

## **Land West of Cheddington, Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire: Summary of Archaeological Works August – October 2018**

Excavations and an interpretative earthwork survey were undertaken on Land west of Cheddington from the 8<sup>th</sup> of August to the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018, on behalf of Savills (the client). Previous archaeological works on site comprised a Heritage Statement (Savills, 2016) which was accompanied by a magnetometer survey, followed by archaeological trial trenching (CA 2017). The site is situated on the Northern side of the modern village of Cheddington, bounded by housing on the southern and eastern sides of the site, the curtilage of the 16<sup>th</sup> century manor to the west and Long Marston Road to the North. The village is situated on a large outcrop of chalk, isolated from the main Chiltern escarpment to the south east and dominating the low-lying land of the Vale of Aylesbury to the North West.

Archaeological activity on the outcrop dates back to the Middle Iron Age, with the construction of a multivallate Hillfort (Fig 1). A Romano British Villa is thought to have been located immediately to the west of Seabrook Farm based on the recovery of ceramic building material from ploughed fields. Trial trenching (CA2017) revealed a concentration of Romano British ditches in the central portion of the site, with sparse remains of agricultural features including furrows, and an East-West oriented drove-way at the northern end of the site. The medieval village is thought to have been late Saxon in origin based on documentary research and its listing in the Domesday survey (Savills, 2016). The extents of the medieval village are not well defined in the archaeological record; the single watching brief report from the area of the modern settlement, which was available on the ADS website, did not produce any meaningful data concerning its development (ASC 2011). The relative isolation of St Giles church may be evidence that the northern end of the settlement has shrunk, or that the centre of the village has migrated south along the axis of Mentmore Road (Figure 1).

### **Interpretative Earthwork Survey Results**

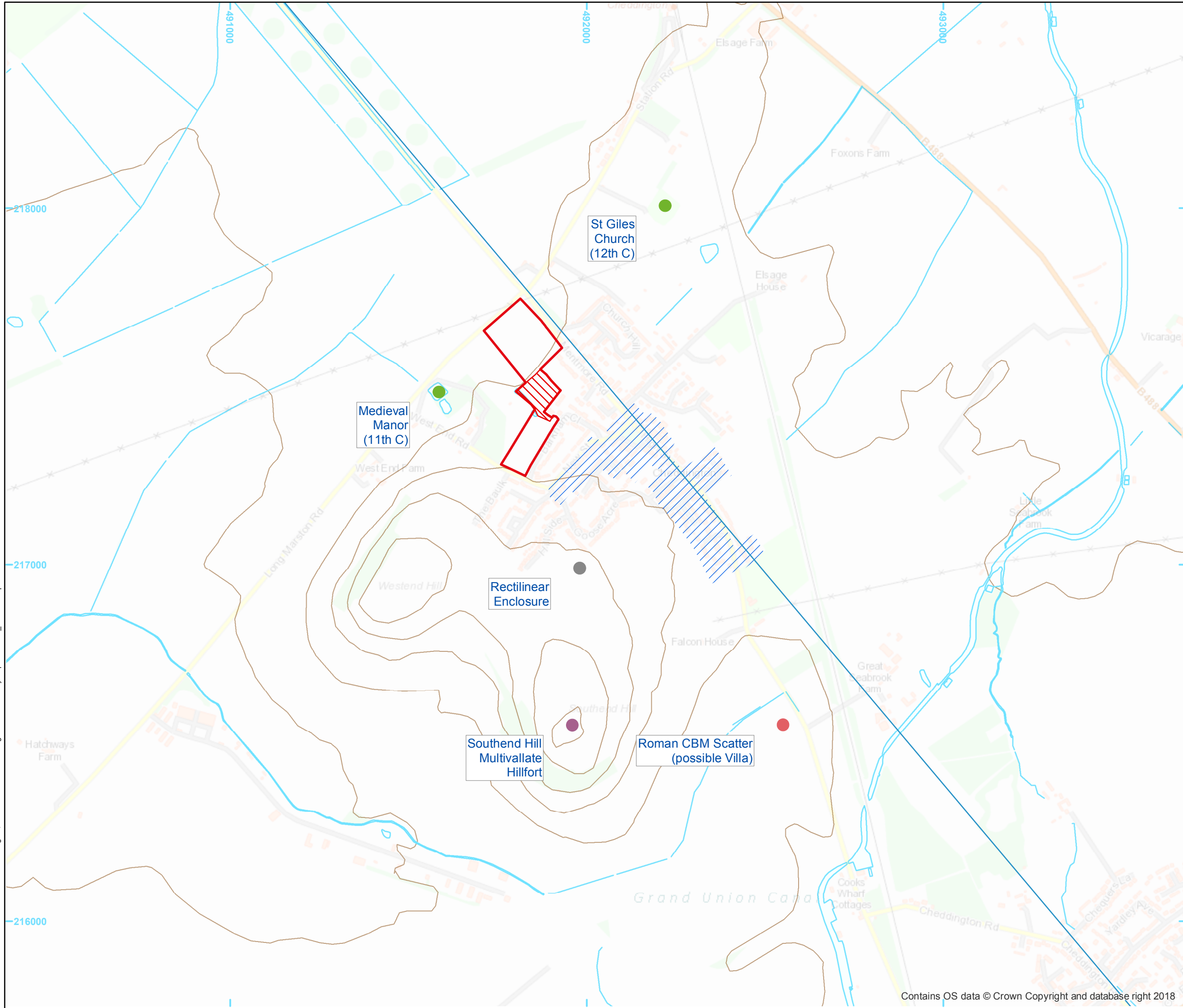
Interpretative earthwork survey was undertaken at the end of August 2018 following mowing in order to give the best visibility for archaeological earthworks. Features were recorded using a Real Time Kinematic (RTK) Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS). Features across the site coincided with anomalies recorded on Environment Agency LiDAR data (CA 2017) (Fig 2). In the northern end of the site the remains of the former drove way was recorded running east west from



**1 – Drove way Earthworks - looking south**



**2 - Manor Boundary - looking north**



- Development Area
- Excavation area
- Relevant Sites and Monuments**
- Iron Age
- Medieval
- Roman
- Undated
- Roman Road (Margary 169A)
- / / / Village Extent (Late 19th Century)



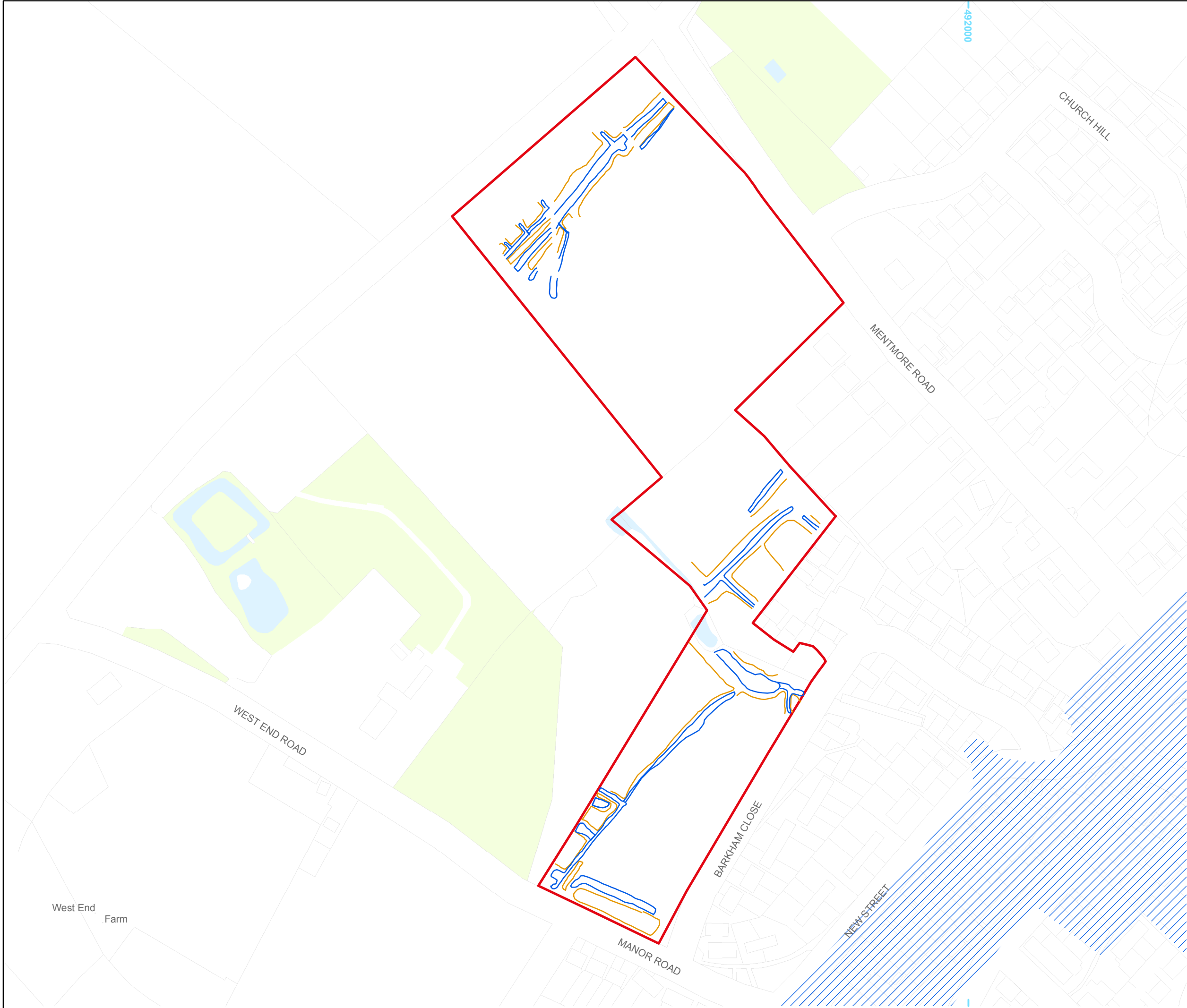
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PROJECT TITLE  
**Land west of Cheddington, Buckinghamshire excavation**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Cheddington Sites and Monuments**

DRAWN BY JSJ	PROJECT NO 661164	FIGURE NO.
	DATE 21/10/2018	
APPROVED BY MPH	SCALE@A3 1:10,000	1



- Development Area
- Topo - bottom of slope
- Topo - top of slope
- Village Extent (Late 19th Century)



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
**Land west of Cheddington, Buckinghamshire excavation**

**FIGURE TITLE**  
**Interpretative Earthwork Survey Results**

<b>DRAWN BY</b> JSJ	<b>PROJECT NO</b> 661164	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b> MPH	<b>DATE</b> 21/10/2018	<b>2</b>
	<b>SCALE@A3</b> 1:2,000	

Cheddington Manor towards Mentmore Road. It was visible as a series of parallel linear earthworks preserved to a height of 0.4m (Plate 1). A series of linear features aligned perpendicular to the drove way may have provided drainage towards low-lying ground to the north. The central and southern portion of the site contained well preserved ditches and dykes which respect the alignment of 19<sup>th</sup> century field boundaries (Plate 2). Finds recovered from the fills of these features suggests they have medieval origins, potentially marking the boundary between the village and demesne land surrounding Cheddington Manor.

## **Excavation Results**

### **Mid-Late Iron Age**

Stripping of the central area revealed a series of Mid-Late Iron Age enclosures (Fig.3). The earliest of these (Ditch A) was very shallow and ephemeral and was clearly cut by later ditches. This was truncated by Ditch D, which had a similar shallow profile and Ditch B/C which were more substantial and may coincide with the edge of the high dry ground of the chalk outcrop. Ditch D appears to have cordoned off an area where a double inhumation [2393] (Plate 3) and a single inhumation [2451] were located. Remains of burnt pits and a possible posthole were also located in this area. Several small pits containing Mid-Late Iron Age Grog tempered ware were located immediately to the north of the inhumations.

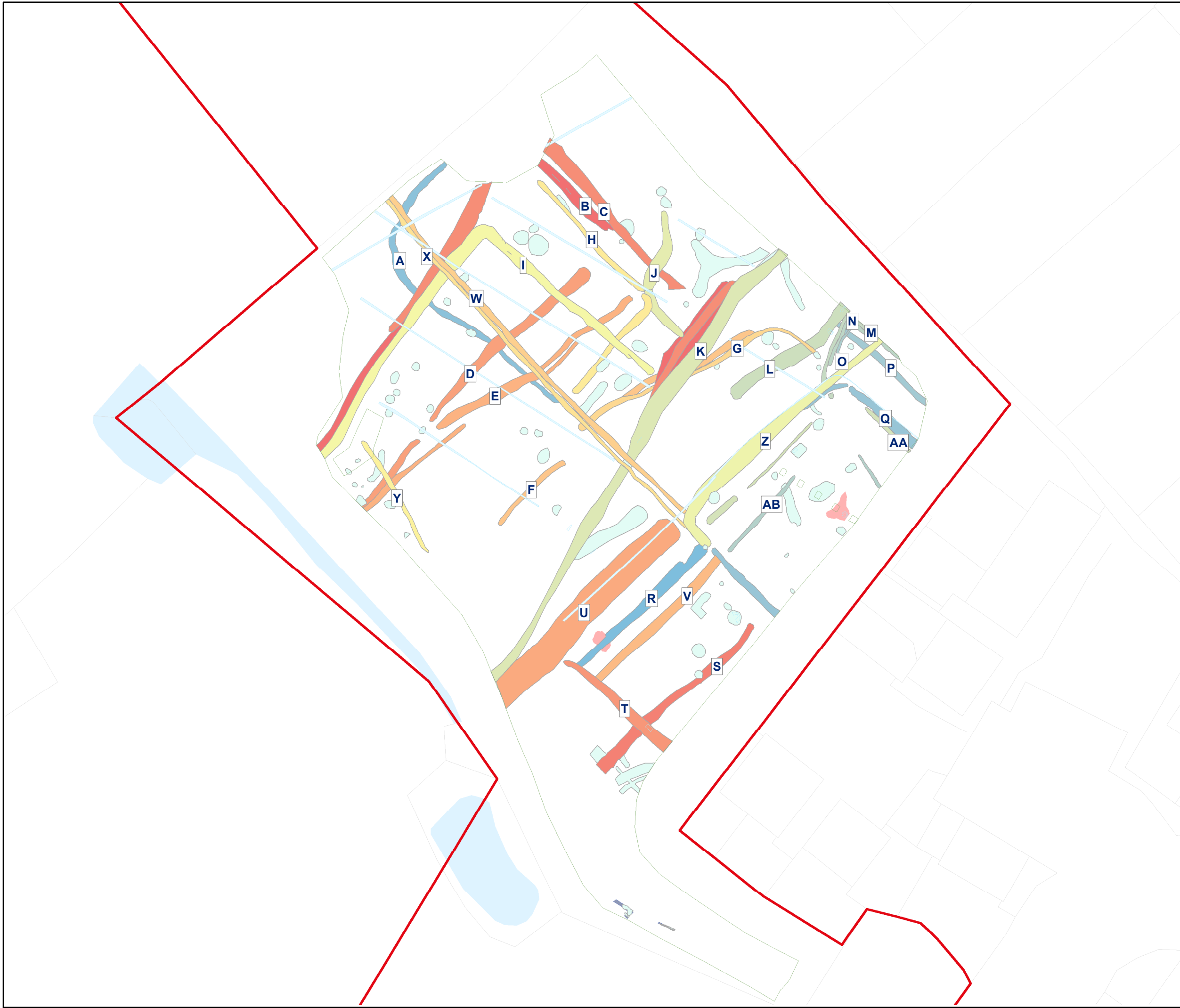
The Alignment of Ditch D was abandoned and modified with the digging of Ditches E and F and by recut G, which may represent a small drove-way. In the South Eastern corner of the site, a large steep sided pit was interpreted as a potential grain store subsequently truncated by ditch L.

### **Roman**

Roman activity on site is characterised by the laying out of sub rectangular enclosures formed by Ditches C, H, and later by Ditches I and K. These contained substantial assemblages of Romano British pottery, and K contained large amounts of iron working waste and lead. In the South Eastern corner of the site Ditch P Formed the edge of a potential enclosure, which was subsequently truncated by ditches M,N and O, remodelling it with an almost 90 degree angle.

### **Medieval**

At the south eastern edge of the site, Ditch Q, T, V and R formed the edges of two parallel enclosures bordering onto a large drainage Ditch (U). These contained small



- Development Area
- Limit of excavation bottom



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
**Land west of Cheddington, Buckinghamshire excavation**

**FIGURE TITLE**  
**Excavation Results with Feature Labels**

DRAWN BY	JSJ	PROJECT NO	661164	FIGURE NO.	3
APPROVED BY	MPH	DATE	21/10/2018		
		SCALE@A3	1:500		



**3 - Double Inhumation 2395/2396 under excavation**



**4 - Cess Pit**

sub enclosures AA and AB, with a number of small isolated features including two cess pits (Plate 4), and a number of shallow features interpreted as tree boles. Parallel ditches X and W shared the alignment of enclosure Q, and cut through the earlier Romano British features, continuing to the North Western edge of the site. These features were sealed by a substantial deposit of garden soil (2003) which was removed mechanically (Plate 5).



**5 - Garden Soil 2003 under excavation**

### **Post Medieval**

A number of discrete features were cut through garden soil 2003, including a layer of rubble from a slighted structure [2006], and a large pit backfilled with compacted stone [2084]. These features are thought to relate to buildings recorded on the 1841 tithe map, which were demolished prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey.

### **Conclusions**

The features revealed during the current phase of archaeological works have confirmed the presence of Romano British and Mid to Late Iron Age activity identified during the evaluation phase. The excavation has also revealed the edges of rectangular plots containing medieval material, which may represent the edge of an early phase of medieval settlement. The features from the Iron Age, Roman and Medieval phases are indicative of a liminal zone between field and settlement, which may have been the site of industrial activity, agricultural processing and storage, and

was certainly used as a place for the burial of human remains. In summary, the excavation has revealed repeated use, abandonment and remodelling of the liminal zone between zones of settlement on the Cheddington chalk outcrop (an Iron Age Hillfort, a Roman Villa and the medieval village) and surrounding field systems.

### **Bibliography**

ASC 2011 Watching Brief: 22 Mentmore Road, Cheddington. Unpublished client report

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017 Land west of Cheddington, Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire: Archaeological Evaluation, CA Report: 11708

Savills 2016, Land west of Cheddington, Aylesbury Vale, Buckinghamshire: Heritage Statement