

MILL MARSH ROAD, MOULTON SEAS END,
LINCOLNSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



E-mail: herts.archtrust@virgin.net • www.hertfordshire-archaeological-trust.co.uk
Mill Marsh Road, Moulton Seas End, Lincolnshire

Conservation
Services

14 NOV 2002

Highways & Planning
Directorate

HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST
Report No. 1203

event L13779
Source 48424
L18425
Mon 483303
23791

MILL MARSH ROAD, MOULTON SEAS END,
LINCOLNSHIRE
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Parish: *Moulton*
Site Code: *HAT 657*
NGR: (TF 3210 2750)

David Britchfield BA
October 2002

The Seed Warehouse
Maidenhead Yard, The Wash, Hertford, SG14 IPX
Tel: 01992 558170 Fax: 01992 553359

www.hertfordshire-archaeological-trust.co.uk
E-mail: herts.archtrust@virgin.net
Registered Charity No. 281819

MILL MARSH ROAD, MOULTON SEAS END, LINCOLNSHIRE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In October 2002, Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Mill Marsh Road, Moulton Seas End, Lincolnshire, prior to proposed redevelopment of the site for residential use.

The identifiable archaeological potential of the site was for remains of the former sea bank (a feature believed to date from the late Saxon period), as well as possible associated salt production in the Saxon/medieval periods.

A previous geophysical survey, revealed a number of anomalies, suggesting the possibility of two parallel ditches, orientated E/W across the southern extent of the site, coupled with adjacent magnetic anomalies believed to be possibly associated with salt production. However, shallow representations of the ditches were only identified within the south-eastern corner of the site, possibly indicative of the truncated sea bank and associated mudflat tributaries. A single mediaeval pottery sherd was recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 During October 2002, Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (HAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Mill Marsh Road, Moulton Seas End, Lincolnshire (NGR **TE** 321 275) (Figs.1-2). The work was commissioned by Tudor Homes in advance of proposed redevelopment of the site. The evaluation was carried out as part of a planning condition required by South Holland District Council (based on advice from Lincolnshire County Council Conservation Service (LCC CS)). It is proposed to develop the site for residential use.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out according to an advice letter issued by LCC CS outlining their requirements (J Bonnor, dated 5/8/02) and a specification prepared by HAT (dated 10/10/02).

1.3 The evaluation followed a geophysical survey, carried out by Engineering Archaeology Services (EAS 1999) as a requirement prior to the granting of planning permission.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The site lies on the south side of Mill Marsh Road, Moulton Seas End, within the fens of south Lincolnshire (NGR **TE** 3210 2750), some 9km to the south west of the Wash (Fig.1). The canalised course of the river Welland lies some 4km to the

west. It currently comprises land in arable and horticultural use. A drainage ditch or dyke meanders along part of the southern boundary of the site, believed to be associated with, or adjacent to, the former sea bank (shown in Ordnance Survey maps) (Fig.2).

2.2 Moulton Seas End is a largely linear settlement, centred on the main N/S street, with Mill Marsh Road forming part of an E/W route crossing the main street. The site lies to the north west of the main settlement. Modern Ordnance Survey mapping depicts the line of the historic sea bank to run along Mill Marsh Road.

2.3 The site is bounded to the north by Mill Marsh Road, to the west by agricultural land (Eastfield), to the south by agricultural land and recent housing and to the east by the rear plots of properties fronting the main street and Mill Marsh Road.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Topography, Geology and Soils Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1.1 Moulton Seas End lies close to the Wash in an area of Marine Silts, deposited from marine inundation in the prehistoric period. The site lies at an average height of 4m AOD on locally flat land.

3.1.2 A geophysical survey carried out by Engineering Archaeological Services prior to determination of the planning application revealed a potential broad double linear feature, running on an E/W axis, adjacent to an existing dyke, along the southern edge of the site (EAS 1999). The possibility that this feature may be associated with the former sea bank was raised. The course of the old sea bank is marked on Ordnance Survey maps.

3.1.3 The LCC advice letter also indicated two further areas of magnetic response identified from the geophysical survey, which required further investigation. The importance of the Saxon and medieval salt-making industry was emphasised as a particular research priority within this area of the Lincolnshire Fenland.

3.1.4 The Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record was consulted, and the sea bank itself is recorded

3.1.5 The project principally focused on the identification of the former sea bank, along with the clarification of geophysical anomalies highlighted during the EAS survey. It was also considered important to identify any remains of the Saxon, medieval or potentially earlier periods, particularly any evidence for salt making on the site.

3.1.6 As Coles & Hall (1998, 66-7) note, the 'sea bank' was an earthen barrier extending around the edge of the whole wash, constructed to protect the landward side from marine inundation. It was suggested as being of Roman date by 17th

century antiquarians, though there has been no evidence to support this (it is still called 'Roman bank' on some modern-day OS maps). Coles and Hall note the first reference to the feature in 1178 (described then as 'old'). A number of Middle Saxon sites (such as at Tilney St Lawrence) are partly overlain by the existing bank, suggesting that the feature is later, and the earliest siltland villages lie close behind the bank, suggesting it was present by the late Saxon period (confirmed by excavations at Terrington St Clement and West Walton). A section of the bank at Clenchwarton confirmed that it had been built directly on mudflats rather than a developed topsoil.

4 METHOD OF WORK

4.1 The evaluation was conducted according to the advice letter (and trench plan suggested by LCC) and the HAT specification, and complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 1999).

4.2 Three trenches were excavated within the southern area of the proposed development (Fig. 2), using a 180° wheeled mechanical excavator (JCB) fitted with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket. Trenches 1 & 3 were 20m x 1.6m and Trench 2 was 40m x 1.6m. The trench locations were approved by both the client and LCC. Topsoil was mechanically excavated under close supervision until the underlying archaeological horizons or natural deposits were visible. All further excavation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological deposits. These were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the trenches were scanned with a metal detector.

5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS (Fig. 3)

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

5.1 Trench 1

Sample Section (0.00 = 4.05m AOD):

- 0.00 – 0.30m L1000. Topsoil. Dark orange/brown loam with inclusions of modern materials including shotgun cartridges.
- 0.30m+ L1001. Natural Marine Silts. Loose, light yellowish-brown silty sand, with mottled orange flecks. Plough truncation and bioturbation evident.

Description Situated within the south-western corner of the site, this trench revealed a probable former channel (F1006), comprising a mid orangey-brown loam (L1007), 0.87m in depth. A single fragment of local unglazed mediaeval pottery with quartz inclusions was retrieved from this deposit (4.5g). F1006 may represent a ditch, although with a width of 19.3m, it is more likely to represent a mudflat tributary channel, or possibly an undulation caused during excess flooding. It exhibited gently sloping sides and a flattish base where seen.

5.2 Trench 2

Sample Section (0.00 = 4.11m AOD):

0.00 – 0.30m L1000. Topsoil. As Trench 1

0.30m+ L1001. Natural Marine Silts. As Trench 1

Description The presence of the potential mudflat tributary, F1006, also dominated this trench. Recorded here as F1008, the feature continued beyond the northern extent of the trench, containing a single fill of a mid orange/brown loam (L1009). A box section was excavated along the extent of this deposit, in order to confirm a maximum depth of 0.25m. No finds were present.

5.3 Trench 3

Sample Section (0.00 = 4.10m AOD):

0.00 – 0.30m L1000. As Trench 1

0.30m+ L1001. As Trench 1

Description Two very shallow features were identified within Trench 3, both providing a physical representation of the 'ditches' identified during the geophysical survey, and both roughly aligned E/W. The first of these, F1002, was situated within the southern part of the trench, measuring some 3m wide and 0.12m in depth, with very gently sloping sides and a flattish, slightly concave base. The feature contained a single fill (L1003), comprising a mid orange/brown, loam, with sparse coarse components. No finds were present.

F1004, lay some 2m to the north of F1002, with a width of 1.32m and a maximum depth of 0.11m. The feature was similar in profile to F1002, containing a single fill (L1005) a mid orange/brown loam deposit. It contained no finds.

6 CONFIDENCE RATING

6.1 With the exception of truncation caused by ploughing, it is not felt that any factors hindered the recognition of archaeological features or deposits during the evaluation.

7 DEPOSIT MODEL

7.1 Shallow topsoil directly overlay the natural marine silts in this area. No developed subsoil was recorded, and the topsoil directly overlay the natural marine silts.

7.2 F1006 L1007 and F1008 L1009, present in Trenches 1 and 2, may indicate a phase of excess flooding, most likely during the medieval period, prior to the 17th century drainage schemes. The two shallow 'ditches' identified in Trench 3 did not

provide any dateable material, although were filled with similar deposits and are likely contemporary with L1007/L1009.

8 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

8.1 The evaluation identified two possible ditches within the south-eastern corner of the site, as illustrated by the geophysical survey. Neither contained finds. While it was not possible to determine a precise relationship (due to the limitations of trial trenching) between the fills of the ditches (1003 & 1005) and layers 1007 & 1009, their physical characteristics were noticeably similar. With this in mind, the single sherd of pottery provides a tentative medieval date for the features encountered.

8.2 The results from the geophysical survey provided the possibility of a double ditch, aligned E/W, within the southern area of the site. Positive identification of two shallow features was obtained in Trench 3, but not in Trench 2. It is likely, therefore, that the variable magnetic anomalies illustrated (EAS 1999: Figures 2 & 3) relate to inclusions within the topsoil.

8.3 Similarly, the areas identified as potential salt production sites produced negative results. It is unlikely that saltern sites, which tend to be prolific in archaeological material, are extant within the development area. Perambulation of the site during the fieldwork produced no surface finds, as would be expected with such a shallow overburden, should there have been salt-production taking place in the vicinity.

8.4 In the case of the sea bank, Ordnance Survey has plotted a potential position as being adjacent to the north side of the dyke; coinciding with the southern extents of layers 1007 and 1009. Assuming that these represent low lying inundations, the former bank may likely have been levelled through ploughing.

8.5 In summary, the evaluation produced little evidence to support the existence of a saltern site within the development area. Similarly, the sea bank, if it once existed within the area, has likely been levelled by ploughing.

9 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

9.1 The archive will be deposited with the City & County Museum, Lincoln.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Trust is grateful to Tudor Homes for funding the archaeological evaluation and for their assistance (in particular Mr Ashley J King).

HAT also wishes to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Jim Bonnor of Lincolnshire County Council Conservation Service.

REFERENCES

Albone, J, 2002, *An Archaeological Resource Assessment of Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework

Coles, J & Hall, D, 1998, *Changing Landscapes: The Ancient Fenland*, CCC/Wetland Archaeology Research Project)

Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd, 1999, *Moulton Seas End, Geophysical Survey, July 1999*

Everson, P, 2002, *An Archaeological Resource Assessment of Medieval Lincolnshire*, East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework

Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 1999)

Lincolnshire County Council (1998) *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook*

Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983. *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales*. Harpenden

HAT 657

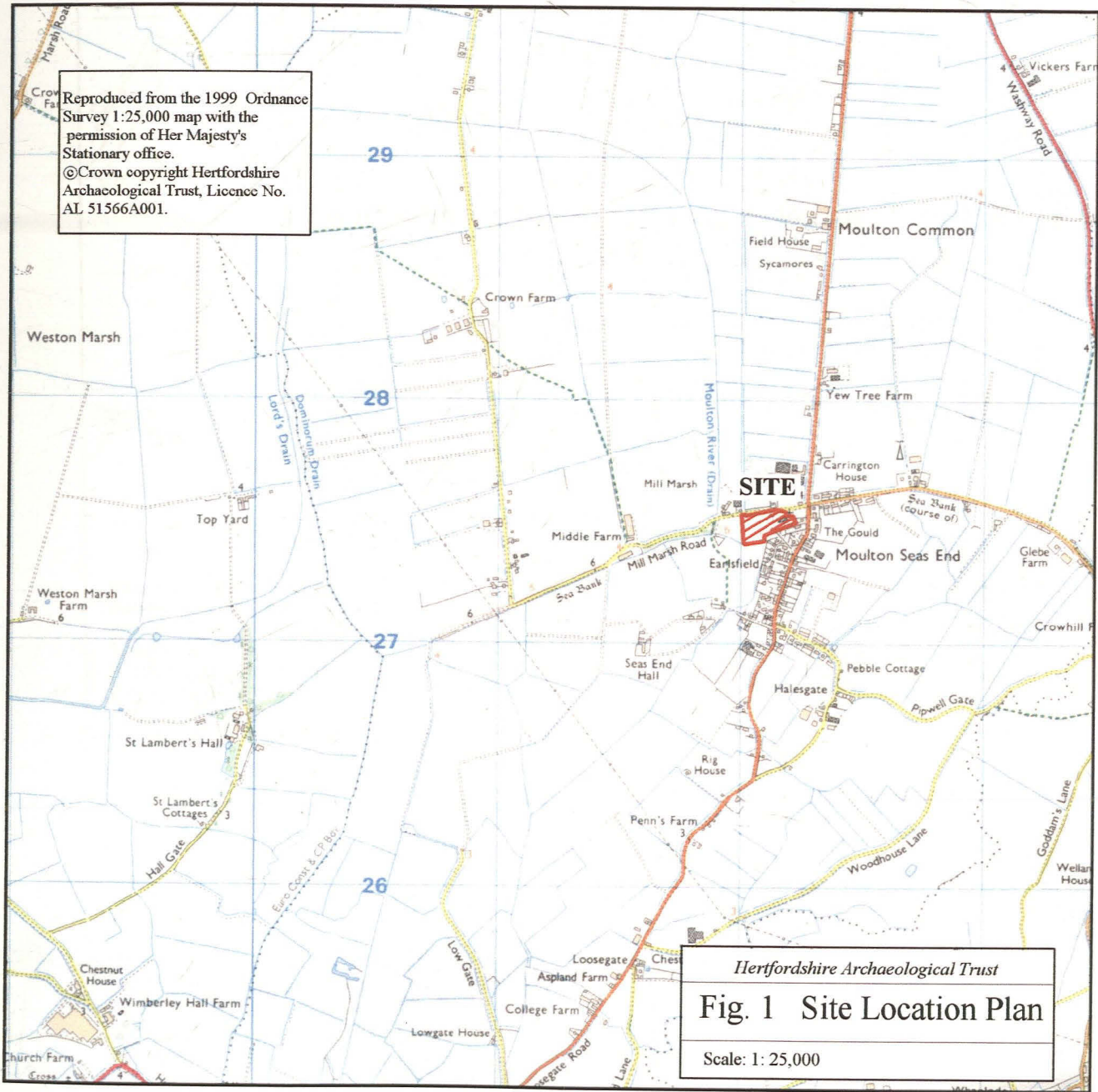
Mill Marsh Road, Moulton Seas End

4/11/02

Concordance of Finds

Trench	Cut	Fill	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	Other
1	F1006	L1007	Fill of linear feature /channel	Mediaeval	4.5g	

Reproduced from the 1999 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationary office.
© Crown copyright Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust, Licence No. AL 51566A001.



Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust
Fig. 1 Site Location Plan
Scale: 1: 25,000

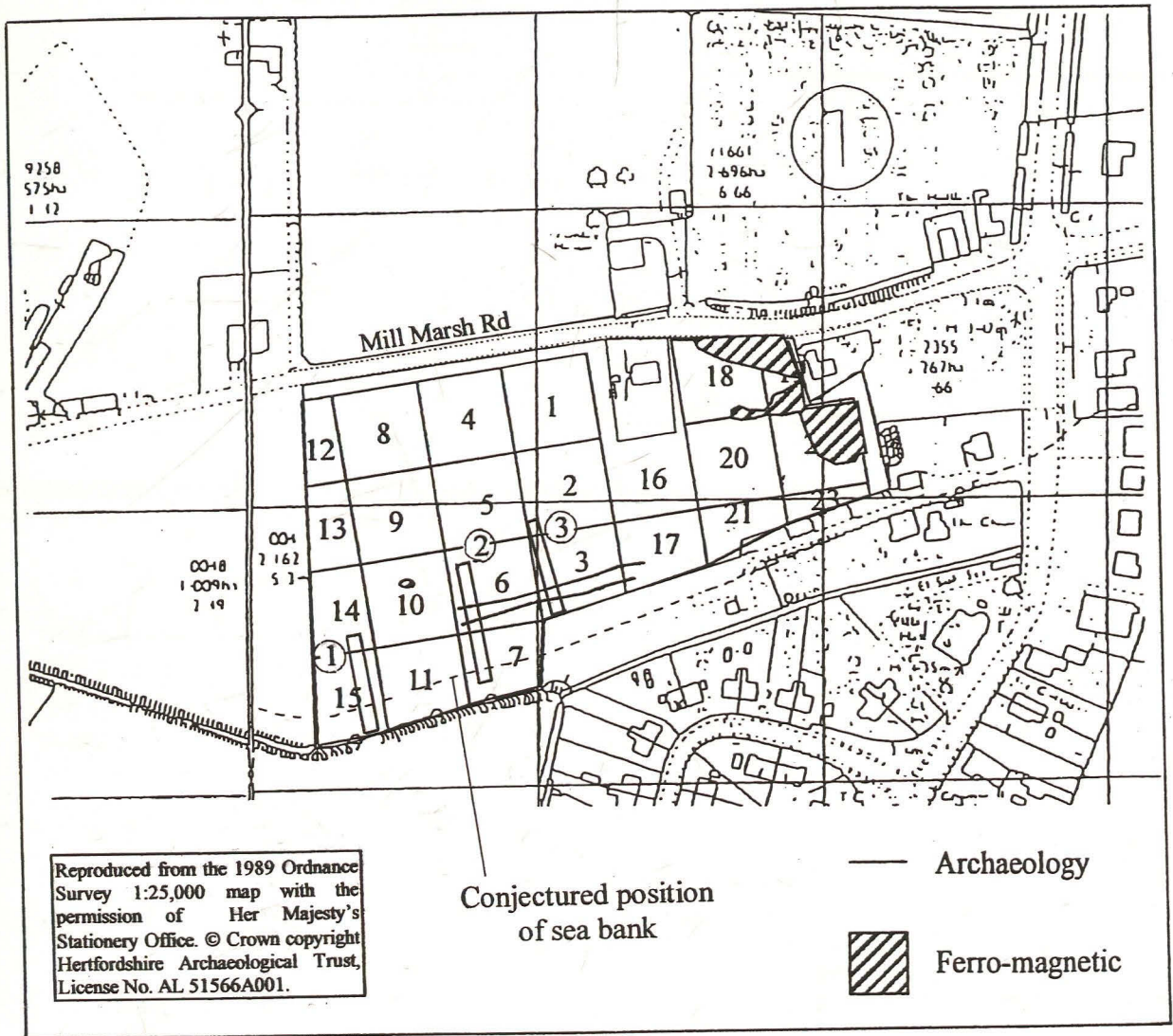
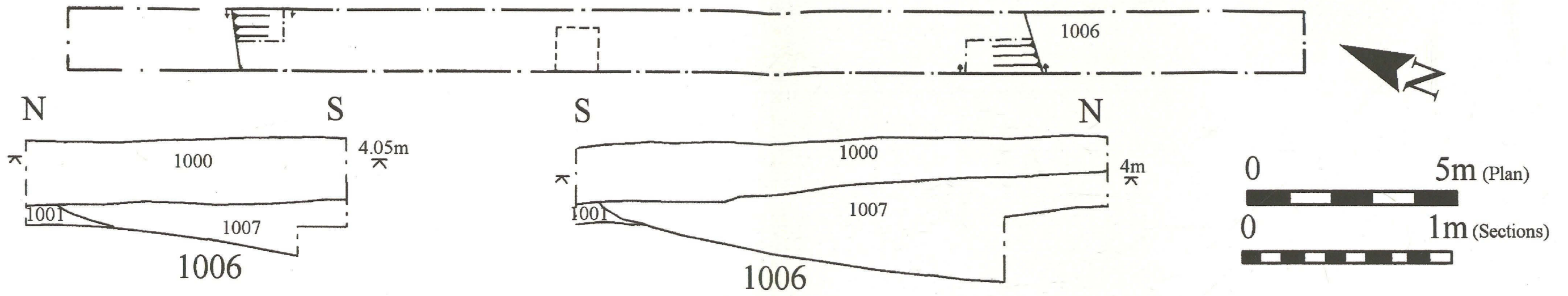
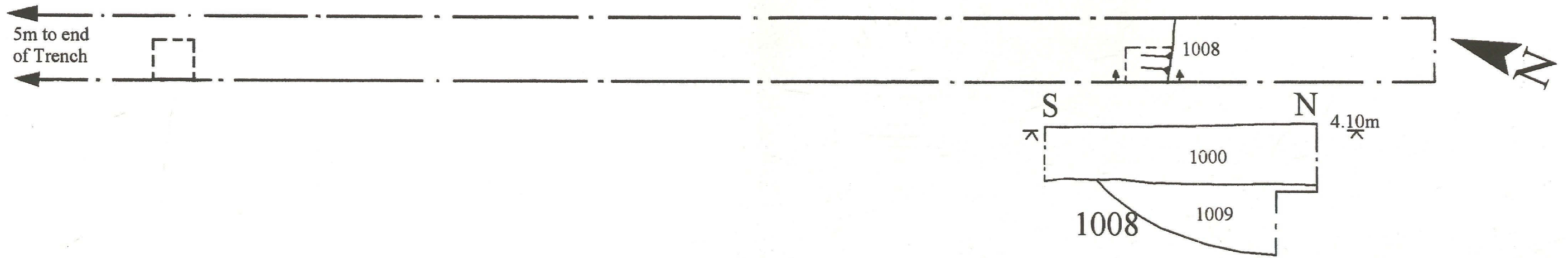


Fig. 2 Trench location plan
Scale 1:2,500

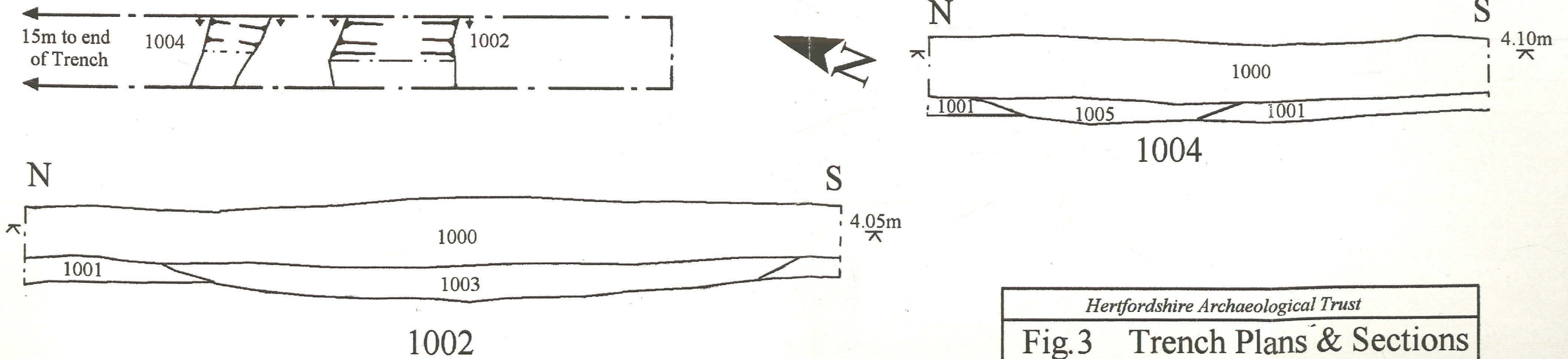
Trench 1



Trench 2



Trench 3



Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust

Fig.3 Trench Plans & Sections

Scale: Plans 1:100 & Sections 1:20 at A3