

Broadfield Park Slopes

Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief and Community Excavation Programme

November 2024



NL-22-00072



Broadfield Park Slopes – Archaeological Watching Brief and Community Excavation Programme

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Project Name:	Broadfield Park Slopes – Archaeological Watching Brief and Community Excavation Programme
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Site Location:	The site is bounded to the north by Rochdale Town Hall and Town Hall Square, to the east by the Church Steps, to the west by Broadfield Community Primary School and to the south by St Chad's Church.
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Introduction

Circumstances of the Project

Rochdale Development Agency intend to undertake a programme of landscaping and restoration works within the Grade II registered Broadfield Park Slopes (centred around SD 89630 13197 and referred to herein as the site), comprising the repair/refurbishment and instatement of new handrails, boundary treatments, retaining structures, SUDS and decorative water features, lawn terracing, accessible and general pathways and surfaces, seating, lighting, interpretative material, and public art pieces. The scheme of works will also further involve the repair and refurbishment of Packer Spout Steps and fountain, including the instatement of new lighting and handrails, surrounding the Grade II listed Market Cross structure.

The delivery of this scheme of works (Planning Ref: 23/01393/FUL and Listed Building Consent Ref: 23/01394/LBC) will require considerable earth-moving works, which has the potential to disturb and/or destroy any buried archaeological remains within the site. The Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Feasibility studies of the site, alongside previous archaeological works within the site boundary, have revealed significant potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains. Hence, the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), in their role as advisors to the local planning authority within Rochdale Borough Council, has recommended that a condition be placed upon the planning and listed building consent applications requiring that any landscaping works will be subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring, in the form of a watching brief. The planning condition is outlined below:

'No development (other than the clearance of trees or shrubs) shall take place until such time as the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a Project Design which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Project Design shall cover the following:

- *A phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording to include a targeted archaeological watching brief during landscaping works;*
- *A programme for post-investigation assessment to include production of a final report on the results of the investigations and their significance;*
- *Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record;*
- *Dissemination of the results of the archaeological investigations commensurate with their significance;*
- *Provision for archive deposition of the report and records of the site investigation; and*
- *Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved Project Design.*

Reason: *To protect the significance of any archaeological remains on the site in accordance with adopted Places for Everyone joint development plan policy JP-P2, policy P2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.*

Reason for pre-commencement condition: *There is a risk of disturbance to below ground features of archaeological importance on commencement of the development.'*

In addition to this, a further activity plan has been designed and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver an activity plan including scope for the delivery of a wide range of community engagement and community archaeology events.

Evidence of earlier Roman or Prehistoric activity within Rochdale is predominantly confined to chance small finds and are concentrated towards the outer areas of the borough more broadly (Fishwick, 1889; Elder and Miller, 2023). No Prehistoric or Roman evidence has been encountered within the site boundary or within its immediate vicinity. The site, based upon the available historical mapping, despite its proximity to the proposed Medieval centre of the Rochdale township, appeared to have remained undeveloped into this period. The site, instead, appeared to have continued to have served as pastoral/agricultural land owned by the local parish church of St Chad's, located just to the south of the site, into the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. Although, it is likely that the local market in the Medieval period was held around the general vicinity of the local parish church at St Chad's, close to the current location of the site (Roethe and Williams, 2019, p.7). Moving into the Post-Medieval period, the town began to expand due to the growing wool industry in the area, causing the growth of the local textile and farming industries to feed the demand for wool (*ibid*). In the 1540s, the market place moved from its location around St Chad's to the north of the River Roch, near the modern Yorkshire Street (*ibid*). Although, the cattle market remained close to the parish church until the 1870s (*ibid*). The earliest, reliable map depicting the site, Yates' Map of Lancashire 1786, indicates that the site remained predominantly undeveloped. However, Packer Street appears to have been developed to the east of the site. Elder and Miller (2023) argue that Yates' map of 1786 likely reflects the earlier Late Medieval layout of the town. In the late 18th century, Packer Spout was adapted, and a new water management system was created, to create a new reservoir, becoming labelled as Leland Bank (DIA, 2022). A dyehouse was also established at the base of the slopes, near the current Town Hall site, during this period (DIA, 2022). The Industrial Revolution saw Rochdale flourish and expand, however, the site remained predominantly undeveloped. By 1831, the large amount of the southern area of the slopes were developed into landscaped gardens for the vicarage (DIA, 2022). In the mid-late 19th century, the land occupied by the site was purchased from the local parish church as part of the wider construction plan for the new Town Hall to the north of the site (Elder and Miller, 2023). By public demand, the slopes, along with a large plot of land to the south-west of the church, were incorporated into a public park (Broadfield Park) (*ibid*). In the late 19th century, Charles Kershaw established a corn mill within the north-eastern corner of the site, lowering the ground level of the slopes in the area and constructing a large L-shaped structure to the south-east of the Town Hall (Elder and Miller, 2023). However, by the 1920s, the main corn mill structure had been demolished and a new

fountain structure around Packer Spout was erected in 1925 (DIA, 2022). Although, the natural spring/drinking water source, the namesake of the fountain structure, was likely in use at least by the Medieval period (DIA, 2022; Historic England, 2001).

The programme of archaeological monitoring and recording is aimed to assess the potential for, and record any buried archaeological remains encountered within the Broadfield Park Slopes, and where possible establish the character, extent, date and state of preservation of any archaeological remains encountered. The activity plan is aimed to engage local communities with the history and heritage of the slopes and aid in the further dissemination

This Project Design (PD) was produced in consultation with GMAAS and outlines the methodology and aims for the programme of archaeological monitoring and Community-focussed excavation to be delivered/conducted during the site works.

Purpose of the Document

An Archaeological Project Design (PD) is a comprehensive document outlining the aims, objectives and working methodology of a specified programme of archaeological works. In reference to the purpose of PD documents, Historic England have stated that

“In those cases where development will lead to loss of a substantive part of the significance of a heritage asset, the steps to be taken by the developer to achieve the NPPF requirements are best controlled through a PD” (Historic England, 2015a, p.10)

They have also further outlined the purpose of PD documents as below:

“PDs are used to set out proposals for assessment and evaluation, as well as post-permission investigation and recording.” (Ibid).

National and Local Planning Policies

The revised *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* outlines the Government’s planning policies and aims towards a presumption of sustainable development, including meeting economic, social and environmental objectives (MHCLG, 2023). The NPPF outlines the significance of the conservation and enhancement of the Historic Environment

“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.” (MHCLG, 2023, Section 16. par. 195).

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) outline the intended objectives and considerations for local planning authorities’ historic environment strategies in Section 16 of the NPPF, highlighting the following considerations as essential:

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*“a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.” (MHCLG, 2023, Section 16. par. 196.)*

Section 16, paragraph 200 of the NPPF states:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.” (MHCLG, 2023, Section 16. par. 200).

Hence, applicants must describe the significance of any affected heritage assets and any effect or contribution made to their setting through a submitted Desk-based Assessment, through consultation with the relevant Historic Environment Record (HER), created by persons with the appropriate expertise. Section 16 paragraph 209 of the NPPF also requires that non-designated heritage assets also be considered in any planning decision:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application.” (MHCLG, 2023, Section 16, par. 209).

Furthermore, the NPPF also outlines that local authorities must require developers to record and advance our understanding of the significance of heritage assets, and for any evidence and/or generated archive to be made publicly-accessible:

“Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible⁷³. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.” (MHCLG, 2023, Section 16. par. 211).

The NPPF also outlines the need for local planning policies to create local plans and frameworks to implement the NPPF at a local level. Rochdale Borough Council's Core Strategy was implemented in 2016 and is scheduled until 2028.

The heritage strategy for the borough is outlined in Section 9 of the document and states the following in reference to the conservation of the Historic Environment:

“Designated and non-designated heritage assets must be conserved in accordance with their significance and the relevant national guidance, standards and good practice guides. The value of heritage assets in terms of their contribution to place making, image, tourism, regeneration and the economy, culture, education and social cohesion will be informed by Historic Environmental Records (HERs) and Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLCA) as well as other studies and information and the views of local communities. An up to date set of conservation area appraisals will be maintained to which potential developers should refer when developing their proposals in these locations. 9.16 It is important that designated assets are protected and conserved with regard to their interior, exterior, curtilage and setting, while those assets which are the subject of local designations should be conserved with respect to their external appearance, character and setting. The conservation of archaeological assets should be proportionate to their significance and fragility. Of particular importance are heritage assets at risk to which special attention will be given. We recognise that sensitive alterations may sometimes be necessary to make heritage assets more accessible.” (Poole, 2016, 9.15-16).

Rochdale Borough Council is advised on archaeological matters by the development control archaeologist at Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS).

Location, Geology and Topography

The site is located on the Broadfield Park Slopes, Rochdale and is bounded to the north by Rochdale Town Hall and Town Hall Square, to the east by the Church Steps, to the west by Broadfield Community Primary School and to the south by St Chad's Church (See *Figure 1*). The natural bedrock geology of the site is part of the Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation, formed between 319 and 318 million years ago during the Carboniferous period, and is comprised of a sedimentary mudstone, siltstone and sandstone bedrock (BGS, 2024). The natural superficial deposits on the site are comprised of sedimentary, devensian, glacio-fluvial deposits of sand and gravel, formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period (BGS, 2024). The site is comprised predominantly of sloped grassland with some constructed stone pathways to both the east and west sides of the site, as well as a connected stone fountain to the centre-east of the site.

Aims and Objectives

Academic Aims

The principle aims of this project are to maintain a watching brief during any ground-breaking activities during the scheme of landscaping and restoration works on the site, and to assess and record all buried archaeological remains encountered. The project further aims to engage a number of local people and communities with the programme of excavation and its results to enhance their skills, understanding of the local historic environment and relationships with the site.

This approach to devising proposals to mitigate the impact of development on heritage assets and archaeological remains within the development area is in accordance with national guidelines, as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework: Section 16.

Objectives

The principal objectives of the archaeological watching brief are:

- to maintain a watching brief, monitoring the excavation of all excavations and fully record all remains encountered;
- to produce a final report and archive on the findings of the watching brief; and
- to make available the results of the work.

The principle objectives of the community engagement activity plan are:

- To practically engage local communities and people with the archaeological remains present on the Broadfield Park Slopes
- To improve local communities' and people's relationship with the slopes
- To practically engage local communities and people with the excavation and post-excavation work on the project
- To inform further dissemination strategies for the results of any investigations
- To provide opportunities for local people and communities to learn heritage skills and volunteer opportunities to gain key skills for heritage/archaeology-based roles

Methodology

The general methodology for the archaeological watching brief and community archaeology excavations will be carried out in accordance with the working methods outlined within this document.

General Methodology

Archaeological Monitoring

The watching brief will monitor any ground-breaking works during the proposed scheme of landscaping and restoration works. All excavations will be machine-excavated with a 360 tracked excavator. The landscaping works will require a large amount of ground-breaking works across the site and thus the dimensions of the excavations remain unconfirmed.

The depth of the excavations will range between 3-5m, dependent upon the landscaping requirements in each area of the site. All archaeological monitoring will be carried out in accordance with ClfA's Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2020a) and the project-specific risk assessment.

Community-focussed Excavation

All Community-focussed excavations will be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. All Community-focussed excavations will be hand-excavated using hand tools. The exact locations and extent of community excavation trenches will be confirmed in consultation with GMAAS prior to the commencement of any community archaeology activities. All Community-focussed excavation will be carried out in accordance with a project-specific risk assessment.

Archaeological Monitoring

All excavations and ground-disturbing works will be continually monitored by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist. If any archaeological remains are encountered, excavation must cease to allow the remains to be investigated and recorded. The main contractor must allow reasonable access so that any remains can be appropriately investigated and recorded. All recording will be undertaken using pro forma recording sheets, supported by a photographic record, as outlined in ClfA guidance for undertaking Watching Briefs. Any archaeological features/deposits will be investigated appropriately in order to adequately establish its location, character, extent, condition, and where possible, date. If required, the monitoring archaeologist will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period, in order to expose the remains and enable an accurate assessment and record of any archaeological remains/deposits to be made. Should any archaeological remains of higher significance be encountered during the watching brief, GMAAS will be notified at the earliest convenience and further archaeological investigation may be required. Any further archaeological works would necessitate the development of a new or modified mitigation strategy, including the creation of a new Project Design document, which should be designed in consultation with GMAAS and Rochdale Development Agency.

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Recording

All archaeological remains encountered will be excavated and evaluated using hand tools and will be subject to full archaeological recording using pro forma context sheets, supported by an adequate pictorial record (photographs, plan drawings, section drawings). Primary records will be used to produce a Harris matrix. All archaeological recording will be done in line with ClfA guidance for undertaking archaeological monitoring and recording.

A full and detailed photographic record will be maintained, including photographs of individual contexts and photographs from general and standard viewpoints of the site at all stages of the excavations. All photographs will include a graduated photographic scale and will be taken in line with Historic England's Digital Image Capture and File Storage: Guidelines for Best Practice (2015b).

All drawings will be completed at an appropriate scale (usually 1:10 or 1:20, but can be produced at any scale required). All primary records will be cross-referenced with sequential numbering and will be available for inspection at all times during the course of the works.

Human Remains

No human remains are expected to be encountered during the course of the works. However, if found, remains will be left in-situ and covered/protected and the relevant persons will be notified. No human remains will be excavated without the prior acquisition of a Ministry of Justice license and any removal will be done in line with professional and legal guidelines.

Finds Policy

All finds recovery and sampling will be done in accordance with professional guidelines (CIFA's standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials, 2020b). Removal of archaeological materials will be done under expert advice where appropriate. All archaeological finds will be subsequently stored appropriately, in line with current guidance by ClfA and the UKIC.

Any finds that may be considered to be treasure under the Treasure Act (1996) will be removed and stored in a safe place and then reported to the local coroner as outlined in the relevant legislation.

Environmental Sampling

Where appropriate, environmental samples may be taken from any suitable archaeological deposits. Any samples will be collected, processed and stored in line with Historic England's Environmental Archaeology; A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation (second edition) (2011).

Health and Safety

Full regard will be given to all relevant health and safety legislation and codes of practice throughout the course of the project. The programme of works and methodology set out in this PD document will be undertaken in accordance with a project-specific risk assessment. A copy of this risk assessment will be provided to the contractor prior to commencement of any works.

Resources and Programming

Personnel

The project will be overall managed by Jordan Perris (Archaeology Project Management Apprentice). His role will be to ensure the adequate implementation of this Project Design and achievement of the project aims and objectives. Ian Miller and Colin Elder, in their roles as mentors to the Archaeology Project Management Apprentice, will support and review the implementation of all project documentation, plans and any other relevant information. Emma Robinson, in her role as a Senior Project Manager, will further support and review project documentation where necessary. All Community-focussed archaeological excavations will be excavated by members of the general public under the supervision and guidance of a suitably qualified archaeologist.

The programme of archaeological monitoring will be completed by Jordan Perris. Post-excavation work and finds analysis may be completed by volunteers, work placements and other members of the public, with support and guidance from Jordan Perris, with the exception of any material requiring specialist reporting.

Project Monitoring

This project will be monitored by GMAAS (Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service). The aims of the monitoring are to ensure that the archaeological works are completed within the limits of, and to the standards, outlined in this Project Design document and to satisfy GMAAS that the planning condition has been adequately fulfilled. As a minimum requirement, GMAAS will be given one week advance notice prior to the commencement of any site works and will be afforded the opportunity to visit the site both prior to and during the course of the archaeological works. Any site visits are intended to monitor the general phasing of the site, results of the fieldwork and assess/discuss any requirements for reporting or any further mitigation works. Any primary records will be made available to GMAAS at any point during the course of the project. Rochdale Development Agency, in the event of any discoveries of particular archaeological significance/interest, will notify GMAAS so that any site visits and/or changes to the mitigation strategy can be made if required. Any changes made to the agreed Project Design will only be made with prior consultation with GMAAS.

Timetabling

The works are intended to take place over approximately six months beginning in March 2025. Working hours will vary between 8:00am and 17:00pm, Monday to Friday. Working outside of these hours is not ordinary practice, however can be completed with prior notice and agreement. The works will be completed according to the schedule of the appointed contractor.

A copy of the final report will be submitted to GMAAS for comments within 12 weeks of the completion of the works on site. The complete project archive, including archaeological materials, will be deposited in an appropriate repository within six months of the completion of site works, subject to their approval.

Insurance

The appointed contractor, who are undertaking the scheme of works, will be expected to have professional indemnity, employer's liability and public and product liability insurance. The value of which can be provided upon request following the appointment of the principal contractor on the site.

Additionally, Rochdale Development Agency also have insurance coverage, details of which can be provided upon request.

Report and Archiving

A draft copy of the report will be submitted to the Development Control Archaeologist based at GMAAS for comment prior to the submission of the final report. The report will include:

- a title page detailing site address, NGR, author/originating body, commissioning body and address;
- full content's listing;
- a non-technical summary of the findings of the archaeological works;
- a description of the archaeological background;
- a detailed account of the historical development of the site, accompanied with map regression analysis;
- a description of the topography and geology of the study area;
- a description of the methodology used during the archaeological works;
- a description of the findings of the fieldwork;
- interpretation of the archaeological features exposed and their context within the surrounding landscape;
- a discussion of the relative significance of the features within the area;
- appropriate photographs of specific archaeological features;
- a consideration of the importance of the archaeological remains present on the site in local, regional and national terms.

Archive

The results of this archaeological investigation will form the basis of a full archive, created in line with current professional guidelines set by Historic England, and current professional standards and guidance set by ClfA (Standards and Guidelines for the Creation, Compilation, Transportation and Deposition of Archaeological Archives, 2020c). The project archive will include all material collected and/or produced during the course of the project. The deposition of a complete, ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is an integral element of all archaeological projects, as outlined in ClfA code of conduct. The project archive will be organised to be compatible with other archaeological archives in the North-West of England.

An OASIS archiving record will be completed for the project, the original record of which, will be registered at the beginning of the project. The paper archive will be digitised and stored in systems that are secure and easily accessible. The project archive will consist of the following:

- All original records created throughout the course of the project;
 - All original drawings, whether created during fieldwork or post-investigation;
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- Indexes to the drawings;
- Indexes to the photographic archive;
- All digital material;
- Digital material created from written, drawn or photographed original records;
- The final project report;
- A list of contents of the archive;

Any archaeological material collected during the course of the project will also be considered an integral element of the project archive. The integrity of the archive will be maintained upon completion of the archaeological works, with the archive ultimately being deposited with the appropriate repository body (subject to their approval), alongside any archaeological material.

It is likely that a large element of the project archive will be in digital format. It would thus be appropriate to deposit a copy of the archive generated from the archaeological investigation with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS), through ADS-Easy., where possible and appropriate. Any records that are created in hard copy during the course of the project will be scanned and added to this digital archive. Rochdale Development Agency, as a public body, will also be able to supply access to the project archive via Freedom of Information request where possible.

Dissemination

As a minimum, a copy of the final report will be uploaded to ADS and submitted to GMAAS to be incorporated into the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER), as well as a copy of the complete project archive, including archaeological material, deposited in an appropriate repository (subject to their approval). Should any more significant archaeological remains be uncovered, a higher level of dissemination may be required in order to fulfil the dissemination clause of the appropriate planning condition.

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Appendix 1 - List of Figures

Figure 1: Site Location with Approximate Site Boundary Outlined in Red.

Figure 2: Proposed Design for Broadfield Park Slopes.

Appendix 2 - Figures

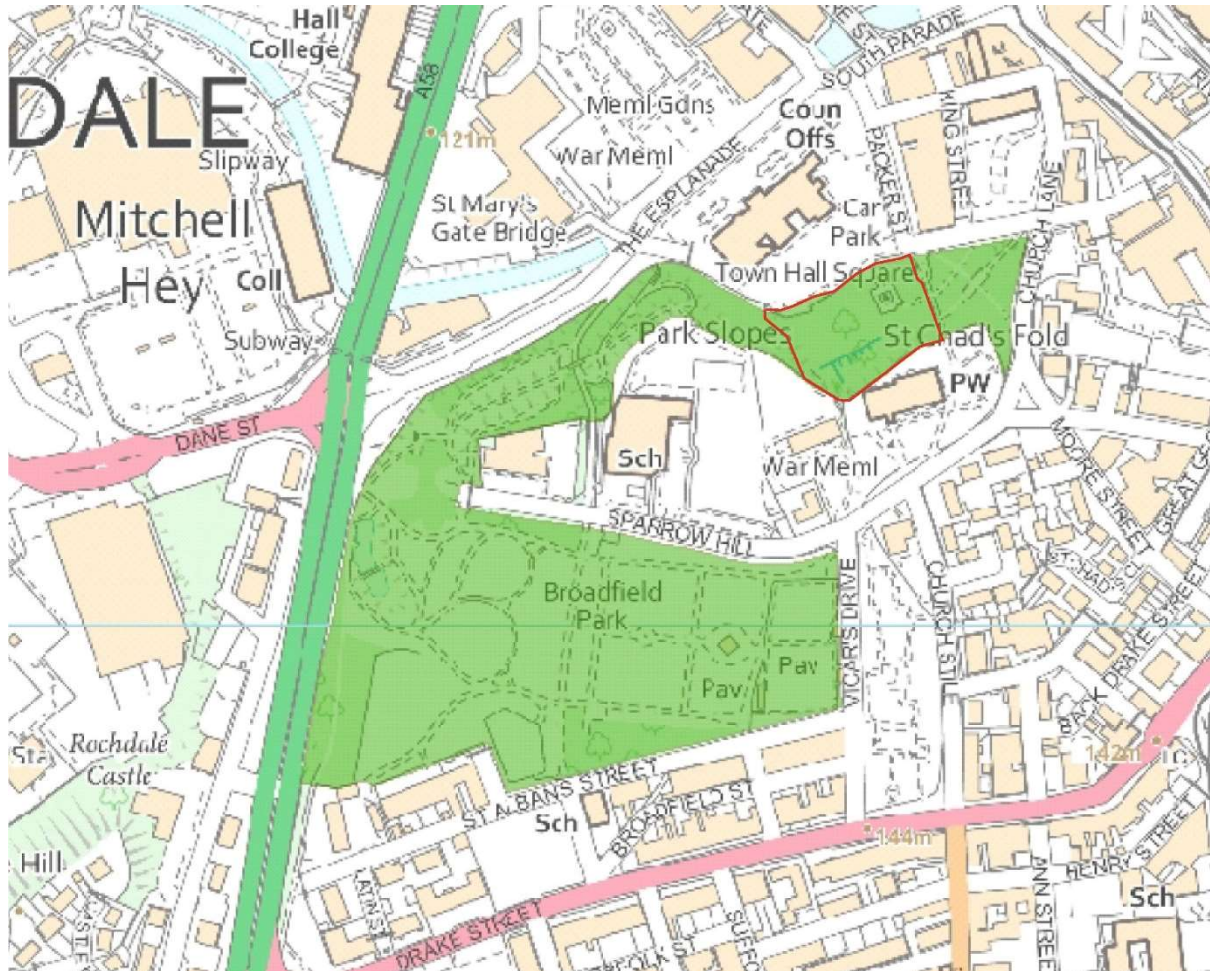


Figure 1: Site Location with Approximate Site Boundary Outlined in Red.

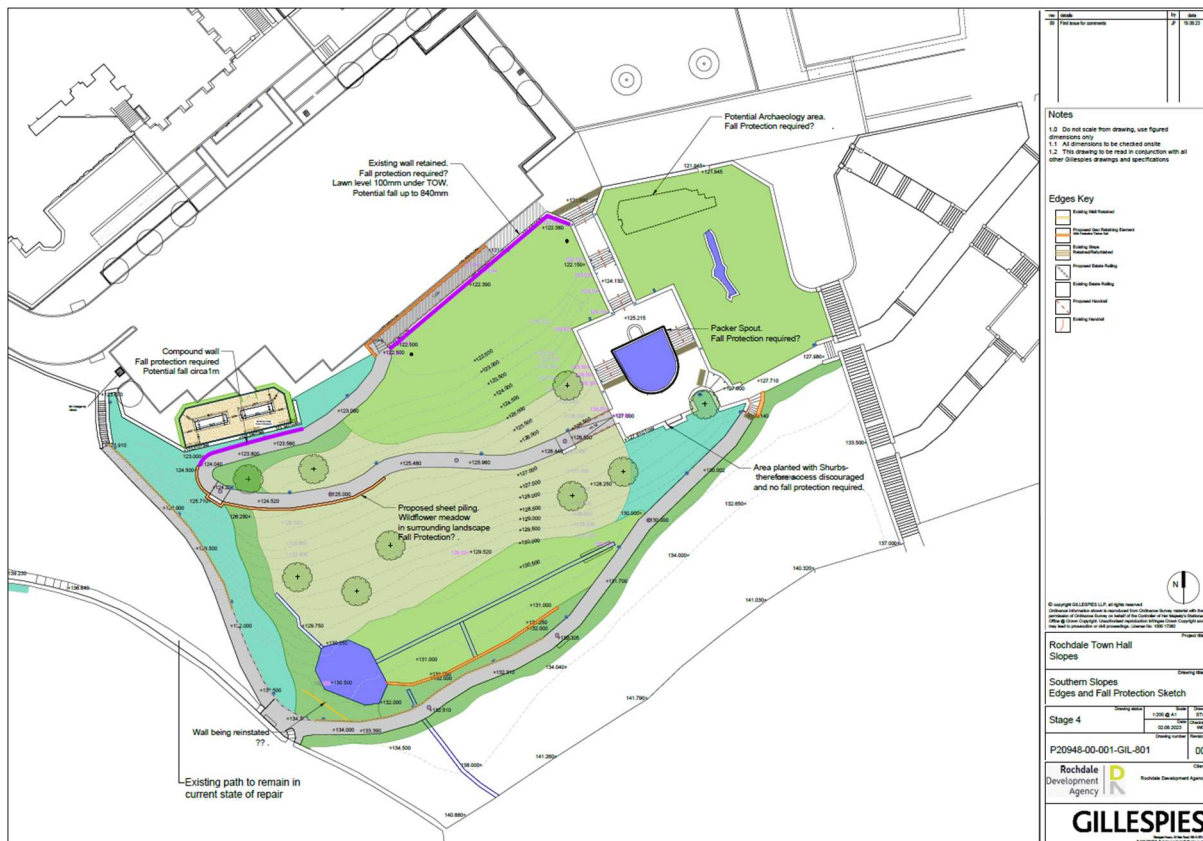


Figure 2: Proposed Design for Broadfield Park Slopes.