

Land Adjacent to The Olivias, Dunmow Road, Takeley, Essex: An Archaeological Evaluation Report

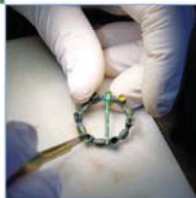
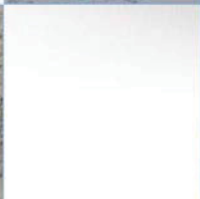
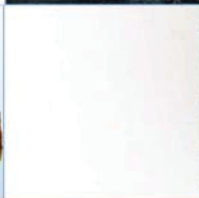
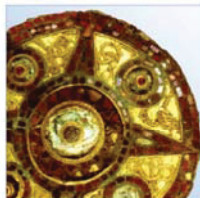
Planning Application: UTT/12/5142/FUL

National Grid Reference Number: TL 5721 2115

AOC Project No: 32363

Site Code: TAOL13

Date: May 2013



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Land Adjacent to The Olivias, Dunmow Road, Takeley, Essex:

An Archaeological Evaluation Report

On Behalf of:	CTS Ltd Decoy Farm Old Church Road Melton Woodbridge IP13 6DH
National Grid Reference (NGR):	TL 5721 2115
AOC Project No:	32363
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Date of Report:	May 2013

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Non-Technical Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on 22nd and 23rd April 2013 at the land adjacent to The Olivias, Takeley, Essex. The work was undertaken on behalf of CTS Ltd. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the impact of development on any surviving archaeological remains.

The evaluation consisted of four trenches, three measuring 20.00m x 1.80m and one measuring 24.00m x 1.80m. The excavation works were carried out using a JCB 3XC machine under the direction of the on site Project Supervisor.

Natural clay with chalk inclusions was recorded on site overlaid by a silty subsoil and topsoil. A series of ditches was recorded on site, with minimal dating evidence. However, it is feasible that they are prehistoric field ditches cut by a later Roman/medieval ditch. No further work has been requested by the archaeological advisor for Essex County Council.

Publication of the evaluation findings will be carried out through a short summary of the fieldwork submitted to the local fieldwork roundup. An OASIS form has also been completed and an electronic copy of the evaluation report will be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). The site archive will be prepared in accordance with local and national guidance and will be deposited with the Saffron Walden Museum.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document details the findings of an archaeological evaluation of the land adjacent to The Olivias, Dunmow Road, Takeley, Essex (Figure 1). The investigation took place on 22nd and 23rd April 2013 and comprised of the excavation of four evaluation trenches, located across the proposed development site.
- 1.2 The development site is located towards the eastern edge of Takeley, to the south of the Dunmow Road (B1256) at NGR TL 5721 2115. It is roughly rectangular in shape with an area of c.3045sq m.
- 1.3 The site was occupied by woodland and has now been cleared. To the north of the site is Dunmow Road, to the east is a plot occupied by Spinney Lodge; the southern boundary is formed by the line of the disused Braintree to Bishop Stortford Railway and to the west lies The Olivias (Figure 2).
- 1.4 The proposed development scheme comprises the construction of six dwellings with associated soft and hard landscaping.

2 Planning Background

- 2.1 The local planning authority is Uttlesford District Council. Archaeological advice to the council is provided by Essex County Council's Historic Environment Officer, Richard Havis.
- 2.2 The site lies within an area highlighted by Essex County Council's Historic Environment Characterisation Assessment and Historic Environment Record as having high potential for archaeological deposits.
- 2.3 Planning permission for residential development of the site was granted under the application UTT/12/5142/FUL. An archaeological condition for trial trenching and excavation was attached to the permission stating:

No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

- 2.4 Richard Havis, Historic Environment Officer for Essex County Council, issued a brief for the work (Essex County Council 2013).
- 2.5 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation, in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation (AOC 2013).

3 Geology and Topography

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS 2013) shows the site is located on bedrock of London Clay overlain by Lowestoft Formation chalky till with outwash sands, gravels, clays and silts

4 Archaeological and Historical Background

The information below is paraphrased from the brief (Essex County Council 2013).

4.1 The Prehistoric Periods (c. 500,000 BC– AD 43)

(Palaeolithic c. 500,000 – 10000 BC; Mesolithic c. 10000 to 4000 BC; Neolithic c. 4000-2200 BC; Bronze Age c. 2200-700 BC and Iron Age c. 700 BC - AD 43)

4.1.1 Evidence for prehistoric occupation spanning the Neolithic to Iron Age periods has been found during archaeological investigation of the Prior's Green development site to the immediate north of the proposed development areas.

4.1.2 A late Bronze Age ditch extends into the development area from the Priors Green site.

4.2 The Roman Period (AD 43 – AD 410)

4.2.1 The site lies on the frontage of the route of Roman Stane Street (A120), one of the major routes linking Braughing to Colchester. Roadside settlements have been found adjacent to and set back from the road.

4.3 The Early Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1066) and Medieval Periods (AD 1066 – AD 1538)

4.3.1 Medieval settlements are also associated with the route of Roman Stane Street; a previously unknown farmstead was found to the north-east of the site near Jack's Lane.

4.3.2 A field system identified to the immediate north of the site on the Prior's Green development is thought to be of medieval date.

4.4 The Post-Medieval (AD 1538 – AD 1900) and Modern Period (AD 1900 to present)

4.4.1 The southern boundary of the development site is formed by the Flitch Way which follows the line of the former Braintree to Bishop Stortford railway.

5 Aims of the Investigation

5.1 The aims of the evaluation were defined as being:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
- To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
- To enable the archaeology advisor to Uttlesford District Council, to make an informed decision on the status of the condition, and any possible requirement for further work in order to satisfy that condition.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

5.2 The specific aims of the evaluation were defined as being:

- To identify any extension of prehistoric occupation previously identified to the north of the site.
- To establish if any remains of Roman roadside settlement are present.
- To establish if any remains of medieval roadside settlement are present.
- To determine whether the medieval field system identified to the north of the site extends into it.

5.3 The final aim was to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

6 Methodology

- 6.1 The evaluation consisted of the monitored excavation of four evaluation trenches located across the site. Three trenches measured 20.00m long and 1.80m wide and one measured 24.00m long and 1.80m wide. The trenching covered a 5% sample of the site. One trench was relocated from that detailed in the WSI due to the presence of trees and the boundary ditch adjacent to the road (Figure 2).
- 6.2 The machining was carried out using a JCB 3CX machine with a smooth bladed ditching bucket, under the constant supervision of the archaeological Project Officer.
- 6.3 The site code **TAOL13** was obtained from the Saffron Walden Museum and was used as the site identifier for all records produced. The accession number **2013.6** will be used for the archive.
- 6.4 The trenches were accurately located to the National Grid and their levels calculated using a differential GPS.
- 6.5 All recording was in accordance with the standards and requirements of the Museum of London's *Archaeological Field Manual* (MoL 3rd edition 1994).
- 6.6 All of the work was carried out in line with:
- Archaeological Guidance Papers (AGP): 2-4, Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork (English Heritage 2009).
 - IfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (IfA 2008).
- 6.8 A continuous unique numbering system was employed. For each trench, a block of numbers in a continuous sequence was allocated. In this report the archaeological fills and layers are represented in curved brackets i.e. (), whilst the cut numbers are represented in square brackets i.e. [].
- 6.9 Written descriptions, comprising both factual data and interpretative elements, were recorded on standardised sheets.

7 Results

7.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3)

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
1	0.27m	97.61m – 97.34m	Dark greyish brown silty clay. Topsoil.
6	0.23m	97.34m – 97.11m	Yellowish brown silty clay. Subsoil.
7	>0.05m	97.11m – 97.06m	Yellowish brown silty clay with gravel. Natural.
8	>0.05m	97.11m – 97.06m	Yellowish brown silty clay with chalk. Natural.

- 7.1.1 Trench 1 measured 20.00m x 1.80m and was aligned northeast-southwest (Figure 3).
- 7.1.2 The earliest deposits within Trench 1 were (7) and (8), a yellowish brown hard silty clay with patches of gravel and a yellowish brown silty clay with flecks of chalk respectively, recorded at an upper height of 97.11mOD. Both deposits have been interpreted as the natural deposits with (8) being located towards the northeastern end of the trench. Overlying the natural was (6), a 0.23m thick layer of yellowish brown silty clay with occasional pebble inclusions. This deposit has been interpreted as subsoil.

- 7.1.3 Cut into the subsoil (6) was a narrow gully [5] which was orientated east-west. It measured 1.8m long, 0.34m wide and 0.24m deep and had a mid yellowish/brownish grey silty clay fill (4). It was recorded at an upper height of 96.82mOD and contained post-medieval tile.
- 7.1.4 Overlying (6), and the gully fill was (1), a 0.27m thick layer of topsoil, comprising of very dark greyish brown silty clay with roots and occasional gravel inclusions. Post-medieval pottery, one sherd of residual Roman tile and 19th-20th century ceramic building material fragments were also present.
- 7.1.5 Cut into the topsoil (1) overlying the gully [5] was a tree pit [3] comprising of black sooty silty clay fill (2) with burnt roots and gravel. It measured 1.80m long, 1.10m wide and 0.50m deep.
- 7.1.6 No significant archaeological finds or features were recorded in Trench 1.

7.2 Trench 2 (Figure 4)

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
9	0.28m	97.04m – 96.76m	Dark greyish brown silty clay. Topsoil.
10	0.23m	96.76m – 96.53m	Yellowish brown silty clay. Subsoil.
25	>0.15m	96.53m – 96.38m	Yellowish brown silty clay with chalk. Natural.

- 7.2.1 Trench 2 measured 24.00m x 1.80m and was aligned northwest-southeast (Figure 4).
- 7.2.2 The earliest deposit within Trench 2 was (25), a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk fragments interpreted as a natural horizon, recorded at an upper height of 96.53mOD. Overlying the natural was (10) a 0.23m thick subsoil consisting of yellowish brown silty clay with occasional chalk and flint inclusions.
- 7.2.3 Located in the centre of the trench, was a round-based ditch [16]. It measured 2.05m long, 0.72m wide and 0.22m deep and was recorded at a height of 96.32mOD. The fill (15) consisted of a yellowish brown silty clay with occasional chalk and flint inclusions. A single worked flint within the fill suggests the ditch may be prehistoric in date.
- 7.2.4 A second east-west ditch was located at the southern end of the trench. The flat-based ditch [22] measured 2.05m long, 0.65m wide and 0.15m deep and was recorded at a height of 96.62mOD (Plate A). The fill (21) was a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk and flint inclusions. Two pieces of worked flint were retained, suggesting the ditch may be prehistoric in date.



Plate A – Ditch [22] facing east

- 7.2.5 At the northern end of Trench 2 was a northwest-southeast ditch [14] cut into the natural horizon (28). It measured 8.10m long, 0.65m wide and 0.27m deep and was recorded at a height of 96.39mOD. The fill (13) comprised of yellowish brown silty clay with occasional chalk and charcoal flecks. A possible Roman/medieval ceramic building material fragment was retained from the fill.
- 7.2.6 Ditch [14] was cut by an east-west flat-based ditch [12]. The shallow ditch measured 1.20m long, 0.55m wide and 0.22m deep and was recorded at a height of 96.36mOD. The fill (11) comprised of a yellowish brown silty clay with occasional chalk and flint inclusions. The ditch was undated.
- 7.2.7 Immediately south of ditch [22] was a northeast-southwest ditch [24], measuring 2.05m long, 0.60m wide and 0.12m deep. It was recorded at a height of 96.61mOD. The fill (23) comprised of yellowish brown silty clay with occasional chalk and flint inclusions. It was undated.
- 7.2.8 Overlying the subsoil (10) was the 0.28m thick topsoil (9) consisting of very dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional flint and chalk and ceramic building material inclusions. This was recorded at a height of 97.04mOD.

7.3 Trench 3 (Figure 5)

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
26	0.24m	96.66m – 96.42m	Dark greyish brown silty clay. Topsoil.
27	0.32m	96.42m – 96.10m	Yellowish brown silty clay. Subsoil.

28	>0.12m	96.10m – 95.98m	Yellowish brown silty clay with chalk. Natural.
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- 7.3.1 Trench 3 measured 20.00m x 1.80m and was aligned east-west (Figure 5).
- 7.3.2 The earliest deposit recorded in the trench was (28), a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk inclusions and was interpreted as the natural horizon. It was recorded at a height of 95.98mOD.
- 7.3.3 At the east end of the trench, a north-south ditch [30] was recorded (Plate B). It measured 1.80m long, 1.40m wide and 0.24m deep and was cut into the natural (28). The fill (29) comprised of dense light yellowish brown silty clay with roots and was undated. It was recorded at a height of 96.16mOD.



Plate B – Ditch [30] facing north

- 7.3.4 Immediately west of the ditch was a small pit [32] cut into the natural (28). It measured 0.43m north-south, 0.40m east-west and 0.27m deep, although it extended beyond the limits of the trench to the south. It was recorded at a height of 95.97mOD. The fill (31) was a yellowish brown silty clay with roots and was undated.
- 7.3.5 This was overlain by a subsoil (27), consisting of dark yellowish brown silty clay with occasional chalk inclusions and measured 0.32m thick. Overlaying (27) was the topsoil (26), a dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional chalk inclusions. It measured 0.24m in thickness.
- 7.3.6 No significant archaeological finds or features were recorded in Trench 3.

7.4 Trench 4 (Figure 6)

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
33	0.30m	97.29m – 96.99m	Dark greyish brown silty clay. Topsoil.
34	0.47m	96.99m – 96.52m	Yellowish brown silty clay. Subsoil.
41	>0.41m	96.52m – 96.11m	Yellowish brown silty clay with chalk. Natural.

- 7.4.1 Trench 4 measured 20.00m x 1.80m and was aligned east-west (Figure 6).
- 7.4.2 The earliest deposit recorded in Trench 4 was (41), a 0.41m layer of yellowish brown silty clay with chalk inclusions interpreted as a natural horizon, recorded at an upper height of 96.52mOD.
- 7.4.3 A northeast-southwest ditch [36] was cut into the natural (41) and was recorded at a height of 96.43mOD (Plate C). It measured 3.50m long, 1.00m wide and 0.12m deep. It is highly probable that the terminus is present, but its shape was difficult to determine due to subsoil movement. The fill (35) comprised of yellowish brown silty clay with small stones and occasional chalk flecks and was undated.



Plate C – Ditch [36] facing northeast

- 7.4.4 To the west of ditch [36] was another northeast-southwest ditch [40], measuring 2.30m long, 0.99m wide and 0.19m deep. It was recorded at a height of 96.29mOD. It is possible that the ditch terminates at the northeast end, but the positioning of the trench section makes it difficult to determine. The fill (39) comprised of yellowish brown silty clay with occasional chalk and flint inclusions and was undated.
- 7.4.5 A channel [38] running northeast-southwest was irregular in shape. It measured 2.30m long, 0.25m wide and 0.08m deep. The undated fill (37) was a fairly loose mid yellowish brown silty clay. This is thought to be modern and relate to rabbit activity.
- 7.4.6 Overlying the natural horizon was subsoil (34), a 0.47m thick layer of yellowish brown silty clay, with mottled brown patches. The subsoil (34) was overlain by the topsoil (33), a 0.30m thick layer of dark greyish brown silty clay with 20th century ceramic building material and plastic inclusions.

8 Finds

- 8.1 A small assemblage was retained from the four trench evaluation. The topsoil (1) contained one large sherd of post-medieval pottery and a small piece of residual Roman tile. Gully [5] in Trench 1 had a large sherd of post-medieval tile.
- 8.2 Trench 2 contained two ditches with worked flint, possibly dating ditches [12] and [22] to the prehistoric period. The earlier was cut by ditch [14] which contained a single worn sherd of ceramic building material, which may be Roman or medieval in date.
- 8.3 There were no archaeological finds retrieved from Trenches 3 and 4.

9 Discussion

- 9.1 The archaeological evaluation accomplished its aim of establishing the presence/absence of archaeological remains.
- 9.2 The natural horizon was identified as a yellowish brown silty clay with chalk inclusions and patches of more silty gravel, at upper heights between 97.11mOD and 96.10mOD, reflecting a slight topographical decline from the southwest to the northeast. The stratigraphy remains consistent across the site, with the silty subsoil overlying the natural and the dark organic-rich topsoil overlying the subsoil. With the decline of the natural levels comes the increase of the subsoil depth towards the northeast of the site.
- 9.3 Trench 2 had the highest level of archaeological features, with two east-west ditches, possibly prehistoric in date; and a northwest-southeast ditch, which may be Roman or medieval in date, cut by a later east-west ditch. However, the northwest-southeast ditch did not appear to continue into Trench 4. The ditch may have terminated past the extent of the trench or it may have been disturbed by subsoil movement. There was also an undated northeast-southwest ditch at the southern end of Trench 2, which is on the same alignment as the ditch in Trench 3. There is a possibility that these make up the same ditch. However, both fills were undated.
- 9.4 The two ditches in Trench 4 were similar in size and appeared to be cut on the same northeast-southwest alignment. Although undated, they could be part of the same field system.
- 9.5 There is the possibility that some or all of these ditches relate to the prehistoric occupation or the medieval field system previously excavated to the north of the site. There is, however, no evidence of Roman or medieval roadside settlements.
- 9.6 There was a great deal of subsoil movement from roots, since the site was previously woodland, and also from the movement of rabbits, therefore, there is the possibility that archaeological features were altered or damaged. This was particularly evident in Trench 4.
- 9.7 Due to the lack of archaeological finds and significant features, it is probable that the site had minimal occupation and reflected the periphery of settlements situated to the north of the site.

10 Publication

- 10.1 Due to the nature of the project, initial publication is expected to be limited to a summary in the *Essex Archaeology and History* round-up and publication via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) (Appendix B).

11 Archive deposition

- 11.1 On completion of the project, the archive, consisting of paper records, drawings, and digital photographs, will be deposited with Saffron Walden Museum.

12 Recommendations

- 12.1 Following on site discussions between AOC and Richard Havis, the archaeological advisor for Uttlesford District Council, it was suggested that no further work would be required due to the lack of significant archaeological remains on site.

13 Bibliography

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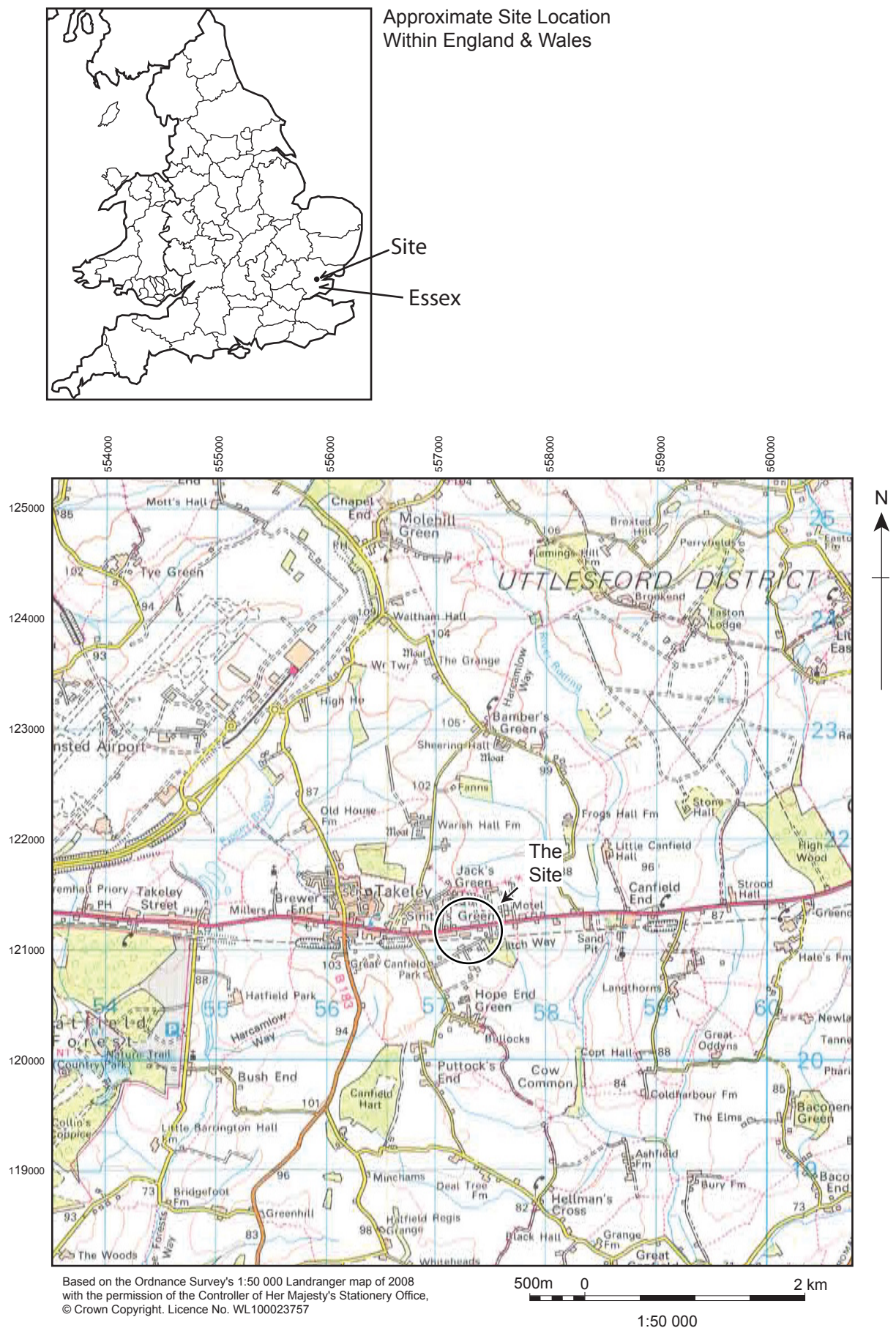


Figure 1: Site Location

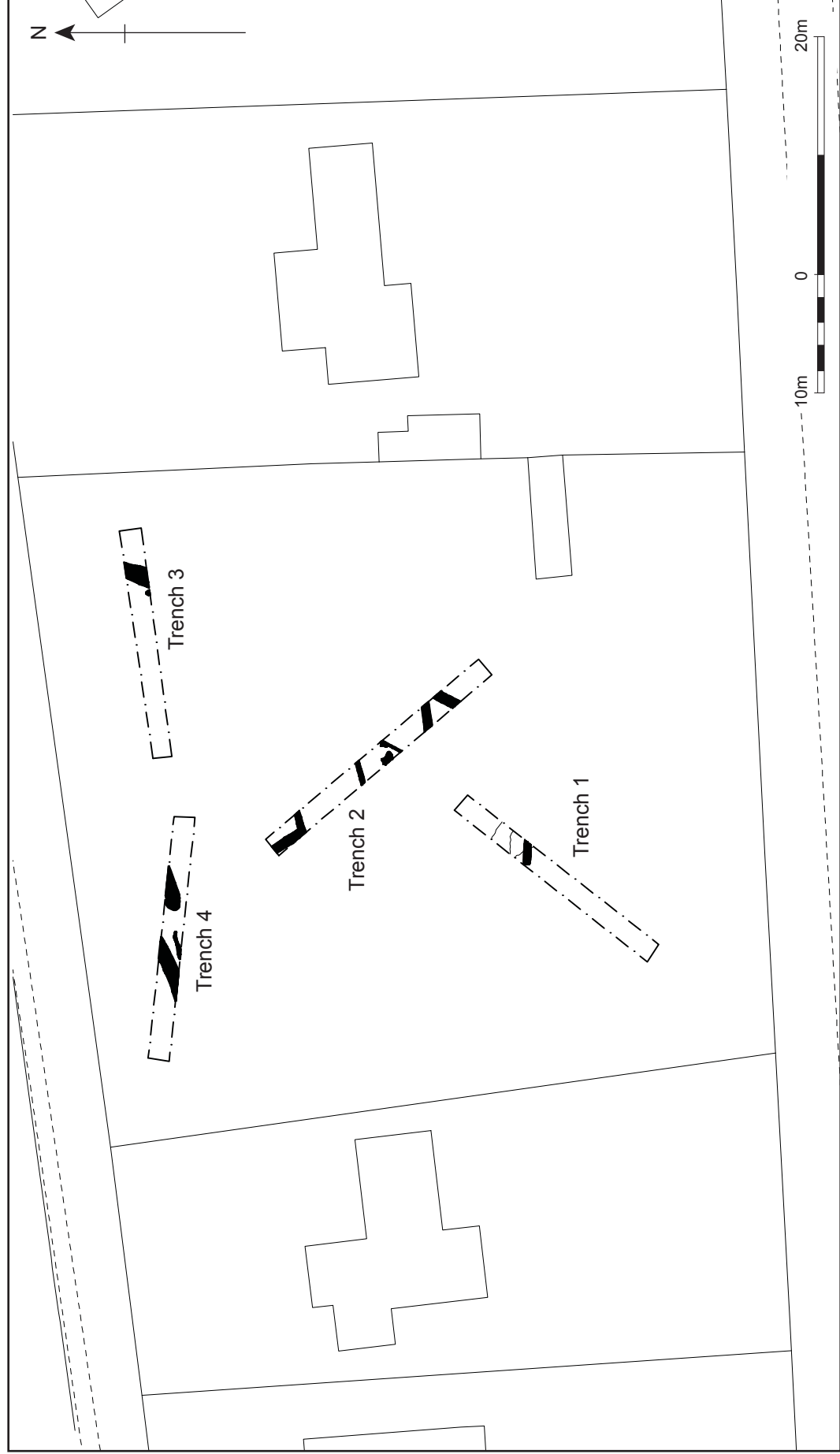


Figure 2: Trench Location

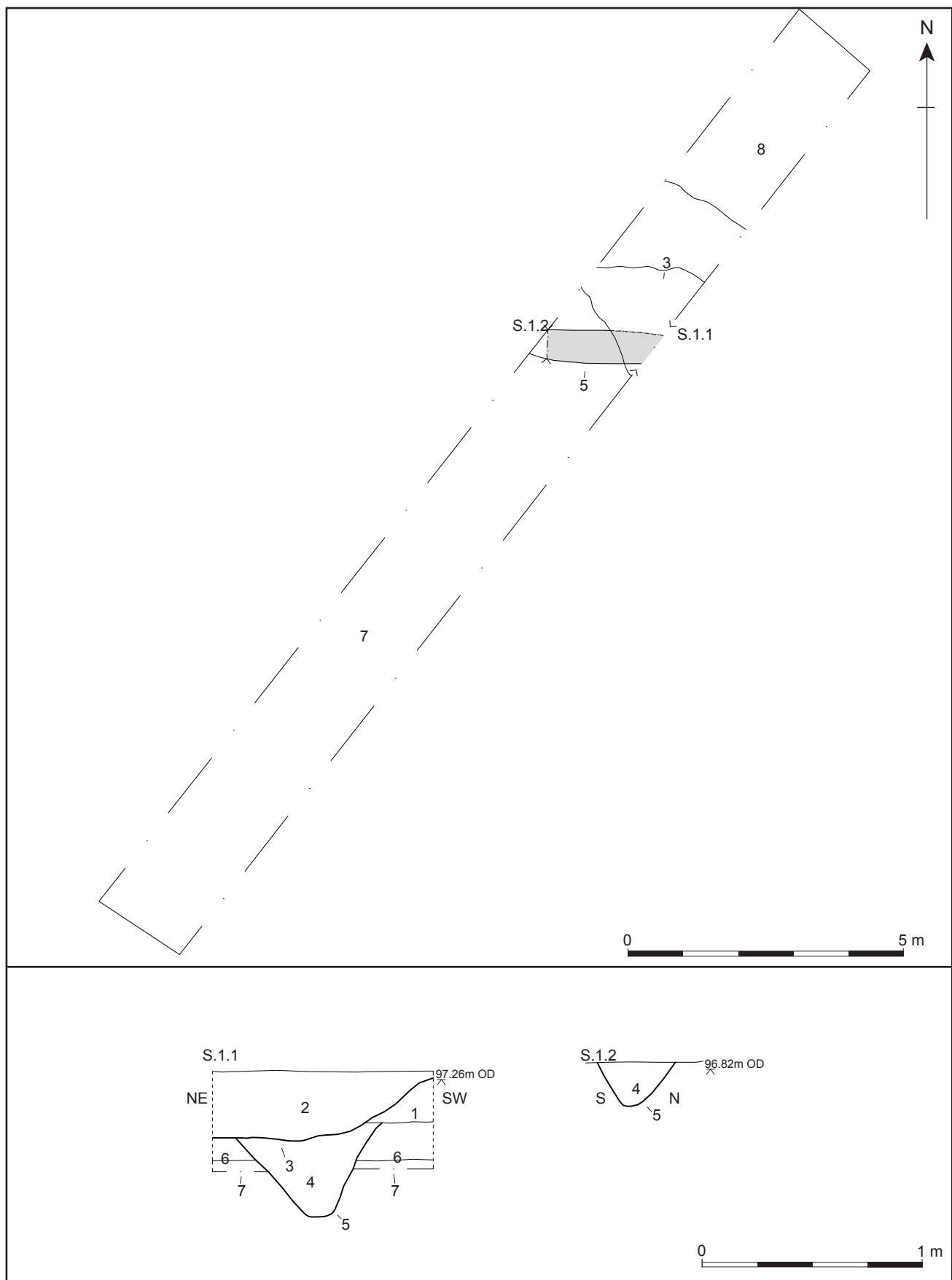


Figure 3: Trench 1 Plan and Sections

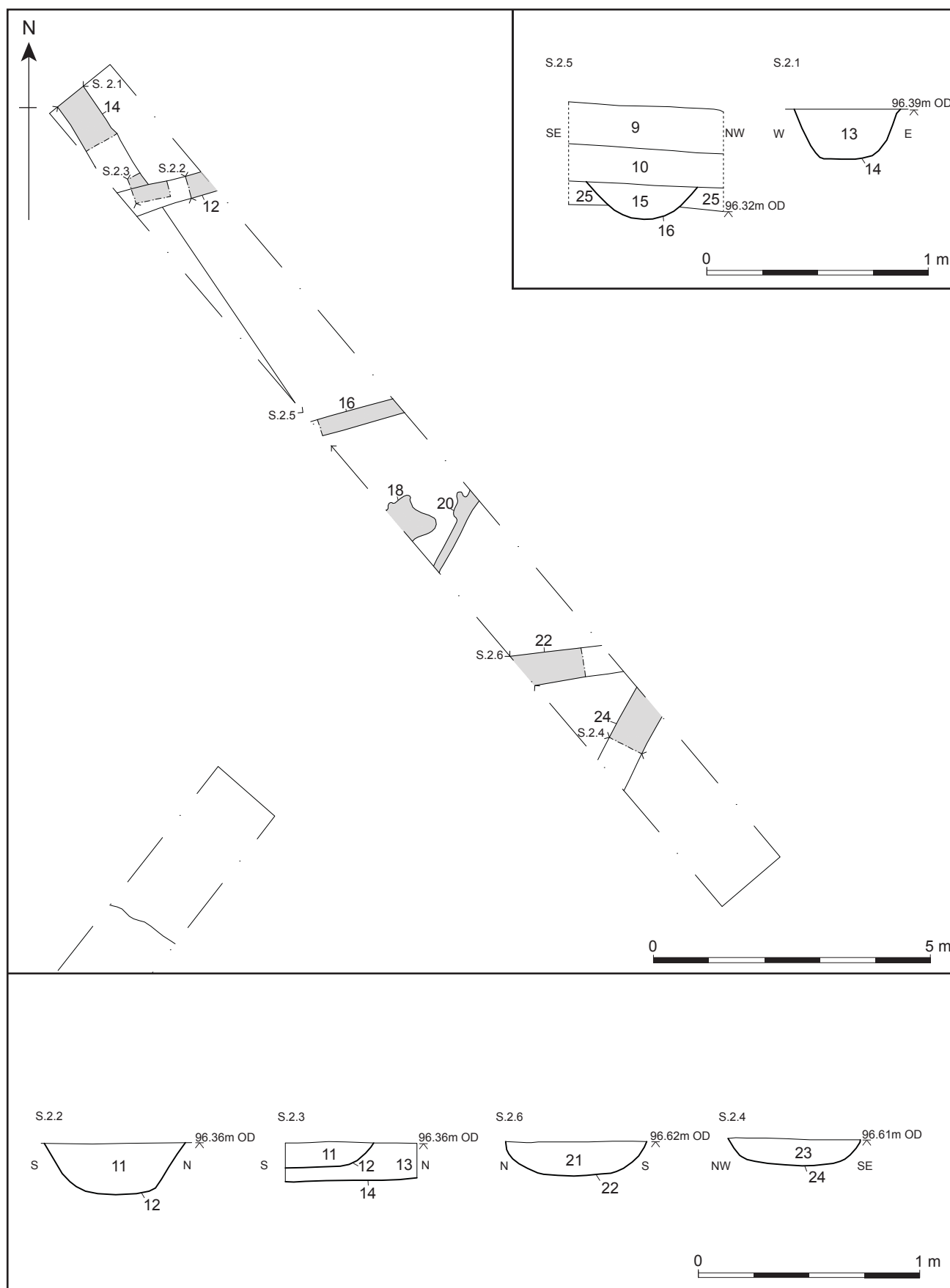


Figure 4: Trench 2 Plan and Sections

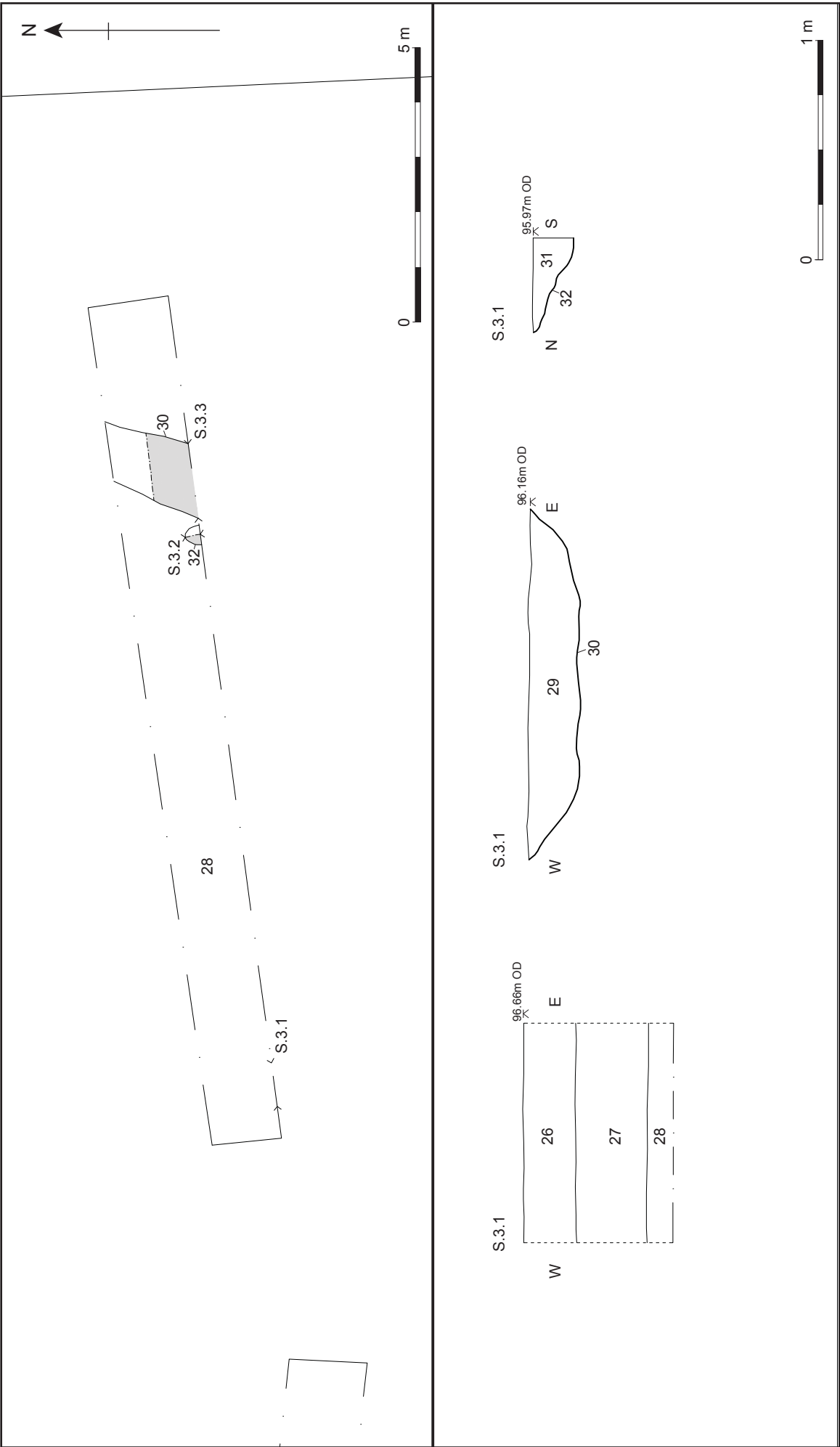


Figure 5: Trench 3 Plan and Sections

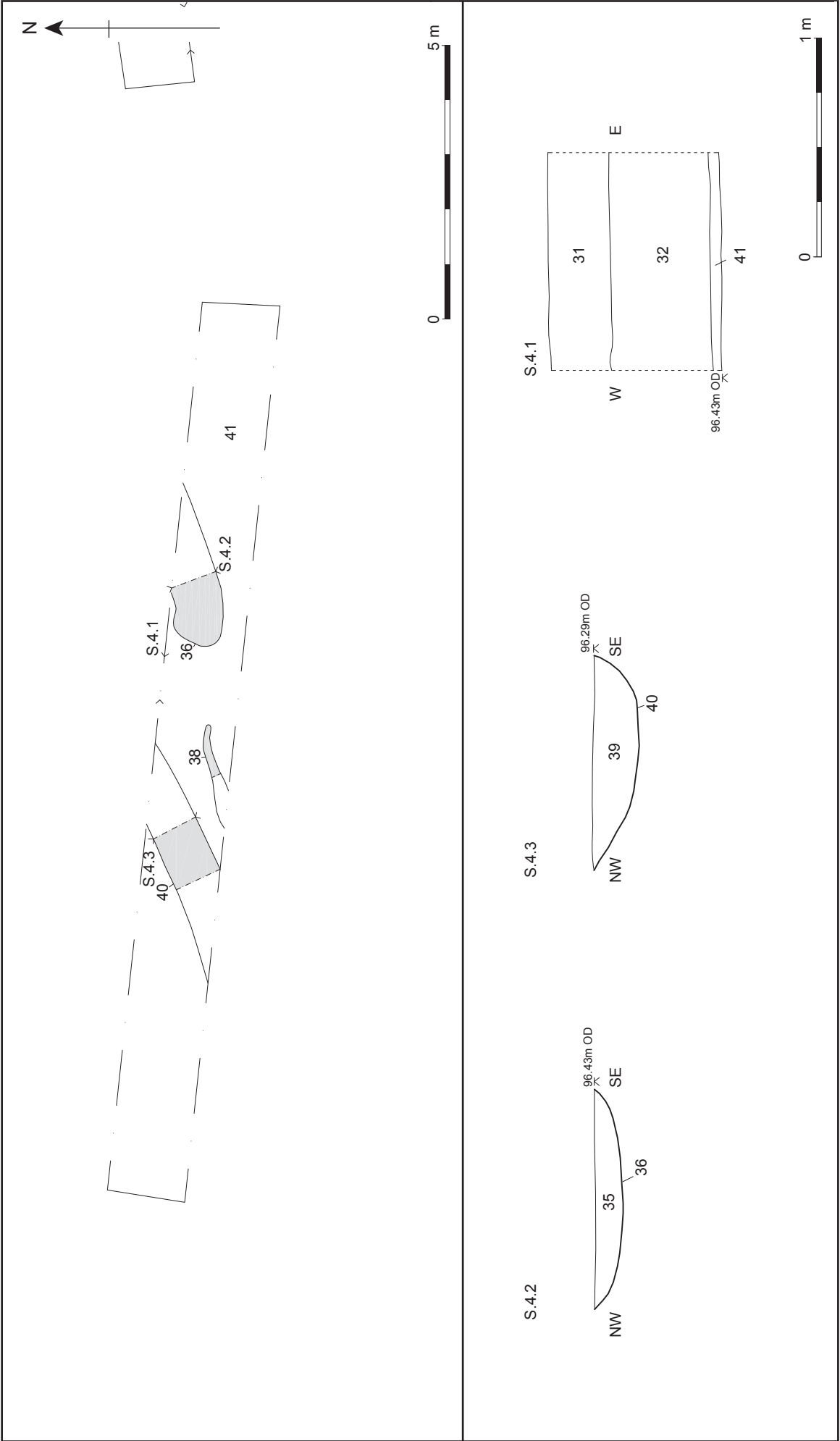


Figure 6: Trench 4 Plan and Sections

Appendices

Appendix A – Context Register

Context No.	Context Description/Index code	Length	Width	Depth
1	Topsoil.	20.00m	1.80m	0.27m
2	Fill of tree pit.	1.80m	1.10m	0.50m
3	Tree pit.	1.80m	1.10m	0.50m
4	Fill of gully.	1.80m	0.34m	0.24m
5	Gully.	1.80m	0.34m	0.24m
6	Subsoil.	20.00m	1.80m	0.23m
7	Natural.	20.00m	1.80m	>0.05m
8	Natural.	20.00m	1.80m	>0.05m
9	Topsoil.	20.00m	1.80m	0.28m
10	Subsoil.	20.00m	1.80m	0.23m
11	Fill of ditch.	1.20m	0.55m	0.22m
12	Ditch.	1.20m	0.55m	0.22m
13	Fill of ditch.	8.10m	0.65m	0.27m
14	Ditch.	8.10m	0.65m	0.27m
15	Fill of ditch.	2.05m	0.72m	0.22m
16	Ditch.	2.05m	0.72m	0.22m
17	Fill of tree pit.	1.10m	0.80m	0.20m
18	Tree pit.	1.10m	0.80m	0.20m
19	Fill of linear.	2.00m	0.10m	0.10m
20	Natural linear.	2.00m	0.10m	0.10m
21	Fill of ditch.	2.05m	0.65m	0.15m
22	Ditch.	2.05m	0.65m	0.15m
23	Fill of ditch.	2.05m	0.60m	0.12m
24	Ditch.	2.05m	0.60m	0.12m
25	Natural.	20.00m	1.80m	>0.15m
26	Topsoil.	20.00m	1.80m	0.24m
27	Subsoil.	20.00m	1.80m	0.32m
28	Natural.	20.00m	1.80m	>0.12m
29	Fill of ditch.	1.80m	1.40m	0.24m
30	Ditch.	1.80m	1.40m	0.24m
31	Fill of pit.	0.43m	0.40m	0.27m
32	Pit.	0.43m	0.40m	0.27m
33	Topsoil.	20.00m	1.80m	0.30m
34	Subsoil.	20.00m	1.80m	0.47m
35	Fill of ditch.	3.50m	1.00m	0.12m
36	Ditch.	3.50m	1.00m	0.12m
37	Fill of linear.	2.30m	0.25m	0.08m
38	Natural linear.	2.30m	0.25m	0.08m
39	Fill of ditch.	2.30m	0.99m	0.19m
40	Ditch.	2.30m	0.99m	0.19m
41	Natural.	20.00m	1.80m	>0.05m

Appendix B – Oasis Form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-145504

Project details

Project name	Land adjacent to the Olivias
Short description of the project	Four trench evaluation. Prehistoric and Roman/medieval ditches and post medieval gully. Limited dating.
Project dates	Start: 22-04-2013 End: 23-04-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	32363 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	TAOL13 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	2013.6 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Woodland 8 - Other
Monument type	DITCHES Uncertain
Monument type	DITCHES Bronze Age
Monument type	DITCH Roman

Monument type	GULLY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	TILE Roman
Significant Finds	TILE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	FLINT Bronze Age
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX UTTLESFORD TAKELEY land adjacent to the Olivias
Study area	0.35 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 5721 2115 51 0 51 51 58 N 000 17 01 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 96.00m Max: 98.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	AOC Archaeology
Project brief originator	Essex County Council - Historic Environment Branch
Project design originator	AOC Archaeology

Project director/manager Melissa Melikian

Project supervisor Tara Fidler

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body CTS Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Saffron Walden Museum

Physical Archive ID 2013.6

Physical Contents "Ceramics", "Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive recipient Saffron Walden Museum

Digital Archive ID 2013.6

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography"

Paper Archive recipient Saffron Walden Museum

Paper Archive ID 2013.6

Paper Contents "Ceramics", "Stratigraphic", "Worked stone/lithics"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Microfilm", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Land Adjacent to The Olivias, Dunmow Road, Takeley, Essex: An Archaeological Evaluation Report

Author(s)/Editor(s) Fidler, T.

Date 2013

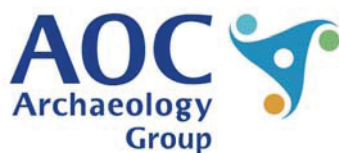
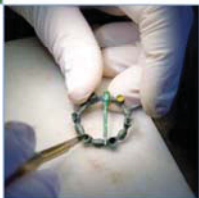
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