Caversham Park, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire

Project specification for an archaeological evaluation

3rd August 2023

Ref: CPC21-252ev

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Caversham Park, Caversham, West Parcel Area LTW, Reading, Berkshire
Project specification for archaeological evaluation

1.0 Background

1.1 The site is located at Caversham Park, Caversham, Berkshire (SU 7236 7627) (Fig. 1). Planning consent (app 220409/220410) has been sought by Reading Borough Council for the redevelopment of Caversham Park for 65 assisted living units (Class C2) for the over 55's, through the conversion of Caversham Park House, 64 bed care home (Class C2), 61 age-restricted retirement dwellings (Class C3), including conversion of the existing buildings The Bursars House and The Lodge, 27 affordable dwellings (Class C3), and refurbishment and extension of the existing pavilion to provide changing facilities, café/studio/interpretation hub and sports provision comprising 2 no. croquet lawns, 2 no. bowling greens, refurbishment of the existing tennis court and associated parking.

The planning consent is anticipated to include conditions relating to archaeology, requiring a phased programme of archaeological work due to the potential for below-ground archaeological deposits having survived on the site. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021). This written scheme of investigation document addresses field evaluation of a parcel of land at the west of the site ('LTW' area), as shown on Fig. 2.

Separate WSI documents will address the field evaluation of other portions of the site area, and a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

1.2 The archaeological significance of the site has been highlighted in an archaeological desk-based assessment (Elliott 2021). In summary, Caversham Park lies within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with finds from most periods found within the local area, though archaeological investigations have had mixed success, perhaps due to the often-small scale of investigative opportunity. The proposal site itself has been part of Caversham Manor since at least medieval times, limiting later development, though it is clear that parts of the site have been terraced which will have an effect on the survival of earlier archaeological remains. However evidence of landscaping is itself of interest in relation to the history of the manor house.
Palaeolithic finds made at St Peter's Hill and Henley Road as well as other findspots within the more immediate area and recorded in the HER. In addition, the HER records a number of features and finds from across multiple periods with multi-phase activity at Emmer Green Primary School to the northeast. A number of archaeological interventions have occurred, mainly to the west of Caversham Park, with mixed findings, though many appear to be on a relatively small scale and are as such less likely to yield archaeological remains by sheer chance.

2.0 Requirement for Work

2.1 It is possible that the development area may contain archaeological deposits and in order to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site so as to mitigate the effects of the development, a field evaluation has been requested as detailed in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021).

2.2 A single component of work is proposed at this stage, a field evaluation by means of machine trenching. Further fieldwork will be required, governed by a separate written scheme of investigation if archaeological deposits are encountered which cannot be preserved in-situ.

2.3 Where appropriate and relevant, the recommendations in the 'Berkshire Archaeology general standards for archaeological fieldwork projects (April 2021)' will be followed.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

3.1 The aims of the evaluation will be to determine the presence/ absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.

3.2 This work will be carried out in a manner which will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

3.3 The specific research aims of this project are;

a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.

b) To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

c) To collect information with which to prepare a mitigation strategy if necessary.

d) To determine if any features or deposits have survived which relate to the landscaping of the site in the 17th and 18th centuries.

e) The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in Historic England Research Agenda (HE 2017) or any more local or thematic research priorities such as identified in the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014) as necessary.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 We propose to dig six trenches 25m long and between 1.6-2m wide.

4.2 The trenches will be located as close as possible to the position shown on Figure 3. The trenches may need to be repositioned or subdivided once details of any further site services and other restrictions are known. A contingency of 10m of trench is included within the proposal should this be required to clarify the initial findings.

4.3 Excavation Methodology

4.3.1 Topsoil and other overburden will be removed by a JCB- or 360° type machine fitted with a ditching (toothless) bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels.

4.3.2 Where archaeological features are certainly or probably present, the stripped areas will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools.

4.3.3 Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed will be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the objective set out in 3.2.

4.3.4 In general, all finds and artefacts will be retained, though all but a sample of some classes of building material will be discarded after recording.

4.3.5 Conservation on site will follow guidelines in First Aid for Finds with any other specialist conservation work subcontracted to our conservation advisor (see below).

4.3.6 A programme of environmental sampling will take place should sufficient well stratified subsoil deposits be located. Typically, this involves samples of up to 40*l* depending on the size of the feature examined. A programme of environmental sampling will take place, if any significant deposits are encountered. These will be sampled in consultation with our environmental consultants and the archaeological advisor to the Borough. Sampling will take place according to Historic England guidance (HE 2015b).

4.3.7 Discovery of any human remains will be reported to the coroner and Berkshire Archaeology but no further action will be taken as part of the evaluation exercise, unless requested as additional work by the client in consultation with the archaeological advisor to the council. Recovery and recording methodologies for human remains follow guidelines issued by the Ministry of Justice. and the standard procedures identified by Mitchell and Brickley (2017) and TVAS Field Recording Manual (8th edition 2018).

4.3.8 All gold, silver, prehistoric base metal and any associated objects will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner and county finds liaison officer according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act (1996) and its subsequent amendments. Where removal cannot be affected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft. No title will be assumed by the finder of any items of value.

4.3.9 Spoil heaps will be searched for finds.

4.3.10 Following completion of all excavation and recording, the trenches will be efficiently backfilled but not resurfaced.

4.3.11 No liability is accepted for damage to any services unless a plan of these is provided by the client.

4.4 Recording Methodology

4.4.1 A single context recording system will be used in accordance with the TVAS Field Recording Manual (8th edition 2018). Descriptions of individual deposits and features will be recorded on pro-forma context recording sheets.

4.4.2 All archaeological deposits exposed will be planned at a scale of 1:20 and sections drawn at a scale of 1:10. All site drawings will be by pencil on drafting film.

4.4.3 Heights above OD will be taken and recorded on plans and sections.

4.4.4 Where appropriate, significant finds will be recorded in 3D.

4.4.5 The locations of the trenches, and of all plans and sections will be tied into the National Grid.

4.4.6 The photographic record will consist of digital image. It will record the principal features and finds discovered, both in detail and in their general context. The photographic record will also include 'working shots' and, where applicable, aerial photographs to illustrate the nature of the archaeological fieldwork programme. All feature shots will include appropriate scales and a photo board, the latter positioned in such a way that the writing is legible and including the context number and site code. Digital images are taken on Canon EOS 4000D cameras with APS-C sensors taking 16-megapixel images.

4.5 Post-fieldwork

4.5.1 Finds and sample processing and analysis will commence immediately following the completion of the fieldwork in accordance with guidelines in MoRPHE (HE 2015a), CIfA guidance (CIfA 2020a) and TVAS post-excavation procedures (6th edition 2013).

4.5.2 Artefacts/Eco facts will be cleaned, conserved and prepared for long term museum storage.

4.5.3 Specialist reports will be prepared on the artefacts recovered. Particular attention will be paid to correlating the pottery recovered with local or regional fabric type sequences.

4.5.4 Specialist analysis and reporting will be carried out by the following specialist staff or consultants as appropriate:

Project Management	Dr Steve Ford or Mr Andy Taylor
Project Coordination	Mr David Sanchez or Ms Danielle Milbank
Fieldwork Supervisor	(one of) Mr Andrew Taylor, Mr Kyle Beaverstock, Mr David Sanchez, Dr Steve Ford, Dr Pierre Manisse, Ms Anne Huvig, Mr Jamie Williams, Mr Will Attard or Ms Maisie Foster
Finds coordination	Dr Cristina Mateos-Leal
Pottery Specialist	(from) Dr Jane Timby, Ms Sue Anderson, Mr Luke Barber or Dr Barbara McNee (consultants) or Dr Cristina Mateos-Leal(TVAS)
Environment (general)	Ms Joanna Pine (TVAS) or Professor Mark Robinson (Oxford University)
Brick and Tile	Ms Danielle Milbank, (TVAS)
Carbonised botanical remains	Professor Mark Robinson (Oxford University) or Ms Rosalind McKenna (consultant)
Faunal remains	Dr Matilda Holmes (consultants) or Dr Ceri Falys (TVAS)
Human remains	Dr Ceri Falys (TVAS)
Coins	Dr Pierre Manisse (TVAS)
Metalwork	Dr Robin Taylor (consultant) or Ms Sophie Peng (TVAS)
Wood	Ms Rosalind McKenna (consultant)
Slag	Dr David Dungworth (consultant)
Radiocarbon dating	Queens University, Belfast
Conservation	Wiltshire County Council Heritage Centre

5.0 Report and Dissemination

5.1 A full report on the results of the evaluation should be available within 2 weeks of completion of the fieldwork.

5.2 The report will follow our established format, comprising a descriptive text, illustrations and catalogues in appendices.

5.3 The text will address the aims and objectives of the evaluation, the methodology employed, describe the basic nature of the archaeological deposits discovered, and report on the artefacts recovered. It will then attempt to place the significance of the findings in their local, regional and national setting.

5.4 The report will include a front sheet providing the following information:

- Site name
- Grid reference
- Site activity (e.g., evaluation trenching, geophysical survey, fieldwalking, watching brief, excavation etc.)
- Date and duration of project
- Site code
- Area of site
- Summary of results
- Monuments identified (referenced to the RCHME Thesaurus of Monument Types)
- Location and reference of archive

5.5 The illustrations will include:
- a site location plan
- a trench layout plan
- trench plans and sections
- profiles/sections of all excavated features
- a selection of colour photos of significant findings

5.6 Catalogues giving descriptions of trenches, archaeological features, and artefacts will be contained in a series of appendices.

5.7 Any findings of national or special local significance will be published as a dedicated report in an appropriate journal such as *Berkshire Archaeological Journal.* Otherwise, a summary will be produced for publication in 'round up' sections in publications such as period specific national journals.

5.8 Copies of the results will be supplied to Berkshire HER in digital format. GIS shapefiles of the fieldwork will also be supplied to the HER. Non-published report(s) will be made available for inspection or download on the TVAS web site.

5.9 Details will be supplied to the OASIS project.

6.0 Archive Deposition

6.1 The finds and site archive will be prepared in accordance with guidelines in MoRPHE (HE 2015a), CIfA guidance (CIfA 2020a) and after consultation with the recipient museum and/or the Archaeology Data Service.

6.2 If the archive includes artefacts and is suitable for deposition with the recipient museum, this will take place according to their procedures and an accession number will be obtained and/or the Archaeology Data Service.

6.3 If the archive is to comprise data only, this will be deposited with OASIS or the Archaeology Data Service as appropriate.

6.4 With the consent of the landowner, the site finds will be deposited with Reading Museum (if accepting).

7.0 General Items

7.1 The project will be managed on a regular basis by a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (S. Ford, J. Pine or A. Taylor) with an appropriate area of competence.

7.2 The project will be carried out in accordance with the CIfA Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluation (2020b) and Code of Conduct (2019) and the quality control mechanisms set out in the TVAS fieldwork and post-fieldwork manuals.

7.3 Safe working practices as set out in TVAS health and safety manual will be adopted and current health and safety regulations will be adhered to.

7.4 Our insurance cover comprises £10 million for public liability, £10 million for employee liability, cover for any hired-in plant, and professional indemnity cover of £5m.

7.5 The archaeological advisor to the Council will be contacted both prior to work commencing on site, and during the evaluation itself, to arrange a site monitoring visit and 10 days' notice will be given. Any changes in the agreed project design will be discussed and agreed with the project consultant and the archaeological advisor to the Council before implementation.

8.0 References

CIfA, 2019, *Code of Conduct*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading

CIfA, 2020a, *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, Reading

CIfA, 2020b, *Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluation*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Reading

Elliott, G, 2021, Caversham Park, Caversham, Berkshire, an archaeological desk-based assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 21/252, Reading

HE, 2015a, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment, MoRPHE project planning*, Historic England, London

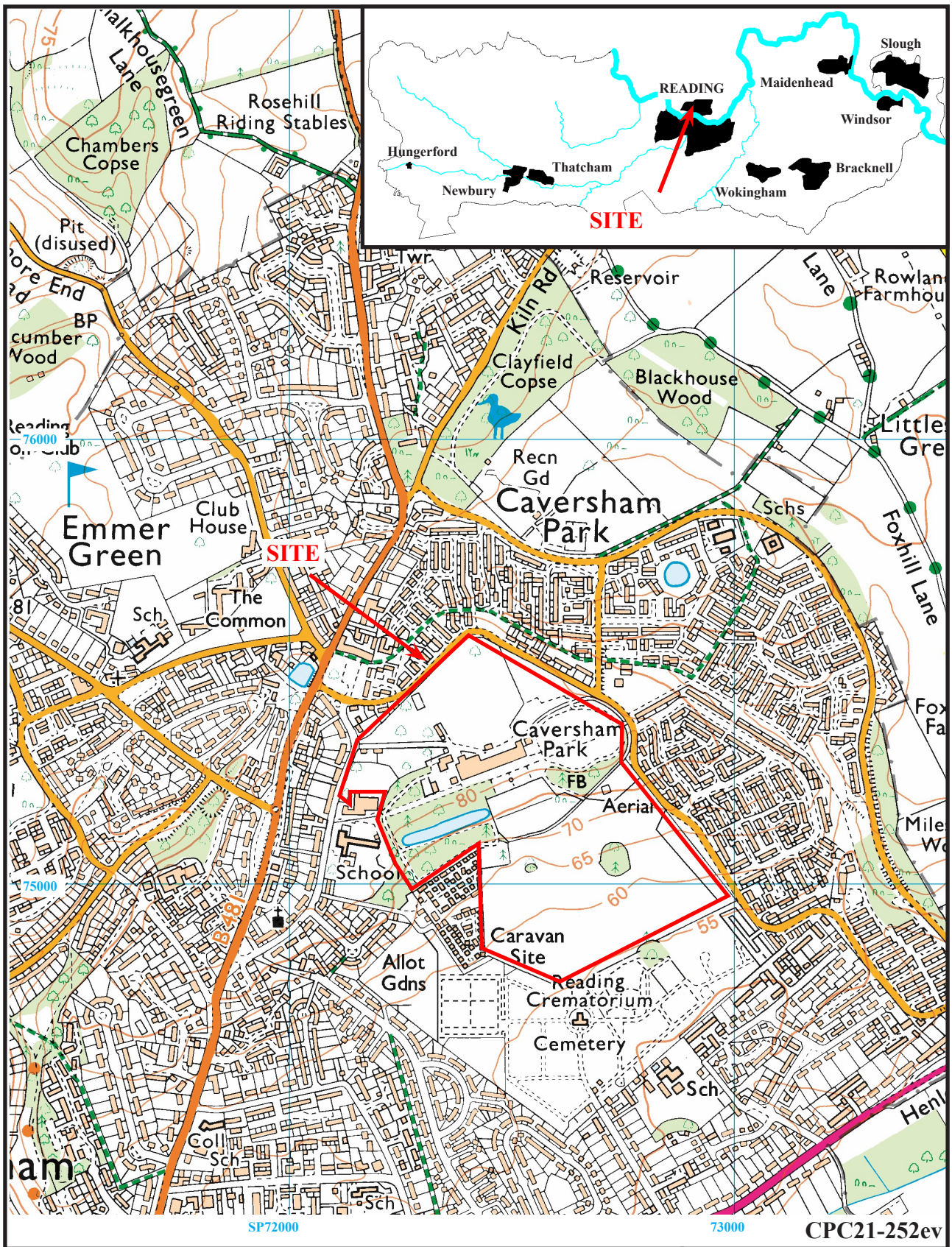
HE 2015b, *Environmental Archaeology*, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines 1, Historic England, Portsmouth, 3rd edn

HE 2017, *Research Agenda*, Historic England, London.

Hey, G and Hind, J, 2014, *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment: Resource Assessments and Research Agendas*, Oxford Wessex Monogr **6**, Oxford

Mitchell, P D, and Brickley, M (eds), 2017, *Updated Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*, CIfA and BABAO, Reading

NPPF, 2021, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London



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Area LTW, Caversham Park, Caversham, Berkshire, 2023
Archaeological Evaluation
Figure 1. Location of site

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0 20 40 60 80 100 m

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Figure 2. Location of site

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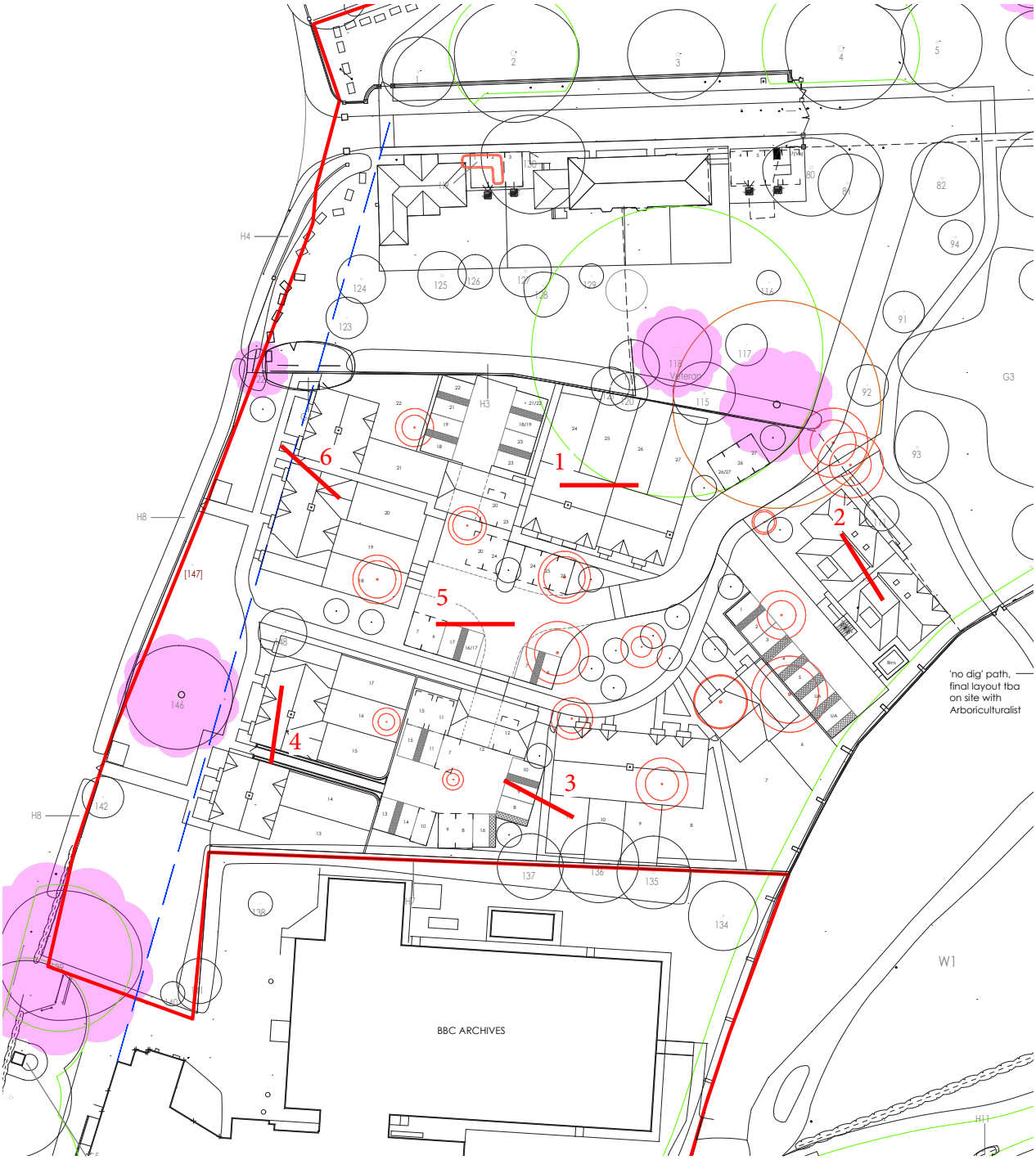

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Figure 3. Location of site

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