

# Coed Darcy Urban Village Neath Port Talbot County Borough

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*



for  
St Modwen Developments Ltd

CA Project: 2699  
CA Report: 15240

April 2015



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CA Project: 2699  
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Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 The site, showing location of ground investigation (1:1250)



## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Coed Darcy Urban Village
<b>Location:</b>	Neath Port Talbot County Borough
<b>NGR:</b>	SS 7190 9649
<b>Type:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>Date:</b>	27 October- 7 November 2014
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	P2005/0393
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with RCAHMMW
<b>Site Code:</b>	COE 14

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during ground investigation at Coed Darcy Urban Village, Neath Port Talbot.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In October and November 2014 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for St Modwen Developments Ltd at Coed Darcy Urban Village, Neath Port Talbot County Borough (NPTCB, centred on NGR: SS 7190 9649; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for Coed Darcy Urban Village (Planning ref: P2005/0393).
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2009) and approved by Neil Maylan, formerly Planning Manager at Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT), the archaeological advisor to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. The fieldwork also followed the *standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2009), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

### ***The site***

- 1.3 The site of the ground investigation comprised two fields, approximately 5.7 hectares in extent adjacent to junction 43 of the M4. The fields had previously been used for livestock grazing.
- 1.4 The site lies at approximately 51m AOD, with the ground level dropping away to the north, south and east.
- 1.5 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Hughes Member – Sandstone of the Carboniferous Period overlain by superficial deposits of Devensian Till of the Quaternary Period (BGS 2014). Natural bedrock was typically encountered throughout the site at a depth of 0.5m below present ground level (bpgl).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The majority of the proposed extent of the Coed Darcy Urban Village comprises the former BP Llandarcy oil refinery site. The refinery site has been the subject of an Environmental Statement (ES) by Parsons Brinckerhoff (2005). The archaeology

and cultural heritage background of the site was detailed in Section 12 of that document and the following information is taken from that source.

- 2.2 The ES records that, although there is some evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity in the vicinity, the site lies within a landscape much altered by modern industrialisation. A single Neolithic axe (GGAT SMR 00605w) has been recovered from within the planning application boundary. Three Roman coin hoards have been recorded in the vicinity (GGAT SMR 00606w; 00623w, 03171w and GGAT SMR 00606w). One of which, the Coed Ffranc/Skewen hoard, has been dated to c. AD 296. Mynydd March Hywel, to the east of Llandarcy, marked the boundary between the lands of the Welsh tribes of the Silures, to the east, and the Demetae, to the west. It has been postulated that the land in the vicinity of the current site was seen as a 'no-man's land' and was used by the Romans as a frontier territory (Parsons Brinckerhoff 2005).
- 2.3 There are no significant medieval or post-medieval sites in the vicinity of the area of the watching brief. The former Llandarcy oil refinery was a site of great economic and historical importance. However, it has now been entirely decommissioned and demolished (*ibid*). As a result of this, and the large amount of truncation carried out during the construction, use and reclamation of the refinery site, GGAT have agreed that the archaeological works are to be restricted to two open field in the north-eastern part of the site that appear not to have been occupied by refinery buildings or apparatus.

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
  - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2009). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the mechanical excavation of trial pits (see Fig. 2 for locations)
- 4.2 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*. The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with RCAHMW.

## 5. RESULTS (FIG. 2)

- 5.1 The ground investigation consisted of the excavation of 106 trial pits laid out in a 20m grid across two fields. Each pit was approximately 3m long, 2m wide and was archaeologically monitored to the depth of the underlying natural substrate (on average 0.5m bpgl).
- 5.2 The natural geological substrate consisting of sandstone bedrock with clay was revealed at an average depth of 0.5m bpgl. This was overlain by sand clay silt subsoil averaging 0.3m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by 0.2m of clay silt topsoil. A shallow modern ditch 104, measuring 0.3m wide and 0.1m in depth, aligned north-west/south-east and running broadly parallel to a modern boundary close to the north-western site limit, was observed in trench NSE0023. This cut the subsoil and contained modern plastic and pottery.
- 5.3 No further features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered. This material was not retained.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above); the watching brief only identified a single modern ditch. No further archaeological remains were observed within the area of groundworks. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that they either do not extend as

far as or were not exposed by the development, or that they may have been removed during previous development, although the presence of *in situ* subsoil makes this unlikely.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Luke Brannlund. The report was written by Luke Brannlund. The illustrations were prepared by Jon Bennet. The archive has been compiled by, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

## 8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2015 *Geology of Britain Viewer*  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 8 December 2014

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2009 *Coed Darcy Urban Village, Neath Port Talbot: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Parsons Brinckerhoff 2005 *Coed Darcy Urban Village: Environmental Statement*





## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Pit No. (NSE)	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	Depth/ thickness (m)
0023	101	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey-brown clay silt	0.2
0023	102	Layer		Subsoil	Light red-brown sand clay silt	0.2
0023	103	Layer		Natural	Bedrock/ grey-orange sand clay	n/a
0023	104	Cut		Ditch	NW-SE aligned linear in plan with shallow U-shaped profile	0.1
0023	105	Fill	104	Fill of ditch	Mid red-brown sand clay silt	0.1
0014-0023, 0034-0038, 0046-0050, 0068-0073, 0082-0086, 0097-0103, 0110, 0112-0116, 0120-0122, 0125-0126, 0133-0135, 0137-0138, 0140-0142, 0150-0154	01	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey-brown clay silt	0.2
0014-0023, 0034-0038, 0046-0050, 0068-0073, 0082-0086, 0097-0103, 0110, 0112-0116, 0120-0122, 0125-0126, 0133-0135, 0137-0138, 0140-0142, 0150-0154	02	Layer		Subsoil	Light red-brown sand clay silt	0.3
0014-0023, 0034-0038, 0046-0050, 0068-0073, 0082-0086, 0097-0103, 0110, 0112-0116, 0120-0122, 0125-0126, 0133-0135, 0137-0138, 0140-0142, 0150-0154	03	Layer		Natural	Bedrock/ grey-orange sand clay	n/a
0009, 0025-0033, 0220-0215, 0051-0058, 0061- 0067, 0087-0096, 0117-0119	01	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey-brown clay silt	0.2
0009, 0025-0033, 0220-0215, 0051-0058, 0061- 0067, 0087-0096, 0117-0119	02	Layer		Subsoil	Dark grey-brown clay silt	0.2
0009, 0025-0033, 0220-0215, 0051-0058, 0061- 0067, 0087-0096, 0117-0119	03	Layer		Natural	Light red-brown sand clay silt	n/a

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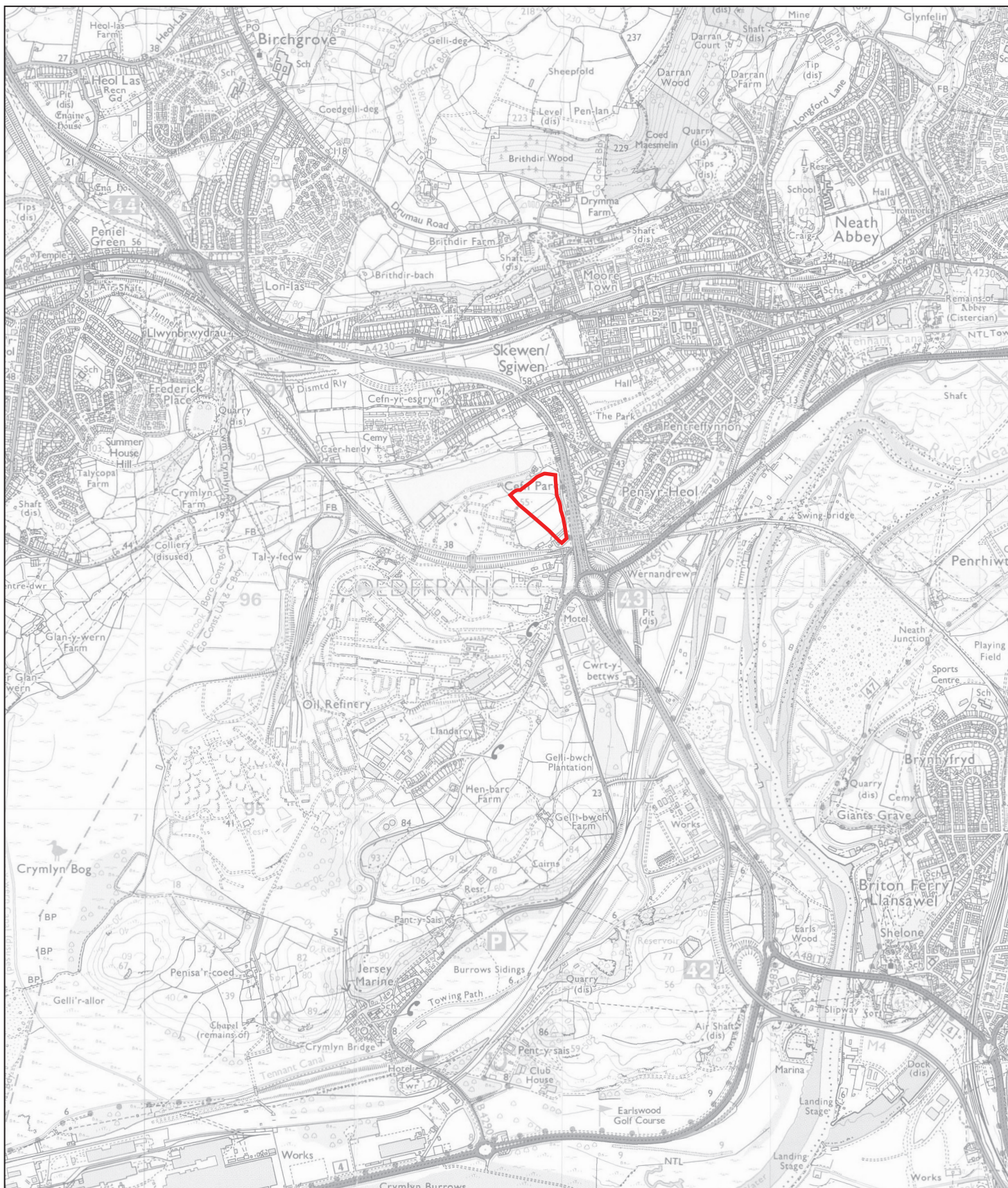
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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Coed Darcy Urban Village, Neath Port Talbot County Borough

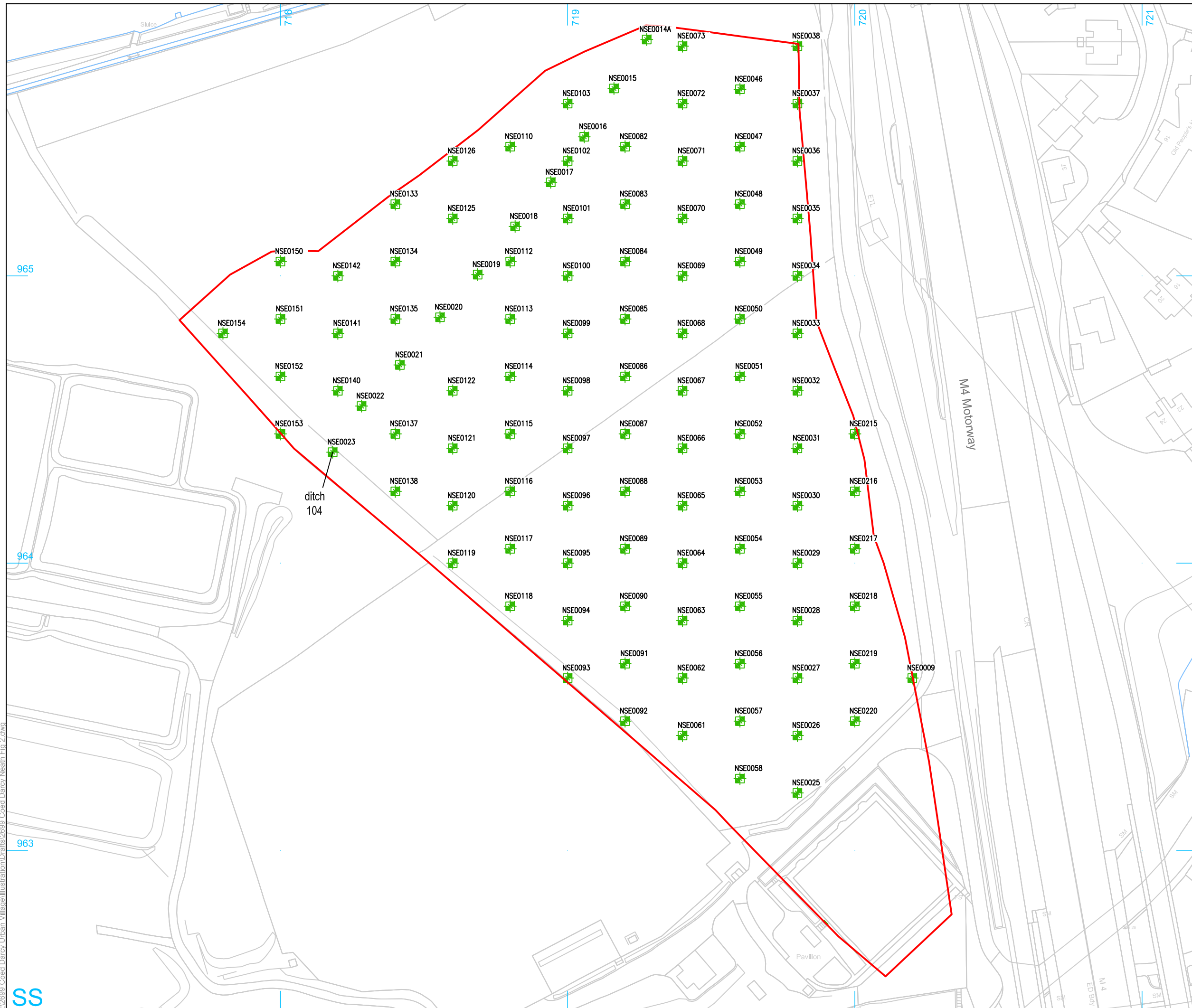
**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

0 1km

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<b>DRAWN BY</b> JB	<b>PROJECT NO.</b> 2699	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b> LVB	<b>DATE</b> 17/04/2015	
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- site boundary
- geotechnical trench location



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
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**FIGURE TITLE**  
 The site, showing location of ground investigation

<b>DRAWN BY</b> JB	<b>PROJECT NO.</b> 2699	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b> LVB	<b>DATE</b> 17/04/2015	<b>02</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b> REY	<b>SCALE@A3</b> 1:1250	

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