

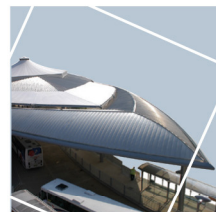
Report 1683



nau archaeology

**An Archaeological Evaluation at
1 Halifax Road, Cambridge
Amended**

ECB 2753



Prepared for
Fitzwilliam College
University of Cambridge



Matt Ratcliff

February 2009



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Contents

<i>Summary</i>	1
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Geology and Topography	1
3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background.....	2
3.1 Prehistoric	2
3.2 Roman.....	2
3.3 Medieval	4
4.0 Methodology	4
5.0 Results.....	7
5.1 Trench 1	7
5.2 Trench 2	9
6.0 Conclusions	9
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	10
<i>Bibliography</i>	10
Appendix 1a: Context Summary	11
Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table	11

Figures

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Trench location
Figure 3	Plan of Trench 1
Figure 4	Section 2
Figure 5	Plan of Trench 2
Figure 6	Section 1

Plates

Plate 1	Trench 1, looking north-east
Plate 2	Trench 2, looking north-west

Location:	1 Halifax Road, Cambridge
District:	Cambridge City
Grid Ref.:	TL 4395 5977
HER No.:	ECB 2753
Client:	Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge
Dates of Fieldwork:	4–5 November 2008

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at 1 Halifax Road, Cambridge. Two trenches were excavated within the area specified, revealing frequent services crossing the site. While it was not possible to extend Trench 1 due to obstructions, a small sondage was excavated in an area between the services to establish the depth of the natural clay.

Excavation within Trench 2 was also restricted by the presence of sub-surface services. However, it was possible to record the depth of the natural clay and the modern rubble deposits and intrusions by which it was overlain.

No archaeological deposits were exposed, and there were no archaeological features or finds within either of the trenches.

1.0 Introduction

The site was located in an area of proposed residential development at 1 Halifax Road, Cambridge (Fig. 1). The area to be evaluated comprised a small courtyard and driveway, surrounded by a house and extended outbuildings (Fig. 2).

The report was commissioned by Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

This archaeological programme was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Cambridge City Council and a brief issued by Cambridgeshire Archaeology (Ref. Eliza Gore, 4 September 2007).

The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref: BAU 1683).

The 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 and Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Cambridgeshire Archaeology.

2.0 Geology and Topography

The present development site is located to the north-west of the historic core of Cambridge, directly north of Fitzwilliam College and approximately 750m north-west of the castle. Halifax Road is situated in the fork between the straight Roman Huntingdon Road to the south, and the Histon Road to the east. At the time of

evaluation the site comprised of a single two storey terrace house on a frontage, with a number of single-storey structures surrounding a small open tarmac area, accessed by a driveway.

The natural geology underlying the site consisted of a solid geology of Middle Chalk. This was capped by heavy boulder clay. The site was located on a slight ridge, just to the north of the River Cam valley (Sheail 2000).

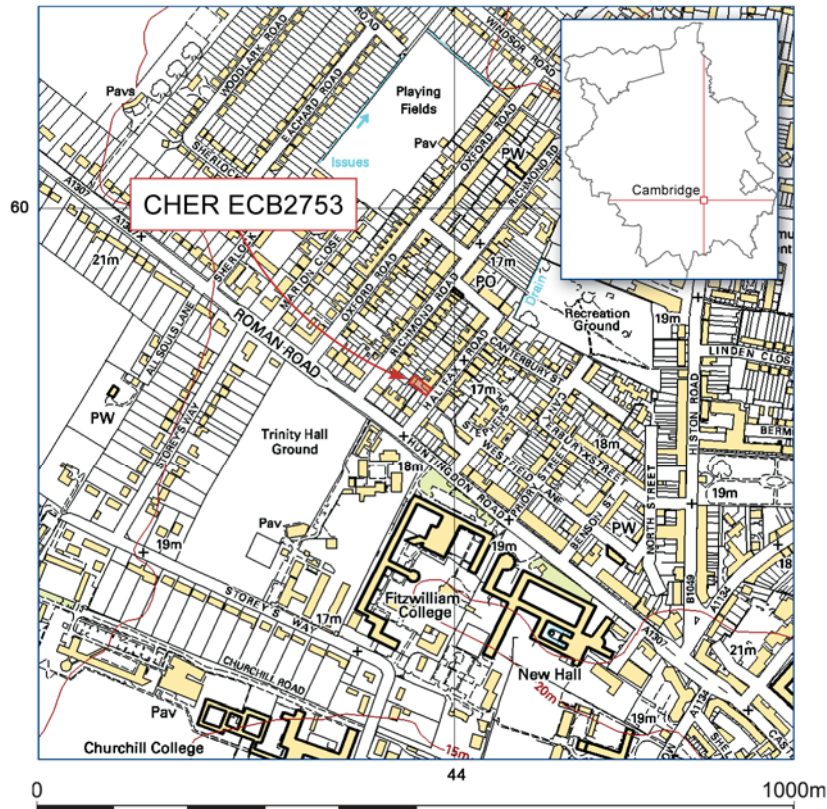


Figure 1 Site location - TL 4395 5977

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3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Prehistoric

A Neolithic chert axe was found to the east of the site, at Histon Road (HER 4513). Further prehistoric finds in the area include a Bronze Age roundhouse, with associated features found at Fitzwilliam College Library excavations (HER CB15416); and separate Iron Age enclosures and features found at both 138 Huntingdon Road (HER 5085) and during excavations at New Hall College, to the south of the site (HER 11965).

3.2 Roman

A number of Roman features and finds have been recorded in the area surrounding the site. Roman pottery was recovered just to the south of the site, on Huntingdon Road (HER 4420), while a Roman Earthwork (HER 4630) was uncovered during contractor work at the Wheatsheaf Inn. A Roman inhumation was also found on Huntingdon Road (HER 4688).

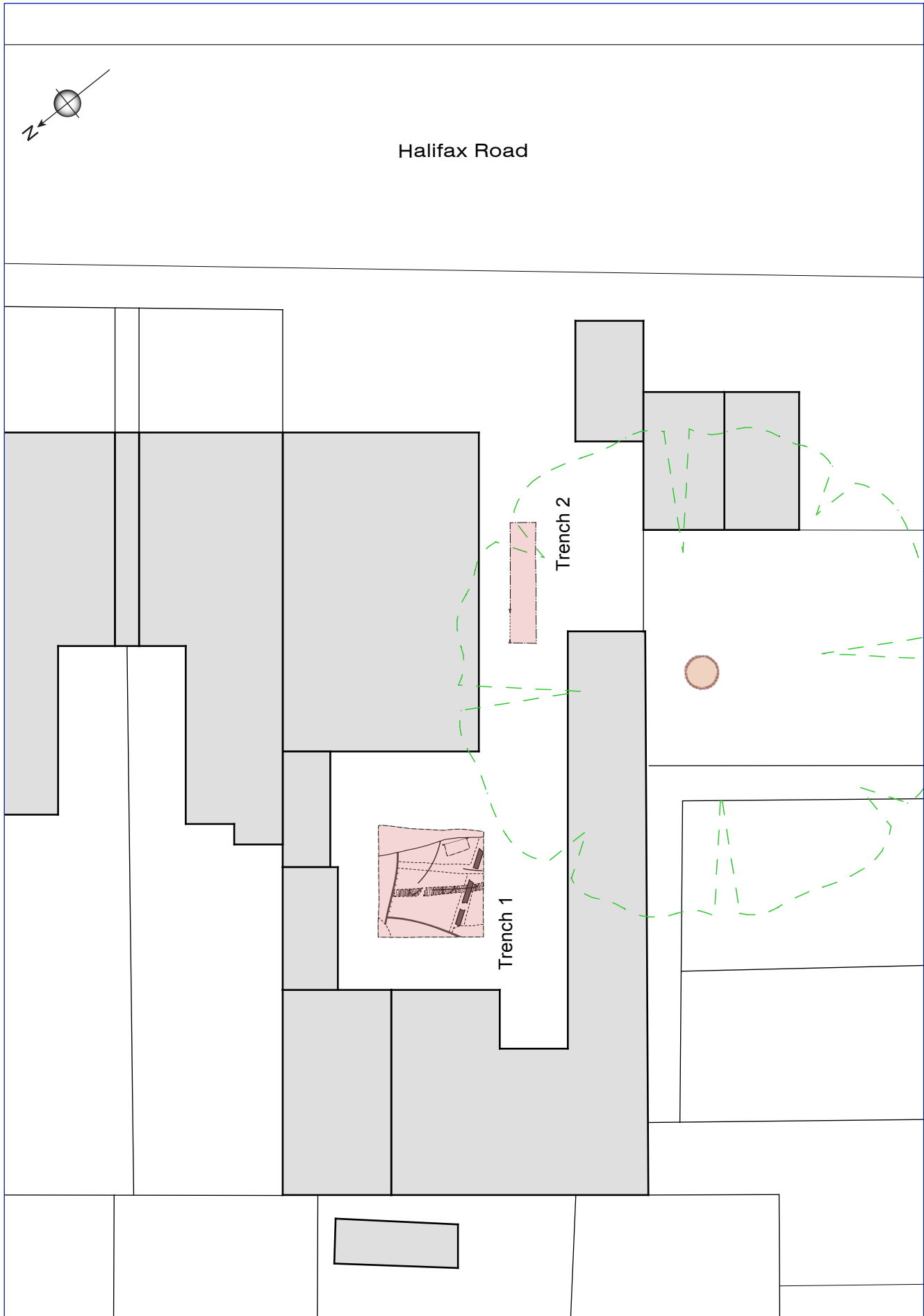


Figure 2 Trench location

Further Roman inhumations and pottery were discovered at Castle Hill during coprolite digging in 1871 (HER 5082). A Roman road and additional ditches and features identified as a field system were found during an evaluation at Trinity Hall playing fields, Storey's Way, in 2004 (HER 16304). Excavations to the south of the site, at Fitzwilliam College Library, revealed a ditch and feature of Roman date (HER MCB17830).

3.3 Medieval

Medieval pottery (HER 10092) was recovered from excavations close to The Grove, an early 19th-century listed building to the south of the site (HER 5093). A Medieval ditch was revealed during the excavations at Storey's Way (HER 16305), while some Medieval finds and features including paths and gardens were found during excavations at Fitzwilliam College Library (HER MCB17831).

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 a 5% sample of the development area be taken. Machine excavation was carried out with a tracked mini-digger, using a toothless ditching bucket and hydraulic breaker under constant archaeological supervision.

One 4m x 4m trench was to be excavated within the courtyard area of the property and a second, 5m x 1.60m trench was to be excavated along the pavement area to the front. However, due to the location of services visible on the pavement surface, the second trench was relocated to the driveway in order to maximise the area unobstructed by modern intrusions (Fig. 2). This was close to the overhang of a tree with a TPO on it in the neighbouring property to the west, which placed further limits on the final location of the trench.

The 4x4 trench (Trench 1) was oriented with the edges of the square on a northwest-southeast alignment. Trench 2, located in the driveway, was oriented to the north-west/south-east.

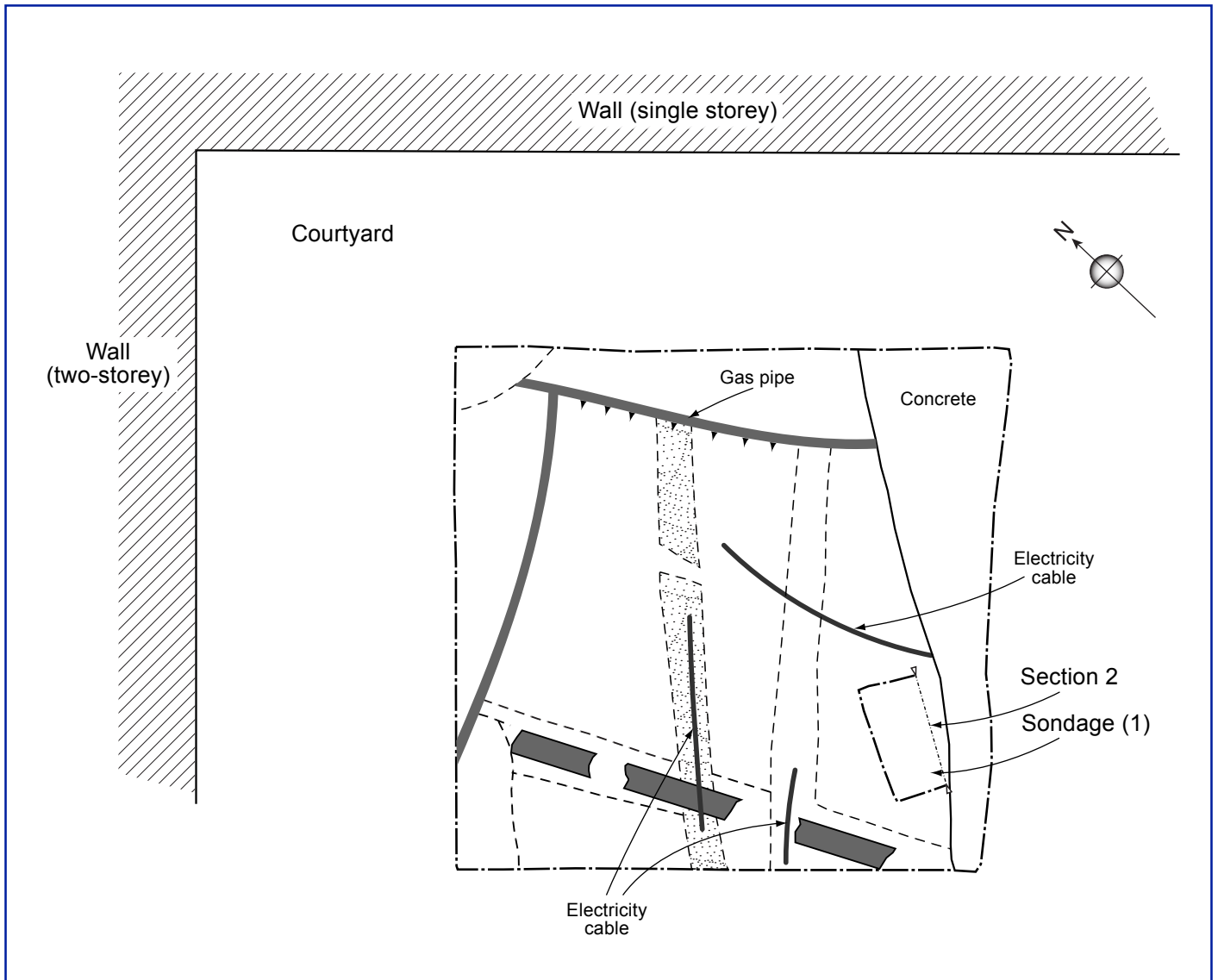
During the excavation of Trench 1, gas pipes were revealed below the surface. Further work revealed electrical cables, additional gas pipes and drainage pipes. Due to the concentration of services in this trench, a small sondage was excavated by hand in order to ascertain the depth of the natural deposits.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection. No environmental samples were taken.

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

The temporary benchmark used during the course of this work was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark with a value of 18.21m OD.

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



0 5m

Figure 3 Plan of Trench 1

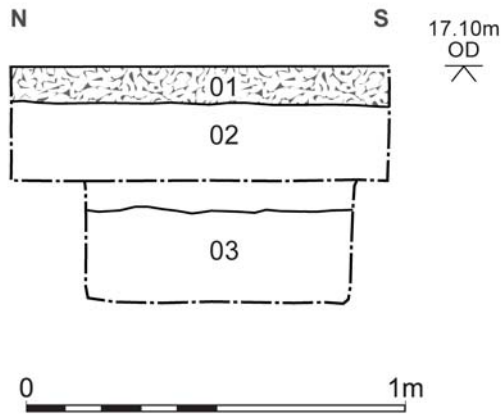


Figure 4 Section 2



Plate 1 Trench 1, looking north-east
Range bar = 2m

5.0 Results

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated to a total depth of 0.60m from the surface, or 16.50m OD (Figs 3 and 4; Plate 1). A solid concrete surface was encountered across the eastern corner of the trench, with a gas pipe extending out across the northern edge at a depth of 0.30m (16.80m OD). An additional gas pipe and two electrical cables were revealed at the same level across the centre of the trench. These were oriented NE–SW and restricted excavation. A ceramic pipe was exposed at the western edge of the trench.

A small sondage was hand-dug between the cables to a depth of 0.60m (16.50m OD). The natural mid-brownish-yellow clay was encountered at 0.40m (16.70m OD) and contained occasional small sub-angular flint inclusions. Above this was a 0.30m-thick mixed grey silty clay (02), containing frequent gravel, flint inclusions and brick fragments. Overlying this was a 0.10m-thick layer of tarmac (01). The services encountered were located within deposit (02).

There were no archaeological features or finds within this trench.



Plate 2 Trench 2, looking north-west
Range bar = 2m

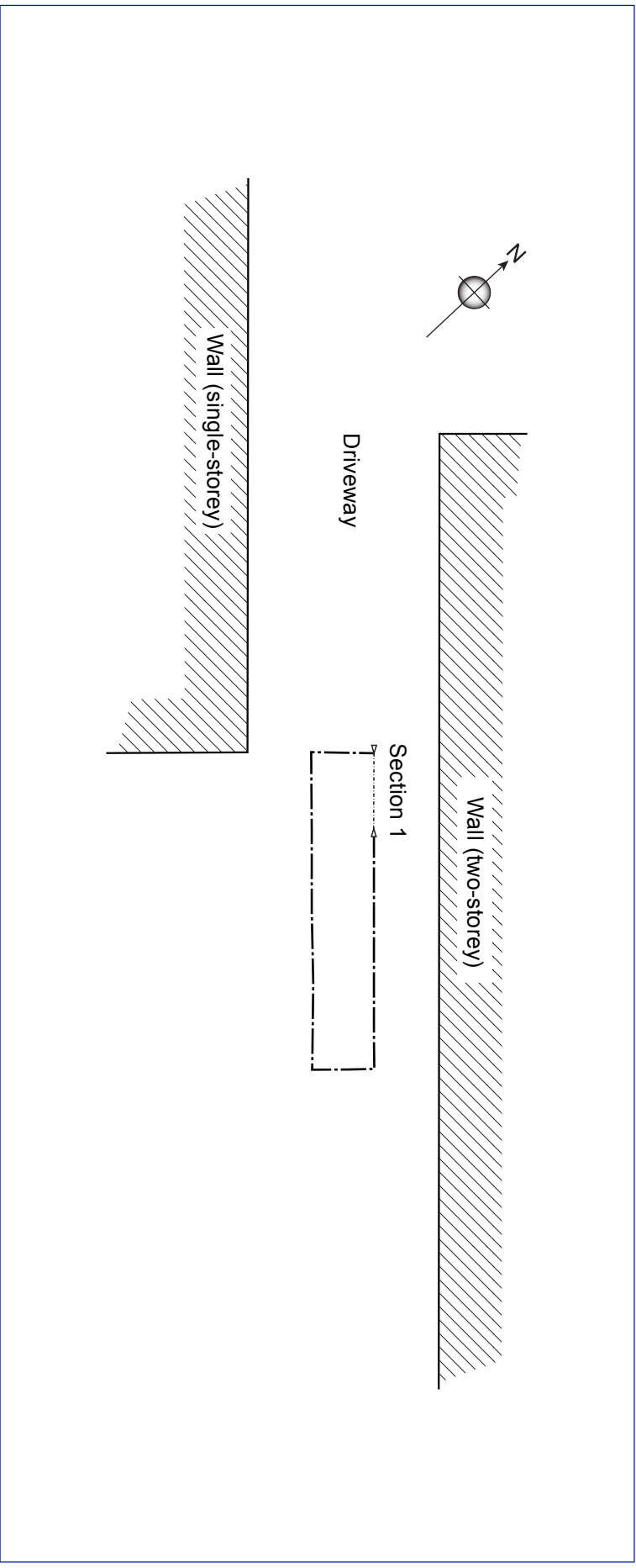


Figure 5 Plan of Trench 2

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated to a total depth of 1m from the surface, or 16.50m OD (Figs 5 and 6; Plate 2). The trench was oriented NW–SE. Two services were encountered – an electric cable and a ceramic sewer pipe, one on each side of the trench on the same alignment. The natural clay was encountered at 0.70m (16.90m OD) and appeared to have been truncated horizontally by modern intrusions. The natural here was a mid-brownish-yellow clay, containing occasional small sub-angular flint inclusions. No significant root intrusions were encountered.

Above this was a deposit of mid-brownish-grey clay (07). This was 0.30m thick and contained moderate chalk fragments and occasional charcoal flecks. This deposit was itself cut by modern service trench (06). This appeared in section as a concave pit approximately 1m wide and 0.50m deep. It contained fill (05), a light greyish silty clay containing occasional charcoal and brick fragments. Overlying this was a 0.20m-thick layer of modern hardcore and builders sand (04). Above this was tarmac surface (01).

There were no archaeological features or finds within this trench.

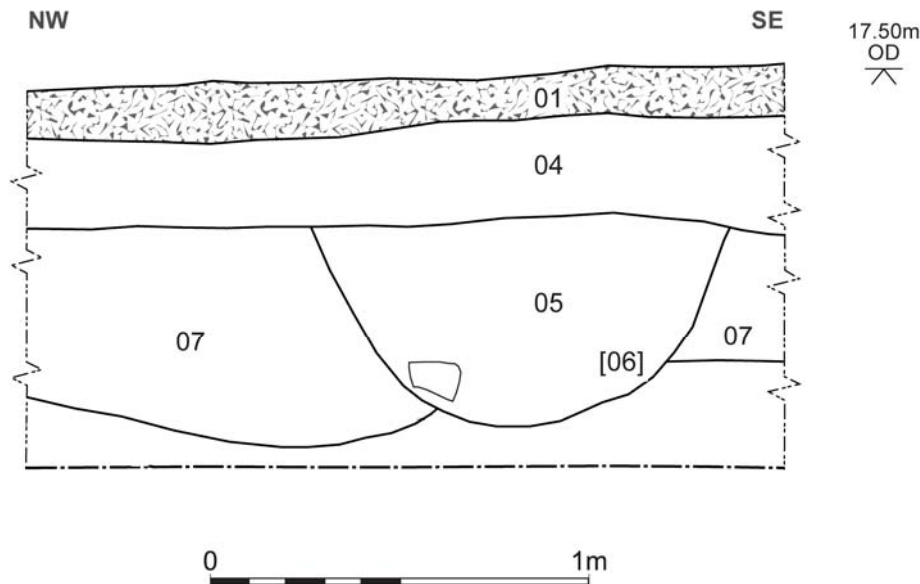


Figure 6 Section 1

6.0 Conclusions

The evaluation was limited by the close proximity of standing buildings and trees, and the concentration of unmapped services across the site. Although it could not be fully excavated due to these obstructions, the natural clay was observed in a small area. The deeper services crossing this trench were cut into the natural clay, but were primarily located within modern deposit (02).

Trench 2 revealed the same natural clay as that in Trench 1, albeit at a slightly greater depth. It is possible that deposit (07) was modern backfill, surrounding the ceramic pipe found along the south-western side of the trench. This would indicate that the natural clay had been truncated by previously unmapped modern

intrusions, which would explain the lack of any archaeological deposits between obviously modern features and the natural clay.

No archaeological features or finds were revealed within either of the two trenches. It is possible that undisturbed deposits and archaeological features do exist on the site, but this could only be verified by a more extensive exploration around and below the existing buildings and their associated services.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Cambridgeshire Archaeology.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by the author and Helen Stocks. The HER information was provided by Sarah Poppy, and the machine was provided by Bryn Williams. The report was illustrated by Michael Feather and edited by Richard Hoggett.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
01	Layer	Tarmac	Modern
02	Deposit	Mixed clay	Modern
03	Natural	Clay	–
04	Layer	Mixed rubble	Modern
05	Fill of (06)	Fill	Modern
06	Cut	Service trench	Modern
07	Layer	Mixed clay	Modern

Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Modern (1900 to 2050 AD)	Trench	1