

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2010/066

Chapel Cottage, Hollow Road, Bury St Edmunds BSE 344

A. Tester
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HER Information

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Summary

Evaluation trenches in the grounds of Chapel Cottage, Hollow Road, Bury St Edmunds found no evidence that could be related to the former medieval hospital of St Nicholas's immediately to the south. There is evidence from three of the four trenches for lime burning. This was clearest in Trench 2 where a large pit, or exposed chalk face contained bricks from a partially robbed structure with evidence for successive phases of burning that dates from the late 17th - early 18th century.

1. Introduction

Archaeological trial trenching was carried out within the grounds of Chapel Cottage, Hollow Road Bury St Edmunds at grid reference TL8639 6485, as part of a pre-planning condition set out in a verbal Brief and Specification by Jess Tipper of the Conservation Team at Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service. The Brief was to establish the archaeological impact if the site were to be redeveloped for housing. This followed a desk top survey of the site by James Rolfe (SCCAS Report No. 2010/026), which showed that the extent of the medieval hospital of St Nicholas to the south was unknown but may have extended into the development area. The brief asked for a programme of trenching to establish whether archaeological remains would be affected by the development before the planning application was considered. The work was commissioned by the owner of the site E. E. Mortimer.

2. Geology and topography

The site lies c. 45-50m above sea level and is on rising ground overlooking the valley of the River Lark. The natural geology is of chalk and the site falls between Hollow Road and Barton Road, the latter occupying a distinct cut into the natural shape of the hillside which may have been caused by erosion or chalk quarrying or a combination of the two. The site itself is on two levels with what appears to be terracing into the slope over the lower part of the site.

3. Archaeological and historical background

A detailed historical and desk top search has recently been completed for this site (RolfeE 2010). The importance of the site is related to its location immediately to the northeast of St Nicholas's hospital. The medieval hospital was one a series that were established on the roads into the medieval town that was suppressed by Henry VIII in 1539. Parts of the old hospital are retained within the present building on the corner of the Hollow Road and Barton Road site and it is likely that remains of the hospital including building footings and burials survive below ground. The ground is almost level between the Chapel Cottage site and the Hospital to the south, which suggests that a terrace has been cut into the hillside. The boundary and a possible terrace, which is

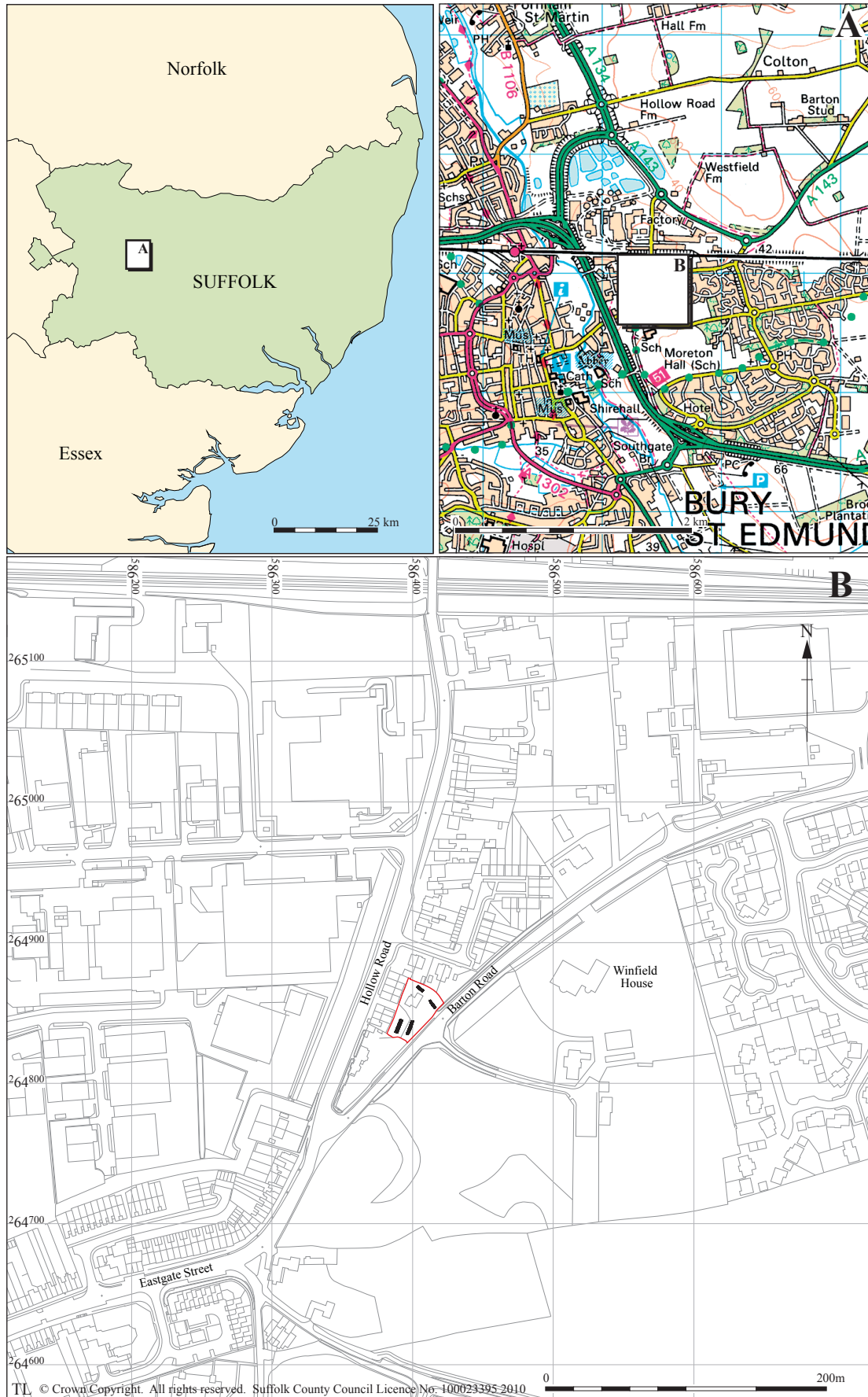


Figure 1. Location of the development area (red) and evaluation trenches (black)

shown by hatching along the roadside, appears on Thomas Warren's map of Bury from 1791 (Rolfe 2010) and therefore dates from before the late 18th century.

4. Methodology

A series of four trenches were excavated in the development area (Fig 1 and 2). Trenches 1 and 3 were located at the south end of the site in order to establish whether there were significant remains extending from the site of the hospital in the development area. Trenches 2 and 4 were positioned at the north end of the development on the higher part of the site. Three of the four trenches crossed the position of the proposed building footings. The trenches were excavated using a back acting digger with a 1m flat bucket (a small digger was required due to the limited access to the rear of the site). Sections were planned at a scale of 1:20 and a Total Station Theodolite was used to locate the trenches. A single sequence continuous numbering system was used for site recording and a photographic record was made of the site. Only a representative sample of tile was retained from layer 0009. All finds from stratified deposits were retained and are held in Archive in Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds.

5. Results

Trench 1 (Figs. 2 and 3)

This trench was 11.5m x 2m and aligned north south. The trench was c.0.4m deep and the profile consisted of c.0.2m of hogging over c.0.2m of rough topsoil that had been disturbed. Beneath this was solid chalk. At the south end of the trench was a possible pit, 0002 which was 0.9m wide and 0.75m long and 0.4m deep (Fig. 3 section 1) it continued to the west of the trench. The pit was filled with green/brown silty clay with fragments of soft orange fabric peg tile. Along the western side of the trench was the foundation of a wall 0014 that was 3.75m long and was made of flint with occasional 19th century bricks. There was a short angular extension to the wall, which was largely removed by a pit at the north end of the trench. This contained building debris including slate and is likely to be the remains of a structure that appears on both the 1904 and 1926 Ordnance Survey maps with the earliest elements shown on Richard Payne's map of 1833.

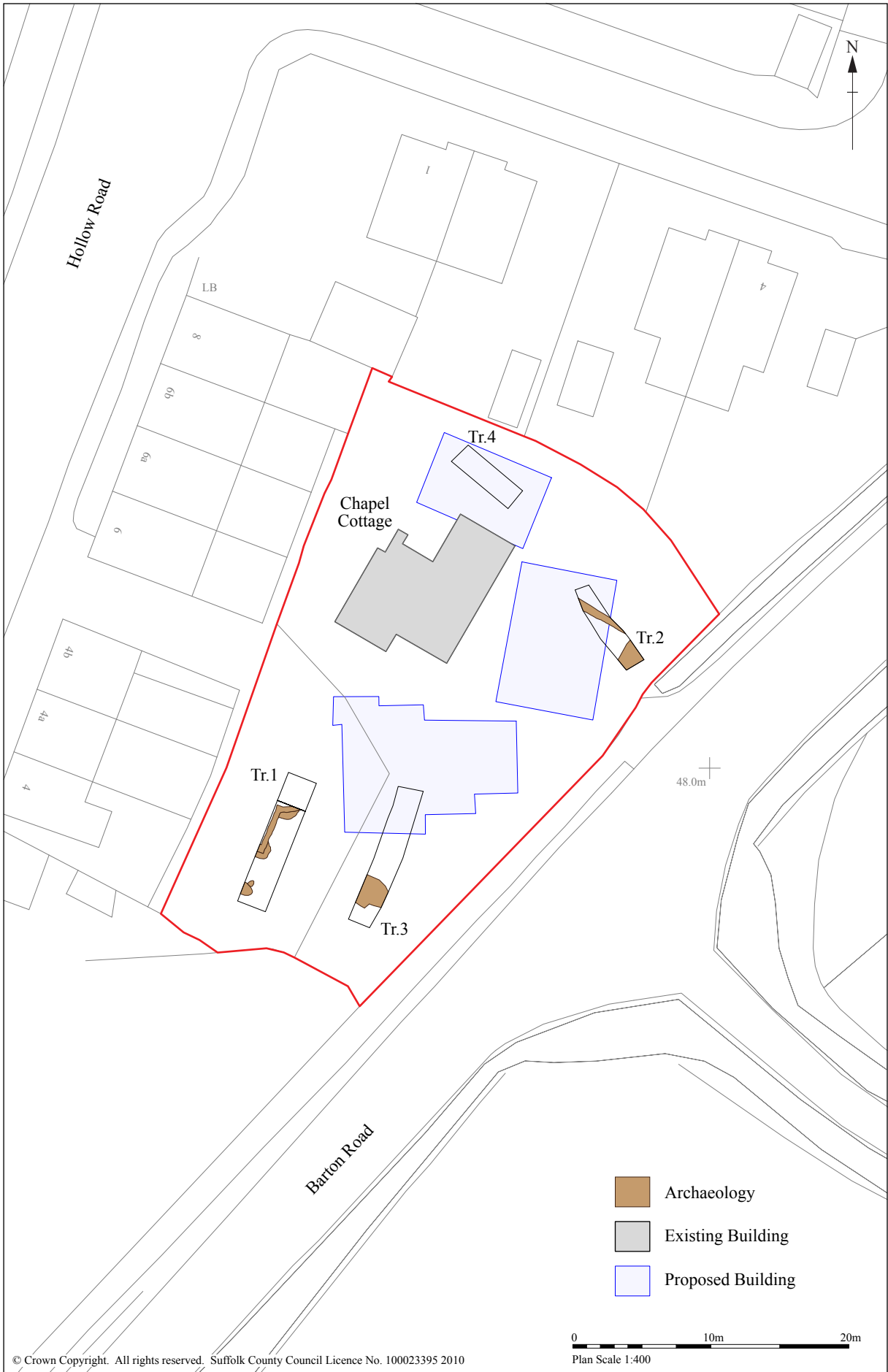


Figure 2. Trench plan

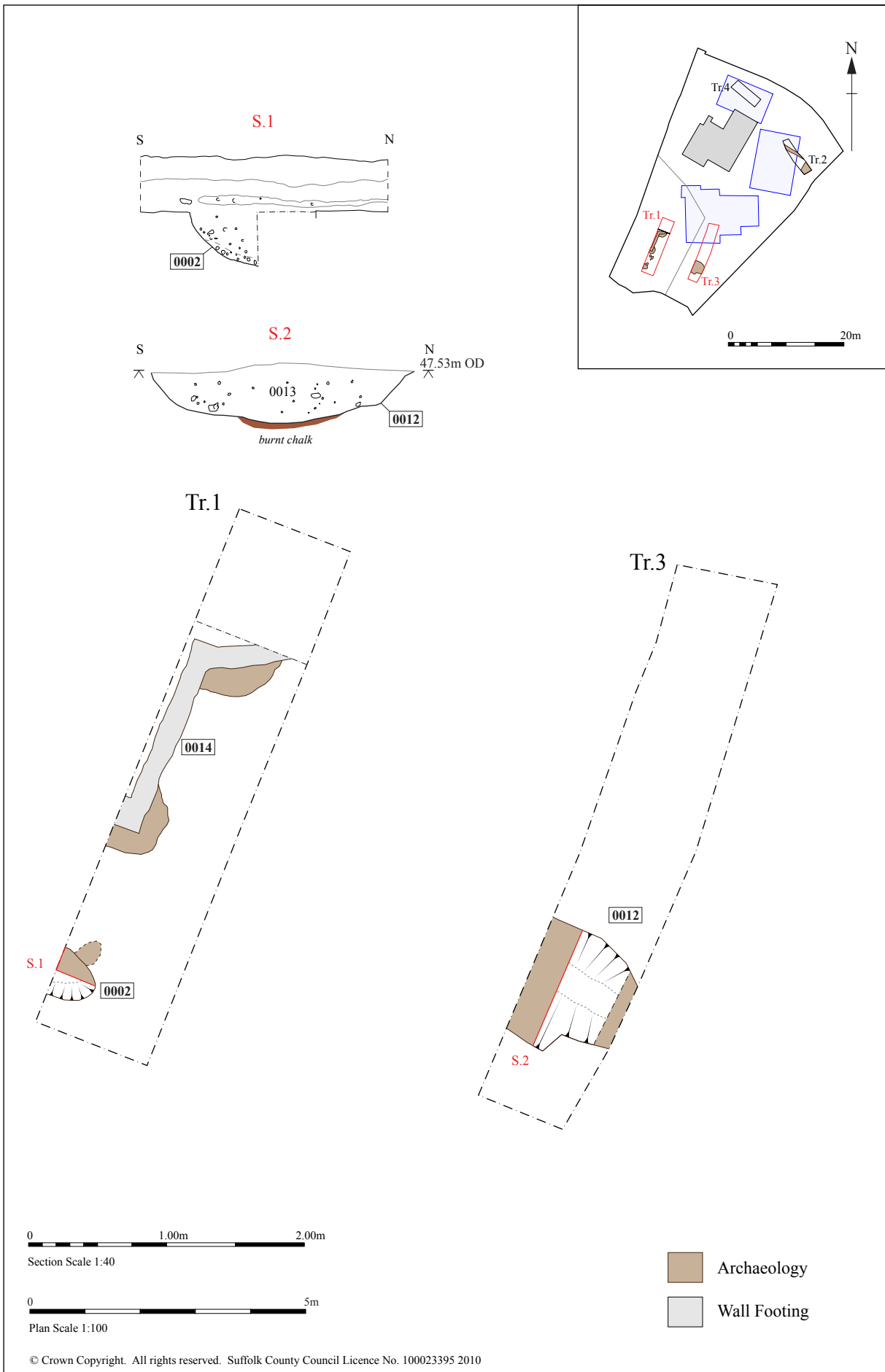


Figure 3. Trenches 1 and 3, plans and sections

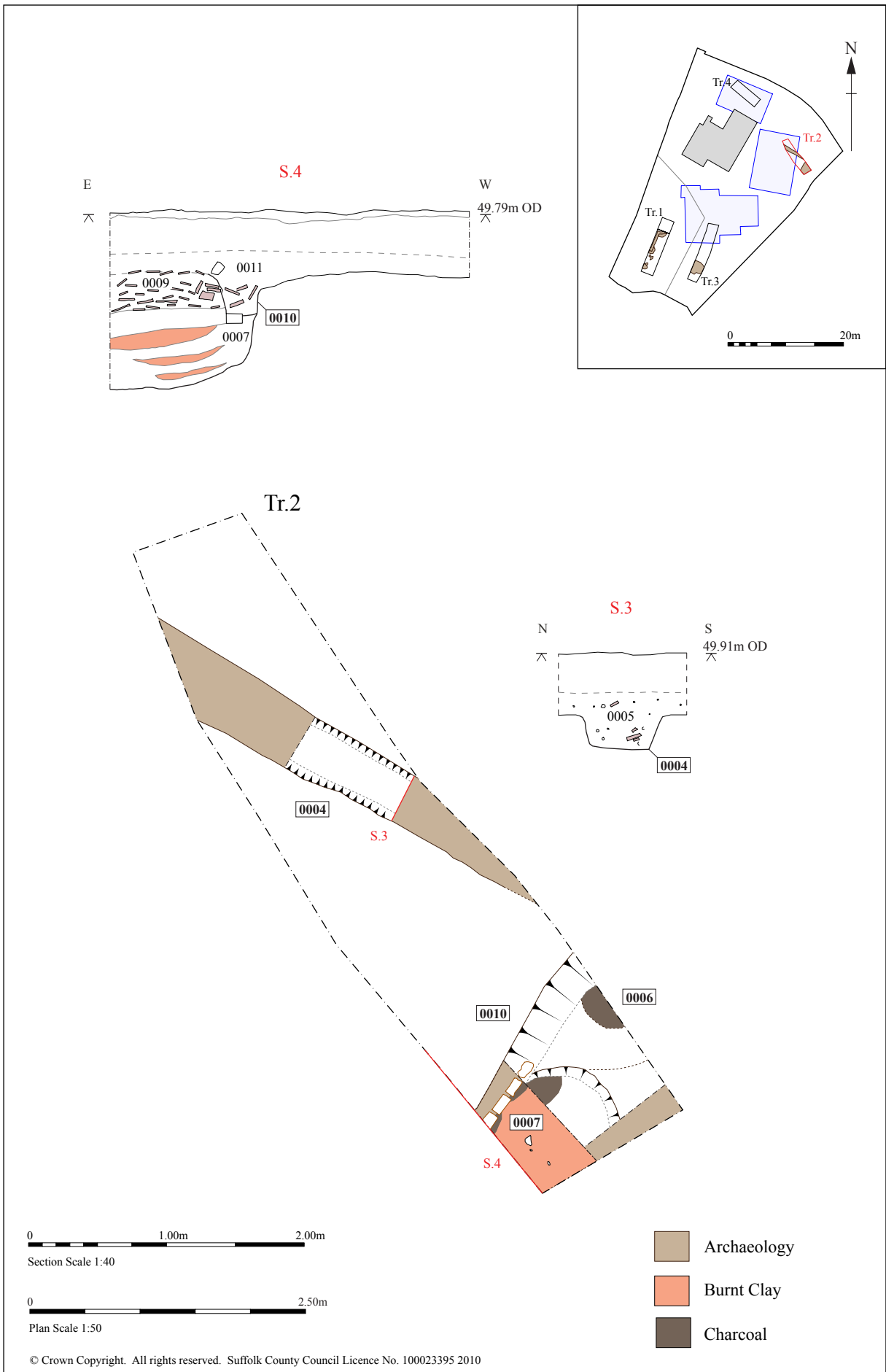


Figure 4. Trench 2 plans and sections



Figure 5. Trench 2, Kiln 0006 partially excavated.

Trench 2

This trench measured 10.5m and was between 1.2m and 2m wide (the trench narrowed at the western end). Natural chalk was encountered at c. 0.45m. At the east end of the trench was a steep cut, 0021, c.0.85m deep (Fig.4 Section 4). Lining the cut for approximately half of its length on the south side was a single course of bricks, 0008, that survived being robbed (the robbing trench was visible in section 4 where it can be seen cutting through tile layer 0009). A series of burnt surfaces were visible in the clay that indicates a sequence of circular structures with a brick superstructure at the south end of the trench. This circular structure was cut into earlier accumulations of fired and unfired clay and the base of the chalk was unevenly burnt, either black or red. It is suggested from this evidence that 0006 was the remains of a lime kiln, which had been used for some time with evidence of numerous firings.

Aligned east west across the trench, parallel with the terrace boundary was a small ditch 0004 (Fig. 4 Section 3). It was approximately 0.4m deep and filled with mid-brown clay and contained animal bone, brick and peg tile that were similar to the material within 0006.

Trench 3

This trench measured 10.5 by 1.9m and was aligned north south. The profile consisted of c. 0.4m of dark brown silt over chalk. A single cut feature, 0012, was identified at the

south end consisted of a slightly irregular oval shape that was a maximum of 2.1m long and at least 1.9m wide (Fig.3 section 2). It was filled with green-brown clay with chalk flecks and small fragments of burnt clay. An oval area at the base of the pit was burnt pink.

Trench 4

This trench measured 1.7m x 5.25m. The profile showed 0.4m of dark brown soil with c.0.2m of a slightly lighter brown subsoil. The natural was solid chalk.

Levels

Levels were taken across the site. These showed that the ground below the terrace from Chapel Cottage to the south end of the property was approximately level at 48m OD. The ground alongside Trench 2 was approximately 49.5m OD. The natural chalk in Trench 2 was c. 0.6m from the surface, whereas the chalk was shallower in Trench 3 at 0.4m. From this evidence it is suggested that up to 1.4m of chalk had been removed by terracing into the hillside.

6. Finds

Introduction

Finds were collected from two contexts in Trench 2, ditch fill 0005 and layer 0009 as shown in Table 1 below.

Context	CBM		Animal bone		Shell		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0005	14	681	1	254	1	3	Post-medieval
0009	14	3900					Post-medieval
Total	28	4581	1	254	1	3	

Table 1. Finds quantities

Ceramic building material

Roof tile

A total of 24 fragments of roof tile weighing 2628g was recovered from the two contexts at Hollow Road. Most of the tile only suffers from slight abrasion and a number of pieces join in layer 0009. Without exception all of the tile fragments occur in a medium sandy fabric with common ferrous inclusions (msfe). The tile is not closely datable but the fabric is mainly post-medieval in date.

Late brick

Late brick fragments are present in both fills (4 @ 1953g). All of the examples are abraded and the pieces in layer 0009 all have varying amounts of mortar attached and have been reused.

All of the brick pieces have a shared fabric (msfe) and a similar depth of around 49mm. Based upon Drury's study of late bricks from Norwich (1993, 165) the depth size of these bricks (49mm) coincides with types LB1 and LB2. On this evidence it may therefore be possible to suggest a date range for these examples of c mid 16th to the early 18th century.

Animal bone

A single animal bone fragment (254g) was noted in layer 0009. Although not complete, it is still possible to identify it as a cow humerus.

Shell

Only one piece of shell is present, recorded in ditch fill 0005, and this belongs to the common garden snail (*helix aspersa*).

Discussion

Although this is a limited and small collection of finds, the presence of the roofing tile implies the presence of a substantial structure within the immediate vicinity.

7. General Discussion

The evaluation has established that the site has been truncated, with a depth of up to 1.4m of chalk having been removed at the deepest point. While level ground would have been useful for negotiating the site when it was a farm the levelling activity, may have been a by-product of chalk mining for building purposes. Chalk, or clunch as it is called in Suffolk, was used in blocks for building from the medieval period both for internal tracery in ecclesiastical architecture and for external walls in vernacular buildings. A more widespread use of chalk was for making lime mortar which persisted in Suffolk well into the 20th century and after the introduction of Portland cement in the

later 19th century. In the production of lime mortar carbon dioxide is burnt out of the chalk and is reabsorbed later during construction.

Pits 0002 in Trench 1 and 0012 in Trench 3 may have been the site of small scale lime burning. This was evidenced by the burnt clay fragments in 0002 and the burnt surface in the base of 0012. This is also the most likely explanation for the successive burning and the remains of the brick structure at the end of Trench 2. This feature included re-used bricks that are approximately dated from the late 16th to early 18th century. The evidence, with multiple patches of burnt clay and chalk, is for successive firings but the scale of this activity is uncertain and the evaluation did not establish the extent of the cut in the chalk or its shape. It is possible that the firing took place in a pit within the chalk or that it was against an open face that was being mined into the hillside.

Ditch 0004 was close in date to 'kiln' 0006 and is aligned at right angles to the edge of the terrace. It is possible that this was the property division between the farm that predated Chapel Cottage (Rolfe 2010) or that the boundary was adjusted because of the terracing immediately to the south.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Evaluation trenches 1 and 3 were positioned to establish whether any archaeological features extended northward onto the site of Chapel Cottage from the medieval hospital and particularly into the area of the southernmost building (Fig.1). No evidence was found that is likely to have been related to the medieval hospital and the larger disturbance in Trench 1 can be identified on Richard Payne's map of 1833 but was absent from the Warren map of 1791. Two shallow and insubstantial pits may be evidence of lime burning. The evaluation has shown that the southernmost building is in an area that has been substantially truncated and therefore has no archaeological potential.

The evidence from Trench 2 is for lime burning that may date from the 17th -18th centuries. Although later than the medieval hospital these features represent a little understood pre-industrial industry, which probably involved the open face excavation of the chalk, although this could not be confirmed during the evaluation and it does not appear on any of the historic maps. The remains of this activity are likely to be

completely removed by any development which involves extending the terracing to the north. It is suggested therefore that there is no objection to the development on archaeological grounds but that the evidence for probable lime kilns close against the terracing in the proximity of Trench 2 should be recorded. It is proposed that this can be achieved by a limited programme of hand excavation during the close monitoring of the soil strip.

9. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Archive Store Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive on SCC server svr-etd077\Arc\Archive Field Proj\BSE\BSE344

Finds and environmental archive: SCCAS Finds Store Bury St Edmunds.

10. List of contributors and acknowledgements

The evaluation was carried out by Andrew Tester and David Gill and the finds were processed by Jonathan Van Jennians. Andy Fawcett and Richenda Goffin prepared the finds report and Crane Begg produced the graphics.

11. Bibliography

Drury, P., 1993, 'Ceramic Building Materials', in Margeson, S., *Norwich Households*.
East Anglian Archaeology 58, Norwich Survey.

Rolfe, J., 2010 'Chapel Cottage, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk' Archaeological Desk Based Assessment'. SCCAS Report No. 2010/066

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

Appendix 1

BSE 344 Context List

opno	trench	feature	identifier	description	cuts	cutby	over	unde	spotdate
0001		blank							
0002	Tr 1	0002	Pit	Oval pit? Extending beyond the trench to the west. C.9m wide and a minimum of 0.75m long. Maximum of 0.4m deep.					
0003	Tr 1	0002	Fill	Fine green/brown silt/clay. Some chalk flecks. Pea gravel at base onto natural chalk. Occasional fragmwnets of soft orange fabric pegtile.					
0004	Tr 2	0004	Ditch cut	Ditch aligned northwest-southeast. 0.5m wide 0.3m deep cut into natural chalk.					0005
0005	Tr 2	0004	Ditch fill	Mid brown clayflecked with chalk. Fair amount of pegtile in file also animal bone.					0004
0006	Tr 2	0006	Lime kiln?	Feature at southeast of trench therefore only one edge visible. Steep sided cut into chalk. Uneven base, also burnt red and black..					
0007	Tr 2	0006	Fill	Internal fill clay with several phases of green brown clay and fired red clay surfaces. Suggests successive firing of kiln? Below brick structure that was partly robbed				0006	0009
0008	Tr 2	0006	Fill	Line of bricks remains from robbed wall c.2 inch wide c.late 17th century			0010		0007
0009	Tr 2	0006	Layer	Layer of pegtile, packed very closely, remains of structure?			0010		0007
0010	Tr 2	0006	pit cut	Robber trench onto brick wall cut through layer of pegtiles 0009.			0009		
0011	Tr 2	0006	Pit fill	Fill of robber trench, brown silt, dug to recover bricks from the side of the kiln. Many loose pegtiles in fill from layer 0009.					0010
0012	Tr 3	0012	Pit cut	Pit c.2m northsouth and at least 1.8m eastwest. Coming to surface on the eastern side. Was thought to be ditch at first and dection c.1m wide was dug through it. Surface in the centre of the chlak was burnt red and black in places. Suggest possible lime kiln remains?					

opno trench feature identifier description cuts cutby over unde spotdate

0013	Tr 3	0013	Pit fill	Green/brown clay with chalk flecks. Tiny fragments of burnt clay in fill. Because this was fragmentary the clay must have been reworked to be dispersed throughout.
0014	Tr 1	0014	Brick struct	flint and mortar wall includes 19th century bricks. 3.75m long before extension at an angle to the northeast for 1.5m. Cut by later pit 0015. Recorded in plan but no finds recovered as clearly 19th century, although some odd tudor bricks incorporated in the footings.
0015	Tr 1	0014	Pit	Pit cut and fill. Contained dark sand silt with slate, tiles and 19th century brick debris. Wide and shallow onto chalk c.0.75m below car park surface. Interpretation, Possible lime kiln robbed out or bricks
0016	Tr 4	0016	Trench	Trench 5.2m x 1.7m wide. Natural chalk at c. 0.6m
0017	Tr 2	0017	Trench	Trench measured 10.5m x 2m c.0.4m of topsoil directly over soil chalk. Suggests the surface has been truncated along whole length of trench.
0018	Tr 1	0018	Trench	Trench measured 10m x 2m aligned southwest northeast. Truncated surface with 0.2m of hardcore over 0.2m of topsoil but quite disturbed and bottom surface probably truncated.
0019	Tr 3	0019	Trench	Trench measured 7m x 1.5m but narrower at north end because of footpath.
0020	Tr 2	0020	cut	Steep cut at the east end of trench 2. south end of cut included in structure 0006