

Archaeological evaluation of land at 15 Evelyn Road, Willows Green, Great Leighs, Essex CM3 1QQ

NGR: TQ 71954 19618

Site Code: FLWG17

Planning Application: UTT/16/2348/FUL



Touchstone Archaeology

August 2017

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Archaeological Evaluation of Land south of Gate Marsh House, Church Road, North Fambridge, Essex CM3 6LU

NGR: TQ 71954 19618

Site Code: FLWG17

1. Summary

Touchstone Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at 15 Evelyn Road in the village of Willows Green. Planning permission (UTT/16/2348/FUL) to develop the site for residential use was granted by Uttlesford District Council, whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological Evaluation (condition 3) be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (ECC 2017) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Essex County Council. The results of the excavation of one evaluation trench revealed one archaeological feature present within the trench; a ditch indicating the presence of a footpath recorded on an early C20th OS Map. The natural geology of London Clay was reached at an average depth of 0.5m below the modern ground surface with the archaeological feature cutting into the natural geology. The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.

2. Introduction

Touchstone Archaeology was commissioned by _____ to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (ECC 2017) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Essex County Council. The evaluation was carried out on the 4th July 2017.

3. Site Description and Topography

The proposed development site comprises of a trapezoidal plot with a thin linear strip to the rear of c.1753sqm (0.433 acres) situated on the south side of Evelyn Road adjacent and east of no.15, within the village of Willows Green and the civil parish of Felstead in the County of Essex. The site lies on London Clay formation with superficial deposits of Lowestoft formation and is fairly flat with an average height of about 65.00m OD (Fig.1).

4. Planning Background

Maldon District Council gave outline planning permission (UTT/16/2348/FUL) for a single dwelling with single garage and associated access driveway and landscaping.

On the advice of the Archaeological Officer for Essex County Council, a programme of archaeological works in the form of an initial archaeological evaluation was attached to the consent:

Prior to commencement of the development, a written scheme of investigation including a programme of recording must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in respect of the historic track on the site. The recording must be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to commencement of the development.

REASON: To ensure the appropriate investigation of archaeological remains, in accordance with Policy ENV4 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005) and the National Planning Policy Framework. This condition must be 'pre-commencement' to allow investigation prior to the loss of archaeological remains.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

Felsted parish comprises of fifteen settlements, known collectively as 'the Greens' of which Willows Green is one. The villages – Willows Green, Molehill Green, Bartholomew Green etc. - take their name from an area of land that had common ownership, once used for grazing and in modern times used for recreation.

Cartographic records from the C18th show a large uneven shaped area of common land through which several roads or paths cross –the Main Road running north south, Evelyn

Road running east west, Mole Hill Green Road running northwest to southeast and an unnamed road running southeast to northwest from the main road to join with Evelyn Road. Settlement is linear along the Main Road and Evelyn Road but does not encroach on the common land.

By the end of the C19th the unnamed road breaks off to follow the field boundary south to Warren Farm, so that the Main Road branch leads into open fields. Despite several footpaths documented on the map (OS: 1896) the footpath across the PDA is not recorded, however it is recorded on a later map (OS: 1915-1923) where it is seen as a continuation of the unnamed road leading from the Main Road.

By 1946 (OS: 1842-1952) three buildings have sprung up to the south of Evelyn Road in the area that was once common land; this is the first cartographic evidence of construction within this area of the village. In the 1950 map the footpath is still in place and the three buildings have been replaced by a row of semi-detached dwellings to the south of Evelyn Road and the west of the Main Road. In the 1958 map the footpath has been upgraded to a white lane.

The footpath/trackway once ran from the main road to Evelyn Road (the route is still defined by the field boundaries and hedgerows), providing a route from the C15th Peaches Farm (37189) to the C15th Lower Rays Farm (37184) and to the common ground between. The original line of the footpath can still be seen in Google Earth images from 2000, where it appears that the entrance to the PDA from Evelyn road is the original entrance/exit to the footpath. A path continues on the other side of Evelyn Road on to Lower Rays Farm.

The Essex HER search of c.500m radius records one find spot of *Bos Primigenius* and Red Deer (6461) north of Willows Green. There are several listed buildings in the village; Peaches Farmhouse (37189) and Lower Rays Farmhouse (37184) and a medieval barn or byre (3783) 10m southwest of Willows Farmhouse all date to the C15th and Willows Farmhouse (37184) to the C16th, all three farms were set on the outskirts of the common land.

Terleys (37149) and Rambler Cottage (37187) are C17th or earlier timber framed houses, Cromwells (37188) and Rutlands (37180) are C17th timber framed houses and Oak cottage (37186) is a mid C17th three bay barn, converted to a dwelling in the C18th. Gate farmhouse (30496) dates to the early C19th.

A cast iron signpost (40817) made by Maldon ironworks in the 1920's/1930's is located at the junction of the Main Road and Evelyn Road.

6. Aims and Objectives

According to the Archaeological Specification, the aims and objectives for the archaeological work were to ensure that *“The archaeological work will comprise the excavation of a single trial trench to identify the nature of construction, and date of original construction of the track. Specific research aims include: Identify any occupation of a medieval or post medieval date (ECC 2017)”*.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Heritage Assets clarify a developer’s responsibility in paragraphs 128 and 141.

Paragraph 128 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.

Paragraph 141 states:

Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also 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 accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

The aims set out in the ECC Specification (2017) for the site required a phased approach to the mitigation of the development site commencing with an evaluation, with the results influencing the possibility of further work on the site depending upon the amount and significance of any possible archaeological remains.

7. Methodology

The Archaeological Specification called for an evaluation by trial trenching comprising one trench across the location of the footpath. The northern half of the site was Hardstanding to provide a driveway for the house, the southern half contained several greenhouses and vegetable patches, therefore the trench was placed at the point where the linear strip joined the plot as it appeared to be the original line of the footpath and had received the least disturbance. Initially a 0.60m trench was excavated with the intention of widening the trench once the footpath was identified, however this proved unnecessary as both sides of the ditch and the probable location of the footpath were identified and further excavation would be unlikely to yield additional information.

A 3.5 ton 360° tracked mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed ditching bucket was used to remove the topsoil and subsoil to expose the natural geology and/or the archaeological horizon. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in **bold**. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with Touchstone Archaeology and IFA standards and guidance.

8. Monitoring

Historic Environment monitoring was available during the course of the evaluation.

9. Results

The evaluation has identified the presence of archaeological remains, which appear to be confined to the Modern period (1901 – present day). The evaluation has succeeded in mapping (and where appropriate, sample excavating) the ditch and footpath.

Trench 1

9.1 The plan and sections are recorded in Figures 2 & 3 (see also Plates 1-6). The trench lay on a NNE-SSW alignment and turned further NNE at the eastern end to avoid a greenhouse. It measured approximately 10.5m by 0.60m.

Undisturbed natural geology **(111)** was identified across the trench as firm orange clay of the London Clay formation, at a continuous depth of approximately 0.5m (64.5mOD) below the present ground surface at 65m OD. The clay deposit was 0.27m at the western end tapering to 0.02m at the eastern end of the trench and overlay a red brickearth with large flint inclusions **(112)** 0.40m to a base of grey clay **(114)**.

Trench 1 began c.1.0m from the east boundary. Cut into the natural geology to the eastern end of the trench was a ditch running NNW - SSE, 1.55m in width. The cut **[105]** tapered to a depth of 0.97m and a fairly flat base of 0.40m width and continued through both the north and south sections.

The fill **(104)** consisted of a loose and dark, brown/grey silty clay with inclusions of animal bone, flint, small to medium stones, modern glass, tile, asbestos, yellow sandy mortar, white lime mortar and fragments of land drainage pipe. The broken drainage pipe was encountered at the base of the ditch.

The deposit was hand excavated but only modern material was retrieved.

To the west of the ditch, within the natural clay **(111)** was an isolated gravel deposit **(110)** 0.28m thick and 1.70m wide and across the surface of the clay was an isolated layer of friable, black brown organic material **(113)** 0.03m thick and 1.6m wide. These layers were sealed by a compact but friable dark, orange, brown clay, silty, sand layer with inclusions of frequent small stones **(106)** 0.22m thick, that gave way in the east to a similar layer in a lighter brown orange colour with a C20th brick inclusion **(103)** 0.15m thick. Above both

layers was a similar layer, weathered and compact but friable, light orange brown, clay, silty, sand with occasional inclusions of small stones and a modern engineering belt **(102)** 0.14m thick that continued into the west section of the trench. These layers were interpreted as the footpath surface.

To the east of the ditch the clay **(111)** petered out and gave way to the red brick earth with flint inclusions **(112)** at a continuous depth of approximately 0.48m (64.7mOD) below the present ground surface at 65m OD. The natural geology was sealed by a level deposit of brown orange, sand and gravel with modern inclusions of tile and glass **(109)**. Above this was a level layer of orange sand and gravel **(107)** interpreted as modern levelling layers.

Above this was a dark layer of topsoil **(101)** 0.13m thick, dark brown to black in colour, friable and containing small stones and roots, but otherwise relatively clean.

10. Discussion

The owner confirmed that his grandfather had kept pigs and chickens on the linear strip and had piped the ditch **[105]** and filled it in **(104)**. The pipe was located at the base of the ditch **[105]**, silted and broken. The ditch **[105]** was located adjacent to the hedge line and this was probably the original line of the hedge and ditch boundary. To the west of the ditch **[105]** were weathered layers **(106/103 & 102)** that were probably the footpath. The two layers totalled 0.29m thick and would have been a worn path across the fields. There was no evidence of reinforcement or construction layers.

To the east of the ditch **[105]** were modern levelling layers **(107 & 109)**.

11. Finds

There are no finds associated with this evaluation.

12. Conclusion

The evaluation trenches at the proposed development site have revealed two features, a ditch [105] and footpath (102). Modern material was recorded but there were no finds from any other period.

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprised of topsoil (101) sealing the surface (102) and (106 & 103), which overlay the natural geology of London clay (111). All features were planned in relation to the trenches, and the excavated features were drawn in section at a scale of 1:50. Therefore, this evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the aims and objectives as set out in the planning condition and the Archaeological Specification.

13. Acknowledgements

Touchstone Archaeology would like to thank the client, _____ for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Richard Havis, Principal Historic Environment Consultant, Essex County Council. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for Digitise This. The fieldwork was supervised by Zoe Schofield, and the project was managed and report written by Zoe Schofield.

Zoe Schofield

Touchstone Archaeology

11th August 2017

14. References

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2008). *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*

The Historic Environment Department, Place Services, ECC (June 2017) *Brief for a trial trench on the line of a historic routeway adjacent 15 Evelyn Road, Felsted*

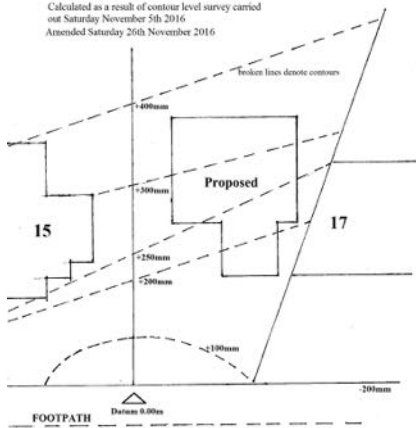
ECC HER data 2017

Site Name/Address: Land at Evelyn Road, Willows Green, Essex CM3 1QQ	
Parish: Felsted	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TQ 71954 19618	Site Code: FLWG17
Type of Work: Trial Trenching	Site Director/Group: Zoe Schofield/Touchstone Archaeology
Date of Work: 4 th July 2017	Size of Area Investigated: 6.3 sqm
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Uttlesford Museum, Saffron Walden	Funding source: Owner
Further Seasons Anticipated? No	Related EHCR No's:
Final Report: Archaeological evaluation on land at 15 Evelyn Road, Willow Green, Essex CM3 1QQ	OASIS number: zoeschof1 - 289508
Periods Represented: Post Medieval/Modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>A single trench of 60cm in width was cut across the width of the position of a footpath/trackway identified on the 1875 OS map to a length of 10.5m. The topsoil was removed with a mechanical excavator. The trench revealed a ditch [105] of 1.55m wide tapering to a base of 40cm at a depth of 97cm that ran along the hedge line (probably the east boundary of the footpath). To the east of the ditch was a modern debris layer over and above the natural. To the west of the ditch was a weathered silty clay layer (102) that covered a similar layer with frequent small stone inclusions (103) of 19cm depth that continued to a width of 3.9m. Beyond this the silty clay layer remained similar but darker in colour. Natural of clay (111) was encountered at an average of 50cm depth. No finds were recovered.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
None	
Author of Summary: ZOE SCHOFIELD	Date of Summary: 7 th July 2017

Ridge heights from datum

Number 15 > 7.50m
Proposed > 6.50m
Number 17 > 6.00m

Calculated as a result of contour level survey carried out Saturday November 5th 2016
Amended Saturday 26th November 2016



CONTOUR PLAN
SCALE 1:250

NORTH



LEVELS CONTOUR PLAN OF PARCEL OF
LAND ADJACENT TO 15 EVELYN ROAD,
GT LEIGHS, ESSEX, CM3 1QQ
DRAWING NUMBER :- TB/LS/01/2016
DATE :- 10/11/2016

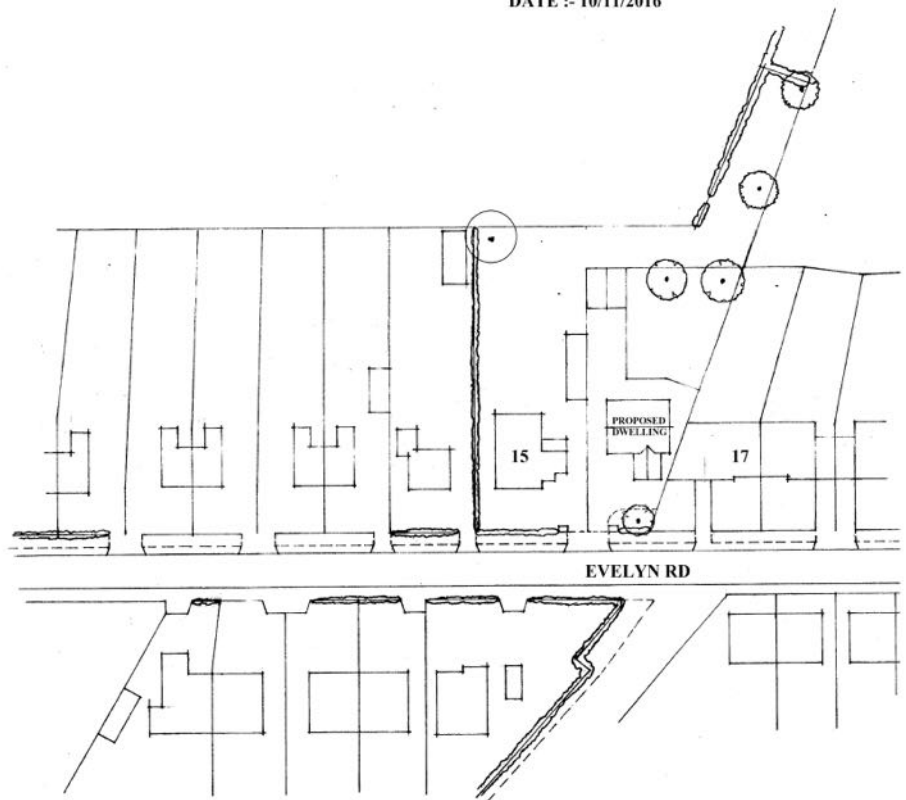


Fig.1. Fig.2.Site Location Plan

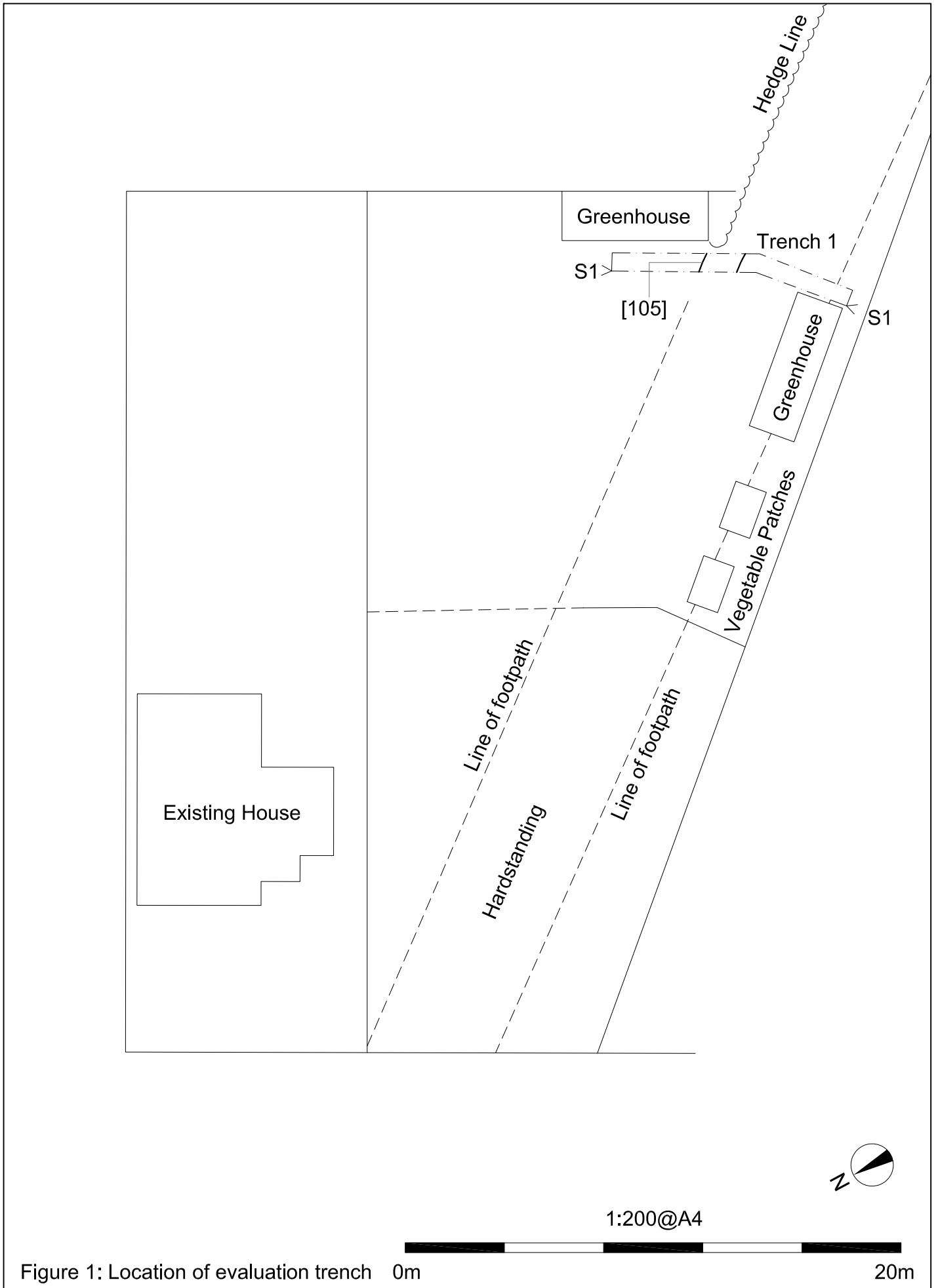


Fig.2. Plan of Trench

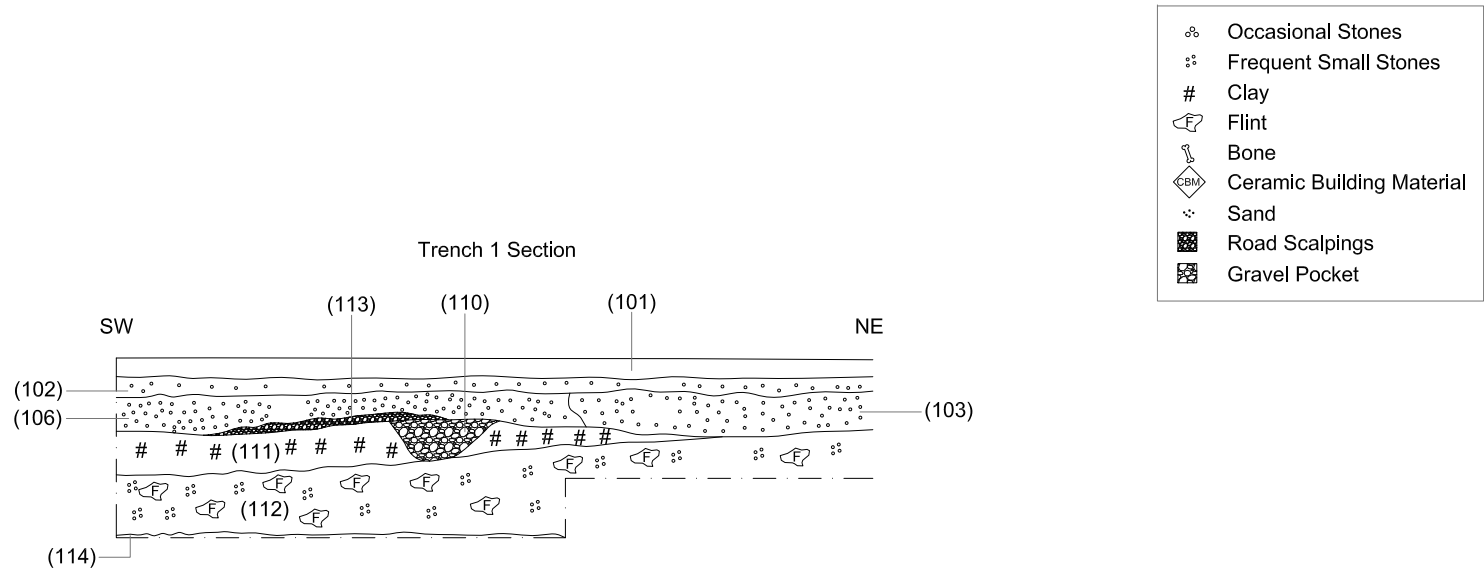


Figure 2: Section

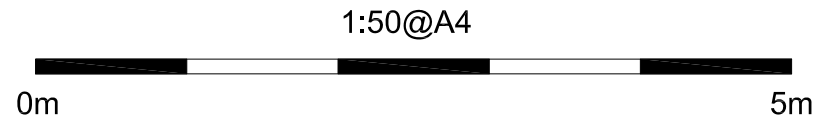


Fig.3. North Section



Plate 1. Trench 1 looking west showing surface (102), ditch [105] and levelling layer (107)



Plate 2. Trench 1 looking east showing surface (102), ditch [105] and levelling layer (107)



Plate

Plate 3. Surface in plan (102)



Plate 4. Sub surface in plan (106)



Plate 5. Ditch [105] looking south excavated to natural (112)



Plate 6. Ditch [105] looking north, excavated to natural (112)