

**Former Roman Hill Primary School,
Love Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk,
NR32 2NY:**

**An Archaeological Trial Trench
Evaluation**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBERS:
DC/12/1330/FUL**

PCA REPORT NO: R11445

SITE CODE: LWT191

JUNE 2013



**Former Roman Hill Primary School, Love Road, Lowestoft,
Suffolk, NR32 2NY:
An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation**

Site Code: LWT191

Report Number: R11445

Central NGR: NGR TM 544 934

**Local Planning Authority: Waveney District Council
Planning Reference: DC/12/1330/FUL**

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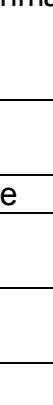
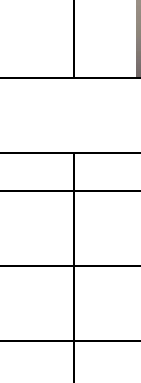
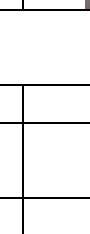
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FORMER ROMAN HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, LOVE
ROAD, LOWERSTOFT, SUFFOLK, NR32 2NY

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH
EVALUATION

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
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Report Number	11445

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	3
1 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	6
3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY.....	7
4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE.....	8
5 DISCUSSION.....	17
6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	18
7 REFERENCES.....	19
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER	26
APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM.....	27
FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION.....	20
FIGURE 2: DETAIL SITE AND TRENCH LOCATION.....	21
FIGURE 3: PLAN OF TRENCHES 1-5.....	22
FIGURE 4: 1 st EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP (c. 1886-1890).....	23
FIGURE 5: 2 nd EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP (1905).....	24
FIGURE 6: 3 rd EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP (1927).....	25

ABSTRACT

This document details the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation at the former Roman Hill Primary School, Love Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk. The work was commissioned by the Castleoak Group to assess the archaeological implications of redevelopment of land at the site.

The work was undertaken from 10th-12th June 2013 and comprised the excavation of five evaluation trenches across the eastern part of the site, totalling 100m in length.

The evaluation found that natural glacial clay was preserved intact across the western part of the study area. In the eastern part, extensive quarrying had occurred in the 19th and early 20th centuries, especially in the northeast corner of the site. This clay and sand quarrying is associated with the brickworks shown occupying the site on late-19th- and early-20th-century Ordnance Survey maps. No earlier archaeological features, deposits or finds were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document details the results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land formerly occupied by the Roman Hill Primary School, Love Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk (centred on NGR TM 544 934) (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The site is located on the south side of Love Road, Lowestoft. Its southern boundary is formed by Ethel Road; houses neighbour the site to the west and a footpath between Love Road and Ethel Road extends along the eastern boundary. In total, the site covers an area of 1.08ha.
- 1.3 At the time of the evaluation, the disused school buildings had been demolished, leaving areas of concrete floor slab, car parking and playground space surfaced in asphalt, and some small areas of grass and vegetation.
- 1.4 The archaeological investigation was commissioned by the Castleoak Group to assess the archaeological implications of redevelopment of land at the site and construction of a new care home.
- 1.5 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Mark Hinman (PCA) (Hinman 2013) in response to a Design Brief prepared by Jess Tipper of the Conservation Team of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS/CT) (Tipper 2013). As the site is known to have been occupied by a brickworks from at least c. 1880 to the 1920s and quarry workings are shown on Ordnance Survey maps of that period (Figures 4-6), the evaluation was limited to the eastern part of the site where less truncation was anticipated to have occurred.
- 1.6 The terrain slopes gently downwards from 14.80m OD in the western part of the study area to around 13.30m OD towards its eastern edge.
- 1.7 The underlying geology of the site consists of Lowestoft Formation over Crag Group Sand (BGS Geology of Britain viewer online).

- 1.8 The fieldwork was carried out between the 10th and 12th June 2013 and comprised the excavation and recording of five archaeological evaluation trenches. These comprised four 15.00m long trenches and one 40.00m long trench. In total 100m of trenches were excavated.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological interest recorded in the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (HER). A Neolithic pit is recorded to the south (HER LWT 137) and Roman coins have been found to the southeast (HER LWT 007) and southwest (HER LWT 027). The Brief for Archaeological Evaluation (Tipper 2013) states that there is high potential for encountering archaeological deposits relating to these, and other periods, in this area.
- 2.2 A map regression based on the 1st Edition (c. 1886-1890), 2nd Edition (1905) and 3rd Edition (1927) Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 4-6) indicates that a brick works with kilns occupied the site in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Extensive clay extraction pits across the western part of the site are shown on the 2nd Edition map (Figure 5). In anticipation that this would have caused extensive truncation to any archaeology present in this area, it was decided in consultation with the County Archaeologist to concentrate the evaluation trenches in the eastern part of the site.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 A total of 5 trenches were laid out in accordance with the requirements of the Brief and the trench location plan included in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Figure 2).
- 3.2 Trenches 1-3 and Trench 5 measured 15.00m in length, while Trench 4 was 40.00m long. Trenches 3 and 4 were situated in part to investigate evidence for mapped historic buildings associated with the brickworks. The trench localities were CAT-scanned prior to excavation. In practice, it was necessary to slightly shorten (and immediately backfill parts of) Trenches 3 and 4 due to the presence of buried asbestos sheeting, especially given the dry weather conditions, the close proximity of the trenches to a nursery school, and the general residential nature of the area.
- 3.3 Ground reduction was carried out under close archaeological supervision using a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Asphalt surfaces, topsoil and underlying modern (later-20th-century) deposits were removed (where possible) in spits down to the level of natural horizons where potential archaeological features could be observed and recorded. In practice, this proved difficult to do within Trenches 3 and 4 due to extensive deep truncations caused by clay extraction.
- 3.4 The field techniques and recording system employed are detailed within the PCA fieldwork induction manual (Taylor and Brown 2011), as well as the Museum of London site manual (Museum of London 1994.)
- 3.5 OD heights and trench locations were recorded using a Leica 1200 GPS rover unit.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

(Figure 3)

Trench 1 (15.00m length) (Plate 1)

4.1 Natural Clay (1) was encountered at a height of between 14.32m OD and 14.26m OD within this trench, 0.37-0.48m below modern ground level. No features were encountered cut into this clay, although there was evidence that small frost polygons had formed on its surface under peri-glacial conditions.

4.2 The natural clay was sealed by a modern asphalt car park surface and its bedding layer. The current ground surface lay between 14.74m OD and 14.69m OD.



Plate 1: Trench 1: view northwest showing Natural Clay (1) in base of trench, with evidence of frost polygons.

Trench 2 (15.00m length) (Plate 2)

- 4.3 Natural Clay (2) was exposed at a height of between 14.15m OD and 14.10m OD. As in Trench 1, no archaeological features were present within this trench.
- 4.4 Overlying the natural clay lay a 0.05-0.10m thick layer of finely crushed brick material (3), most probably arising from brick production and dating to the 19th century. The underlying clay showed no signs of scorching or burning, hence it is unlikely that this material was deposited while still at a high temperature, nor did the brick deposit show signs of wear on its upper face associated with having been laid down as a surface.
- 4.5 This crushed brick layer was sealed by very modern concrete, brickwork and topsoil; an electricity cable was also present towards the western end of the trench. Current ground level around this trench lay at between 14.80m OD and 14.47m OD, sloping down to the south-east due to past terracing associated with the school building.



Plate 2: Trench 2: view east showing natural clay (2) in base of trench, with modern intrusions visible.

Trench 3 (15.00m length) (Plates 3 and 4)

4.6 Natural deposits were not encountered in this trench due to extensive deep truncation caused by clay extraction pits. The earliest (and lowest) deposit encountered comprised the late-19th-century backfill (4) of these clay workings. This was encountered at a height of between 13.34m OD and 12.96m OD and was more than 1.75m deep. The deposit had a partly domestic character (containing inclusions of domestic pottery and glass bottles), which suggests that the extraction pits were used in part as a landfill from the adjacent late Victorian terraced houses. A test pit into Layer (4) was excavated at the west end of the trench in an attempt to ascertain the depth at which the natural geology survived. However, no natural was encountered at a depth approaching 2.5m below modern ground level. For safety reasons, the test pit was backfilled and the remainder of the trench excavated to a depth of 1.30m only, into the upper levels of Layer (4).



Plate 3: Trench 3: north-facing section at west end of trench showing 19th-century quarry backfill (4) with modern made ground above. 2.00m scale.

- 4.7 Built over this deposit were two parallel walls (5) and (6), aligned northeast to southwest, and probably forming external walls of the same building. Wall (5), the westernmost, lay at a height of 13.18m OD, was 0.55m wide and 0.23m high. Wall (6), to its east, was exposed at a height of 13.29m OD, was 0.35m wide and 0.48m high. These two walls appear to correspond closely with a long building shown on the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey map (dating to 1927; Figures 3 and 6). It is not clear whether the site was still occupied by the brickworks at this date (unlike the two earlier Ordnance Survey maps, it is not marked as such), thus making it possible that this building had another function.
- 4.8 Above this building lay a mass of material relating to its demolition. This was in turn sealed by the disused asphalt playground surface and its bedding material. The current ground surface within the vicinity of Trench 3 lay between 13.95m OD and 14.09m OD.



Plate 4: General view of Trench 3, looking east, with Wall (5) in foreground and Wall (6) in background.

Trench 4 (40.00m length) (Plates 5, 6 and 7)

- 4.9 This trench was occupied by three large cut features arising from clay extraction, numbered from north to south (respectively) as [11], [13] and [15]. Due to the excessive depth at which they were exposed, it was not possible to explore them in detail. Two, [11] and [13], were exposed in three deep sondages which were machine-excavated into the floor of the trench.
- 4.10 Pit [11] was seen to be between 0.60m and 1.10m deep and was backfilled with dumped layers of sand and clayey silt (9). Its base was encountered at a height of between 11.87m OD and 12.37m OD. Although the cut of Pit [11] was not identified in the northernmost sondage, its backfill (9) was present, strongly suggesting that a very large extraction pit (probably measuring well in excess of 12.00m from north to south) lay within the northern part of the trench. As this area is shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (c. 1886-1890; Figure 4) as being in the immediate vicinity of a brick kiln (and its attendant chimney), it is probable that this extraction pit dates to the later 19th or first half of the 20th century.



Plate 5: Trench 4: section showing Backfilled Sand (9) within Quarry Pit [11] and Natural Sand (10) below. 2.00m scale.

4.11 Pit [13], further to the south, was partially exposed on the eastern side of the trench at a height of 13.00m OD and was excavated by machine to 11.85m OD, at which point machining was stopped for safety reasons. The exposed part of the feature measured 2.50m from northeast to southwest, 0.40m+ from northwest to southeast, and was 1.15m+ deep. The pit was backfilled with a sandy silt deposit (12) which contained inclusions of concrete and therefore dates to no earlier than the late 19th or early 20th century.



Plate 6: Trench 4: view northwest of deep machine-excavated sondage into late-19th- to 20th-century Quarry Pit [13], to right of sondage truncating Natural Sand (10) (left). Depth of sondage: 2.00m below modern ground surface.

4.12 Another large clay extraction pit [15] was encountered in the south end of Trench 4, at a height of 12.66m OD. It was exposed for a distance of 10.50m from northeast to southwest and only a small part of the northeast edge of the pit was exposed. It had been backfilled with a silty sand deposit (14), which contained inclusions of glass, brick and coal, and dates from the 19th century. Due to the depth at which this pit was encountered, it was not fully excavated. Due to the presence of large quantities of buried asbestos at the southern end of the trench, further excavation was slightly curtailed for health and safety reasons.

4.13 These clay extraction features were sealed by the modern asphalt playground surface and its bedding layer. Modern ground level lay at between 13.70m OD and 14.02m OD, rising to the north-east.



Plate 7: Trench 4: view north with large Quarry Pit [15] in foreground.

Trench 5 (15.00m length) (Plate 8)

- 4.14 Natural Sand (20) was encountered throughout the trench at a height of between 12.59m OD and 12.71m OD. This was very similar in character to the natural sand deposits (10) encountered in Trench 4, a short distance to the northwest.
- 4.15 Trench 5 also contained two 19th-century pits [17] and [19], both situated at the western end of the trench. Pit [17] measured 2.40m from east to west and extended to the north and south beyond the trench. It was exposed at a height of 12.59m OD. Within its backfill (16) were occasional inclusions of peg tile and clay tobacco pipe stems, which date this to the late 18th or 19th century. It was rather smaller in size to the other pits of similar age exposed elsewhere on the site, which might suggest a more domestic origin, although its backfill displayed no signs of being derived from domestic waste (unlike Layer (4) in Trench 3).

4.16 The eastern edge of another pit [19] was exposed at the western end of Trench 5, and uncovered for a stretch of 1.50m. It appeared at the same level OD as [17] and appeared to be of a similar age, as its backfill contained inclusions of coal and frogged red brick. A modern pit and posthole (mid 20th century+) were identified at the east end of the trench.

4.17 Trench 5 was also covered by the modern asphalt playground surface, on top of a bedding layer and modern made ground which was up to 1.00m thick. The modern ground surface in the vicinity of this trench lay at a height of between 13.33m OD and 13.52m OD.



Plate 8: Trench 5: general view looking east, showing Natural Sand (20) in base of trench and 19th-century pits [17] and [19] in foreground.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 No pre-19th-century archaeological features were identified in any of the trenches, perhaps partly due to the extensive truncation caused by clay extraction in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, nor was there any evidence of archaeological remains in the less-truncated areas of the site examined in Trenches 1 and 2, or at the eastern end of Trench 5.
- 5.2 Clay extraction pits were encountered in Trenches 3, 4 and 5, across the east side of the study area. This was unexpected because it had been assumed prior to the evaluation that the most intensive past quarrying had occurred in the central and western parts of the site. In view of this, the presence of solid, undisturbed natural clay in Trenches 1 and 2 is a surprise. Its intact presence might be due to its proximity to the later phase of buildings belonging to the brickworks, shown on the 2nd Edition OS map of 1905 (Figure 5).
- 5.3 Given the presence of natural clay on slightly higher ground to the west, the original underlying geology of the site can be characterised as a thin natural clay layer capping underlying sand deposits. The identified extraction pits were excavated very deeply into the sand, probably for the purpose of extracting sand for use in brick manufacture (*i.e.* as temper) or for making mortar used in building construction.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PCA would like to thank Castleoak Group for commissioning this evaluation. Thanks to Josephine Brown and Mark Roughley of the PCA CAD Department for preparing the figures and to Jess Tipper of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team for monitoring the project. This report was edited by Tom Woolhouse.

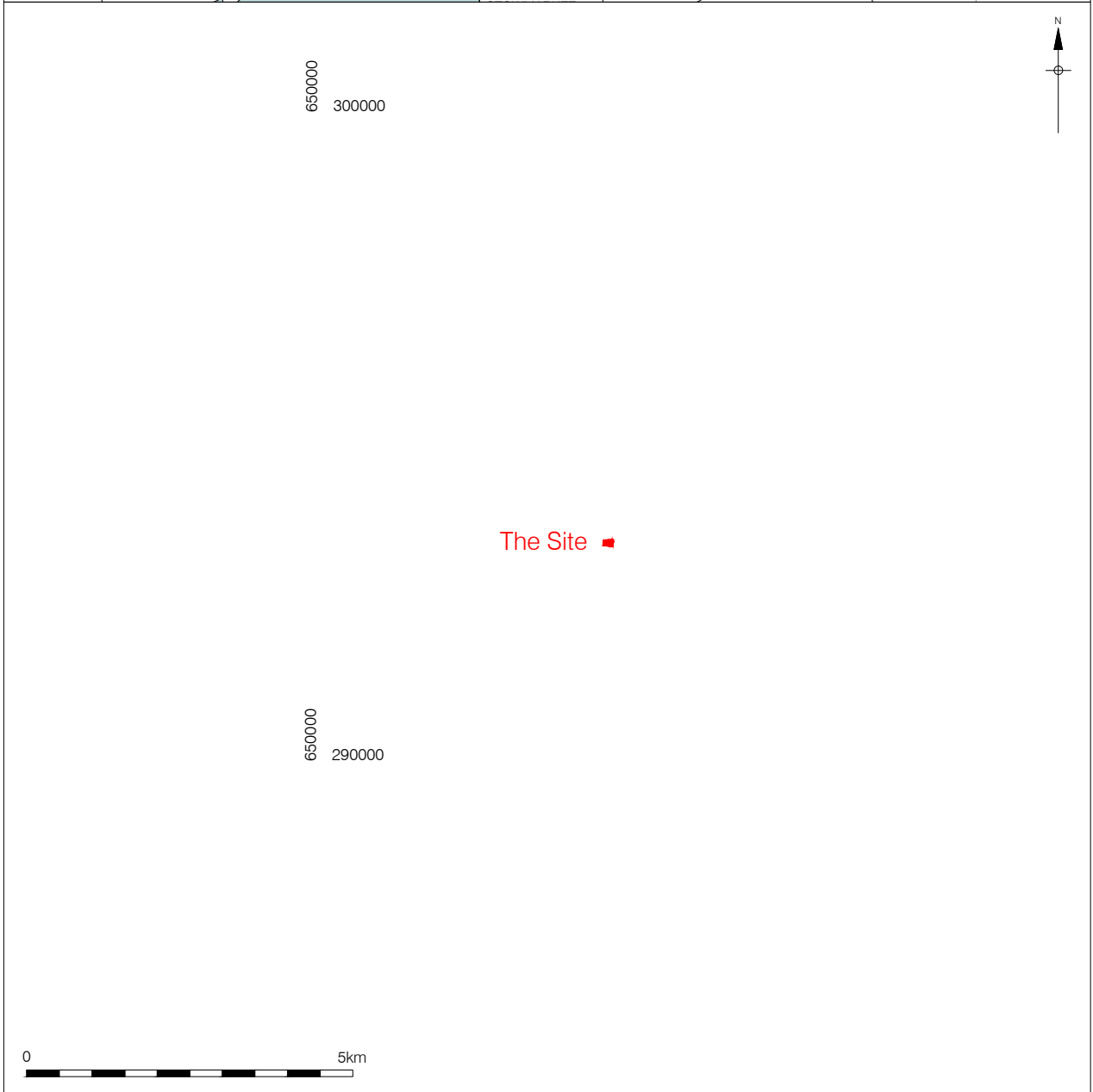
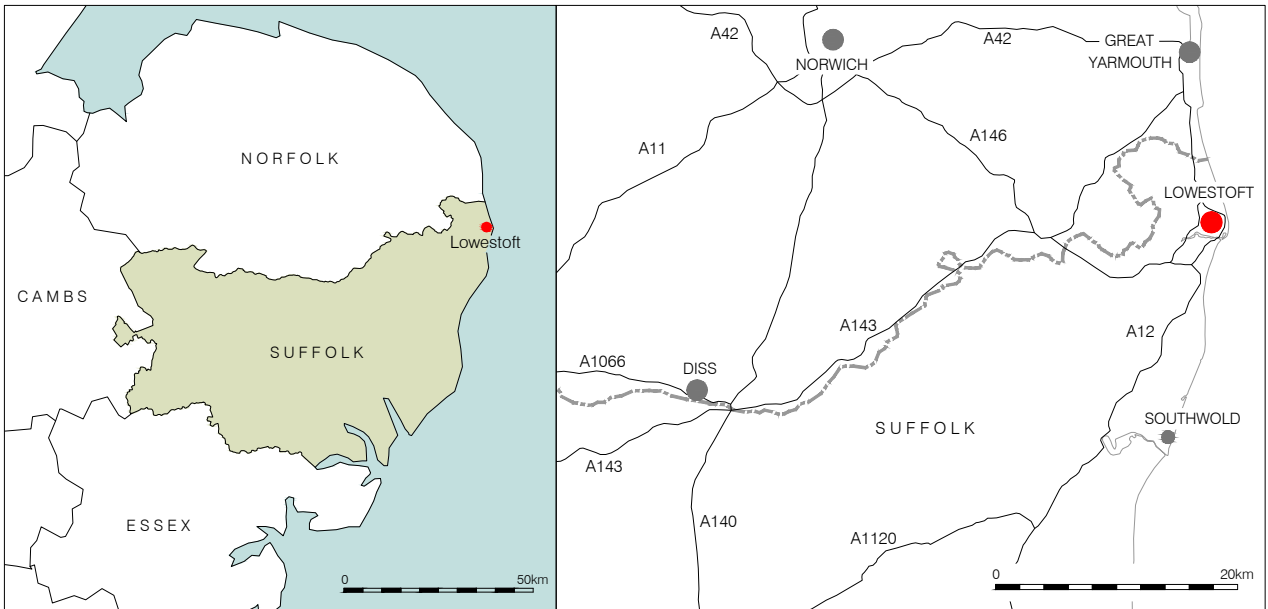
7 REFERENCES

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Museum of London 1994 *Archaeological Site Manual*. 3rd Edition. London

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Tipper, J. 2013 *Brief for a Trenched Archaeological Evaluation at Former Roman Hill Primary School, Love Road, Lowestoft*. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:2,000,000; 625,000 & 100,000 at A4

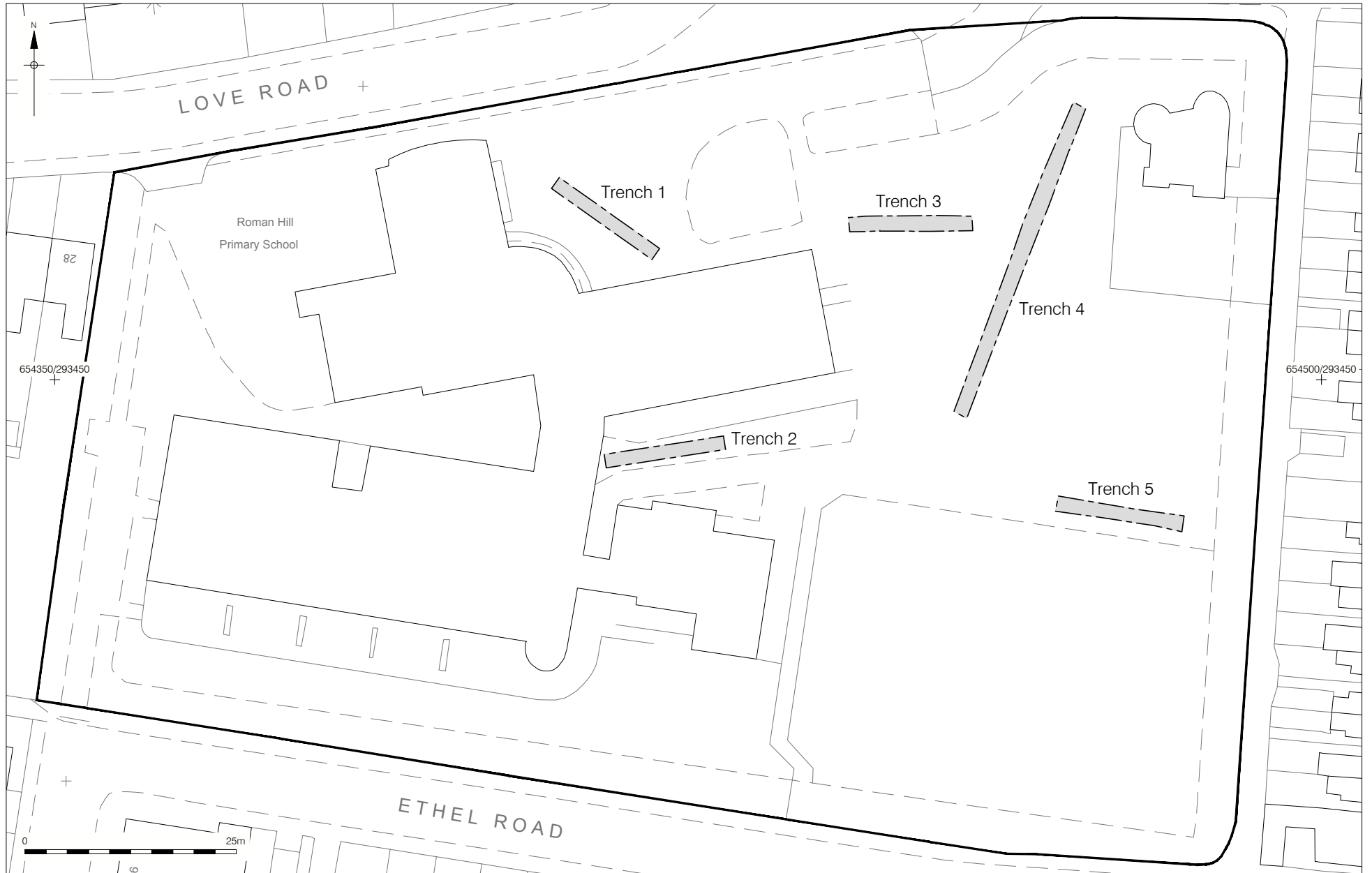


Figure 2
 Detail Site and Trench Location
 1:625 at A4

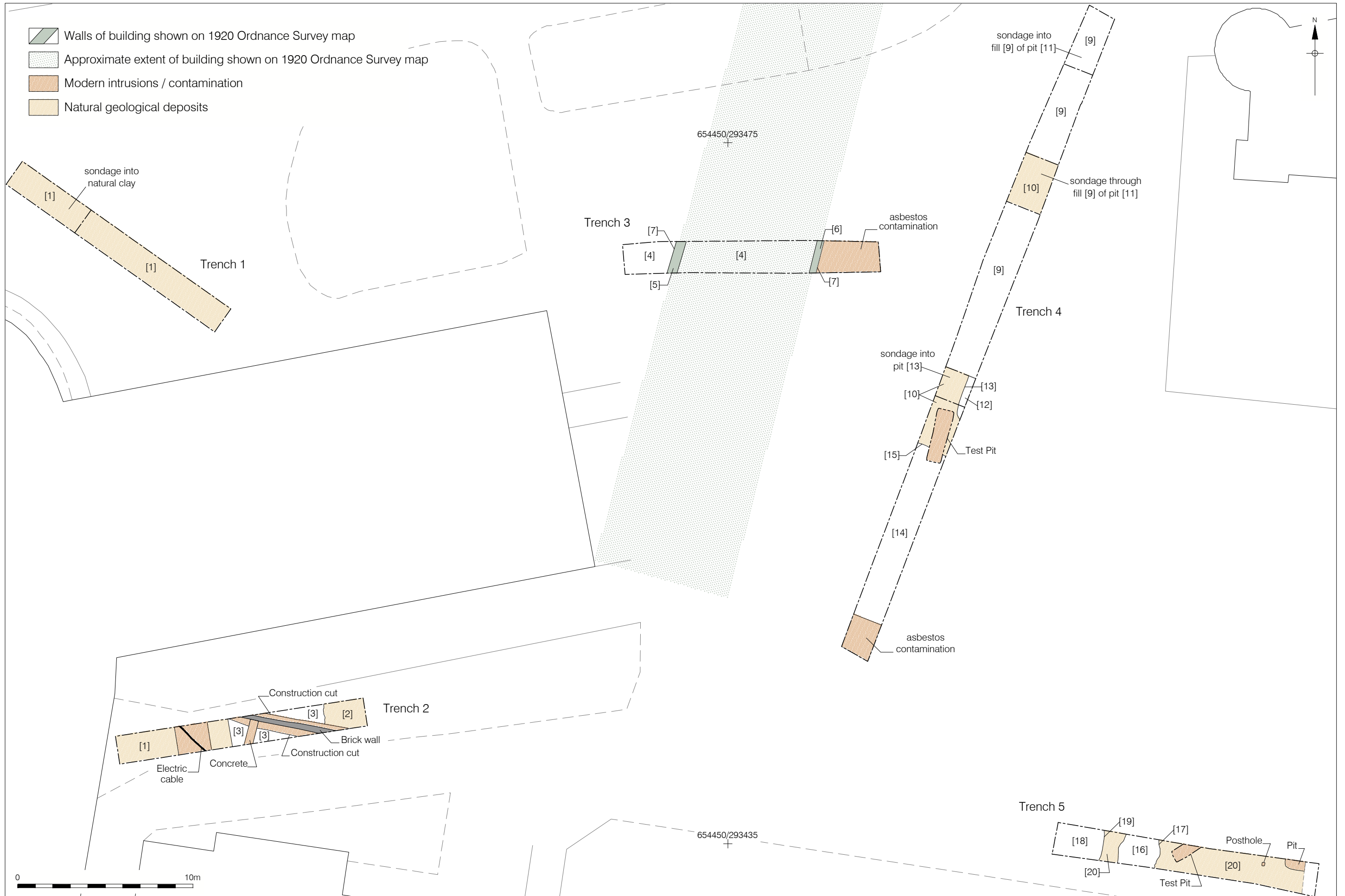


Figure 3
 Plan of Trenches 1 to 5
 1:200 at A3







APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Cut	Type	Tr.	Comments
1		Natural	1	Natural clay
2		Natural	2	Natural clay
3		Layer	2	Brick dust layer
4		Layer	3	Backfill of quarrying
5		Masonry	3	Early 20 th century brick wall
6		Masonry	3	Early 20 th century brick wall
7		Cut	3	Cut for cellared (?) building
8		Layer	4	Burnt material: kiln debris
9		Deposit	4	Backfill/levelling of clay quarrying
10		Natural	4	Natural sand
11		Cut	4	Quarrying Pit
12		Fill	4	Backfill of [13]
13		Cut	4	Late 19 th century quarry pit
14		Fill	4	Backfill of [15]
15		Cut	4	Quarry pit
16		Fill	5	Backfill of [17]
17		Cut	5	19 th century pit
18		Fill	5	Backfill of [19]
19		Cut	5	19 th century quarry pit
20		Natural	5	Natural sand

APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-152941

Project details

Project name	Roman Hill, Lowestoft Evaluation
Short description of the project	Five evaluation trenches totalling 100m in length were excavated to assess the archaeological potential of the site in advance of redevelopment. The site was occupied by a brickworks in the 19th and earlier 20th century. Deep clay and sand extraction pits associated with this use had truncated the natural geological horizon across much of the investigation area. No earlier archaeological features or finds were identified.
Project dates	Start: 10-06-2013 End: 12-06-2013
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LWT191 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	DC/12/1330/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches","Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK WAVENEY LOWESTOFT Former Roman Hill Primary School, Love Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 2NY
Postcode	NR32 2NY

Study area	1.08 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 544 934 52 1 52 28 42 N 001 44 48 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 13.00m Max: 14.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Officer
Project design originator	Mark Hinman
Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Ashley Pooley
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Castleoak Group

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Entered by	Tom Woolhouse (twoolhouse@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	17 June 2013

OASIS:

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