches.

3.5.2 Over the course of the project, our targets for engagement are to:

- train community participants in excavation and post-excavation tasks
- engage children and young people with our education sessions including school visits, DigCamps, and DigClubs
- broadcast online content across multiple social media channels collated on our dig timeline
- deliver a programme of public events, including site tours, both in-person and as an online virtual site tour with Q&A sessions with the project team, reaching an expected 120 individuals and a global online community

3.5.3 Participants will be invited to join the 2026 excavations and will be trained in archaeological skills, co-producing the archaeological archive using DigVentures' digital recording system, DiggIt. Reports produced following the excavations will be hosted on the website, providing a research resource for anyone interested in the region's archaeology.

4 BUSINESS CASE

4.1 Historic England Research Agenda

4.1.1 The project has been designed in accordance with priorities articulated in the Historic England Research Strategy (2017) and Historic England Corporate Plan (2023-26). The Research



Strategy defines nine broad themes that describe Historic England's research interests to ensure that any proposed work is aligned with HE's mission. The Project drivers can therefore be articulated within the fundamental theme to #understand (rural landscapes; archaeology of the deeper past in addition to other research outcomes that will address other Historic England and sector priorities, delivering significant value-added benefit. As a consequence of the innovative digital and multi-partner collaborative approach, there is a significant 'value added' dimension to this project, encompassing research themes including #adapt (land management, societal change); #conserve (buildings and landscapes, collections and archives; preserving archaeological remains); #inform (information systems and services); #skill (developing the workforce; working more effectively); #inspire (audience research, research media); #innovate (materials; human environment; dating and chronology; measuring and sensing).

4.2 Archaeological research frameworks, professional ethics and initiatives

4.2.1 The key research agenda relating to Earth Trust is the 'Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment Resource Assessments and Research Agendas' (Hey and Hind, 2014). Within this document the relevant chapters are 9-12, these encompass the Later Bronze Age through to the Roman period. Specifically relating to this excavation targeting the Roman building, there are key questions which can be responded to within the research agenda (Fulford in Hey and Hind 2014). For example these include:

- Extensive environmental sampling to gain further evidence of the farming landscape around the site (Aim 2)
- Investigating patterns of development and abandonment of the building, a further refinement of the chronology of the building is one of the questions raised in Aim 1 (see section 3.2 above)

4.2.2 The research framework provides a period-based resource assessment and research agenda which identifies major gaps in understanding as well as key research questions. The framework is a sound platform from which the project team can design, review and interpret the results of the site. It should be noted that the resource was published in 2014 and has not been updated, so whilst it provides a substantial and comprehensive assessment of the archaeological resource, there are recent projects and discoveries which should also be considered including the recent work at Wittenham Clumps (Jackson 2024).

4.2.3 In addition to the research context for the project, it is important to note that public benefit is enshrined within professional frameworks provided by ClfA and seen as a key part of an archaeological project. This includes enabling public engagement within archaeology projects, and encourages consideration of wider public benefit through engagement, participation and/or dissemination of the results both during and after the project (ClfA Universal Standard for Archaeological Excavation 2023). This project is therefore delivered in line with ClfA Standards and guidance, as well as the [ClfA toolkit for public engagement](#).

4.3 Earth Trust

4.3.1 For 40 years [Earth Trust](#) has been providing and championing accessible natural green space and running inspiring, award-winning programmes to help people connect with nature and the environment. During recent development led works, DigVentures were invited to deliver the archaeological requirements needed as part of the planning process – with a specific



request to enable public benefit through wider engagement, participation, and dissemination of results. The team at Earth Trust are cognisant of the significance of the archaeological heritage of the site, and of the importance of the stories which can be told about the development of the area because of recent archaeological excavations. Results from the archaeological investigations have been integrated into the development of the site, as well as forming part of education, wellbeing, and participatory activities. The results of the ongoing archaeological investigations will continue to play a part in the delivery of the Earth Trust's strategy and mission, providing an important role for archaeology in the engagement of people with their place and environment.

5 INTERFACES

- 5.1.1 This project will interface with a series of other projects, stakeholders, and initiatives, summarised in the table below:

Interfaces	Description
<i>Earth Trust Team</i>	The Earth Trust team have been consulted at every step of the way and will continue to be consulted on the project, building strong links between the DigVentures team and the core staff at the Earth Trust.
<i>Core Project Team</i>	The core project team and specialist staff have consulted widely during the project planning and will continue to build on this as the project develops, forging strong links with local, national and international professionals and institutions actively engaged in a broad range of multi-period sites.
<i>Oxfordshire County Archaeology Services (OCAS)</i>	The county archaeologist, Richard Oram, has been consulted during the planning process for the project. OCAS will be informed of the progress of the excavation and the results as they are completed.
<i>Local Stakeholders</i>	The project will showcase the archaeology from Earth Trust, and offer skills-based learning opportunities focused on teaching digital heritage skills to engage as broad a group as possible in the local heritage. The project will offer free enjoyable learning opportunities, both online and across multiple accessible locations, to help address the strong social and educational needs of the surrounding communities. The project has been crowdfunded by both the Earth Trust community and DigVentures community bringing together local stakeholders and the wider archaeological community.

Table 1: Project interfaces

6 COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 Project team and management responsibilities

- 6.1.1 The Project will be funded through crowdfunding. Project Assurance will be allocated to the Project Executive (Lisa Westcott Wilkins, DigVentures) who will monitor compliance against the deliverables detailed in this document. The project team have all worked closely together before (Caerfai 2021-2023, Lindisfarne 2016-present, Sudeley Castle 2019-present and Elmswell Farm 2017-present). Brendon Wilkins (Projects Director) will undertake overall Project Management supported by Nat Jackson (Site Director) who will oversee the day-to-day archaeological activities on site and during post-ex. There will be four core DigVentures archaeological staff on site throughout the fieldwork, and all will be retained throughout the post-excavation phase of the project. All core staff are employed in line with ClfA guidelines and are practicing field archaeologists of good standing at PCIfA level or above, or equivalent.

6.2 Project management and communications

- 6.2.1 DigVentures operates a computer-assisted project management system. Projects are undertaken under the direction of the Projects Director who is responsible for the successful completion of all aspects of the project. All work is monitored and checked whilst in progress



on a regular basis, and the Projects Director / Site Director checks all reports and other documents before being issued. A series of guideline documents or manuals form the basis for all work.

6.2.2 The DigVentures senior management team are full members of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCI(A)). DigVentures is a ClfA Registered Organisation (No. 102), and fully endorses the ClfA Code of Conduct and supporting Standards and Guidance documents. All DigVentures staff are employed in line with the Institute's Codes and will usually be members of the Institute.

6.2.3 The Project Manager will be responsible for ensuring that the project runs to schedule, keeping track of key resources and progress. The Project Team will have a project meeting at each milestone to ensure that all major tasks are briefed/debriefed as necessary. Provision will be made for the project in 'Basecamp', which is a web-based project communication package used by DigVentures, enabling project participants to generate and record notes, tasks, milestones and other project-related communication.

6.3 Outreach and engagement

6.3.1 **Public participation.** As a crowdfunded and crowdsourced archaeological project, every aspect of the project is cognisant of a wider outreach agenda. Public participants will take part on site (through participation in the dig, Finds Room (in future years), and co-creation of an open-access archaeological record), and online (through interactive online events, live updates on the Dig Timeline, social media content including, and access to digital archaeological record).

6.3.2 **Evaluation.** Impact is measured with DigVentures' standard audience evaluation of all project participants (field and digital) to establish baseline data and assist with future management strategies and promotion.

6.4 Dissemination and reporting

6.4.1 Rapid dissemination of the results to, and involvement of, stakeholders of the project is vital throughout. This will take place through multiple channels, addressing a multitude of established and new audiences. Dissemination outlined below will all be undertaken during 2026, and will include, but not be limited to:

- dedicated project page with daily news updates and all major social media channels (Predominantly Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, alongside LinkedIn and YouTube) amplified through third-party coverage by the networked blogging community
- dedicated digital archive of the excavation data, submitted to HER on completion of project
- wide circulation of the project assessment and the final report, including submission to the regional HER and relevant bodies
- site publication in an appropriate local/national journal commensurate with the final results
- wide circulation of the Assessments, Updated Project Design, and final report
- deposition of all relevant reports with the appropriate historic environment record.

6.4.2 In addition to the evaluation of the project, several products will underpin the longer-term impact of the excavation. Our technical report will provide detailed analysis of the



archaeological site and finds, with specialist reporting, scientific analysis and interpretation linking directly to the evidence presented online (such as 3D models, context descriptions and finds profiles). The digital archive, including both the project page and digital records will be maintained for five years beyond the close of the excavation, and a stable and comprehensive archive will be prepared and deposited with the appropriate body.

- **Technical report** – the archaeological excavations will be fully written up in line with the standards of ClfA, the professional institute for archaeology. our archaeological reports are prepared in line with ClfA Standards and guidance and presented an illustrated and detailed analysis of the archaeology recorded. Reports are made available on the project website, deposited with the regional HER and attached to the OASIS record of the site.
- **Research archive** – the project will result in the co-production of a digital research archive, maintained for 5 years post-project. Our digital recording system will house all site archive information. In addition to the online archive, a stable and comprehensive archive will also be prepared and deposited with the appropriate bodies.
- **Evaluation data** – included within the technical reporting, our ongoing evaluation of participants and visitors will provide the data for feedback around of what was delivered, who took part and how they benefitted. The report will present qualitative and quantitative data collected from dig participants and public visitors to the site, linked to our Theory of Change.

6.5 Project archive

- 6.5.1 The project archive will be prepared in accordance DigVentures guidelines for Archive Preparation, following [ARCHES: the Standard and Guide to Best Practice in Archaeological Archiving in Europe](#) (2020). All reports produced by the project will be openly and freely disseminated through the HER and DigVentures website. Copyright on all reports submitted will reside with DigVentures, although a third party in-perpetuity licence may be given for reproduction of the works by the originator, subject to agreement in writing with DigVentures.



7 PROJECT REVIEW

- 7.1.1 The project will be continually reviewed by the Project Executive and Project Manager, with a formal review undertaken at the end of each Stage as follows:

Stage	Description	Review Point	Completion Date
Initiation	Consideration of Project Proposal	RV1 – Assemble Project Team and liaise with stakeholders	Completed – December 2023
Stage 1	Project Start-up, finalising Project Design and definition of scope	RV2 – Sign-off on MoRPHE Project Design, and liaison with stakeholders and landowners	Proposed – May 2024
Stage 2	Archaeological Fieldwork	RV3 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Proposed – June 2024
Stage 3	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV4 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Spring 2025
Stage 4	Archaeological Fieldwork	RV5 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	June 2025
Stage 5	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV6 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Proposed – Summer 2026
Stage 6	Archaeological Fieldwork	RV7 – assemble site archive and distribute pertinent data to specialists	Proposed - October 2026
Stage 7	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	RV8 – critically review findings, making recommendations for further work	Proposed – Summer 2027
Stage 8	Analysis & reporting	RV9 – final report sign-off, and prepare archive for accession	Proposed – Winter 2027/Spring 2028
Closure			Spring 2028

Table 2: Project review stages

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 8.1.1 DigVentures will undertake the works in accordance with Health and Safety requirements and a Health and Safety Plan. This document will take account of any design information pertaining to above and below ground hazards. DigVentures will ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with its company Health and Safety Policy, to standards defined in *The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974*, and *The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999*, and in accordance with the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) health and safety manual *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (1997).



Part Two: Resources and Programming

9 PROJECT TEAM STRUCTURE

9.1 Team and responsibilities

- 9.1.1 DigVentures' Project Team is outlined below in Table 3. A summary CV, setting out the skills and expertise of DigVentures core team members is set out in Appendix 2, with CVs for the wider specialist team available on request.

Name	Initials	Project Role	Key Responsibility
Lisa Westcott Wilkins	LWW	Project Executive	Overall project responsibility, budget responsibility and project assurance
Brendon Wilkins	BW	Projects Director	Overall responsibility for the direction of the project
Stephanie Duensing	SD	Director of Operations, Finds Room Supervisor	Management of programme (on and off-site), liaison with project team, partners and Stakeholders. Management of the onsite finds room.
Harriet Tatton	HT	Project Coordinator	On-site fieldwork and volunteer training and Project Coordination
Nat Jackson	NJ	Senior Project Officer; Site Director	On-site fieldwork, fieldwork strategy advice and volunteer management/training
Ben Swain	BS	Community Archaeologist; Trench supervisor	On-site fieldwork and volunteer training
Darcey Spenner	DS	Community Archaeologist; Trench supervisor	On-site fieldwork and volunteer training
Freddy Wannop	FW	Community Archaeologist; Trench supervisor	On-site fieldwork and volunteer training
Nick Swift	NS	Community Archaeologist; Trench supervisor	On-site fieldwork and volunteer training

Table 3: Team and responsibilities

- 9.1.2 In addition to the core team, it is expected that throughout the project between 15 and 25 volunteer staff will be present on-site engaging with excavation. DigVentures will host a series of family-friendly DigCamp sessions, where families will be able to join the dig and help to unearth part of the site.



10 METHODOLOGY

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 The methods reflect the Project Stages set out in Section 7 above. Detailed method statements relating the specific techniques or approaches detailed below to their constituent research questions can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

10.2 Stage 1 – Project Start-Up and Design

- 10.2.1 A site visit was conducted with the Earth Trust project team in February 2024 to discuss logistics and project specific details. Following this, the Project Design and Method Statement has been designed and written and put through critical review. An Updated Project Design was produced for the 2025 excavations (Stage 5) and this document has been created in line with Stage 6. A RAMS has also been produced following the site visit, taking into account the hazards observed on site at the time of the visit and those perceived to be a potential issue during the excavations, including the presence of Great Crested Newts.

10.3 Stage 6 – Archaeological fieldwork

- 10.3.1 Stage 6 (scheduled for 13th October to 1st November 2026) will comprise the third fieldwork season required to meet Aim 1 (Q1-4, see Section 3.2 above) and will entail a programme of targeted trenching. Specific archaeological interventions are outlined in Appendix 1 below.

10.4 Stage 7 – Assessment report & updated project design

- 10.4.1 This Stage will address Aims 2 and 3 (Q5-11, see Sections 3.3 and 3.4 above), culminating in Review Point 8.

10.5 Stage 8 – Further work, analysis and publication

- 10.5.1 Addressing Aim 3, this is the main reporting and recommendation Stage of the project, culminating in Review Point 9 and focusing on the following research questions;
- Q9: What can an integrated synthesis of the results of this work with previous remote sensing tell us about the site and its setting?
 - Q10: In light of the evidence recovered from this and previous work, can we articulate a link between the multi-phased use of the Site and its different areas?
 - Q11: Formulate recommendations for further archaeological and palaeoenvironmental analysis at the Earth Trust based on Aims 1-3 and implement a programme to publish and disseminate the results or continue fieldwork into additional seasons.



10.6 Methodological linkages

10.6.1 It is anticipated that the 2026 work will be undertaken in four stages (see Table 4). These are expanded in the table below showing linkages with the project aims and questions that will be met at each stage, the products that will be produced and the tasks undertaken.

Stage	Description	Project Aims/ Questions	Products	Task & ID Number
Stage 5	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	Aim 1-3 Q1-11	1. Assessment of previous results 2. Finalised UPD & Risk Log 4. Educational Plan & Information Pack 5. Digital Communication Plan 6. Risk Assessment	1.1. Consult with wider project team and stakeholders to define milestones and delivery timetable. 1.2. Core Archaeology Team Meeting. 1.3. RV5 – Sign off on MoRPHE
Stage 6	Archaeological Fieldwork	Aim 1 Q1-4	7. Field Archive 8. Survey Archive 9. 3D Survey Archive	2.1. Site Preparation 2.2. Fieldwork (excavation) 2.3 RV6-7 assemble site archive and distribute to specialists
Stage 7	Assessment Report & Updated Project Design	Aim 2-3 Q5-11	10. Stratigraphic & Assessment Report	3.1. Specialist finds and palaeoenvironmental assessments 3.2 Integrated assessment report 3.3. RV8 – recommendations for further work
Stage 8	Analysis and Publication	Aim 1-3 Q1-11	11. Final report 12. Publication 13. Completed and accessioned archive	4.1. Specialist analysis 4.2. Finalise report and publication 4.3. Prepare data and archive for deposition 4.4. RV9 – final sign-off 4.5. Closure

Table 4: Project stages, products and tasks

11 OWNERSHIP

11.1.1 The Copyright on all reports submitted will reside with DigVentures, although a third party in-perpetuity licence may be given for reproduction of all products, subject to agreement with DigVentures. The original copyright holder will retain copyright in pre-existing data.



12 RISK LOG

Risk number	1	2	3	4
Description	Inclement weather - prolonged periods of rain	Exceptional weather (drying exposed archaeology)	Absence of core team member	Absence of specialist team member
Probability	Medium	Medium-low	Low	Low
Impact	Delay programme of work	Slow progress	Delay programme of work	Delay programme of work
Countermeasures	Provision of site hut, and planned indoor archiving tasks with flexible programme	Provision of water bowser + spray	Reallocate responsibilities or appointment of alternative	Reallocate responsibilities or appointment of alternative
Estimated time/cost	3 Days	None	Minimal if done by adjustment	Minimal if done by adjustment
Owner	BW/NJ	BW/NJ	BW/SD/NJ	BW/SD/NJ
Risk number	5	6		
Description	Equipment theft/breakages	Serious site injury		
Probability	Medium	Medium		
Impact	Delay programme of work	Delay programme of work		
Countermeasures	Removal of finds material and digital equipment from site	Detailed H&S Risk Assessment + daily safety briefing		
Estimated time/cost	3 days	3 days		
Owner	BW/NJ	BW/NJ		

Table 5: Risk Log



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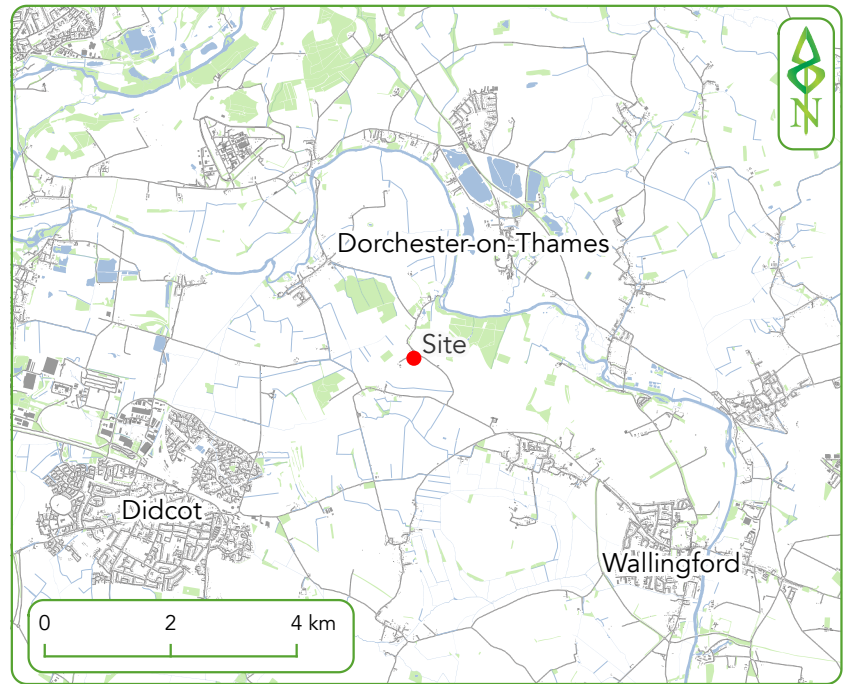


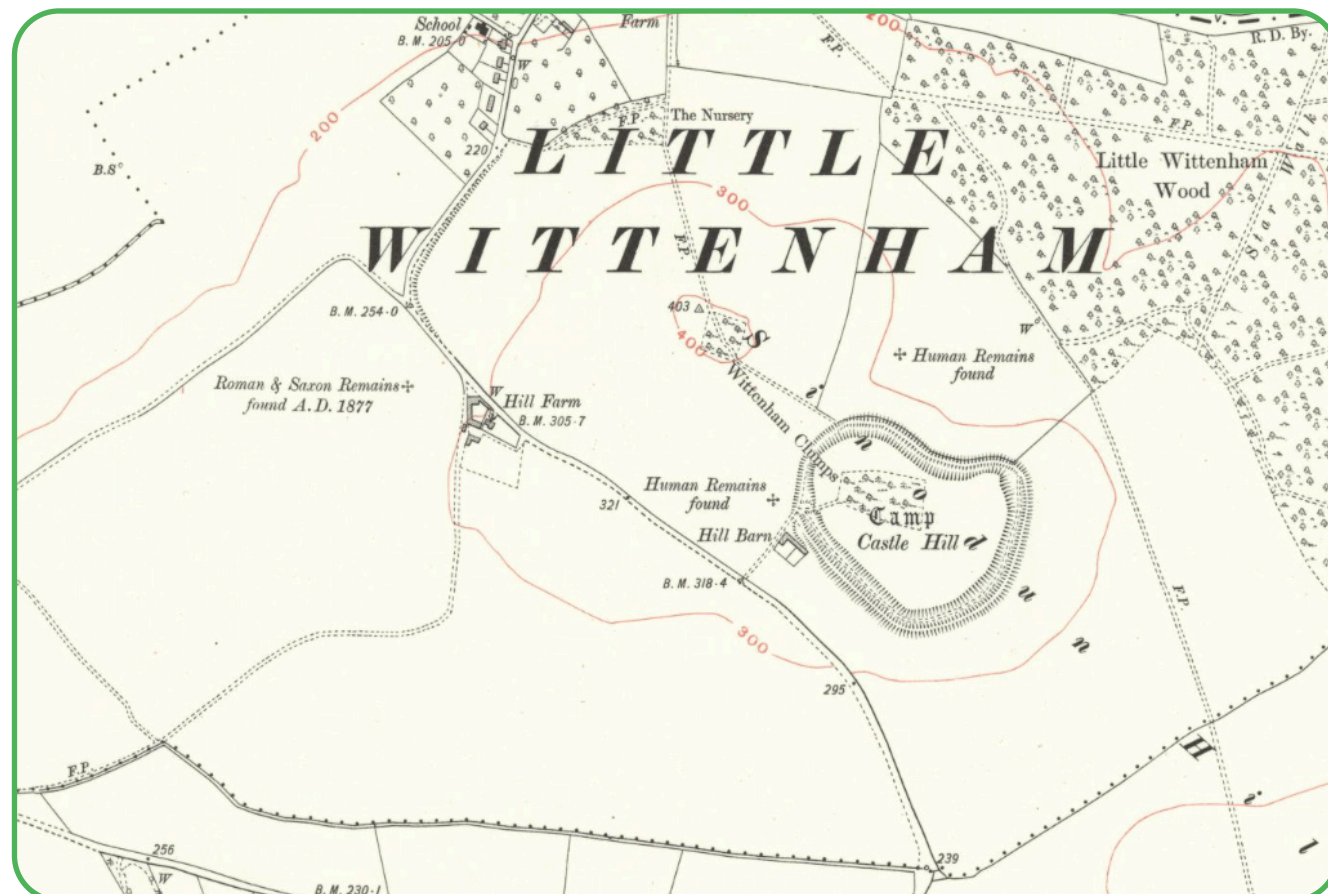
Figure 1. Site location



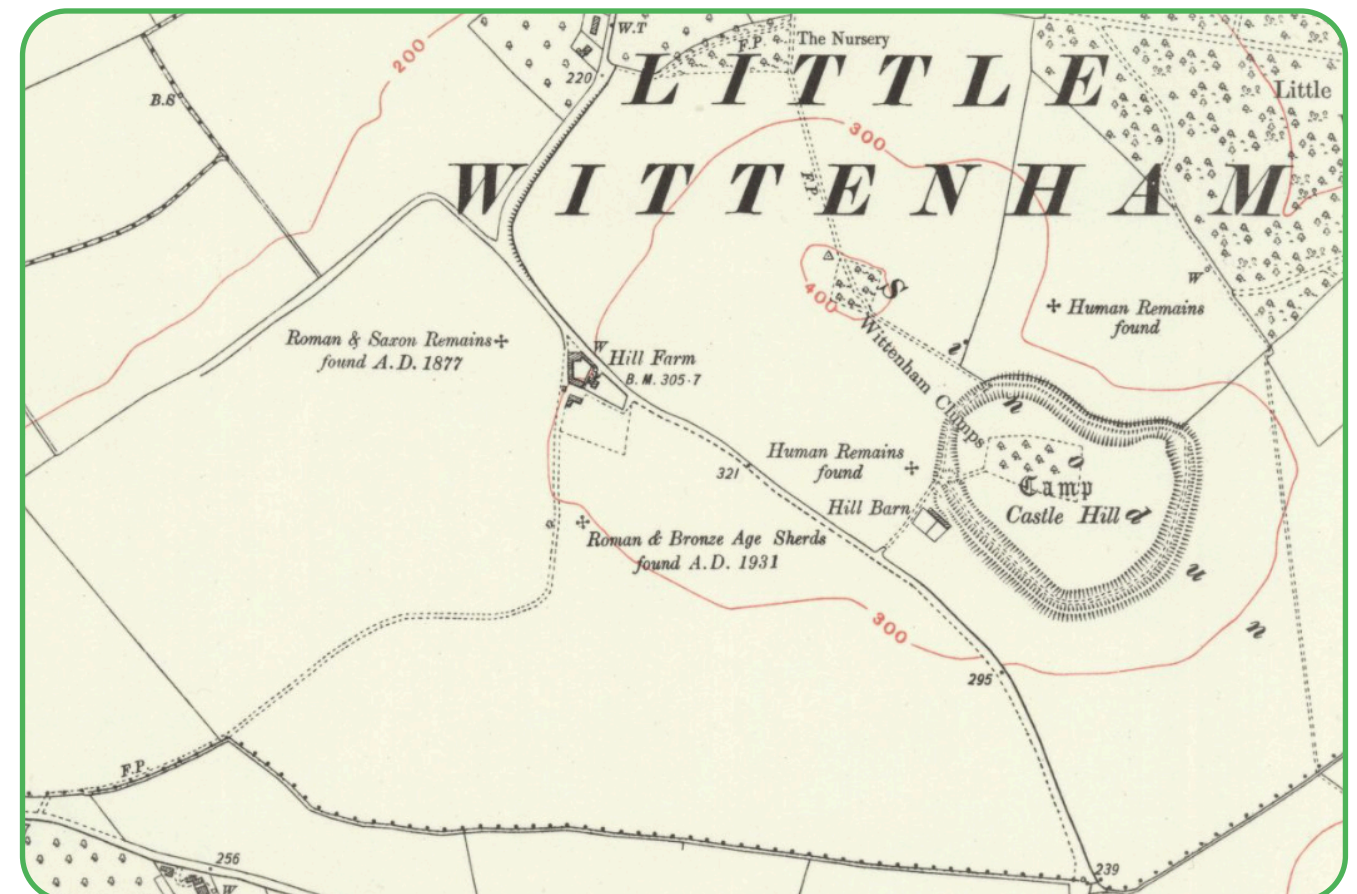
1. 1883



2. 1900



3. 1914



4. 1933

Figure 2. Ordnance survey maps of Wittenham Clumps (taken from National Library of Scotland website)



0km 1.25km 2.5km
1:25000 Scale on A4

Figure 3. Crop marks in the area around Wittenham Clumps (screenshot taken from the Historic England crop mark survey online)

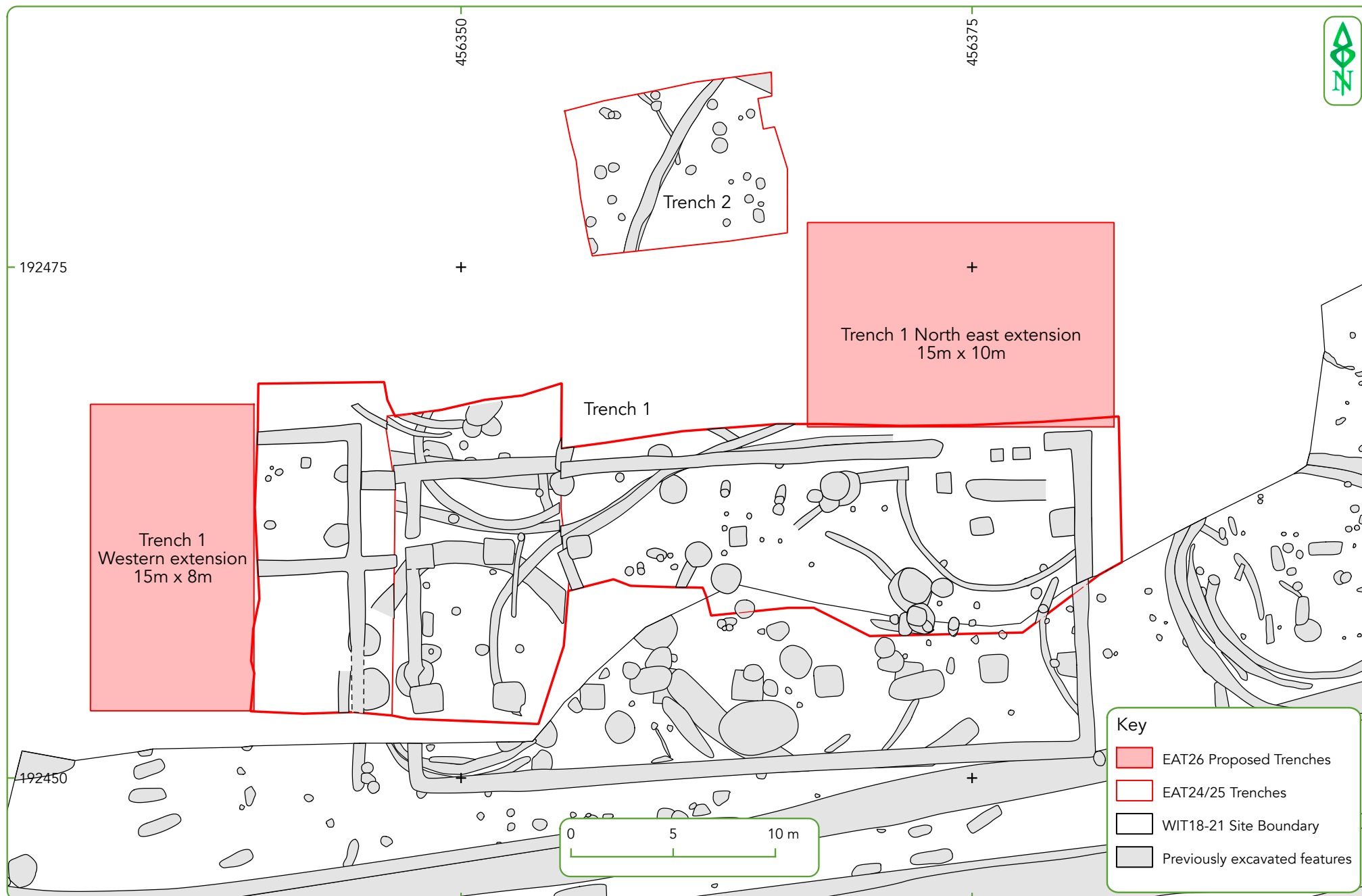


Figure 4. EAT26 Proposed trench locations

Appendices

14 APPENDIX 1 METHOD STATEMENTS

The methods for the proposed project will involve a combination of GIS modelling, archaeological excavation, palaeoenvironmental sampling and assessment. The methods are linked directly to the project aims and objectives (see Table 6) and detailed below.

Key Questions and Objectives	Photogrammetry	Archaeological Excavation	Sampling	Environmental Assessment	Findings Assessment	Synthesis and Data integration
Q.1	✓	✓				
Q.2	✓	✓				
Q.3	✓	✓			✓	
Q.4	✓	✓			✓	
Q.5		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Q.6		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Q.7			✓	✓	✓	✓
Q.8			✓	✓	✓	✓
Q.9			✓			✓
Q.10						✓
Q.11						✓

Table 6: Linking methods with objectives

Survey and GIS modelling

Any survey work will be carried out using a EMLID RS3 GPS survey system. The EMLID RS3 GPS survey system is used in conjunction with a tablet with mobile data and QFIELD software, enabling real-time updates to the site GIS project. The method is highly efficient and accurate (+/- 2cm) when good signal is available. The survey data is exported from the RS3 as a compressed GIS folder containing all collected data that can be integrated into the project GIS. All survey and excavation data will be stored within a GIS environment, which will remain the principle conduit for all spatial data throughout the project.

Archaeological excavation

Two extensions to Trench 1 will be opened targeting the Roman aisled building and looking for evidence of the earlier high-status structure and underlying Iron Age activity (Figure 4).

Trench	Dimensions	Target	Description
1 (North east extension)	at least 15m x 10m	Roman building and any underlying earlier archaeology	Extension of Trench 1 to the north east, at least 15m x 10m, targeting the north-east area of the aisled building and looking for evidence of the earlier high-status building.
1 (western extension)	15m x 8m	Roman building and any underlying earlier archaeology	Extension of Trench 1 to the west, 15m x 8m, targeting a previously uninvestigated area and looking for the western extent of the aisled building.

Table 7: Trench target, location and description

Interventions

All areas will be opened by a mechanical digger, depositing spoil where possible into the previously signed off areas of the 2018-21 excavations. The trench extensions will be cleaned by hand, planned and photographed prior to any further excavation. A representative section, not less than 1m in width, of the entire deposit sequence encountered will be recorded. If complex stratigraphy and/ or significant remains (e.g. structural remains, artefact scatters, remains clearly of a funerary nature etc.) are encountered, these may only be excavated to the minimum requirement in order to satisfy the project objective, to avoid compromising the integrity of remains that may be either (a) preserved in situ, or (b) excavated in detail during any next phase of research excavation. Interventions will focus on feature intersections in order to establish relative chronologies, and 'clean' sections to maximise retrieval of stratigraphically secure dating evidence and environmental samples.

Full written, drawn and photographic records will be made of each trench and test pit, even where no archaeological remains are identified. A plan at an appropriate scale (1:50 or 1:100) will be prepared, showing the areas investigated and their relation to more permanent topographical features, and the location of contexts observed and recorded in the course of the investigation. Plans, sections and elevations of archaeological features and deposits will be drawn as necessary at an appropriate scale (normally 1:20, or 1:10 for complex features).



Drawings will be made in pencil (6H) on permanent drafting film and archived in a suitable depository.

Each trench or test pit will be recorded using the digital recording system used by DigVentures, DiggIt. Digital photography will be used for all photography of significant features, finds, deposits and general site working. The photographic record will illustrate both the detail and the general context of the principal features and finds excavated, and the Site as a whole.

Palaeoenvironmental sampling

All deposits with good palaeoenvironmental potential will be sampled; bulk samples will be taken from the section as appropriate, under advice from the project specialist. Context specific samples will be taken by the most appropriate means (kubiena tins, contiguous columns, incremental block, bulk etc.) for multi-disciplinary analysis. All aspects of the collection, selection, processing, assessment and reporting on the environmental archaeology component of the evaluation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in *'Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation'* (Historic England 2011) and with reference to the Association for Environmental Archaeology's *'Working Paper No. 2, Environmental Archaeology and Archaeological Evaluations'* (1995).

Bulk sampling strategy

Bulk samples will usually be 20 litres in size, depending on the likely density of macrofossils. Ten litre samples will only be used for the recovery of plant macrofossils from waterlogged contexts. Samples will be stored in ten litre plastic bags or buckets with lids and handles. A waterproof label will be fixed to the bucket and will record site code, context number and sample number and number of buckets in comprising the sample. A duplicate label will be retained inside the bucket. Samples will be protected from temperatures below 5° and above 25° Celsius and will be prevented from either wetting or drying out.

- Bulk samples selected for processing will be wet-sieved/floated and washed (by the excavation team at a suitable area close to the temporary headquarters) over a mesh size of 250 microns for the recovery of palaeobotanical and other organic remains, and re-floated to maximise recovery;
- Non-organic residues shall be washed through a nest of sieves of 10mm, 5mm, 2mm, 1mm and 250 micron mesh to maximise finds recovery;
- Both organic and non-organic residues shall be dried under controlled conditions;
- The dried inorganic fractions will be sorted for small finds or any non-buoyant palaeoenvironmental remains, and scanned with a magnet to pick up ferrous debris such as hammer scale;
- The dried organic fractions will be sorted under a light microscope to identify the range of species or other material on a presence/absence basis, the degree of preservation of the bio-archaeological material and the rough proportions of different categories of material present;
- In the event that waterlogged deposits are identified and sampled, further processing will be undertaken as appropriate and agreed, including paraffin flotation to recover insect remains. Any such remains will be scanned to identify and assess their potential;



- Selection of other types of sample for processing and the methods to be used for processing and assessment will be undertaken on the advice of the relevant specialist and will be agreed with the Consultant before implementation.

Contexts that are well stratified and potentially datable are all of value, so a systematic approach to selecting samples for processing and assessment will be taken. These will be divided into three categories:

- Category A (always sampled): contexts where the composition of the sediments is likely to inform us of the use of a particular structure or feature or if the deposits are waterlogged. These will include: *in situ* occupation deposits and fills/layers associated with particular activities; hearths; destruction deposits; basal pit/slot trench fills; waterlogged deposits, cesspits or latrines.
- Category B (always sampled, though discretion can be exercised by the trench supervisor): deposits identified as containing material that could yield information regarding their origin or the process that produced them. These will include: dumps, middens, upper pit fills with evidence for charred material, shell, bone and industrial waste.
- Category C: deposits containing material which is not necessarily related to the function of the feature to which they are related, but which can characterise deposits from different areas of the site. These will include: secondary and tertiary fills, postholes, levelling deposits, spreads etc.

Category A deposits should always be sampled, Category B deposits always sampled however, the supervisor's discretion may allow for a strategy such as 'scatter sampling' enabling exploration of variation within a deposit and Category C deposits sampled on a random basis (such as 1 in 5). These samples can help to characterise the background noise of a site, so as to highlight spatial or temporal trends and provide material that can be directly compared with those from Category A and B. All samples will be taken in large white 10 litre tubs, with labels placed inside with the deposit and attached to the bucket. All samples will be processed off site in a dedicated floatation and wet sieving area.

Photogrammetry survey

Photogrammetry survey of the trenches and features within the trenches will be undertaken on site using DigVentures' telescopic mounted camera or our UAV DJI Mini-2 toy drone (Operator ID: GBR-OP-JL2B8RNZ8C4N). The drone will be used only for aerial imagery shots of the trenches to gain context for the features, capturing vertical images from up to 50m in altitude.

For the ground-based photogrammetry images will be captured perpendicular to the structure using telescopic mounted cameras, to deliver optimum results requiring little or no rectification. All images will be taken with a 16-megapixel Nikon D7000 digital camera with a variety of standard and other lenses, downloaded directly on to the hard disk of the laptop. We will utilise Agisoft PhotoScan 3D Modelling software to detect the feature points of the structure, and match these in different images to create a point cloud. The camera positions will be calculated automatically by the software and a dense reconstruction or geometric model will be built to create a DSM. The resulting DSM can be manipulated for viewing from any angle using a variety of artificial light and shading techniques to highlight certain features, or overlaid or draped with the original photographs for true colour representation.



We will process the aerial imagery to produce point cloud, mesh, and textured 3D models and DEMs as GeoTIFS files. The DEMs will then be geo-referenced to the National Grid via GPS positioned ground control points or by aircraft derived GPS coordinates.

Zooarchaeology

If large deposits of bone or marine shell are encountered advice of the project Zooarchaeologist will be sought as regards further sampling. If large deposits of bone or marine shell are encountered the project Zooarchaeologist advice will be sought as regards further sampling. If articulated groups of bones are encountered (as found in previous excavations), they will be surveyed, recorded *in situ*, (including digital photography and planning), and then excavated to retain the group's integrity. Bones from each articulated limb will be bagged separately. If inhumations or cremation burials are encountered and excavated the surrounding soil will be sampled to retrieve any loose teeth or bone fragments.

All hand collected animal bones and bones from processed samples will be assessed, following Historic England's Environmental Archaeology guidelines (2011). If warranted by the size of the recovered assemblage, it will be assessed using two different quantification methods to determine the most suitable for full analysis, taking into account methods used in comparative assemblages. The assessment will not distinguish between certain taxonomic groups; full speciation will be carried out as part of the analysis, using a vertebrate comparative collection. In addition to quantification of domestic species and occurrence of wild species, the assessment will consider the number of articulated bone groups, and the prevalence of aging, sexing and osteometric data available for full analysis, following standard published conventions. The assessment report will comment on the potential of the assemblage, particularly in the context of the excavation's research questions and current understanding of comparative assemblages. It will also provide recommendations for any necessary future analysis.

Human osteoarchaeology

In the event of the discovery of human remains (inhumations, cremations and disarticulated fragments) they will be left *in situ*, covered and protected, until Natural England have been informed. If a decision is taken to remove them, they will be fully recorded and excavated in compliance with the relevant Ministry of Justice Licence. A copy of the Ministry of Justice licence will be supplied to Natural England for logging onto the agri-environment agreement documents. The excavation of human remains will be carried out in accordance with the procedures detailed in the document *Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed human remains* (McKinley and Roberts 1993, ClfA Technical Paper 13). Significant assemblages of human remains will be subject to an assessment of DNA preservation to establish potential familial relationships.

Inhumations will be scanned with a metal detector prior to excavation, and the position of possible metallic grave goods will be noted. Wherever possible, each burial will be excavated within a single working day, particularly with regard to visible grave goods. To minimise unauthorised disturbance of human remains, partially exposed remains will be covered overnight, though in such a way as to not draw undue attention, using loose excavated spoil.

Excavation of inhumations will be undertaken using a trowel, plasterer's leaf, plastic spoon and paintbrush as appropriate depending on the condition of the bones. When lifted the bones will be bagged by skeletal area (skull, axial, upper and lower limbs) with separate bags for the



left and right side. A standard series of samples will be taken from each inhumation burial to ensure full recovery of any remaining osseous tissues or small artefacts. Once human remains are removed from inhumation graves, any soil residue remaining at the base of the grave will be retrieved for bulk processing.

Inhumations and cremations will be drawn at a scale of 1:10 and photographed prior to lifting. They will be recorded on Skeleton Record Sheets that form an integral part of the site *pro forma* recording system. The recording will include condition, completeness, articulation, orientation and posture.

Fragile objects found within graves will be lifted with appropriate care and handling to minimise breakage. This may include subsequent controlled excavation under laboratory conditions. A trained conservator will be employed on the site if necessary. All cremation burials and cremation-related contexts will be excavated and sampled in quadrants to ascertain the distribution of any archaeological components within the fills, with division into spit also if appropriate. Cremation-related features other than burials may be subject to more detailed sub-divisions, the appropriate strategy being developed by a specialist as the size and nature of the remains becomes clear.

Undisturbed and slightly disturbed, but largely intact, urn cremation burials will be lifted *en masse* for excavation under laboratory conditions. The urns will be wrapped in crepe bandages and securely boxed for transportation. Where a vessel has been crushed, thereby disrupting any original internal deposition of the cremated remains, it will be lifted *en masse* after separate recovery of displaced sherds. All cremation-related contexts will be subject to whole-earth recovery from the point at which any cremated bone or other pyre debris is observed. If deposits of placed human bone are encountered in features, these may be excavated in spits if appropriate. The soils from these features will be bulk sampled.

Finds

All finds will be treated in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Universal Standard for Archaeological Excavation* (2023), excepting where statements made below supersede them. All artefacts will be retained from excavated contexts, except features or deposits undoubtedly of modern date. In these circumstances, sufficient artefacts will only be retained to elucidate the date and function of the feature or deposit.

All artefacts from the excavation will, as a minimum, be washed, marked, counted, weighed and identified. Any stratified ironwork will be X-rayed and stored in a stable condition along with other fragile and delicate material. The X-raying of objects and other conservation needs will be undertaken by appropriately qualified conservation specialists. Suitable material, primarily the pottery and non-ferrous metalwork, will be scanned to assess the date range of the assemblage.

Conservation

Artefacts will be recovered as a matter of routine during the excavation. When retrieved from the ground finds will be kept in a finds tray or appropriate bags in accordance with *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 1998). Where necessary, a conservator may be required to recover fragile finds from the ground depending upon circumstances.



After the completion of the fieldwork stage, a conservation assessment will be undertaken which will include the X-radiography of all the ironwork (after initial screening to separate obviously modern debris), and a selection of the non-ferrous finds (including all coins). A sample of slag may also be X-rayed to assist with identification and interpretation. Wet-packed materials, including glass, bone and leather will be stabilised and consolidated to ensure their long-term preservation. All finds will be stored in optimum conditions in accordance with *First Aid for Finds* and *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage* (Walker, 1990). The conservation assessment report will include statements on condition, stability and potential for further investigation (with conservation costs) for all material groups. The conservation report will be included in the updated project design prepared for the analysis stage of the project.

Scientific dating

Radiocarbon dating will be appropriate for clarifying and linking aspects of archaeological and environmental chronologies, and a strategy for this will be agreed following discussion with Earth Trust, OCAS and the relevant specialists following assessment.

Synthesis and data integration

Radiocarbon results from the project will be integrated and synthesised with future investigations, and other relevant work within the region and further afield. This will include a literature review of other pertinent sites.