

Enterprise Café, St Neots Road, Hardwick, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report





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**ENTERPRISE CAFE
ST NEOTS ROAD,
HARDWICK
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Prepared on behalf of:

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For Taylor Woodrow

by

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Taylor Woodrow to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on land at the Enterprise Café, St Neots Road, Hardwick, Cambridgeshire centred on NGR 536663 259619, in advance of a residential development.

The Site comprises a rectangular parcel of land, measuring 200m north to south and 60m east to west with a total area of approximately 1.2ha. It is located some 500m to the west of Hardwick and bounded to the north by St Neots Rd and the A428. To the east and west the Site is bounded by properties fronting onto St Neots Rd and to the south by open fields.

A total of six trenches were excavated according to a project design prepared by Wessex Archaeology and approved by Cambridgeshire County Council. The work was carried out between 14-17th November 2005.

Three undated features, two tree throws and a possible ditch terminus were recorded. No finds were recovered from these features.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology is grateful to CgMs Consulting for commissioning the evaluation through their Consultant Mr Rob Bourn. Jon Martin undertook the fieldwork assisted by Laura Catlin and Naomi Hall. Ruth Panes surveyed the Site. The drawings were prepared by Linda Coleman and Liz James. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice from Kasia Gdaniec, Assistant County Archaeologist, Cambridgeshire County Council. The project was managed by Nick Truckle for Wessex Archaeology

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Taylor Woodrow to undertake an archaeological field evaluation of land at the Enterprise Café, St Neots Road, Hardwick, Cambridgeshire (hereafter the Site) centred on NGR 536663 259619.

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 Outline planning consent (S/1204/04/0) has been granted for the construction of a residential development of 42 units. The consent was granted subject to a number of conditions, one of which related to archaeology requiring an archaeological evaluation of the Site to be undertaken.
- 2.1.2 The evaluation was undertaken following the methodology set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Wessex Archaeology (ref 61450.01) and approved by the archaeological advisor to Cambridgeshire County Council in advance of the commencement of fieldwork.
- 2.1.3 The programme of work was designed to evaluate any surviving archaeological deposits likely to be affected by this development. This will enable the Senior Archaeologist (Development Control) with Cambridgeshire County Council to make recommendations on any mitigation strategy necessary to deal with those deposits.

3 THE SITE

- 3.1.1 The Site comprises a rectangular parcel of land, measuring some 200m north to south and 60m east to west with a total area of approximately 1.2 ha. It is located some 500m to the west of Hardwick and bounded to the north by St Neots Road and the A428. To the east and west the Site is bounded by properties fronting onto St Neots Road and to the South by open fields. **(Figure 1)**
- 3.1.2 Most recently the Site has been used as a lorry park and café and includes areas of tarmac and concrete hard-standing with a number of small disused structures in the centre of the Site. There are also mounds of demolition

rubble. Currently demolition works are being undertaken, with buildings and structures being demolished to ground level only.

- 3.1.3 According to the 1:50,000 BGS Sheet 187, the drift geology comprises glacial deposits of Boulder Clay overlying Solid Gault clays. The nearest watercourse to the Site is a small stream – the Callow Brook- approximately 200m to the east. The Site lies at a height of between 60m and 65m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 3.1.4 A recent site investigation report (Harrison August 2005) demonstrates that in areas of hardstanding the asphalt/concrete (0.2m to 0.7m depth) generally overlie deposits of made ground or directly overlie the natural clays. Outside areas of hardstanding topsoil varying in depth from approximately 0.2m to 0.4m overlies the natural clays.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1.1 Within the vicinity of the Site there have been two major programmes of archaeological investigation undertaken in recent years.
- 4.1.2 Some 6km to the west of the Site, at Cambourne New Development, an extensive programme of archaeological evaluation and excavation has been undertaken in advance of and during development (see WA Report Ref 45973.1, 45973.2). The results of these works by Wessex Archaeology identified a range of archaeological material principally including;
- A small number of Late Bronze Age sites identifying industrial activity
 - Continuous settlement sites from the Early Iron Age through to the Late Roman Period, including a large 3ha settlement at Cambourne Green and a regular pattern of smaller enclosed homestead settlements each of about 0.5ha
 - A small number of Anglo Saxon finds indicative of possible settlement within the area
- 4.1.3 A programme of archaeological investigation (field artefact collection, geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation) (Albion Archaeology 2005) has also recently been undertaken in relation to the A428 Caxton to Hardwick Improvement Scheme. The A428 runs immediately north of the Site and evaluation identified three Areas of Archaeological Evidence (AAE) within close proximity to the Site which include;
- **AAE7** – Some 200m northwest of the Site (Field 18-Trenches 62 – 64)) two enclosures and a depression/pond were identified by non-intrusive evaluation, subsequently trial trenching dated these features through recovered pottery to the Early/Middle Iron Age.

- **AAE8** - Some 200m northeast of the Site (Field19 Trench 71) two pits were recorded containing burnt deposits and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery. Although the pits were 100% sampled there were no indications that they were cremations or cremation deposits.
- **AAE9** - Some 200m northeast of the Site (Field19 Trench 80) an area of colluvium was recorded in the lower lying part of the field. Three patinated flint flakes were recovered and an undated ditch and five postholes were recorded cutting the colluvium.

5 OBJECTIVES

- 5.1.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to determine, as far as reasonably possible, the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological remains within the area of the Site.
- 5.1.2 Previous archaeological work and observations in the vicinity suggested that it was possible that evidence of Late Bronze Age /Early Iron Age settlement/occupation may have been present on the Site and therefore the evaluation aimed to clarify the date, nature and extent of any remains of this period.
- 5.1.3 The results of this evaluation are intended to inform the determination of the appropriate treatment of any archaeological remains found within the Site and if necessary prepare a suitable mitigation strategy.

6 METHOD

- 6.1.1 The project design called for ten trenches measuring 30m x 1.8m representing a 5% sample of the Site. In practice however this proved to be unworkable and a total of six trenches of varying lengths were excavated. Trench 1 measured 30.00m x 1.90m, Trench 2: 30.00m x 1.90m, Trench 3: 34.50m x 2.10m, Trench 4: 17.83 x 1.90m, Trench 5: 23.05m x 1.9m and Trench 6 29.53 x 1.9m. The total area of these trenches represented a 2.75% sample of the Site. The positioning of two proposed trenches to the north of the Site would have placed them under overhead power lines. Other trenches had to be positioned to avoid large spoil heaps generated by demolition activities. To the east of the Site the depth of tarmac and reinforced concrete was such that it temporarily defied the efforts of the demolition contractors.
- 6.1.2 Trenching was carried out by a 360 tracked excavator using a toothless bucket. Machining was supervised at all times by Wessex Archaeology staff.
- 6.1.3 Machining continued until either an archaeological horizon or the natural soil layers were reached. Any potential archaeological features were excavated by hand.
- 6.1.4 Trenches were located using a Geographical Positioning System (GPS) and referenced to the National Ordnance Survey. The digital survey record forms

part of the archive of the evaluation. All potential archaeological features were digitally located.

- 6.1.5 Recording was carried out using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* based recording system. Plans were drawn at 1:20, sections at 1:10. All trenches were photographed in section and plan using both manual and digital cameras.
- 6.1.6 Topsoil and subsoil were excavated and stored separately and all trenches were backfilled on completion of recording.
- 6.1.7 The evaluation was carried out in November 2005.

7 RESULTS

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 A total of 165m of trenching was dug over six trenches. In all trenches the topsoil was a dark greyish brown silty clay containing quantities of modern debris; bricks, cans plastic etc. In Trenches 1, 2 and 5 this lay directly above disturbed natural boulder clay. In Trenches 3, 4 and 6 a pale brown silty clay subsoil was visible. All trenches revealed some degree of modern disturbance cutting into the natural layers.

7.2 Trench summary

- 7.2.1 Trench 1 revealed no features of archaeological interest. Layer (102) contained modern debris; brick, ceramic building material (CBM) and plaster.
- 7.2.2 Trench 2 contained two irregularly shaped tree throws, (205) and (209). A possible small, shallow ditch terminus (207) was located at the eastern end of the trench. The features cut into the natural clay (203). No finds were recovered and therefore the features remain undated.
- 7.2.3 Trench 3 contained no archaeological features. Substantial concrete foundations were visible at the south end of the trench and two modern field drains crossed the trench running approximately NW-SE.
- 7.2.4 Trenches 4, 5 and 6 contained no archaeological features. Layers (402), (403), (502), (603) and (604) contained modern building material; CBM, brick, plaster, plastic etc.

7.3 General Discussion of Evaluation Trenches

- 7.3.1 Trenches 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 contained no archaeological features. It is probable that the construction of the Enterprise Café itself and any levelling for the car park and concrete slab behind the building would have destroyed any shallow archaeological remains. Features deeper than 0.50m, for example large pits and ditches, would possibly have survived but no evidence of these was discovered. It is worth noting that the topsoil over the whole site was shallow

and without structure. Perhaps this layer was redeposited after the site had been levelled/truncated by site construction works. All the trenches have experienced some degree of modern disturbance on top of, and cutting into, the natural clay. The features excavated in Trench 2 remain undated. The ditch terminus (207) is only tentatively interpreted as such and may well be a natural feature.

7.4 Finds and Environmental

- 7.4.1 No finds were recovered from any of the evaluation trenches and no features suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were identified

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 The evaluation revealed little of archaeological interest and the Site would appear to have a low archaeological potential. This is reinforced by the fact that no finds were recovered from any features or from the topsoil and subsoil layers, Any archaeological remains that were previously present may have been destroyed by the construction of the Café and car park.

9 TRENCH TABLES

Trench 1	Length and width 30m x 1.9m	Depth 0.41m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
101	Topsoil, dark silty clay containing modern material, brick ,plastic, etc	0-0.07m
102	Disturbed clay, mid to dark green rare chalk and flint inclusions, contains brick rubble gravel etc	0.07-0.41m
103	Natural boulder clay	0.41m+

Trench 2	Length and width 30m x 1.9m	Depth 0.84m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
201	Topsoil, dark silty clay. Gritty. Abundant modern material; brick, rubble etc	0-0.11m
202	Disturbed clay, mid to dark greenish grey, contains modern CBM	0.11-0.33m
203	Natural boulder clay	0.33m +
204	Similar to (202), mid grey green clay	0.33-0.53m
205	Cut for tree throw	0.22m
206	Fill of tree throw, blue grey clay, flint inclusions. No finds	0.22m
207	Cut of possible ditch Terminus	0.16m
208	Fill of (207). Mid blueish grey clay with chalk and flint inclusions. No finds	0.16m
209	Cut for tree throw, irregular in plan	
210	Fill of (209), mid blue grey clay, no finds	

Trench 3	Length and width 34.50m x 2.10m	Depth 0.95m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
301	Topsoil, dark greyish brown silty clay, contained modern debris, brick, CBM, domestic rubbish	0-0.10m
302	Subsoil, pale brown silty clay with small chalk and flint inclusions	0.10-0.70m
303	Natural, blueish grey clay with rare, small chalk and flint inclusions, paler brown clay patches	0.70m+
304	Concrete foundation at south end of trench	

Trench 4	Length and width 17.83m x 1.9m	Depth 1.03m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
401	Topsoil, dark brown silty clay, disturbed by tree roots, contains modern debris	0-0.20m
402	Subsoil, mid brown silty clay, contains small flints. Modern brick, CBM and domestic rubbish	0.20-0.46m
403	Disturbed natural clay, CBM, brick etc	0.46-0.95m
404	Natural, pale green clay	0.95m+
405	Pipe trench, modern	
406	Field drain	

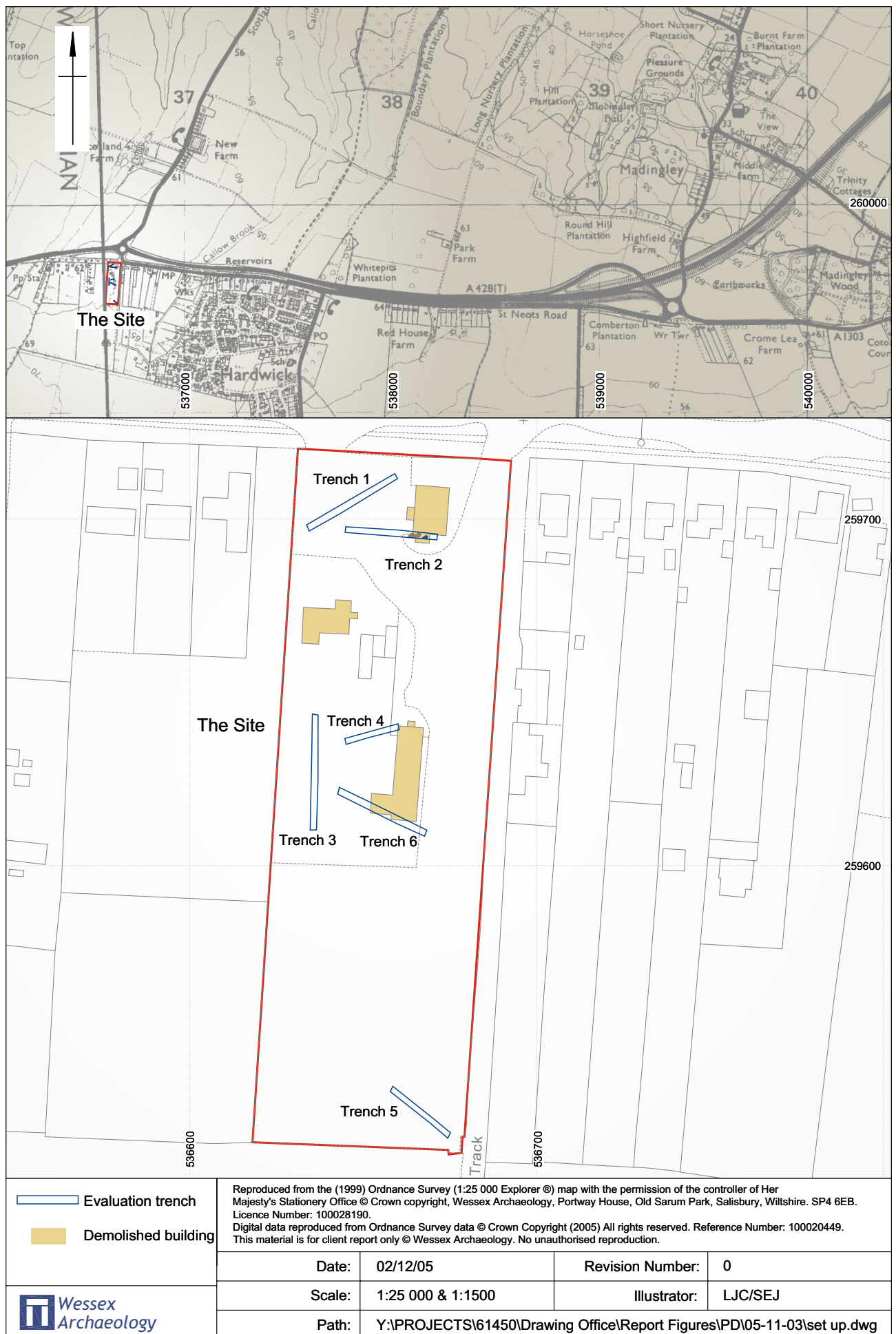
Trench 5	Length and width 23.05m x 1.9m	Depth 0.72m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
501	Topsoil, dark brown sandy clay, contains modern debris	0-0.28m
502	Disturbed natural, greyish green clay chalk and flint inclusions, brick, CBM	0.28-0.60m
503	Natural, blueish grey clay with chalk and flint, mottled brown patches	0.60m+

Trench 6	Length and width 29.53 x 1.9m	Depth 0.98m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
601	Topsoil, dark silty clay, root disturbance, rare chalk and flint	0-0.11m
602	Subsoil, mid brown silty clay with chalk and flint inclusions	0.11-0.28m
603	Made ground, East end of trench, contains brick, CBM, gravel	0-0.32m
604	Disturbed natural, greyish green clay, some modern debris	0.28-0.60m
605	Natural, greenish grey clay	0.60m+

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albion Archaeology – *A428Caxton to Harwick Improvement Scheme, Cambridgeshire, Preliminary Report on Results of the field, Evaluation 2005*

Wessex Archaeology, 2005 - *Enterprise Café St Neots Road, Hardwick, Cambridgeshire*. Project design for an Archaeological Evaluation



Site and Evaluation trench location

Figure 1

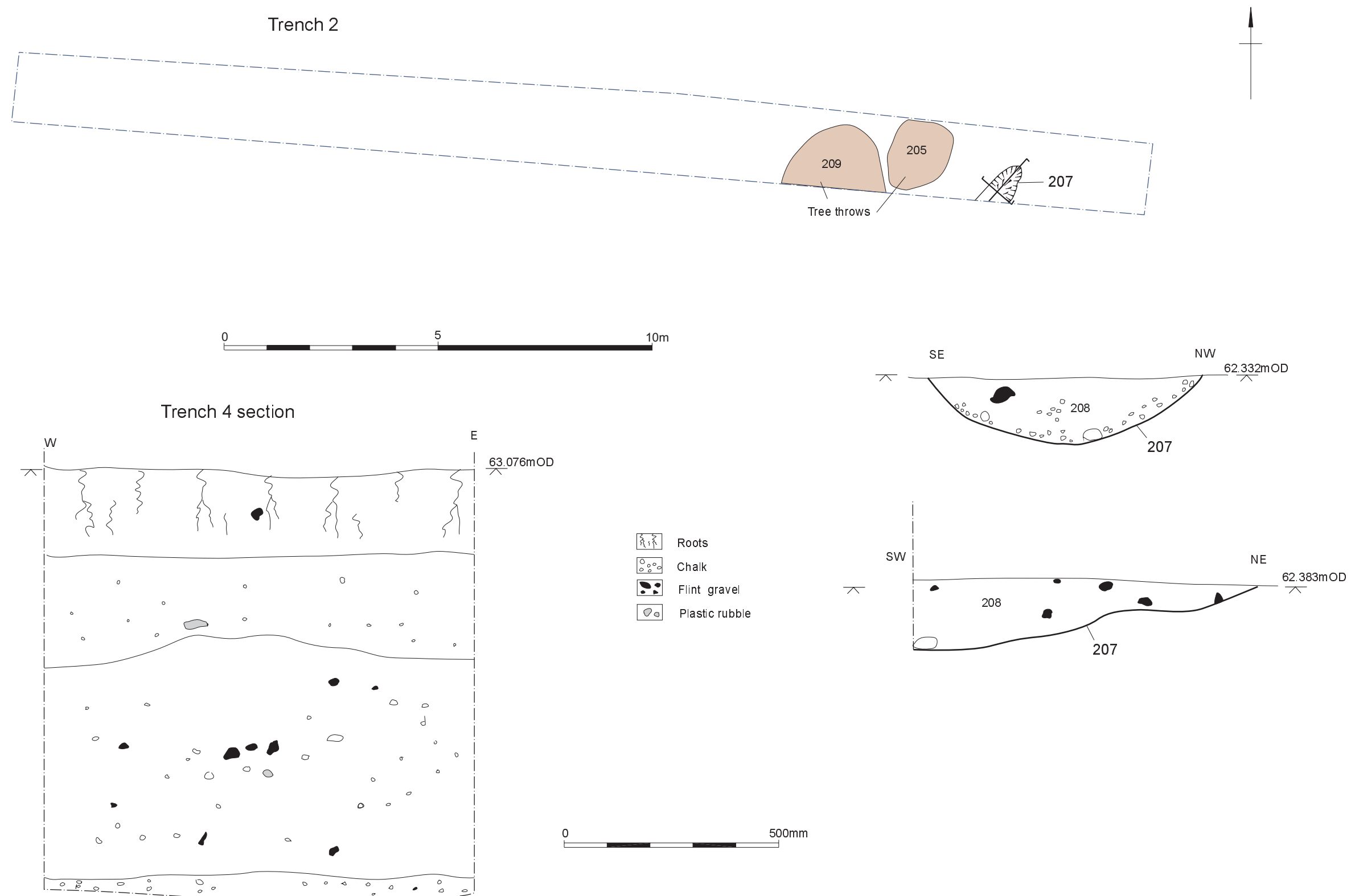




Plate 1. Trench 1 (pre-excavation), looking north east



Plate 2. Trench 2 (pre-excavation), looking east



Plate 3. Surveying Trench 2



Plate 4. General view of demolition in progress on the site



Plate 5. Trench 3 (pre-excavation), looking south



Plate 6. Trench 5 looking south east

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