Report 2789

nps archaeology

Archaeological Evaluation at the Family Life Church, Heartsease Lane, Norwich

ENF127090

Prepared for
Norwich Family Life Church
c/o Chaplin Farrant Ltd
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Location:	Norwich Family Life Church, Heartsease Lane, Norwich
District:	Norwich
Planning Ref.:	09/00249/F
Grid Ref.:	TG 2716 0861
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Client:	Norwich Family Life Church
Dates of Fieldwork:	11–15 August 2011

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was conducted for Norwich Family Life Church ahead of construction of a new church at Heartsease Lane, Norwich.

Four trenches were excavated within the development area. Remains associated with the use of the area for military training purposes were observed and it appeared that parts of the site had been truncated in the relatively recent past.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The development site occupies the site of a previous church and lies within an area utilised as a Prisoner of War Camp during the First and/or Second World Wars and was formerly part of Mousehold Heath, which was extensively used for military training during these periods. Norfolk Historic Environment Service therefore recommended that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken as a condition of the planning consent (Planning Ref: 09/00249/F). The scope of the works was detailed in the Brief for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching (James Albone 17 June 2009, Ref. CNF42365) issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service.

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Broadland District Council (Ref. 09/00249/F). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2789/NP). This work was commissioned by Chaplin Farrant Ltd. and funded by Norwich Family Life Church.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority about the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by NPS Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

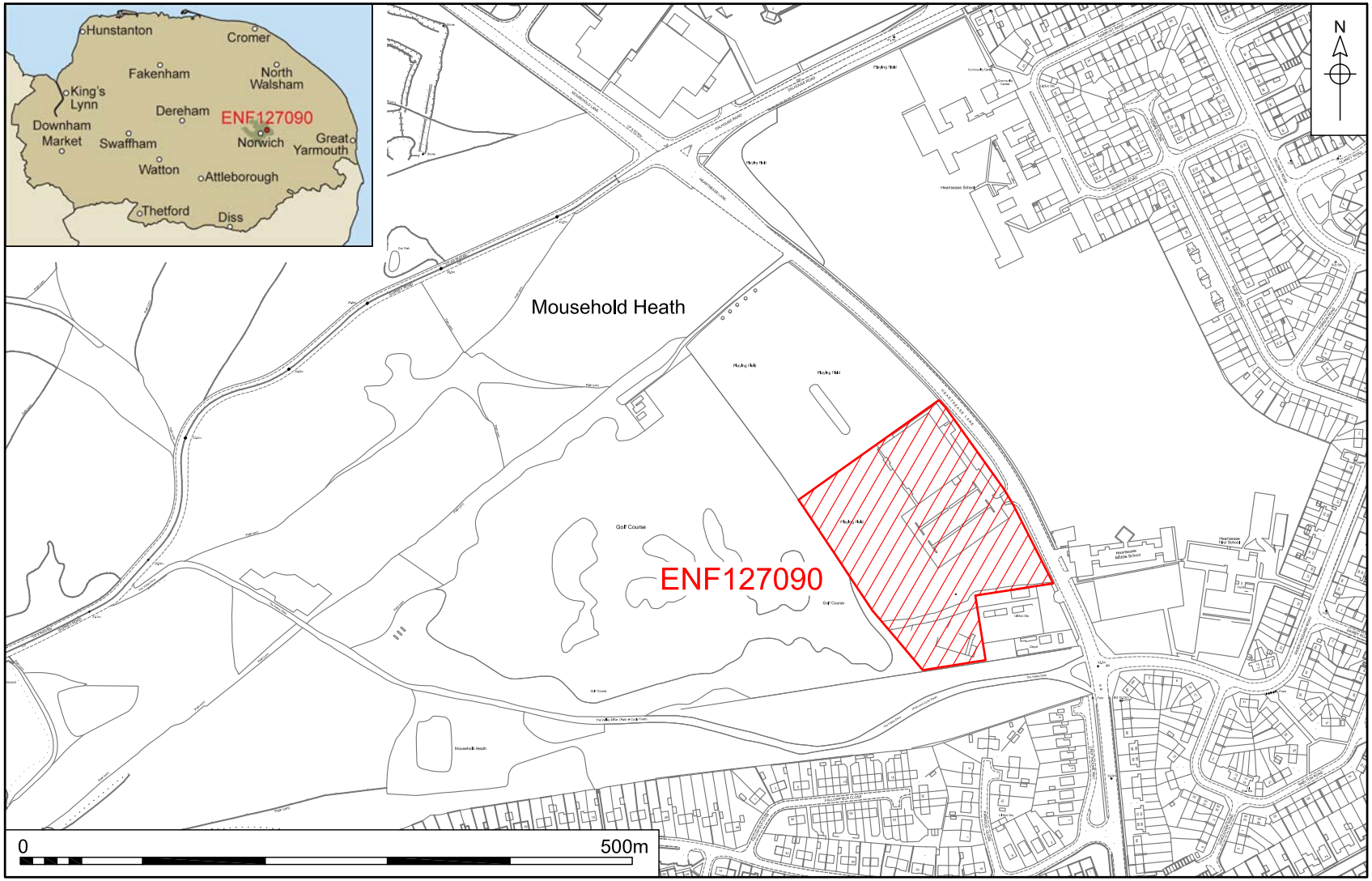

Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The solid geology of the site is chalk (Lewes nodular, Seaford, Newhaven and Culver chalk formations) with superficial deposits of glacial sand and gravel (Happisburgh glacigenic and Lowestoft formations)(BGS www.bgs.ac.uk).

The topsoil at the site is a fine dark brown sandy silt under rough turf approximately 0.15m deep. The subsoil is a yellow-brown sandy silt ranging between 0.07m and 0.20m deep. The natural on the site is a bright mid-orange sand containing a high amount of flint gravel.

This site is fairly flat with a slope to the south and lies at approximately 32.6m OD.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The development site at Heartsease Lane is located on former heathland within a former prisoner of war camp that is visible on aerial photographs from the mid 1940s. Prior to this date the site was used as a military training area early in the Second World War, just as it had been in the 19th century. Many surviving heaths in Norfolk contain prehistoric remains and any deposits not disturbed when this site was used for military purposes may be well preserved.

Mousehold Heath is an area of elevated, undulating woodland heathland located in north-eastern Norwich (Ashwin and Davison 2005). The area was mainly wooded prior to the Norman Conquest but by the year 1086 this woodland had been reduced to heath and it remained as heathland right up until the early 1900s. The heath covers an area approximately 2428 hectares and has been looked after by Norwich City Council on behalf of Norwich citizens since 1880. Between the end of the Second World War and the present much of the heath has returned to woodland.

Entries in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) have been reviewed and show that a number of interesting finds have been made in the vicinity of the Heartsease Lane site.

Three Palaeolithic hand axes have been recovered nearby, one (NHER 468) from halfway along Valley Drive to the south and two more (NHER 471) from Mousehold Heath itself. A fragment from a Mesolithic flaked hand axe was found to the south of the site in 1983. Two Bronze Age barbed and tanged flint arrowheads have been recorded close to the site; one found in a garden of a property on Lloyd Road (NHER 502), the other recovered from the grounds of Norwich prison (NHER 486) close by, both found in the 1950s. A few Roman coins have also been found nearby, to the north and south-east of the development site. These finds indicate that the area has borne witness to a long and varied history of human activity.

Perhaps the most significant sites recorded in the area are the Mousehold Aerodrome and World War II heavy anti-aircraft battery (NHER 12415) located to the north of the current site, and a possible World War II prisoner of war camp (NHER 51904) that appears to have been situated on the north side of the current site. This camp is visible on the aerial photograph from 1946, accessible via Norfolk County Council's E-map Explorer (www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk).

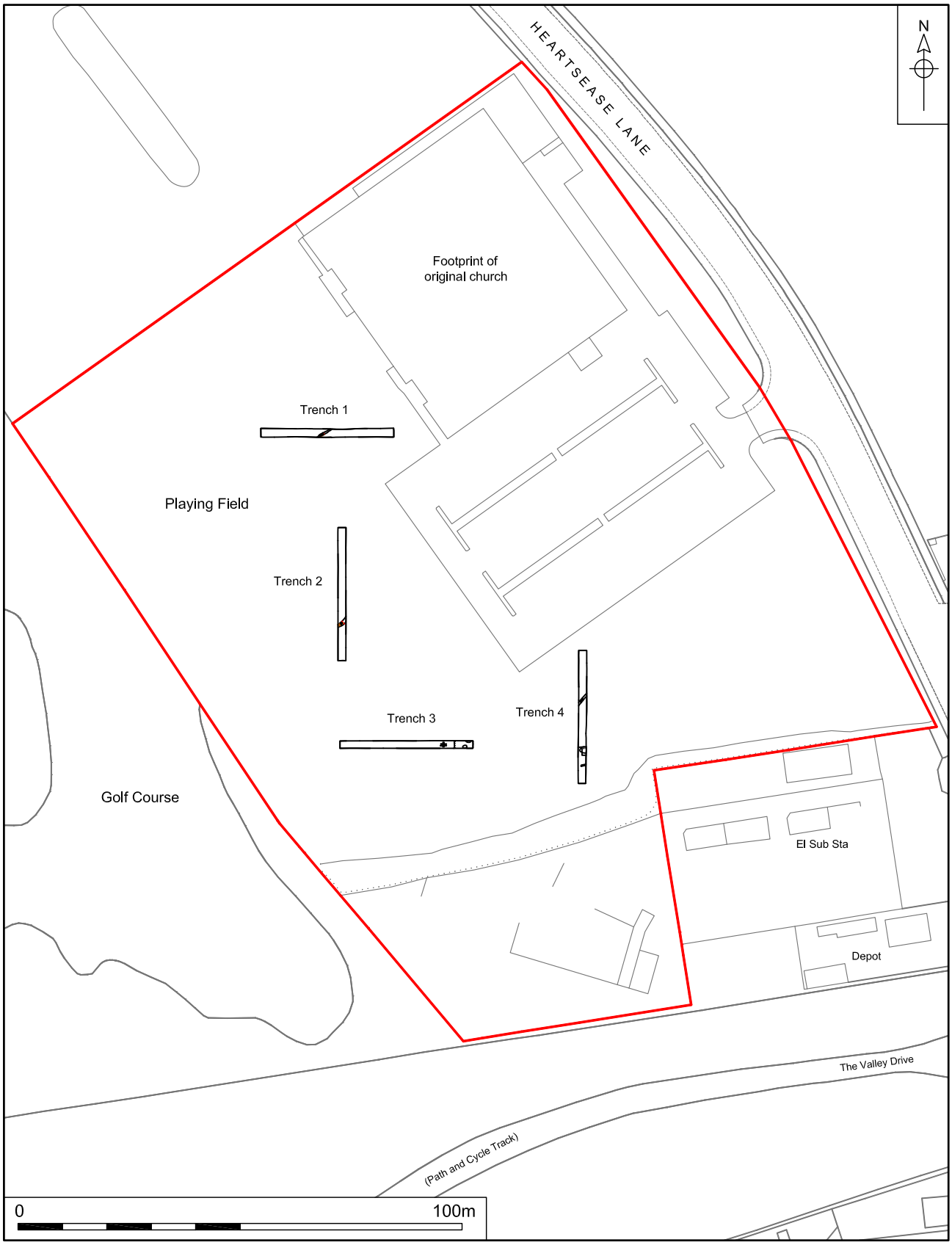

Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:1250

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that four 30m by 1.8m trenches be opened on the site to provide an approximate 5% sample of the development area (Fig. 2).

Machine excavation was carried out with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector but only fragments of corrugated iron and an occasional iron nail were noted.

No environmental samples were taken.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NPS Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Colour, monochrome and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

The temporary benchmark used during the course of this work was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark at 32.22m OD located on the corner of 96 Heartsease Lane.

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in fine weather.

5.0 RESULTS

Four trenches were excavated, each trench measuring 30m long by 1.8m wide.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was the northernmost of the four trenches and was located to the west of the former church building and north-east of football pitch. The trench was orientated east-west (Figs 2 and 3, Plate 1).

The east end of Trench 1 cut through a hardcore surface – presumably a former path – to the south-west of the demolished church building. Below this was topsoil [1] a very fine, dark brown sandy silt 0.10-0.14m deep. The topsoil overlay subsoil [2], a very fine, light yellow-brown sandy silt 0.07-0.14m deep. Beneath this was a thin layer of stony, very fine, brown-grey silt [16] approximately 0.07m deep, (perhaps a relatively modern former topsoil).

A natural deposit of bright orange sand and gravel with bands of less gravelly yellowy-orange sand was encountered at a depth of 0.36-0.50m below the current ground surface. Into this had been cut a very narrow trench [9], running on a north-east to south-west alignment (Plate 2). This feature was only 0.15-0.18m deep and 0.25-0.30m wide and was lined with corrugated iron (Fig. 3, Plate 3). Excavation of the feature revealed two fills; primary fill [10] consisting of fine, grey-brown silt located between the iron sheets and layer [11], a very hard and compacted sand and gravel deposit that overlay it.

On the surface of deposit [10] and sealed by deposit [11] was a smoke bomb (a narrow, blunt-ended metal cylinder, with flights of the same metal protruding from

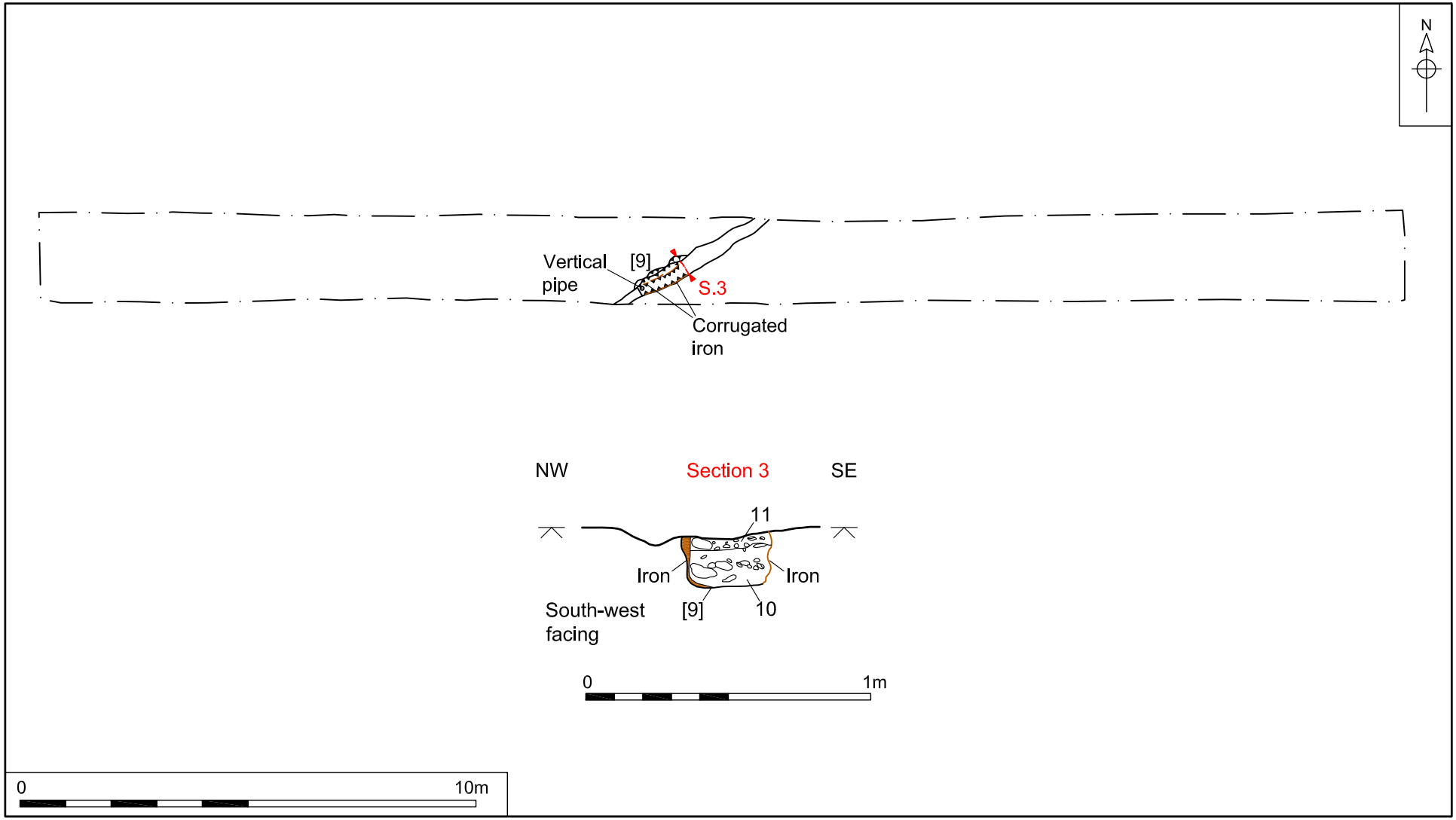

Figure 3. Trench 1, plan and section. Scale 1:125 and 1:20

its back (Plate 4). Work in this area ceased until a bomb disposal team could be mobilised and confirm that the ordnance was safe. The presence of such an item highlights the previous use of this area during the Second World War as a training ground.

A sondage was excavated at the west end of Trench 1 to ensure that the perceived natural was a geological deposit. The orange sand and gravel was found to be a continuous deposit.

Plate 1. Trench 1

Plate 2. Trench 1, linear feature [9]

Plate 3. Trench 1, section of linear feature [9]|

Plate 4. Trench 1, the smoke bomb

Trench 2

Trench 2 was opened in the centre of the playing field, aligned in a north-south direction (Figs 2 and 4, Plates 5 and 6).

Like Trench 1, deposits consisted of a layer of grey-brown sandy silt topsoil [1] (here 0.3m deep) over a layer of lighter, stony silt subsoil [2] and a natural layer of yellowy-orange sand and gravel.

Plate 5. Trench 2

A single feature was identified in the southern half of the trench cut into the natural. Curvilinear feature [3] was 0.75m wide by 0.4m deep and continued beyond the western and eastern edges of the trench. The feature appeared originally to have been lined on one side (the outer side of the curve) by a sheet of corrugated iron, but this had collapsed inwards across the feature (Fig. 4, Plate 6). It appears that the iron sheet originally formed a wall or structure.

In the base of the feature was a concrete block approx 0.4m long by 0.2m wide and relatively thick. It is evident that this trench relates to Second World War

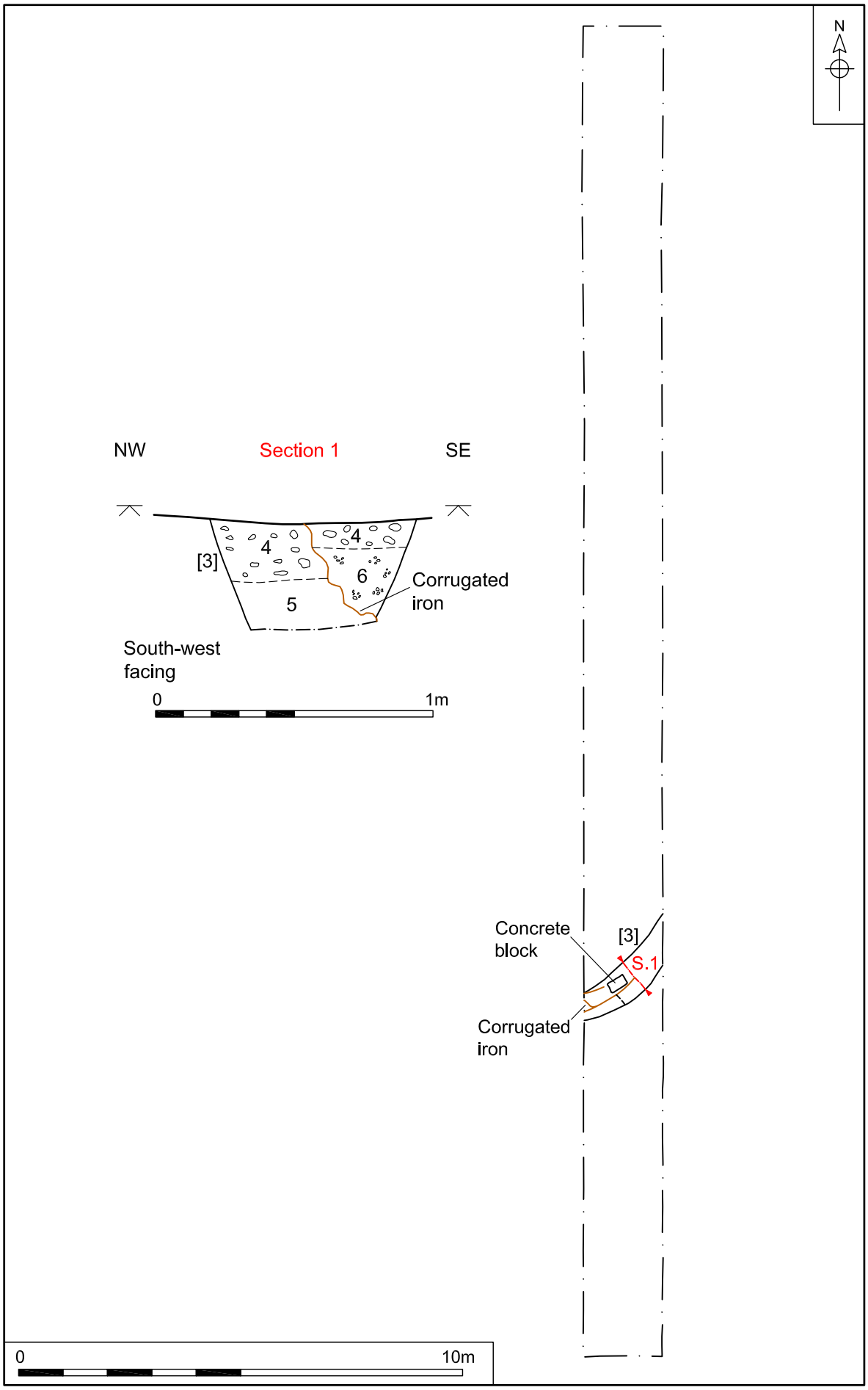

Figure 4. Trench 2, plan and section. Scale 1:125 and 1:20

training activity on the site. The curvilinear shape and the presence of the corrugated iron are indicative of perhaps a bomb shelter or Nissan hut. The internal area of the feature had been backfilled with deposit [5], a dark, grey-brown silt whilst externally, where the iron sheet had been pushed inwards, was filled with deposit [6], a much stonier, orangey-brown sandy clay. Both deposits were overlain by layer [4] a light grey sandy silt.

Plate 6. Trench 2, view of feature [3] and corrugated iron

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located in the south of the site, within the playing field area, and was aligned east-west (Figs 2 and 5, Plate 7). Deposits in Trench 3 were deeper than in the other three trenches. The dark brown, fine silt topsoil [1] was 0.12m deep and the yellow-brown silt subsoil [2] was 0.06m deep sealing other layers.

Plate 7. Trench 3

At the west end of Trench 3 was a dark brownish-grey, stony silty sand [19] layer (probably a former topsoil) that was 0.3m deep with a layer of iron pan at its base, which overlay the natural sand and gravel.

At the east end of the trench the surface of the natural was lower and the sequence of deposits was as follows. Topsoil [1] was 0.18m deep, above a band

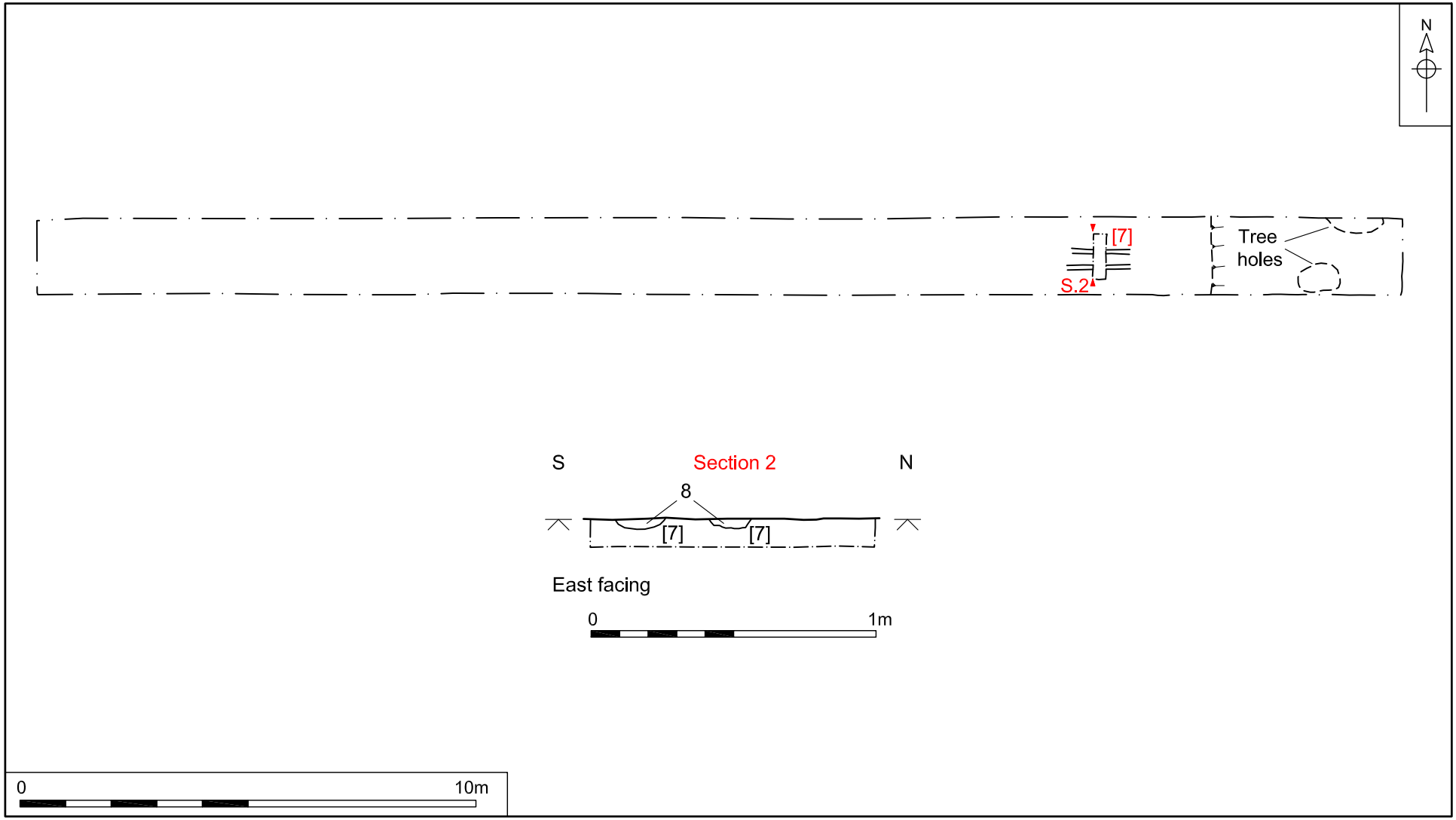

Figure 5. Trench 3, plan and section. Scale 1:125 and 1:20

of yellow silt subsoil [2] 0.1m deep. Beneath [2] were modern deposits [17] (a band of dark and gravelly grey-brown silt 0.16m deep) overlying [18] (a layer of pale orange silt and gravel 0.26m deep). Below this was deposit [19], a 0.33m deep layer of dark brown silt (possibly a former topsoil layer similar to deposit [16] observed in Trench 1) which lay directly above the natural gravel (exposed at a depth of approximately 1m below the current ground surface).

Plate 8. Trench 3, linear features [7]

A 1976 coin (not retained) was found within the putative buried topsoil layer, indicating that the deposits had been truncated in the recent past and soil deposits had been subsequently introduced to the site. Two isolated parallel narrow linear features [7] of unknown purpose were seen to cut the natural in the eastern half of the trench (Fig. 5, Plate 8).

Trench 4

Trench 4 was orientated roughly north-south and located in the south of the site about half way along the southern boundary (Figs 2 and 5, Plate 9). The southern boundary of the site dropped away steeply to the south.

There was a reduction in ground surface level towards the south end of the trench which coincided with the alignment of a boundary marked to the east and west by trees.

A feature exposed in the trench appeared to be either a large pit ([14]) or an earlier edge of the steep incline over which modern debris had been tipped creating a an levelling or makeup layer of modern material, including part of a red brick wall and fragments of asbestos, tile and plastic (Plate 10). Due to the presence of potentially hazardous materials, this deposit ([15]) was rapidly recorded and immediately reburied precluding any further examination.

At the northern end of the trench was a narrow feature which, superficially, appeared similar to feature [9] in Trench 1 however on excavation it was clear that it was the cut for a drainage pipe. The pipe was ceramic and hexagonal in shape and further examination showed that the pipe trench had been cut through a black deposit containing asbestos (Plate 11). What had initially been interpreted as a natural layer of sand and gravel in this trench was in fact a redeposited gravel

layer and overlay a continuous deposit of burnt silt and debris, possibly derived from clearance of the site after demolition of the church which had burned down.

This deposit was exposed (Plate 12) but when asbestos tile was identified the layer was photographed and immediately reburied.

Plate 9. Trench 4

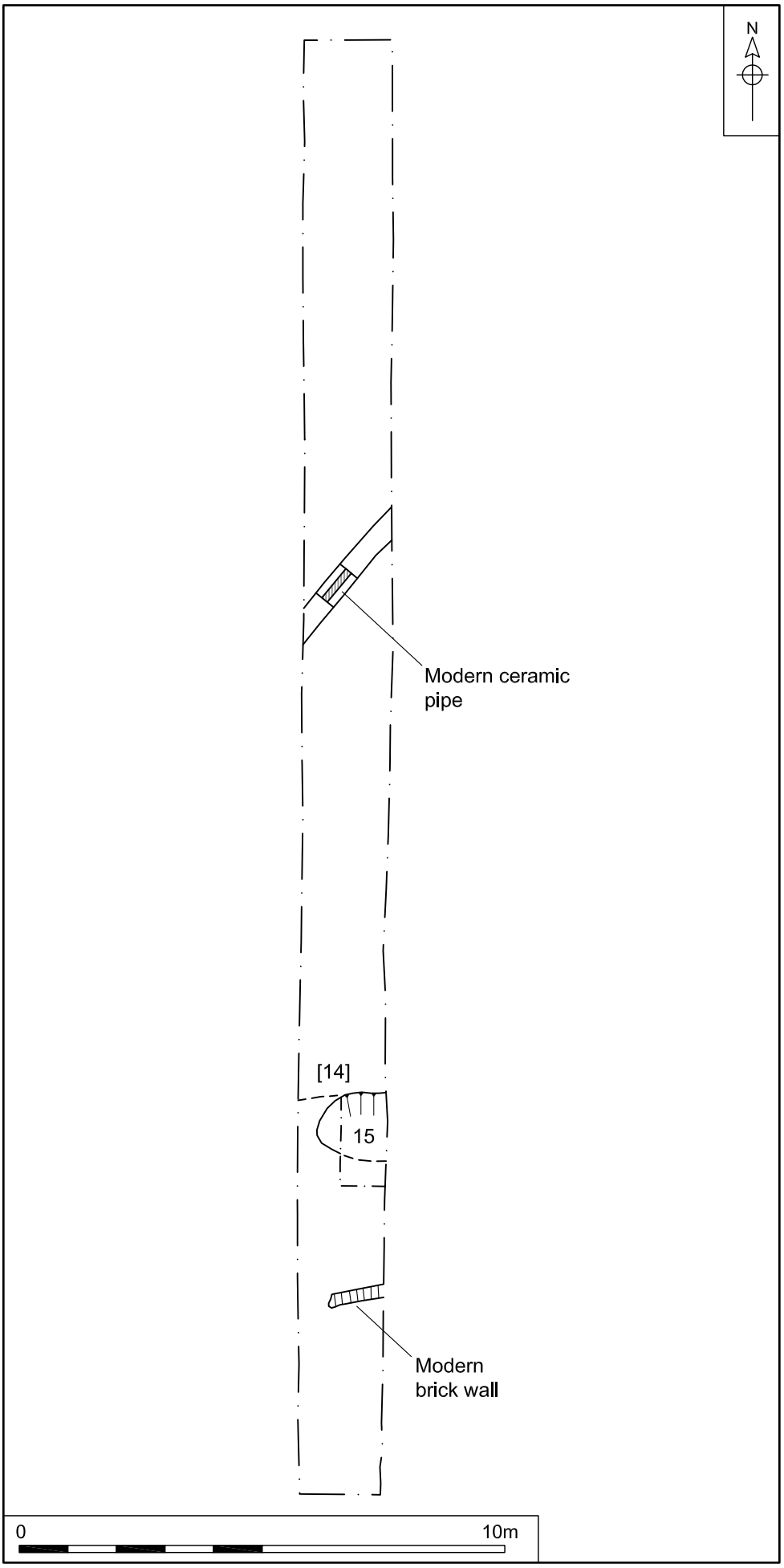

Figure 6. Trench 4, plan. Scale 1:125

Plate 10. Trench 4, wall and deposits

Plate 11. Trench 4, ceramic pipe

Plate 12. Trench 4, modern disturbance

6.0 FINDS

by Lucy Talbot

Finds were washed and recorded and relevant information entered onto an Excel spreadsheet. A list of finds by context can be found in Appendix 2a and descriptions of the artefacts ordered by material below are shown below.

6.1 Ceramic building material

Three fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered from topsoil [1] and context [15] the fill of pit [14]. The assemblage consists of two examples of brick weighing 831g collected from fill [15]. One is a fragment of abraded nineteenth century late brick in a red coloured, medium sandy fabric, with sparse chalk, quartz, crushed and burnt flint and ferrous inclusions and the other is a

piece of modern faced brick. Topsoil [1] produced a single fragment of modern pan tile, weighing 30g.

6.2 Glass

Pit fill [15] produced a single fragment (7g) of clear bottle glass of modern date. It was recorded and subsequently discarded.

6.3 Iron

Two iron nails weighing 8g were collected from pit fill [15]. Although intrinsically undated, these nails are likely to be of modern date and have been discarded.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

From the results of the evaluation it is clear that the proposed site of the Norwich Family Life Church has been subjected to various activities, levelling and soil moving episodes in the modern period (at least from the Second World War through to the present day).

There is no evidence of any earlier activity on the site, although it is possible that any such evidence may have been destroyed by demolition of the church that previously occupied the site and associated truncation from this and the isolated WWII evidence that was present . The dumping of materials represented by the large infilled dip towards the south of site, as seen in Trench 4 and on the edge of Trench 3 will have masked any remains that may have been present in these areas however given the lack of evidence elsewhere on the site the likelihood of early remains being present is remote.

Other than the linear features in Trenches 1 and 2 that contained corrugated iron, and the presence of the smoke bomb, no other evidence of military use was encountered.

The segments of parallel shallow linear features observed in Trench 3 may indicate activity at the site before any type of military use, possibly representing plough marks.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by the Historic Environment Service.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Norwich Family life Church for funding the work. Field work was undertaken by Suzie Westall, Rob Brown, and Lilly Hodges. The finds were washed, recorded and analysed by Lucy Talbot. The report was edited by Jayne Bown and illustrated and produced by David Dobson.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period	Trench
1	Deposit			Topsoil		all
2	Deposit			Subsoil		all
3	Cut	Linear		Foundation cut	Modern	2
4	Deposit		3	Upper fill		2
5	Deposit		3	Lower north fill		2
6	Deposit		3	Lower south fill		2
7	Cut	Linear		Narrow parallel features	Uncertain	3
8	Deposit		7	Fill of narrow features		3
9	Cut	Linear		Lined with corrugated iron	Modern	1
10	Deposit		9	Fill of linear feature		1
11	Deposit		9	Fill of linear feature		1
12	Cut	Linear		Cut for drain pipe	Modern	4
13	Deposit		12	Fill of drain pipe cut		4
14	Cut	Pit		Pit	Uncertain	4
15	Deposit		14	Fill of Pit		4
16	Deposit			?buried topsoil	Modern	1
17	Deposit			layer	Modern	3
18	Cut			layer	Modern	3
19	Deposit			?buried topsoil	Modern	3

Appendix 1b: OASIS Feature Summary

Period	Cut Type	Total
Modern	Service trench	2
	Uncertain	1
Uncertain	Linear features	1
	Pit	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Qty	Wt	Period	Notes
1	Ceramic Building Material	1	30g	Modern	Pan tile frag
15	Ceramic Building Material	1	559g	Post-medieval	Brick frag
15	Ceramic Building Material	1	272g	Modern	Brick frag
15	Glass	1	7g	Modern	bottle frag; clear; DISCARDED
15	Iron	2	8g	Unknown	Nails; DISCARDED

Appendix 2b: OASIS Finds Summary

Period	Material	Total
Post-medieval	Ceramic Building Material	1
Modern	Ceramic Building Material	2
	Glass	1
Uncertain	Iron	2