

Former Cooper BMW site, Kings Meadow, Reading Berkshire

Project specification for an archaeological evaluation

6th October 2017
Revised 3rd November 2017
Revised 3rd January 2018



Ref: KMR14/191ev

Former Cooper BMW site, Kings Meadow, Reading, Berkshire Project specification for archaeological evaluation

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Planning consent (162166/FUL) has been gained from Reading Borough Council to construct new a apartment block on the former Cooper BMW site, Kings Meadow, Reading, Berkshire (SU7182 7386). The site area is c.0.45 ha. The consent is subject to an archaeological condition (15).
- 1.2 The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing document produced by Ms Ellie Leary of Berkshire Archaeology drawing on desk-based assessment (Elliott 2014). In summary this potential stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley (Booth et al 2007; Lambrick et al 2009), though the immediate location of the proposal site has few sites or finds recorded in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. At least three Saxon burials were recorded to the south west and a Roman coin was found to the west. The site lies to the north east of the historic (Saxon and medieval) core of Reading and south of medieval Reading Abbey.

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 2012, para 141).
- 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 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 2016)' 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 determine if any Medieval deposits are present relating to the nearby abbey complex.
 - d) To collect information with which to prepare a mitigation strategy if necessary.
 - e) The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in English Heritage Research Agenda (EH 2005) 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 a total of 5 trenches. Due to the concentration of services 3 will be 1.6m wide and 10m long and the remaining 2 will be 1.6m wide and 5m long.

- 4.2 The trenches will be located as close as possible to the position shown on figure 1. The trenches may need to be repositioned or subdivided once details of any further site services and other restrictions are known. The trenches will be wider at the top for stepping and/or battering to facilitate safe access. 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 Tarmac and other overburden will be removed by a JCB- or 360°-type machine. A breaker will be used to penetrate the car park surface and a ditching bucket will be used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels.

4.3.2 Timetable of works:

Day 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
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- 4.3.3 The area to be occupied by each trench and the associated spoil heaps will be enclosed with Heras fencing before breaking out commences.
- 4.3.4 An area triple the width of each trench (i.e. 3.8m) will be cleared of Tarmac with the resulting rubble deposited to one side of the broken out area, a minimum of 1m from the edge of the trench.
- 4.3.5 Excavation will commence with the digging out of the central section of each trench to the depth of 1m. If neither archaeological deposits nor natural geology are encountered at this depth then a 1m wide strip on either side will also be reduced to a depth of 1m and excavation will continue downwards in the central strip until a total depth of 2m or the archaeological horizon is reached.
- 4.3.6 Spoil will be placed to one side, separate from the broken-out Tarmac, to be reused for backfilling.
- 4.3.7 Where archaeological features are certainly or probably present, the stripped areas will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools.
- 4.3.8 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.
- 4.3.9 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.
- 4.3.10 Conservation on site will follow guidelines in First Aid for Finds with any other specialist conservation work subcontracted to our conservation advisor (see below).
- 4.3.11 A programme of environmental sampling will take place should sufficient well stratified subsoil deposits be located. Typically this involves samples of up to 40/ 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).
- 4.3.12 Discovery of any human remains will be reported to the coroner 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 Borough.
- 4.3.13 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 effected 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.
- 4.3.14 Spoilheaps will be searched for finds.

4.3.15 Following completion of all excavation and recording, the trenches will be efficiently backfilled and resurfaced with Tarmac.

4.3.16 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 (7th edition 2011). 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 A photographic record will be made of the evaluation project, consisting of digital image. It will record the principal features and finds discovered, both in detail and in their general context.

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 MAP2 and TVAS post-excavation procedures (6th edition 2013).

4.5.2 Artefacts/ecofacts 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:

Pottery	Dr J Timby, Dr M Lyne or Mr P Blinkhorn (consultants) or Dr R Tabor (TVAS)
Stone	Dr D Williams (Southampton University)
Bone	Ms S Hamilton-Dyer, Dr M Holmes (consultants), or Ms L Lewins (TVAS)
Palaeolithic struck flint	Prof N Barton (Oxford University)
Post-glacial struck flint	Dr S Ford (TVAS)
Charred plant remains/environment	Prof M Robinson (Oxford University) or Ms R McKenna (consultant)
Pollen	Mr D Young (Reading University - Quest)
Metalwork	Mr S Crabb (TVAS) or Dr B Aggers or Dr R Taylor (consultants)
Radiocarbon	Queens University, Belfast
Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating	Gloucester University
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 frontsheet 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 both paper and digital format. 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), ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a) 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 Reading Museum, this will take place according to their procedures and an accession number will be obtained.
- 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.
- 6.5 The records will be copied onto microfiche for the National Archaeological Record.

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.

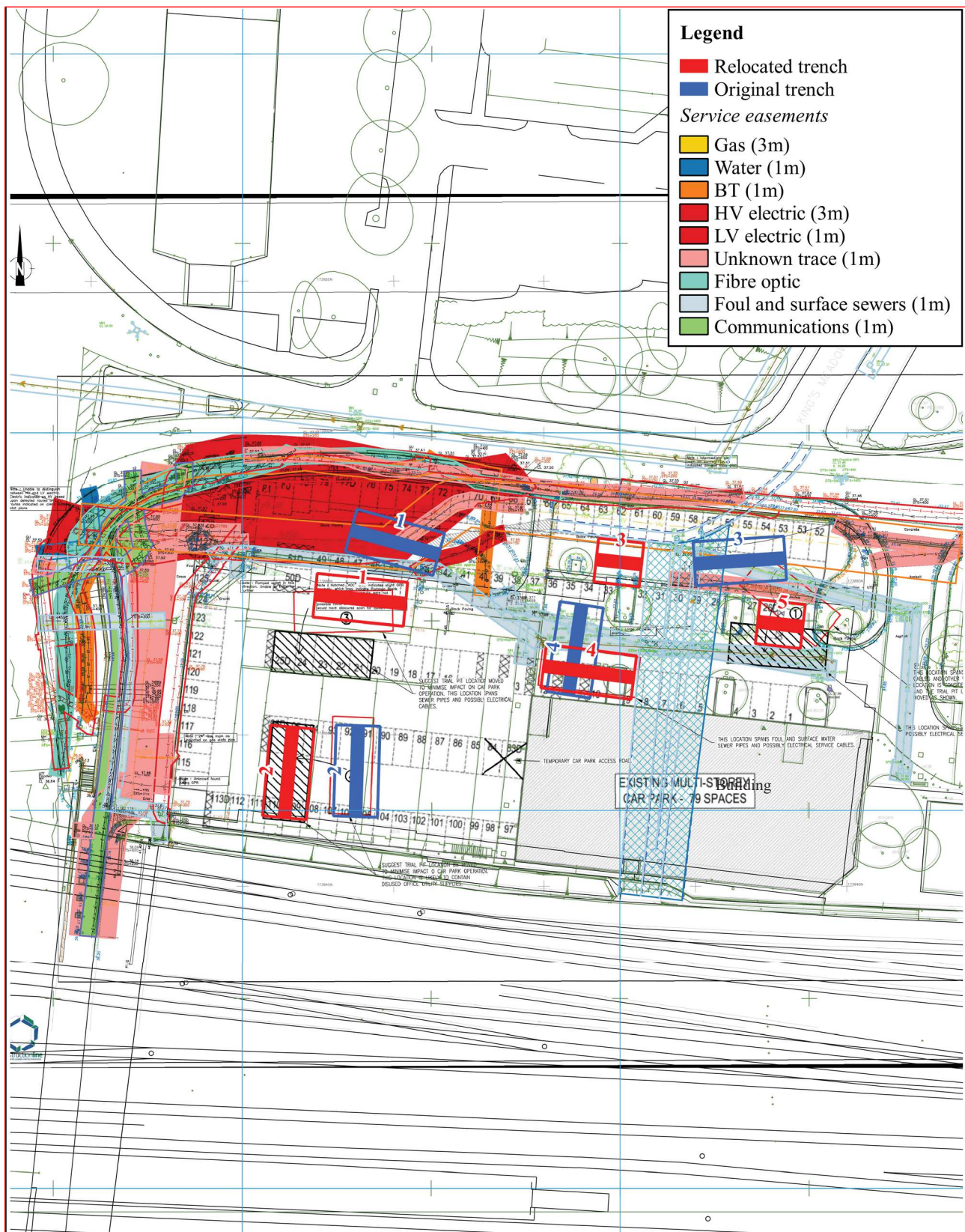
- 7.2 The project will be carried out in accordance with the CIfA Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation (2014b) and Code of Conduct (2014c) and the quality control mechanisms set out in the TVAS fieldwork and post-fieldwork manuals.
- 7.3 Safe working practices as set out in TVAS health 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 Borough Council will be contacted both prior to work commencing on site, and during the evaluation itself, to arrange a site monitoring visit. Any changes in the agreed project design will be discussed and agreed with the archaeological advisor to the Borough Council before implementation.

8.0 Resources

- 8.1 It is anticipated that 6-12 man/days will be required on site for the evaluation with a smaller number for post-fieldwork.

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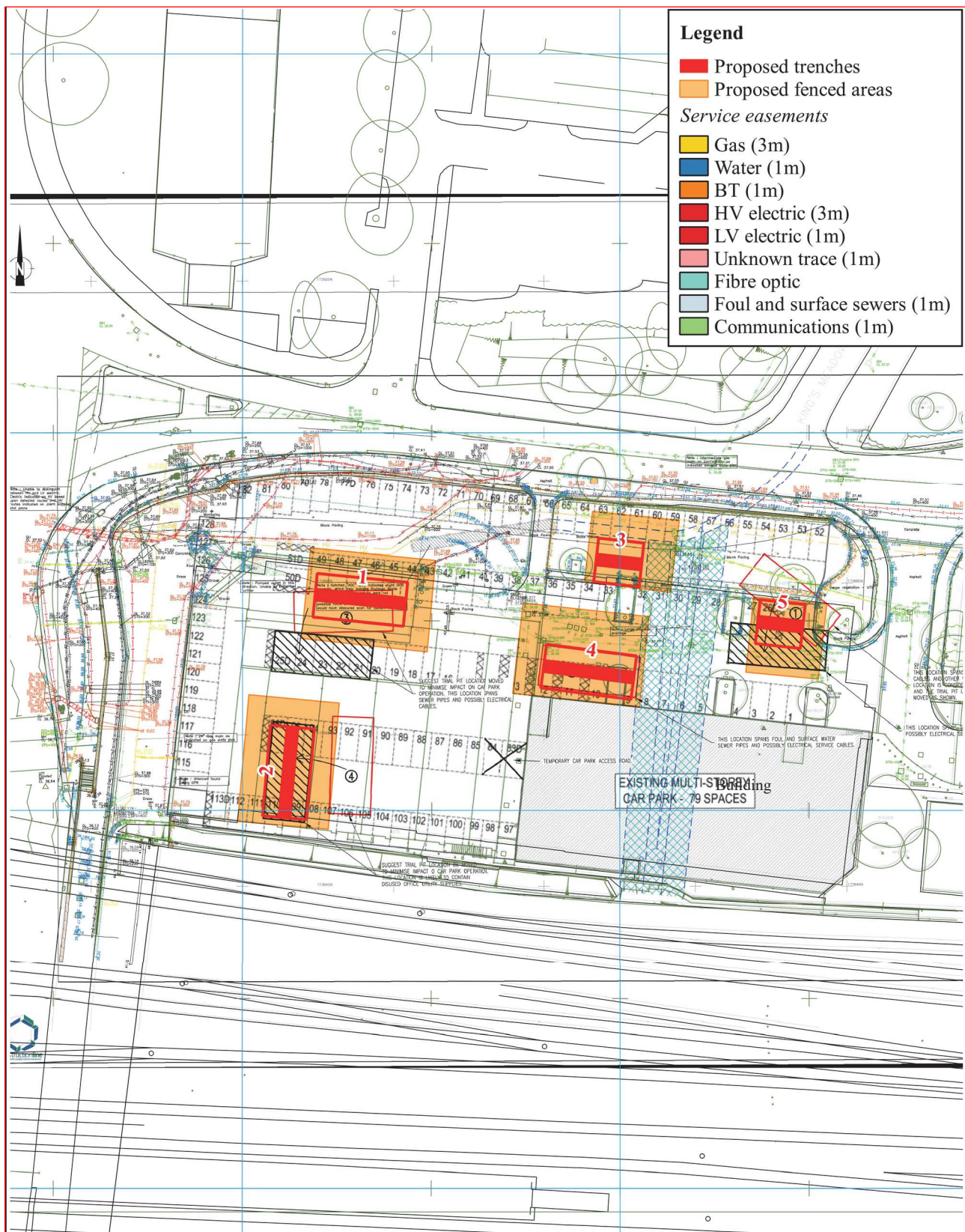


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Former Cooper BMW site, Kings Meadow,
Reading, Berkshire
Proposal for an archaeological evaluation

Fig. 1. Location of trenches.

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Fig. 1. Location of trenches with proposed fenced-off areas.

0 10 20 30 40 50 m

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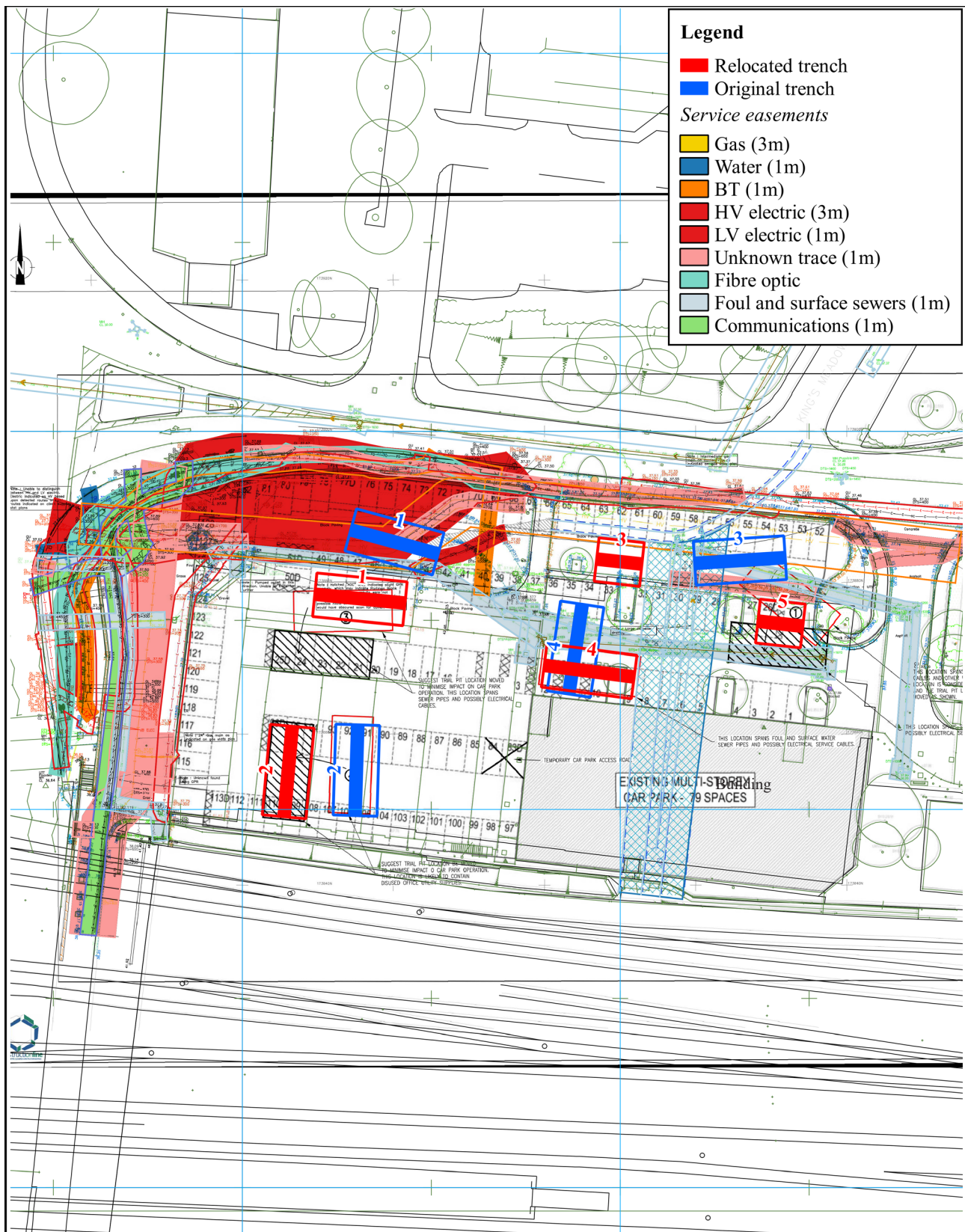
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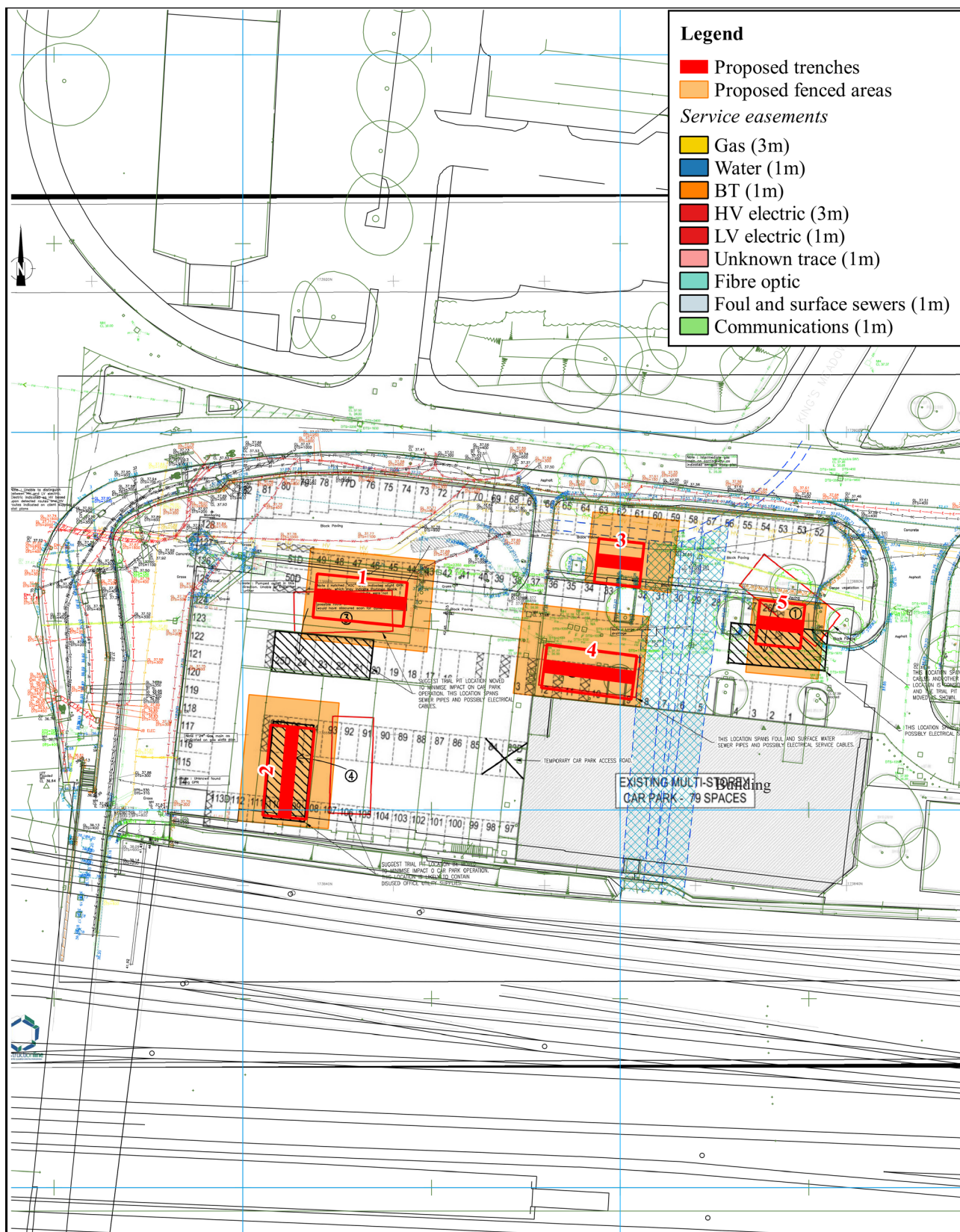


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Fig. 1. Location of trenches.

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Fig. 1. Location of trenches with proposed fenced-off areas.

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