



North Kent Community Church, Springhead, Ebbsfleet, Kent

Archaeological Assessment Report





**NORTH KENT COMMUNITY CHURCH, SPRINGHEAD PARK,
EBBSFLEET, KENT**

Archaeological Assessment Report

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was appointed by CgMs Consulting Limited, to carry out an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation on land at Springhead, near Ebbsfleet in Kent. The archaeological works formed part of a detailed mitigation strategy requested by the Archaeological Officer for Kent County Council, in advance of the proposed construction of the North Kent Community Church.

A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the majority of the Site comprising topsoil overlying colluvium and natural geology. A total of nine archaeological features and one natural feature were encountered including three Mid-Late Bronze Age ditches and three post-medieval ditches that coincide with previously recorded field systems. A single re-cut pit has been provisionally dated between the Late Bronze Age and Late Iron Age and two intercutting pits have been assigned to the medieval period.

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Acknowledgements

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The project was managed by Richard Greatorex, Head of Fieldwork for Wessex Archaeology, and run in the field by David Britchfield assisted by Jo Condliffe. Wessex Archaeology would like to extend special thanks to Roger Richards for volunteering his invaluable metal-detecting skills.

Finds analysis was carried out by Lorraine Mephram. The environmental assessment samples were processed by Matthew Kendall and were assessed by Sarah F. Wyles. The report was researched and compiled by David Britchfield, edited by Richard Greatorex with illustrations being provided by Elizabeth James.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Limited, to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of strip, map and sample excavation within the impact footprint of a new Community Church and a watching brief within the footprint of the associated car parking area (hereafter referred to as the Site). The development forms part of a wider mixed use (housing and commercial) development within the former Springhead Quarter zone of the Ebbsfleet Development. The area of investigation is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 561870 172992.

1.2 Location, Topography and Geology

1.2.1 The Ebbsfleet Development is situated on the south bank of the River Thames between Swanscombe and Northfleet, Kent. The Ebbsfleet Development is bisected by the River Ebbsfleet, which forms the boundary between the Borough of Dartford and the Borough of Gravesham.

1.2.2 The former Springhead Quarter zone was located within the south-east quadrant of the Ebbsfleet Development. The Quarter was irregular in shape, being bounded to the north by a sewage works and the Springhead Enterprise Park, to the west by the Ebbsfleet and the CTRL Trace, to the south by development bordering the embankment of a dismantled railway from Gravesend to Longfield and to the east by the rear gardens of properties fronting on to Springhead Road. The Community Church development is located centrally within the former development zone and is bounded to the east and south by new housing and to the north by a proposed school development and to the west by a proposed sports facility.

1.2.3 The solid geology of the former Springhead Quarter zone comprises Upper Chalk, which locally is capped by Thanet Sands (Institute of Geological Sciences 1979). The chalk outcrops only in localised areas on the slopes down into the valleys that bound the quarter to the west and north. On the lower valley slopes, Pleistocene Head deposits occur which mask the underlying Chalk.

1.2.4 However Plateau Gravels have been located on the higher ground and significant depths of colluvium (up to 1.7m thick) were recorded on the lower valley sides and the valley floor of the Ebbsfleet. The colluvium is a chalk-flecked brown/yellow clay/silt containing some small to medium sub-rounded flint gravel. The deposit becomes lighter in colour and more calcareous towards the upper profile. The colluvium seals features of prehistoric and Roman date and is therefore thought to be a result of ploughing in the Roman and later periods.

1.2.5 In the immediate area of the Site, evaluation trenching undertaken at the end of 2003 and reported on in 2004, indicates that topsoil averages 0.3m

(mid to dark brown/grey brown sand/loam/clay with moderate amounts of small to medium sub-rounded flint gravel and very occasional small chalk flecks) and subsoil, 0.40m (an orange/grey/brown sand/silt with occasional small flint gravel inclusions; Wessex Archaeology 2004).

2 THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 Palaeolithic

2.1.1 Within the Ebbsfleet Valley (including two areas which are protected as Scheduled Monuments), sequences of alluvial and colluvial deposits containing lithics dating from the Upper Palaeolithic to the later prehistoric periods have been investigated on a number of earlier occasions (Burchell and Piggott 1939; Sieveking 1960).

2.1.2 Analysis of geological deposits for their Pleistocene/Palaeolithic potential (Wenban-Smith 2003a; 2003b; Wessex Archaeology 2004) has established that much of Springhead Quarter comprises Thanet Sand overlain by Holocene colluvium and thus there is relatively limited Pleistocene/Palaeolithic potential.

2.2 Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age

2.2.1 Pottery, animal bone and waterlogged timber structures, dating to the Neolithic were recovered from the immediate environs of the Site during investigations at two sites in the valley bottom now protected as Ancient Monuments (KE268, Burchell and Piggott 1939; Sieveking 1960).

2.2.2 Investigations within the CTRL Trace running close to the eastern bank of the Ebbsfleet indicated a high potential for prehistoric deposits in a zone adjacent the lower slopes of the Ebbsfleet Valley within the former Springhead Quarter zone. Evaluation, followed by excavation, (Union Railways 2002), located Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age features and deposits, some of which had been truncated by a channel (part of the Ebbsfleet) in-filled with deposits of Romano-British date. These features included a series of small pits containing large quantities of burnt flint which have since been radiocarbon dated to the Early Bronze Age (Phil Andrews pers. comm.). Similar pits within the Springhead Quarter Phase 3 footprint were uncovered during a watching brief on groundwork for the storm water culvert and cascade; analysis is also likely to confirm an Early Bronze Age date (Wessex Archaeology 2008a).

2.2.3 Above the Ebbsfleet Valley floor (towards the boundary between the Phase 2 and 3 developments, a general scatter of prehistoric (predominantly Bronze Age) worked and burnt lithic material was recovered from the plough soil and subsoil during field walking and evaluation trial trenching respectively. This material, although largely spread generally across the Site by ploughing, did appear to have a number of possible foci (WA 2004, ref. 54924).

2.2.4 A small number of isolated pits containing Early Neolithic pottery and hazelnut shells were identified during the Springhead Quarter Phase I excavation (WA 2006a). During the recent Phase II excavation, a tree throw containing large quantities of Early Neolithic pottery and struck flint

confirmed the presence of some activity of this date situated along the higher gravel terrace (Wessex Archaeology 2008b).

2.2.5 Several phases of evaluation and area excavation within the Springhead Quarter have been undertaken since 2004 (WA 2004; 2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2008a; 2008b). These have identified an extensive Bronze Age field system aligned approximately north-south. There is some evidence to suggest that the setting out of elements of the field system, which includes an eastern driveway running north-south, may date from the Early Bronze Age onwards.

2.2.6 During the most recent Phase II excavations, two small clusters of Beaker pits were identified on the higher gravel terrace on the east side of the Ebbsfleet Valley (WA 2008b). Other Beaker activity is represented by a small number of shallow clay-lined pits dispersed across this part of the landscape, and a few isolated pits and post-holes, also containing Beaker pottery. The tradition of clay-lined pits continues into the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, and several of these contained 'deliberately placed' deposits that include complete vessels. A number of unurned cremations, although as yet undated, may also be of Middle-Late Bronze Age date, due to their close spatial proximity to the Bronze Age field ditches. A small number of pits containing dumps of material that included burnt animal bone and pottery cut the Bronze Age ditches, and these may be represent domestic discard generated from settlement in the immediate vicinity. However as yet, there is no evidence for concentrated Bronze Age settlement within the former Springhead Quarter zone landscape.

2.3 Iron Age /Romano-British

2.3.1 An evaluation (WA 2004, ref. 54924) largely focussed within the Springhead Quarter Phase I and Phase II footprints, identified a localised but intense concentration of Early-Middle-Iron Age enclosure-type activity with early Roman re-cuts located in the central/southern part of the former Springhead Quarter zone. Animal bone, pottery, frequent briquetage and possible structural remains, such as a hearth, suggested the presence of a settlement.

2.3.2 Three subsequent phases of excavation, have since identified three two Late Iron Age enclosures, both of which re-utilised components of the Bronze Age field system. The most westerly of these 'D-shaped' enclosures, (previously identified during the evaluation, in the eastern part of former Springhead Quarter zone) had two small sub-enclosures attached to its northern side. A larger rectangular enclosure in the south-western part of the Site, comprising three interconnected sub-enclosures that was partially revealed during the CTRL excavations and would appear to be related to the Springhead/Ebbsfleet ceremonial way. Pottery retrieved from the ditch fills from the eastern 'D'-shaped enclosure would suggest Middle-Late Iron Age chronology while that from the western rectangular enclosure is exclusively of Late Iron Age date. The continued respect and re-use of the Bronze Age field system alignments suggests considerable continuity of farming and land unit exploitation over millennia.

2.3.3 Internal features within the enclosures include pits (including deep 'bath-shaped' pits, possibly for storage) and large numbers of post-holes. With

two exceptions, none of the post-holes were arranged in patterns that might indicate round or square post-built structures.

2.3.4 There is little evidence for new enclosure activity in the Romano-British period, although some localised re-cutting of the Iron Age enclosure ditches and the discarding of Romano-British pottery in the upper fills of the Bronze Age field system's ditches is present. In addition three early Romano-British inhumation burials were located in the southern part of former Springhead Quarter zone immediately to the east of the eastern Bronze Age driveway. This evidence suggests that both the Bronze Age field system and the Iron Age enclosures were still in use during the early part of the Romano-British period, if only for stock control and pasturage.

2.3.5 The only ditch clearly cut in the early Romano-British period is aligned parallel to the Ebbsfleet River in the north-west corner of the proposed Phase 3 evaluation area and was also first identified during the CTRL works.

2.4 Saxon (6th-10th Century AD)

2.4.1 A Saxon cemetery, partially located and investigated during the CTRL-related archaeological works, is now known to have extended into the former Springhead Quarter zone (WA 2004; 2008b) forming a cemetery of approximately 180 burials. The Springhead Quarter part of the cemetery, excavated during the second half of 2007, uncovered 122 definite graves. The cemetery is the richest mid Anglo-Saxon cemetery (c.625-700 AD) to be identified in the western part of Kent. It might be related to the deliberate splitting of the Kentish Anglo-Saxon royal family in the early seventh century between the eastern and western spheres of Kent in order to cope with increasing external political pressures. The cemetery included a high number of weapon burials and other high-status burials, some containing composite disk brooches.

2.4.2 Evidence for a truncated sunken-featured building was identified in the north-eastern part of the Site during excavations ahead of the construction of the Storm Water Culvert/Cascade (WA 2008a). This feature has tentatively been dated to the early-mid Anglo-Saxon period (approx. 5th – 7th century AD) and may be associated with a pit uncovered on the eastern bank of the Ebbsfleet River (during CTRL investigations), which contained a Visigothic brooch (URN 2002).

2.4.3 An eighth century tidal mill was identified and partially excavated near Northfleet as part of the CTRL investigations (OWA 2008 in prep.).

2.4.4 Settlement and light industrial evidence in the Springhead Quarter from this period largely dates to the early part of the Late Saxon period c. 900, largely comprising some corn dryers and pits containing knives and coins. This activity was focussed predominantly in the eastern part of the former Springhead Quarter zone within the Phase 1 development footprint (WA 2006a).

2.5 Late medieval/post-medieval modern

2.5.1 Late medieval features were identified during the 2005 excavation (WA 2006a) comprising of a well and a number of east-west aligned ditches,

located in the far north-east of the Phase 1 development footprint. More recent excavations have noted further field boundaries and a funnelling driveway which were established on a different alignment to that of preceding periods (direct north-south and east-west axes). The lack of dating evidence means it is uncertain whether these are late medieval or post-medieval in origin. However, it is clear that these ditches cut (in several places) other linears securely dated either to the Iron Age or the Anglo-Saxon periods and therefore post-date them.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 To determine the presence/absence and the general nature of any deposits and remains present.
- 3.1.2 To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains/deposits, by means of artefactual/environmental evidence.

3.2 Specific

- 3.2.1 To identify features which might be associated with or be continuous of features identified immediately north-east of the Site.
- 3.2.2 Where possible to attempt to provide dating of features which may be associated with those previously identified in 2005 and 2008, where dating evidence was either poor or from heavily disturbed contexts as a result of erosion.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Stripping and Fieldwork Methodology

- 4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the standards set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2012) and according to the requirements as listed in the KCC Specification Manual (Part B), where appropriate. All previous evaluations and excavations undertaken by Wessex Archaeology at Springhead since 2004 have conformed to KCC requirements.
- 4.1.2 Prior to the excavation the Site was cleared of spoil from neighbouring construction areas and any scrub that might have accumulated during the years of inactivity on the Site.
- 4.1.3 The limits of the Community Church footprint (to include the healing garden, prayer shelter, children's play area and shelter) were set out with a GPS (see **Figures 1 and 2**). The topsoil and subsoil was then removed in 100mm spits (using two 360° tracked machines with flat edged ditching buckets). This initial process was constantly monitored by an archaeologist with any potential archaeological remains being fully investigated prior to the subsoil being removed down to natural or the top of the archaeological horizon (in 50mm spits).
- 4.1.4 Once all overburden was removed, sample excavation, a sampling strategy specific to the different deposits and remains revealed was agreed upon

with the development control archaeologist for Kent County Council during a monitoring meeting carried out during the course of the fieldwork.

4.2 Service location

4.2.1 Prior to and during excavation, the Site was walked over and inspected to visually identify, where possible, the location of above and below ground services. Trench locations were scanned to verify the absence of any underground services using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT).

4.3 Recording

4.3.1 All recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system.

4.3.2 All archaeological features and deposits exposed in the evaluation trenches were hand cleaned and excavated to determine their nature, character and date.

4.3.3 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprises both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections). The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and AOD heights.

4.3.4 Photographs were taken as appropriate, providing a record of excavated features and deposits along with images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. The record also includes images of the overall Site. The photographic record comprises black and white, colour images and digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.

4.3.5 All interventions were surveyed using a GPS tied into the Ordnance Survey.

4.3.6 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in **Appendix 1**. Layers and fills are recorded (**100**). The cut of the feature is shown [**100**]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes; these are used in the report (in **bold**).

4.4 Health and Safety

4.4.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety regulations 1992 and Health and Safety in Field Archaeology 1997, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.

4.4.2 A Health and Safety Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology (2012), which was read and understood by all staff attending the Site before groundwork commenced.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section presents the results of the archaeological investigations. Detailed descriptions of the features and stratigraphic contexts are included in **Appendix 1**. **Figures 1** and **2** show the overall location of the Site and **Figures 3** to **5** provide illustration of archaeological features encountered.

5.1.2 An area equating to approximately 1386m² was excavated, identifying the presence of three pits, one natural root bole and the continuation of six linear features revealed during earlier archaeological investigations in the surrounding area (See 5.3 below). All archaeological features encountered are described individually below.

5.2 Stratigraphic Sequence

5.2.1 A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the majority of site comprising topsoil/overburden overlying colluvium and the natural geology. The topsoil/overburden generally consisted of friable dark grey brown slightly silty clay (**101**) overlying colluvium consisting of mid orange brown silty sand with occasional gravel and charcoal flecks (**102**). A variation in consistency within the northern-western spur of the Site provided a second colluvial horizon comprising mid red brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks (**103**). The natural geology consisted of mid orange brown sandy silt with occasional patches of gravel (**104**) extant at a level of 23.7m aOD within the southern area of the Site and 22.9m aOD within the northern area of the Site. Four representative soils profiles were recorded across the Site (**Figures 3** and **4** and **Plate 5**).

5.2.2 A clear line of horizon gave way to natural geology where mechanical excavation ceased and careful examination and investigation for truncating features was carried out.

5.3 Results and Interpretation

Linear Features

5.3.1 Located within the western extent of the Site the identification of six linear ditches provided the continuation of the established Bronze Age and post-medieval field systems recorded to the south (Wessex Archaeology 2008).

5.3.2 Within the western extent of the Site ditches (**137**) and (**138**) were aligned NW-SE and measured approximately 1.1m in width with fills comprising light grey brown sandy silt. A break of approximately 1.83m separated (**137**) from (**136**) which continued to the north and identified during earlier evaluation works on Site (Wessex Archaeology 2008). Both phases of earlier work suggest a mid-late Bronze Age date for these three ditches.

5.3.3 To the north and south three segmented ditches (**135**, **139** and **140**) measured approximately 0.54m in width and were aligned N-S. The fills of these features comprised mid brown grey sandy silt and coincide with a post-medieval field system recorded elsewhere within the wider site (Greatorex 2012 pers. comm. 26/1/12).

5.3.4 No further investigation of these field systems was carried out during this phase of works.

Pits

- 5.3.5 Located within the southern extent of the Site a single pit [105] measured 2.11m in length and 1.48m in width with near vertical sides and a flat base to a depth of 1.02m. Early silting of the pit comprised mottled sands and clays with occasional gravel, CBM and charcoal inclusions (106, 107, 108 & 109) followed by an episode of natural slumping (110 & 112) forming an undercut on the northern extent suggesting that the feature may have been left open, albeit temporarily. Secondary silting of the pit subsequently consisted of light grey brown clay sand (111) and light green sand (113) sealed by mottled orange and light green clay sand with occasional CBM and charcoal flecks (114) and mid grey orange clay sand with similar inclusions (115). Two fragments of provisionally dated prehistoric pottery were retrieved from (111) along with a single worked flint.
- 5.3.6 The pit appeared to have undergone a later phase of re-cutting [116] to a depth of 0.59m followed by natural silting (117) and an episode of deliberate dumping (118) comprising brown grey clay sand with frequent charcoal and CBM and finds including animal bone and pottery provisionally dating to the prehistoric (LBA-LIA) period (see below). A layer of mid brown grey clay silt with modern charcoal and CBM flecks (119) subsequently underlay natural slumping (128 and 129) on the northern and southern extent of the re-cut pit followed by the final fill comprising mid grey brown clay silt with moderate charcoal and CBM inclusions (120). Fragmented animal bone, burnt flint, fired clay and worked flint was retrieved from fills (119) and (120).
- 5.3.7 Within the northern extent of the Site two intercutting pits [121 and 125] were initially interpreted as a single feature. With an overall length of 2.36m and an irregular width averaging 0.85m, initial investigations focused on the eastern and western extents each providing contrasting characteristics. To the west pit [121] measured 0.69m in depth, with gently sloping sides and a concave base and contained three distinct fills. A lower fill comprised light brown grey silty clay with occasional small rounded stones (122) underlying mid grey silty sand with moderate charcoal inclusions (123). The final fill of the feature consisted of mid-dark grey silty sand with occasional flint and charcoal (124) and was very similar to the upper fill recognised in the adjacent pit (127 see below). Finds from (122) included CBM, fired clay and worked flint while fragmented animal bone burnt flint and worked flint were retrieved from (123).
- 5.3.8 Directly to the east an intercutting second pit [125] measured 1.11m in depth with a length of 2.32m and width of 1.61m. A lower fill consisting of dark grey sandy silt with occasional charcoal (126) contained animal bone, CBM and fired clay along with fragmented of a small comb, probably made from antler (L Mephram below). Directly above the upper fill of this pit comprised mid-dark grey silty sand (127) with properties similar to that recorded in the adjacent pit [121]. The consistency of fills (124) and (127) would appear to suggest that both pits were partially exposed at the same time and subsequently filled naturally. An intervention excavated between the two pits suggests that [125] predated pit [121].
- 5.3.9 Within the north-eastern extent of the Site a shallow undulated root bole [131] measured 0.46m in width, 0.27m in depth and continued beneath the western baulk edge. Natural slumping of the feature consisted of mid orange yellow clay with occasional charcoal flecks (132) underlying mid grey clay

sand with frequent charcoal, occasional CBM and a fragment of flint tempered pottery (133). A small circular deposit of dark grey clay sand with frequent charcoal (134) filled a shallow indentation measuring 0.11m in diameter and 0.04m in depth.

5.4 Archaeological Narrative

- 5.4.1 Archaeological investigations from surrounding sites have shown extensive settlement patterns ranging from the prehistoric periods through to the post-medieval period. Within the immediate locality a network of Mid-Late Bronze Age field systems form a NE-SW alignment which include boundary ditches, and droveways, a pattern clearly represented within the existing site as a continuation of segmented ditches (136 – 140). These have been subsequently truncated by later post-medieval ditches aligned N-S (135, 139 & 140).
- 5.4.2 Within the southern extent of the Site an early sub-circular pit [105] has been re-cut [116] with fills containing fragmented animal bone and a pottery fragment dating between the Late Bronze Age and Late Iron Age. This particular fragment showed signs of abrasion suggested that it is likely to be residual within a later context. Confirmation is offered from environmental samples which recorded the presence of hulled wheat and fish bone, along with free-threshing wheat pointing to a later Romano-British date for the re-cut pit [116]. The presence of Romano-British material within this area of the Site is not at all unsurprising as a small number of 1st century AD features, including an enclosure and a cluster of inhumation burials are recorded to the south (WA 2008:33). What is evident however is that these features are relatively isolated providing confirmation of Late Iron Age abandonment with later Roman settlement being confined to lower ground within the valley to the west (2008:33).
- 5.4.3 Within the central northern area of the Site the two intercutting pits [121 and 125] were initially thought to be associated with the re-cut pit described above. Fills and finds bore close resemblance to the early pit and the analysis of environmental samples suggested similar ecological conditions and farming practices. However, the presence of medieval tile within the lower fill (126) of the earlier of the two pits [125] can not be ignored. The tile fragment was far too large to have been intrusive and was located close to the base of the feature confirming a much later date than originally expected. A single medieval pit was recorded to the south and has been associated with a medieval field system and funnelling droveway (2008:38).

6 ARTEFACTS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 A small quantity of artefacts was recovered during excavation, mostly from stratified contexts but also including some unstratified metalwork (recovered by metal detecting). The stratified material ranges in date from prehistoric to medieval, while the unstratified metalwork appears to be largely post-medieval. All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are summarised in **Table 1**.

6.1.2 The condition of the assemblage is fair to poor. Ceramic materials in particular have suffered high levels of surface and edge abrasion (leading to some ambiguity in identifications), and the lithics show moderate edge damage.

6.2 Pottery

6.2.1 The pottery should provide the best dating evidence for the Site, but the four body sherds recovered are not easily assigned to specific date ranges. Two sherds are coarsely but sparsely flint-tempered (one from pit [105], fill (111) and one from possible pit [131], fill (133)); one is grog-tempered (from pit [105], fill (111)), and the fourth was originally tempered with calcareous material (probably shell), now leached out, leaving voids (from pit [116], fill (118)). All could be accommodated within a late prehistoric date range, but the fabric types are not otherwise chronologically distinctive. In the absence of any diagnostic features, only a very broad date range from Late Bronze Age to Late Iron Age can be suggested. In any case, all four sherds are small and heavily abraded, and cannot be taken as firm dating evidence for the features in which they were found.

6.3 Ceramic Building Material (CBM) and Fired Clay

6.3.1 Four fragments of CBM were recovered, of which three are of Romano-British date, although not attributable to specific brick or tile type (colluvial layer (102); pit [121], fill (122)). The fourth fragment, from pit [125], fill (126), is from a medieval roof tile.

6.3.2 A further ten fragments, recorded as fired clay could also represent abraded CBM; these fragments are all in very soft, sandy fabrics, and some have traces of original flattish surfaces. If not CBM, then these pieces are almost certainly of structural origin, although of uncertain date.

6.4 Worked and Burnt Flint

6.4.1 The worked flint includes waste flake and core material, but also a high proportion of utilised pieces (6 scrapers and 3 other retouched pieces). Raw material is largely a variegated greyish flint, but there are a few pieces in a more cherty material. Most pieces show some signs of edge damage, and one piece is rolled, all of which is consistent with a process of redeposition. None of the utilised pieces is chronologically distinctive, and a broad Neolithic to Bronze Age date is suggested for this small group.

6.4.2 Burnt, unworked flint was also recovered. This material type is intrinsically undated, but is often taken as an indicator of prehistoric activity. In this instance its distribution does largely coincide with that of the worked flint.

6.5 Metalwork

6.5.1 The metalwork (copper alloy, iron and lead) was collected exclusively from unstratified contexts. It includes two Romano-British copper alloy coins, and a lead rivet which could be a Romano-British pot repair, but otherwise all objects are either demonstrably post-medieval, or are undated. They include two domed studs, two buttons, a nail and a bolt.

6.6 Animal Bone

6.6.1 The animal bone is in relatively poor condition; fragments are generally small, and in some cases have suffered abrasion. This small group includes sheep/goat and cattle; bones of domestic fowl and fish were retrieved from one of the sieved soil samples (pit [125]).

6.7 Worked Bone

6.7.1 Small fragments of a comb, probably made of antler, were found in pit [125]. These are fragments of side plate from a composite comb; whether single sided or double-sided is unknown, although double-sided is more likely. The side plates carry incised decoration in the form of transverse lines and edge notches, and were fastened with iron rivets. Double-sided composite combs were made from the late Roman period through to the early medieval period (MacGregor 1985, 92, fig. 51); insufficient survives of this example to discern any possible chronologically distinctive features. The only other dating evidence from pit [125] is a fragment of medieval roof tile, but Romano-British artefacts were also found on the Site.

Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

Layer	Animal Bone	Burnt Flint	CBM	Fired Clay	Worked Flint	Metal (no.)	Pottery
102		2/73	2/469		8/283		
111					1/5		2/8
118	9/24						1/2
119				3/176			
120	11/6	5/150		2/23	7/103		
122			1/165	1/15	4/54		
123	16/190	2/127			6/128		
126	16/12*		1/119	3/17			
127	10/60	2/56		1/89	6/90		
133					2/28		1/5
unstrat.						25	
TOTAL	62/292	11/406	4/753	10/320	34/691	25	4/15

CBM = ceramic building material; * includes one worked bone object

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

Environmental samples taken

7.1.1 A total of six bulk samples were taken from four undated pits and were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and charcoals.

7.2 Charred plant remains

7.2.1 Bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6 mm, 2mm and 1mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. Flots were scanned under a x10 – x40 stereobinocular microscope and the preservation and nature of the charred plant and wood charcoal remains recorded in **Table 2**. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997).

7.2.2 The flots varied in size with low to high numbers of roots and modern seeds that may be indicative of stratigraphic movement and the possibility of contamination by later intrusive elements. Charred material comprised varying degrees of preservation.

7.2.3 Cereal remains were recorded in samples from all four features, and in higher numbers from pits [116] and [125]. These remains included grains of hulled wheat, emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*), and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*). There were also a few possible grains of free-threshing wheat (*Triticum turgidum/aestivum* type). The few chaff elements comprised a culm node, a rachis fragment and a glume base of hulled wheat.

7.2.4 Free-threshing wheat became common in Southern England within the Saxon and medieval period (Greig 1981), appearing to generally replace hulled wheat at this time. However a large number of free-threshing wheat grains were recovered from a Romano-British corn dryer during the Phase 1 excavations at Springhead Quarter along with hulled wheat (Stevens 2011).

7.2.5 Weed seeds were generally sparse in the samples apart from the sample from pit [125] where a large amount of both charred and mineralised weed seeds were observed. The weed seeds included seeds of vetch/wild pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.), oat/brome grass (*Avena/Bromus* sp.), speedwell (*Veronica* sp.), bedstraw (*Galium* sp.) goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.) and dock (*Rumex* sp.). These weed species are all found in arable environments or field margins.

7.2.6 There were also a few fragments of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell in pit 131 and a fragment of fruit stone and fruit parenchyma, possibly of sloe type (*Prunus* sp.) in pit [116].

7.3 Wood charcoal

7.3.1 Wood charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 2**. Large quantities of wood charcoal fragments >4mm were retrieved from pits [116], [131] and [125]. The charcoal was mainly mature wood fragments.

7.4 Land and fresh/brackish water molluscs

7.4.1 A few land snails were observed in the sample from pit [131]. These comprised a small number of shells of the open country species *Helicella itala*, *Vallonia costata* and *Vallonia excentrica*.

7.5 Small animal and fish bones

7.5.1 During the processing of bulk soil samples for the recovery of charred plant remains and charcoals, small animal bones were noted, and recorded (Table 2), in the flots. These included those of small mammals and fish. Fish vertebrae and scales were recorded in pits [116], [125] and [121].

7.6 Dating

7.6.1 Although these pits are undated, the sample assemblages provide an indication of date. The presence of hulled wheat and fish bone, together with the possibility of some free-threshing wheat, in this area points to a likely Romano-British date for these features.

Table 2 Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

Feature	Context	Sample	Vol (L)	Flot size	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Notes for Table	Charcoal > 4/2mm	Other
Undated												
Pits												
116	118	1	5	100	3	C	-	Wheat grain frags	C	<i>Veronica</i>	17/15 ml	Sab/f (A)
116	120	3	18	30	40	A	C	Hulled wheat + barley grain frags, glume base	B	<i>Veronica</i> , <i>Galium</i> , fruit stone + fruit parenchyma (? <i>Prunus</i>)	2/2 ml	-
131	133	2	20	120	2	C	-	Indet. grain frag	C	<i>Corylus avellana</i> shell frags, <i>Veronica</i>	20/35 ml	Moll-t (C)
125	126	4	30	175	15	A	C	Hulled wheat, ?free-threshing wheat +barley grain frags, rachis frags	A	<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> , <i>Avena/Bromus</i> , <i>Veronica</i> , min. seeds of <i>Chenopodium</i> , <i>Rumex</i>	30/65 ml	Sab/f (A*), Min seeds (A)
121	122	5	20	60	55	B	C	Hulled wheat, ?free-threshing wheat + barley grain frags, culm node	C	<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> , <i>Veronica</i>	3/5 ml	Sab/f (B)
121	123	6	8	30	30	C	-	Barley grain frags	-	-	4/3 ml	Sab/f (C)

Key: A*** = exceptional, A** = 100+, A* = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = <5; Sab/f = small animal/fish bones, Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs

8 FURTHER POTENTIAL

8.1 Finds Potential

8.1.1 This is a small assemblage with limited archaeological potential. Some dating evidence has been obtained from the few sherds of pottery recovered, but this is ambiguous and by no means conclusive for the features in which it was found. Other datable items (Romano-British CBM and metalwork) were largely unstratified. The fragments of bone comb are of interest, but cannot be closely dated. The prehistoric worked flint contains nothing that is closely diagnostic, and in any case is probably largely residual. There is little or no potential for any further investigation of the nature of the site through the artefacts.

8.2 Finds Proposals

8.2.1 The finds have already been recorded to an appropriate archive level, and no further analysis is proposed. The information included in the project archive, or presented in this report, could be included in any publication report.

8.3 Palaeoenvironmental Potential

Charred plant remains

8.3.1 There is only a low potential for the analysis of the charred plant remains to provide information on the local environment and the nature of the settlement, particularly as the pits are undated. Richer plant assemblages were recovered from the nearby multi-period site at Springhead Quarter (Wessex Archaeology 2008b).

Wood charcoal

8.3.2 There is a potential for analysis of the wood charcoal to provide limited information on the range of species and the management and exploitation of the local woodland resource if these pits become dated. The wood charcoal does not appear to be related to any specific settlement activity.

Dating

8.3.3 Although C14 century dates could be obtained on the wood charcoal and/or cereal remains from three of these pits, it is unlikely these would prove to be suitable, if mature wood charcoal fragments have to be dated, or possibly if material proved to be residual. Such dates would provide an indication of the date of archaeological activity upon the site, although there is no other direct settlement activity associated with the features. Further, within the immediate area there is well dated evidence for occupation covering a wide range of periods, and as such dating these features would contribute little to our understanding of the wider area.

8.4 Palaeoenvironmental Proposals

Charred plant remains

8.4.1 No further work is proposed on these samples.

Wood charcoal

8.4.2 No further work is proposed on these samples

Dating

- 8.4.3 It is not proposed to obtain any C14 dates on the material from these pits.

9 CONCLUSIONS**9.1 Overview**

- 9.1.1 Archaeological investigations at the proposed North Kent Community Church site at Springhead Park have been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. Archaeological horizons have been shown to survive at a depth approximately 0.8m below the existing ground level, indicating the presence of surviving archaeological features. Truncation of archaeological horizons was relatively minimal, evident only by the existence of low impact services, root boles and animal burrows. Suggestions as to the definition of potential archaeological features have been offered above.

9.2 Further Archaeological Works

- 9.2.1 In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2011) and in agreement with Kent County Council a programme of archaeological monitoring (Watching Brief) is planned and will be carried out during groundwork associated with a proposed car parking area. The extent of the car park is set out within the WSI (2011: Figure1).

10 ARCHIVE**10.1 Preparation and Deposition**

- 10.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990).
- 10.1.2 The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's Rochester office under the site code **79460**, but will ultimately be deposited for permanent storage with an appropriate museum.
- 10.1.3 The paper archive comprises three A4 ring-bound files containing:
- 2 A4 Drawings, 3 A3 Drawings and 1 A1 Drawing, Graphics Register
 - 39 Context Sheets
 - 1 Context Register Sheets
 - 3 Photographic Record Sheets, 1 Colour Slide Film, 1 Monochrome Film and 1 CD containing 169 images (12.1 MegaPixel) including feature record shots and general working shots
 - Day Book
 - A copy of the WSI
 - A copy of the Archaeological Assessment

- Fieldwork Risk Assessment

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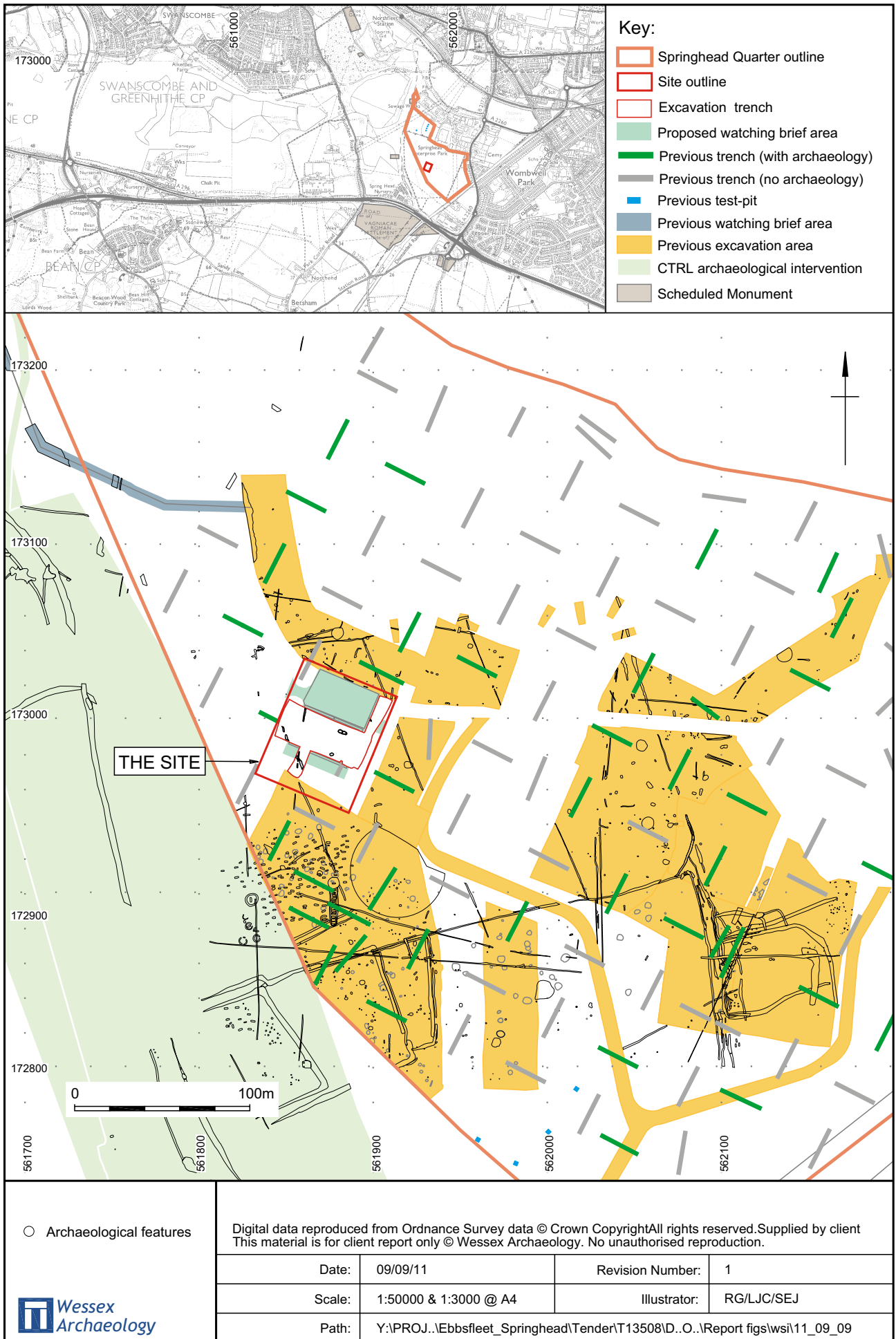
APPENDIX 1: TRENCH CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLE

Context Number	Type	Samp	Description	Interpretation	Fill of/with	Arch Area	Plan	Sec	Ini	Date
100	Layer		Crushed hardcore, tarmac and concrete associated with builders' compound within the eastern extent of the Site.	Overburden						
101	Layer		Dark grey brown silty clay with occasional gravel and mild rooting.	Topsoil	Site			1	DB	27/1/12
102	Layer		Mid orange brown silty sand with occasional gravel and charcoal flecks.	Colluvium	Site			1	DB	27/1/12
103	Layer		Mid red brown sandy silt, very fine with occasional charcoal flecks. Only located within the Northern extent of the Site.	Colluvium	Site			1	DB	27/1/12
104	Layer		Mid orange brown silt sand with occasional patches of natural gravel.	Natural	Site			1	DB	27/1/12
105	Cut		Oval pit measuring 1.48m in width, 2.11m in length with a maximum depth of 1.02m. Very steep (near vertical) sides with a flat base.	Pit	106-115		2	1	JC	27/1/12
106	Fill		Mottled light green sand and mid orange clay sand with occasional charcoal, manganese, CBM flecks, small-medium sub-rounded gravel and large natural flint nodules.	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12
107	Fill		Light grey brown clay sand with occasional charcoal and CBM flecks, occasional small gravel stones and lenses of orange clay sand.	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12
108	Fill		Light grey brown clay sand with occasional charcoal and CBM flecks, occasional small gravel stones.	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12
109	Fill		Mottled orange and light green clay sand with occasional CBM, charcoal and manganese flecks with lenses of light grey brown clay sand.	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12
110	Fill		Mottled mid orange and light green clay sand	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12

Context Number	Type	Samp	Description	Interpretation	Fill of/with	Arch Area	Plan	Sec	Ini	Date
111	Fill		Light grey brown clay sand with frequent charcoal and CBM flecks, occasional small gravel stones and lenses of orange clay sand. (Same as 112)	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12
112	Fill		Light grey brown clay sand with frequent charcoal and CBM flecks, occasional small gravel stones and lenses of orange clay sand. (Same as 111)	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12
113	Fill		Light green sand.	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12
114	Fill		Mottled orange and light green clay sand with occasional CBM, charcoal and manganese flecks.	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12
115	Fill		Mid grey orange clay sand with occasional charcoal and CBM flecks and occasional small gravel stones.	Fill of pit	105			1	JC	27/1/12
116	Cut		Re-cut of pit to a maximum depth of 0.58m	Re-cut of pit	117-120 128-129		2	1	JC	27/1/12
117	Fill		Light yellow grey clay sand with occasional charcoal and CBM flecks with moderate gravel stones.	Fill of pit	116			1	JC	27/1/12
118	Fill	<1>	Dark grey brown clay sand with frequent charcoal and CBM, bone and fragments of pottery	Fill of pit	116			1	JC	27/1/12
119	Fill		Mid brown grey clay silt with moderate charcoal and CBM flecks and small-medium gravel stones.	Fill of pit	116			1	JC	27/1/12
120	Fill	<3>	Mid grey brown clay sand with moderate charcoal and CBM flecks, frequent gravel, flint and CBM	Fill of pit	116		2	1	JC	27/1/12
121	Cut		Cut of pit measuring 2.54m in length, 1.62m in width with a maximum depth of 0.67m.	Pit	122-124		4	5	DB	27/1/12
122	Fill	<5>	Light brown grey silty clay with occasional small rounded stones	Fill of pit	121			5	DB	27/1/12

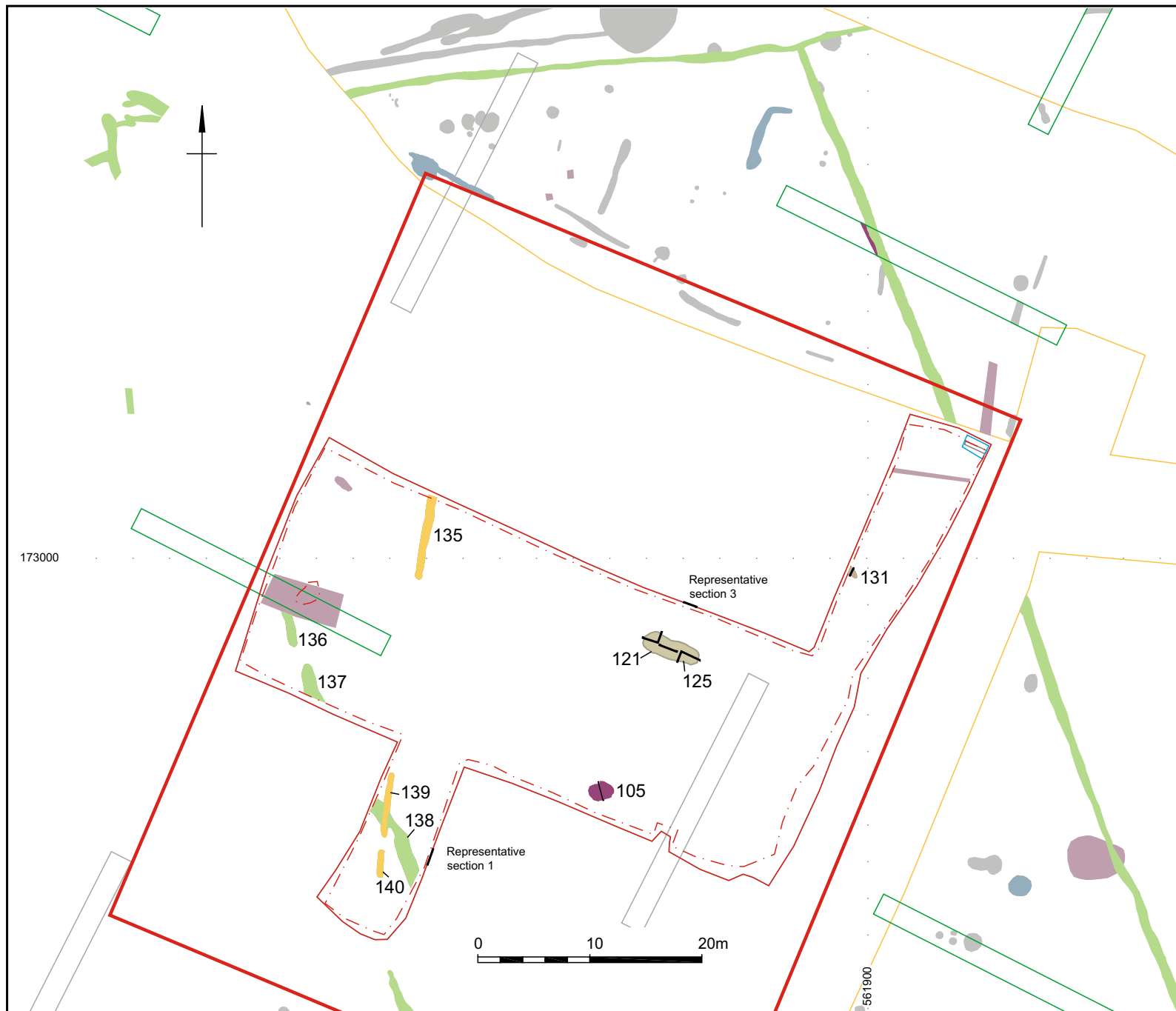
Context Number	Type	Samp	Description	Interpretation	Fill of/with	Arch Area	Plan	Sec	Ini	Date
123	Fill	<6>	Mid grey silty sand with moderate charcoal inclusions	Fill of pit	121			5	DB	27/1/12
124	Fill		Mid-dark grey silty sand, occasional flint nodules and rounded stones with occasional charcoal flecks (very similar to 127)	Fill of pit	121		4	5	DB	27/1/12
125	Cut		Sub-oval pit measuring 1.61m in width, 2.32m in length with a maximum depth of 1.11m. Very steep (near vertical) sides with a flat base.	Pit	126-127		4	5	DB	27/1/12
126	Fill	<4>	Dark grey sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks and rounded stones. Cut by pit [121].	Fill of pit	125		4	5	DB	27/1/12
127	Fill		Mid-dark grey silty sand with occasional flint, rounded stone and charcoal flecks (very similar to 124)	Fill of pit	125		4	5	DB	27/1/12
128	Fill		Mid grey orange clay sand with occasional charcoal and CBM flecks and occasional small gravel stones.	Fill of pit	116			5	JC	28/1/12
129	Fill		Mid grey orange clay sand with occasional charcoal and CBM flecks and occasional small gravel stones.	Fill of pit	116			5	JC	28/1/12
130	Fill		Mid orange brown silt sand with occasional gravel	Natural slump	NA		4	5	JC	28/1/12
131	Cut		Cut if small pit or root bole measuring 0.46m in width, 0.27m in depth, disappearing beneath western extent of excavated area.	Rooting	132-134		3B	3A	JC	28/1/12
132	Fill		Mid orange yellow clay sand with occasional charcoal flecks.	Fill of rooting	131		3B	3A	JC	28/1/12
133	Fill	<2>	Mid grey clay sand with frequent charcoal flecks, occasional CBM and occasional rounded stones	Fill of rooting	131		3B	3A	JC	28/1/12
134	Fill		Dark grey clay sand with frequent charcoal flecks	Fill of rooting	131		3B	3A	JC	28/1/12
135	Fill		Mid brown grey sandy silt	Fill of unexcavated ditch	-				DB	28/1/12

Context Number	Type	Samp	Description	Interpretation	Fill of/with	Arch Area	Plan	Sec	Ini	Date
136	Fill		Light grey brown sandy silt	Fill of unexcavated ditch	-				DB	28/1/12
137	Fill		Light grey brown sandy silt	Fill of unexcavated ditch	-				DB	28/1/12
138	Fill		Light grey brown sandy silt	Fill of unexcavated ditch	-				DB	28/1/12
139	Fill		Mid brown grey sandy silt	Fill of unexcavated ditch	-				DB	28/1/12
140	Fill		Mid brown grey sandy silt	Fill of unexcavated ditch	-				DB	28/1/12



Site location plan

Figure 1



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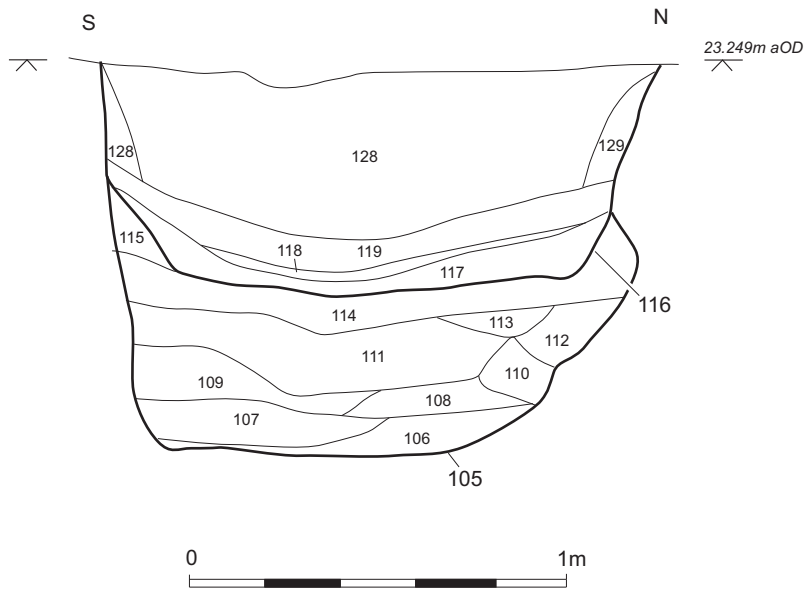
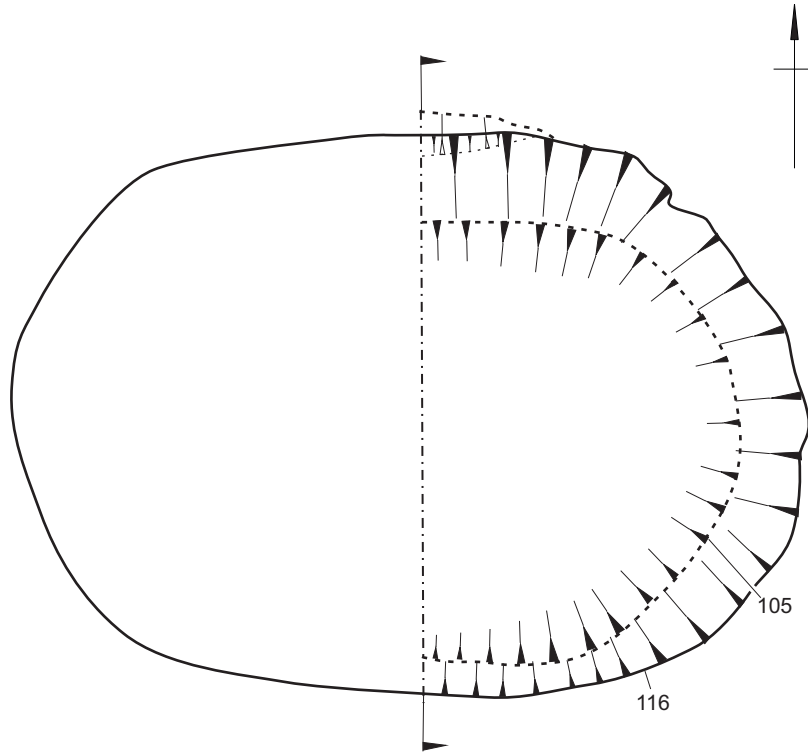
- Site outline
- Excavation trench
- Previous excavation area
- Middle -Late Bronze Age
- Late Iron Age
- Romano-British
- Medieval
- Post-medieval
- Modern
- Undated
- Natural
- Section line

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Phased plan

Figure 2



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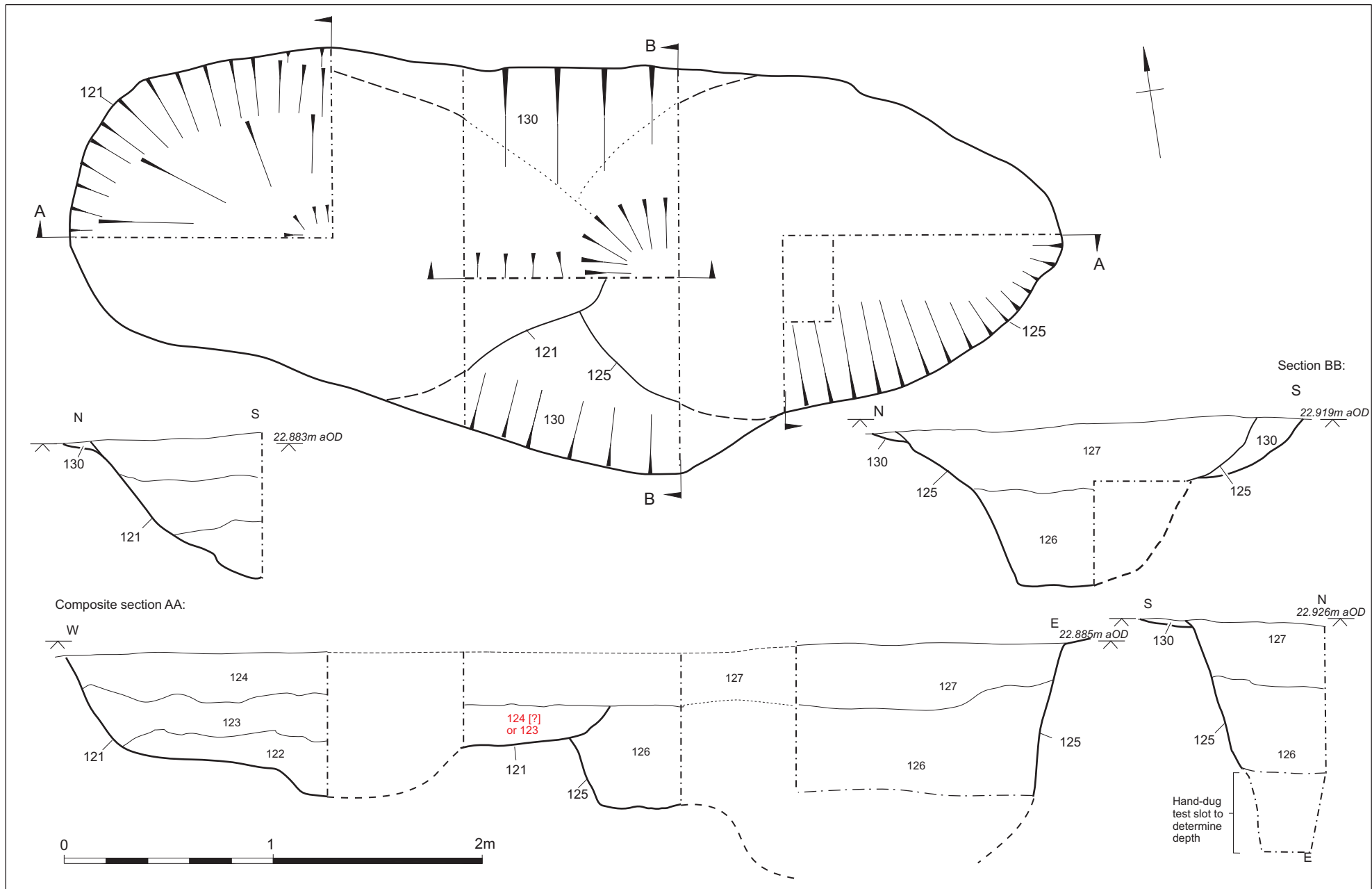
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Pit [105] plan and section

Figure 3

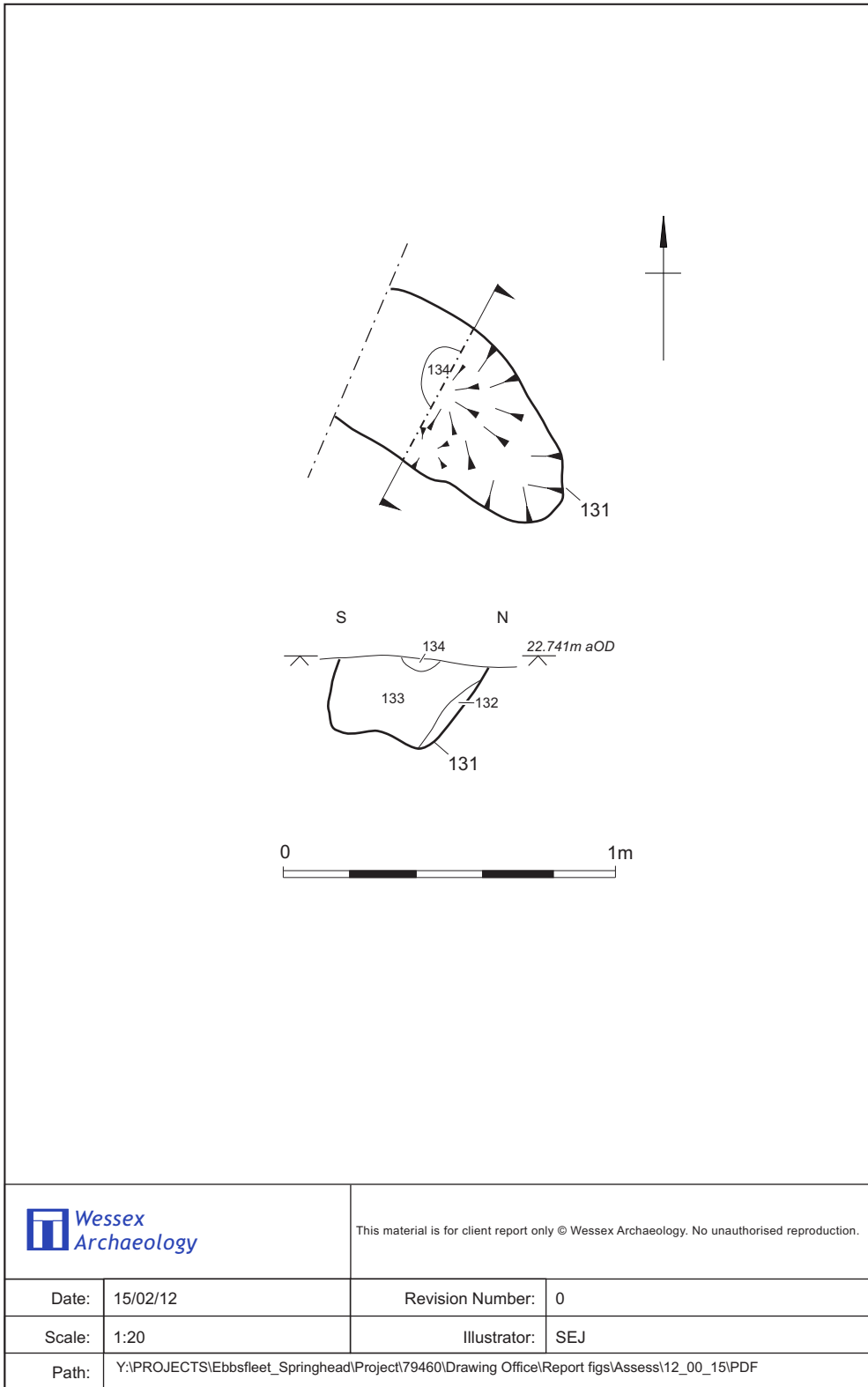


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Pits 121 and 125 plan and sections

Figure 4



Pit [131] plan and section

Figure 5

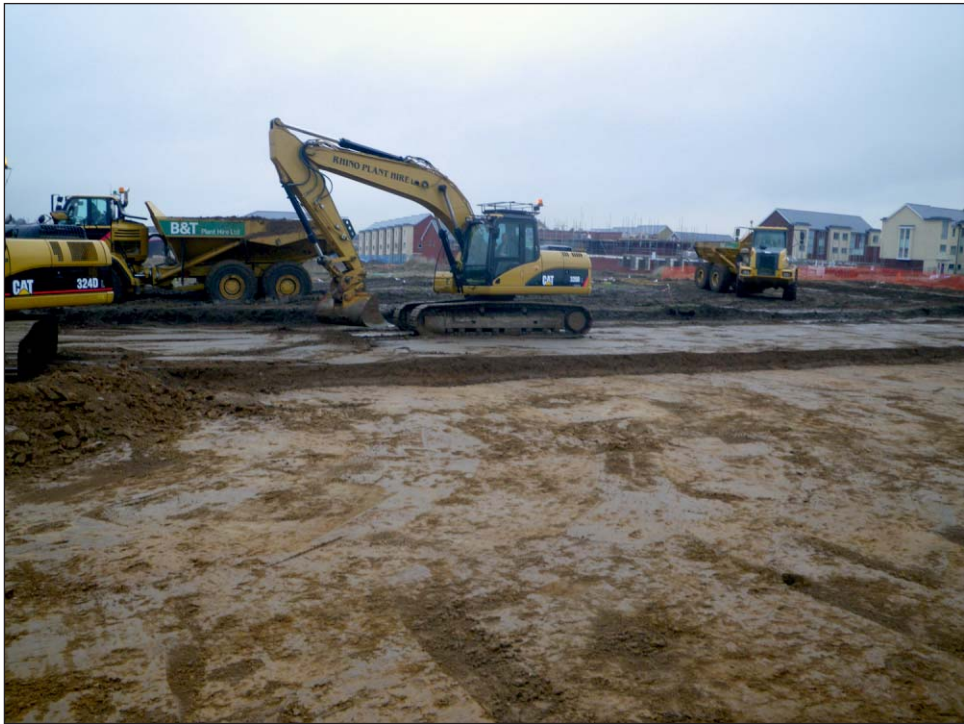


Plate 1: Working shot taken from the south during the removal of the topsoil (101) and colluvium (102) to expose the natural geology (104)

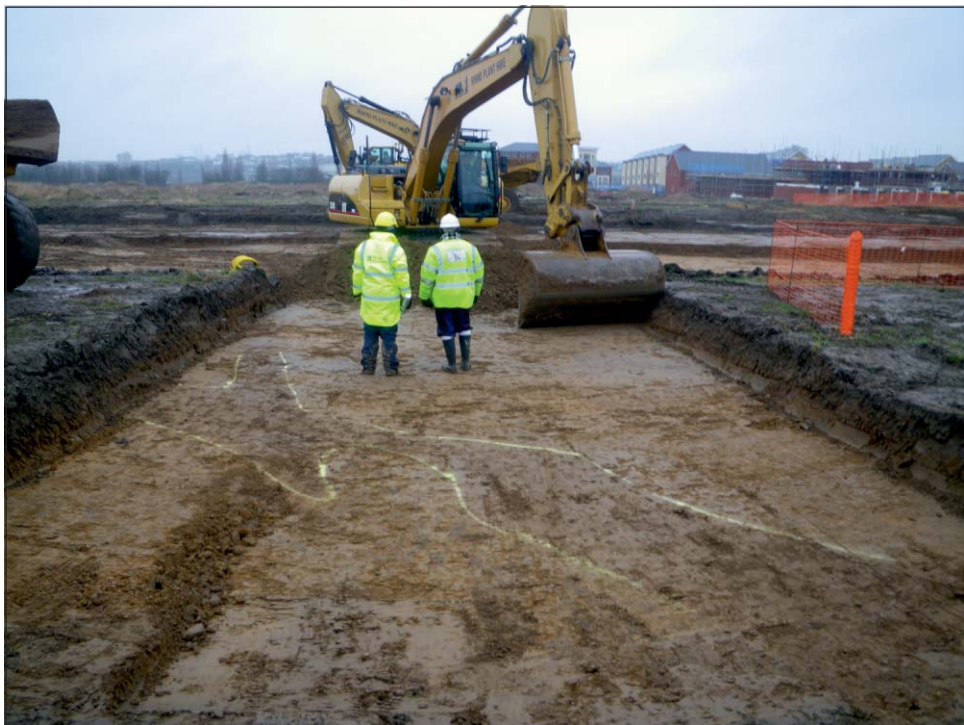


Plate 2: Exposing ditches (138), (139) and (140), facing north


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Plate 3: Exposing ditches (136) and (137), facing north



Plate 4: Representative section 1


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Plate 5: Representative section 3



Plate 6: Pit (105)

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Plate 7: Section through Pit (121) viewed from the south



Plate 8: Section through Pit (125) viewed from the north


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Plate 9: Section showing relationship between Pit (121) and (125) viewed from the north

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