

**NEW TREES, WELLINGTON ROAD,
MALDON, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
AND RECORDING**



Essex County Council

Field Archaeology Unit

December 2005

**NEW TREES, WELLINGTON ROAD,
MALDON, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
AND RECORDING**

Prepared By: Matthew Pocock Position: Project Officer	Signature: Date:02.12.2005
Checked By: Patrick Allen Position: Project Manager	Signature: Date:
Approved By: Mark Atkinson Position: Project Manager	Signature: Date:

Document Ref.	1482EvalRep.doc
Report Issue Date	02 December 2005
Circulation	Knight Developments Ltd(x2)
	Essex CC Historic Environment Management Team
	Essex CC Historic Environment Records
	Archive (x 2)

As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.

Please contact the Archaeological Fieldwork Manager, at the
Field Archaeology Unit,
Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3YQ
Tel: 01376 331470
Fax: 01376 331428

CONTENTS

	Page
Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	2
1.1 Planning Background	2
1.2 Report and Archive	2
2.0 Background	2
2.1 Location, Geology and Topography	2
2.2 Historical and Archaeological Background	3
3.0 Aims And Objectives	4
4.0 Methods	4
5.0 Fieldwork Results	5
5.1 Area A (Plots 1 and 2)	5
5.2 Area B (Plot 3)	5
6.0 Conclusions	6
7.0 Assessment of Results	7
Acknowledgements	8
Bibliography	9

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Fieldwork Data	10
Appendix 3: Archive Index	12
Appendix 4: Essex Historic Environment Record Sheet	13

FIGURES

1. Site location	14
2. Monitored foundation trenches, showing levels of truncation	15
3. Sections 7 and 8	16

**NEW TREES, WELLINGTON ROAD,
MALDON, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
AND RECORDING**

SUMMARY

Client: Knights Development Ltd

NGR: TL 8466 0694

Planning Application No.: MAL/1320/04

FAU Project No.: 1482

Site Code: MD35

Date of Fieldwork: 17/09/05 to 03/11/05

Archaeological Excavation was carried out on the foundation trenches of new houses to north and south of the existing house at New Tress, Wellington Road, Maldon. The monitoring was carried out by the Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Knight Developments LTD as part of the condition on planning consent. The site is located on the hilltop to the west of Maldon town centre, which previous archaeological work has suggested is the site of an early Iron Age settlement, and a large earthwork interpreted as the Maldon burh, a late Saxon defended enclosure, possibly a re-fortification of an Iron Age hill fort.

The monitoring identified pits, ditches and post-holes surviving in the south-eastern corner of the footprint of the southern house (Area B, Plot 3), but no artefacts were recovered to date them. A possible ditch was identified in the footprint of the northern housing block (Area A, Plots 1 and 2), but this area was extensively truncated by modern disturbances. However, the survival of archaeological features in Area B/ Plot 3 suggests that features might survive over other parts of the site that have not been disturbed by modern buildings or landscaping. Due to the lack of dating evidence the significance of the recorded features is uncertain. They could be related to the earthwork enclosure of the postulated Iron Age hill-fort and/ or late Saxon burh, but could equally represent evidence of the Iron Age settlement that preceded it.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

1.1.1 Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of new houses either side of the existing house at New Trees, Wellington Road, Maldon (Fig. 1). The development comprised two semi-detached dwellings to the north of the existing house (Plots 1 and 2), and a third, detached dwelling to its south (Plot 3), together with driveways and services, and levelling up of the ground surface towards the rear of the building plots.

1.1.2 The monitoring work was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of Bryant Harvey Partnership under the terms of an archaeological condition placed on planning consent in accordance with Planning Policy Guideline 16 (PPG16). The condition was placed by Braintree District Council following specialist advice from the Essex County Council Heritage Environment Management team (ECC HEM), as the development site lies in an area of high archaeological potential (Medlycott 1998). The archaeological work followed the archaeological brief produced by ECC HEM (2005) and the written scheme of investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2005).

1.2 Report and Archive

1.2.1 Copies of this report will be supplied to Knight Developments (including a copy to be forwarded to Maldon District Council), the Essex CC Historic Environment Management (HEM) and Record (HER) sections, and the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>). The project archive will be deposited at Colchester Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, Geology and Topography

2.1.1 The development site lay immediately outside Maldon town centre (NGR TL 8466 0694, centred), beyond the west end of the medieval High Street, occupying a hilltop to the west of Spital Road. This is the highest point in the area, overlooking the confluence of the rivers Chelmer and Blackwater, and the Blackwater estuary.

2.1.2 The previously undeveloped parts of the site around the existing house were largely laid to grass with thick shrub and partial tree coverage. The site generally sloped down to the east with ground levels ranging between 46.97 and 43.85 m OD. The surface geology comprised glacial sands and gravels.

2.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

2.2.1 The development is situated within the probable area of the Maldon *burh*, a late Saxon fortification. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records the foundation of a *burh* at Maldon in 916 and its successful defence against the Danes in 917. The hilltop to the west of Maldon town centre is the most likely location of the *burh*, as an earthwork enclosure was recorded there by two antiquarians, Salmon (1740) and Strutt (1774). The evidence for the *burh* and its relationship to Maldon's development is summarised by Bedwin (1992). The generally accepted interpretation is that Maldon grew along the High Street between the *burh* to its west and the Hythe (wharf) on the Blackwater to its east, but while the *burh* soon lost its significance, the High Street and the Hythe developed as an important commercial centre. Maldon was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as a borough (Rumble 1983), one of only two in Essex at that date, and continued to prosper as a town and port during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

2.2.2 The development is in an area of known archaeological potential, as previous investigations in the vicinity had uncovered remains spanning the Bronze Age to the medieval periods. Likely evidence of a prehistoric farming landscape has been identified at 20-22 London Road (Robertson 2004), and a length of an early Iron Age ditch and palisade at Beacon Green (Bedwin 1992). Excavations at 33 Beeleigh Road and 20 Spital Road by the Maldon Archaeological Group in 1985-6 identified a bank and ditch that may represent the circuit of the *burh*, although only at Beeleigh Road was late Saxon pottery recovered (Brown 1986). The bank and ditch were also investigated nearby at St Peter's Hospital and a sherd of 12th-century pottery was recovered from the ditch fill (Ingram 1993). It has been suggested that the *burh* was a re-fortification of an Iron Age hill-fort (Brown 1996), but while an earthwork certainly existed on the hilltop, on current evidence its date remains uncertain.

2.2.3 Medieval remains were found at 20-22 London Road, attesting to an intensification of land-use and westward expansion of the town in the 12th-14th centuries (Robertson 2004). This is substantiated by further medieval remains found at the former

Dovercourt Motors site on the junction of Spital and Fambridge Roads. Watching brief recording at 2 Spital Road suggests there was extensive post-medieval levelling and terracing around the edge of the hilltop and its earthwork (Atkinson 1993).

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The archaeological work was carried out to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains threatened by the development.

3.2 The specific objectives of the archaeological investigation were to:

- Identify Iron Age settlement and land-use remains on the hilltop
- Identify Saxon remains relating to the late Saxon *burh*
- Identify medieval settlement and agricultural land-use remains

4.0 METHOD

4.1 The programme of archaeological work consisted of intermittent attendance on site by an archaeologist to monitor ground works and record any archaeological remains exposed by them. Monitoring consisted of observation of machine-excavation of foundation trenches in two areas of the development: Plots 1 and 2 (Area A); and Plot 3 (Area B) (Figs 1 and 2). A site visit was made during initial site clearance, involving removal of topsoil and trees, but these ground-works did not expose any archaeological remains and no further coverage of this phase of works was necessary. Removal of a concrete pond to the rear of Plot 1, in a corner of the site proposed for use as a soak-away, could not be monitored, as this area remained under water for the entire duration of the works. Service trenches ran close to the foundation trenches and thus additional monitoring was deemed unnecessary.

4.2 Standard Essex CC FAU recording methods were used. The narrowness of the foundation trenches meant that archaeological features were mainly recorded in section, although in some cases features were cleaned and partially excavated in an attempt to recover artefacts that might date them.

- 4.3 The monitoring work was carried out according to regional standards in field archaeology (Gurney 2003), and followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

5.1 Area A (Plots 1 and 2) (Figs 1-2)

- 5.1.1 Area A consisted of the footprint of a block of two semi-detached houses (Plots 1 and 2) in the north of the site, and foundation trenches across this area were recorded after initial topsoil clearance. Section numbers 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, (Fig. 2), represent both the stratigraphic nature of the deposits and archaeology in this area but have not been illustrated. There was a substantial drop in ground surface in this part of the site, from 46.74 m OD at the front to 43.52 m OD at the rear (after topsoil removal). The area appeared to have been recently landscaped, resulting in varying degrees of truncation.

- 5.1.2 Concrete foundations from a previous development were present in the south-western corner of the area, while a large area of ground reduction, filled with modern overburden, was defined across the north. Both areas of disturbance would have extensively truncated any archaeological deposits.

- 5.1.3 Truncation was less severe over the rest of the area, and in the areas of least disturbance, in the west and the north-east, humic topsoil directly overlay the natural sand and gravels. No archaeological features, other than modern garden structures and rubbish deposits, were recorded in the west of the area. Part of a possible ditch aligned south-west to north-east (16) was recorded in the relatively undisturbed north-east of the area, but no artefacts were recovered from its fills and its date is unknown.

5.2 Area B (Plot 3)

- 5.2.1 Area B consisted of the footprint of a single house (Plot 3) in the south of the site, which occupied level ground, with the cleared surface only varying between 45.41 and 45.34m OD from front to rear. Section numbers 006, 007, 008 009 and 010 (Fig. 2) represent both the stratigraphic nature of the deposits and archaeology in this area; of these 007 and 008 have been illustrated (Fig. 3). Again, foundation trenches

across this area were recorded after topsoil removal. The potential for survival of archaeological features and deposits appeared to be much greater in Area B than in Area A.

- 5.2.2 After initial topsoil removal, a thin layer of humic topsoil was left above the natural horizon. Overlying the gravels and sands in localised areas was a thin layer of red/brown clay. Archaeological features were exposed in sections in the sides of foundation trenches at the south-eastern corner of the area, although no datable artefacts were retrieved from any of these features.
- 5.2.3 Several relatively large features were recorded, representing either pits or ditches (Fig. 3). A large feature (064), either a pit or the terminus of a ditch, had a series of gravelly clay-silt fills. It was largely truncated by a probable ditch (45) with a broad V-shaped profile 0.8m deep, again containing a sequence of gravelly clay-silt fills, from which no datable artefacts were retrieved. The ditch's alignment could not be established, although it may run south-west to north-east. Parts of other features were recorded, but extended beyond the limits of the foundation trenches. These were a pit over 1m deep (054, not illustrated) and shallower pits with gravelly fills 035 and 041, containing no finds.
- 5.2.4 Several post-holes were recorded (028, 060, 062 and 037), the last of which is illustrated (Fig. 3). Post-hole 37 included packing material (038) down one side and a post-pipe (039) where the post had been removed. Two shallow stake-holes (52, 58) were also recorded. No datable artefacts were retrieved from these features.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The archaeological monitoring identified a group of pits, ditches, post-holes and stake-holes in the south of the site, in the south-eastern corner of Area B (Plot 3). These were recorded in a part of site that appears to have escaped major truncation, but no archaeological features were identified over the rest of Area B.
- 6.2 In the north of the site, a ditch possibly aligned north-south was recorded in the north-eastern corner of Area A (Plot 1). This area appeared not to have been badly truncated, although the rest of Area A was extensively truncated by modern

landscaping/terracing, concrete footings, and other disturbances. The wide difference in levels between the Wellington Road frontage and the rear of the plot is mainly due to the natural slope, but may have been accentuated in places by recent terracing, while the hollow at the rear of Plot 1 may be due to quarrying. The north-south ditch recorded in Area A may represent a drainage ditch running along the rear of the terraced area along the front of the site.

- 6.3 It is difficult to interpret the archaeological features due to the limited areas exposed in the foundation trenches, and the lack of artefacts to provide dating evidence. However, the presence of archaeological features in Area B suggests that further features may survive in other parts of the site that have not been affected by modern disturbances. Unfortunately, the features recorded on site cannot be interpreted further on site evidence alone.

7.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

- 7.1 The results of the monitoring identified archaeological features in the south of the site, suggesting reasonably good preservation in areas that have escaped modern disturbance. Lack of detail and dating evidence prevents full assessment of their significance in terms of the research objectives set out above (3.0 Aims and Objectives), although an assessment can be attempted by comparison with investigations on neighbouring sites.
- 7.2 The previous excavations at 20 Spital Road (Brown 1986; Bedwin 1992) and St Peter's Hospital (Ingram 1993) backed onto Area B/Plot 3 of the Wellington Road site. Both investigations located the postulated ditch and bank of the late Saxon *burh*, but no late Saxon pottery was recovered from the ditch on either site. At 20 Spital Road the bank sealed an early Iron Age pit, and the ditch contained predominantly early Iron Age pottery, but mixed with some Roman and medieval pottery and therefore considered to be residual. At St Peter's Hospital early Iron Age pits and a gully were recorded as well as the bank and ditch. This evidence appears to reflect a general trend for archaeological sites in the area, in which hardly any late Saxon pottery has been recovered and the dating of the bank and ditch of the postulated *burh* remains uncertain, but where there is extensive evidence for early Iron Age features and pottery over the hilltop.

- 7.3 It should not be automatically assumed that the features recorded at Wellington Road were related to the earthwork enclosure, whether as a late Saxon *burh* or as an Iron Age hill-fort later re-used as a *burh*. They could equally well represent further evidence of early Iron Age settlement on the hilltop, recorded on adjoining sites at 20 Spital Road and St Peter's Hospital, enclosed by the ditch and palisade identified at Beacon Green (Bedwin 1992). The features are unlikely to represent medieval or later remains, as none are known in the area apart from at 20-22 London Road, on the main road out of Maldon (Robertson 2004), and it is thought that the earthwork on the west hill presented a barrier to growth of the town in that direction until the 19th century.
- 7.4 The monitoring at New Trees, Wellington Road confirmed that there is potential for locating archaeological features on the site, and on Maldon's western hill in general, in areas that have not been landscaped or built on. However, the limited form of the investigation meant that the significance of the recorded remains is unclear, and the archaeological evidence on the western hill is unlikely to be properly understood unless it exposed and recorded over larger areas as opportunities arise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Knight Developments, who commissioned and funded the archaeological monitoring, especially to Craig, the site manager, and Neil Johnson for their help. Pat Connell of the Essex CC Historic Environment Management team monitored the archaeological work, which was carried out by Matthew Pocock, with an initial site visit by Andy Robertson. The project was managed by Mark Atkinson and Patrick Allen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Atkinson, M. 1993 'Maldon, 2 Spital Road' in Bennet, A., Work of the Essex CC Archaeology Section, 1992, *Essex Archaeol. Hist.* **24** 185-6
- Bedwin, O. 1992 *Early Iron Age Settlement at Maldon and the Maldon 'burh': excavations at Beacon Green 1987 Essex Archaeol. Hist.* **23**, 10-24
- Brown, P. 1986 *The Maldon Burh Jigsaw*, Maldon Archaeological Group
- Essex CC FAU 2005 *Written Scheme of Investigation, Archaeological Monitoring and Recording. New Trees, Wellington Road, Maldon, Essex.* Essex CC FAU, August 2005
- Essex CC HEM 2005 *Archaeological Investiation at New Trees, Wellington Road, Maldon: detailed archaeological monitoring and recording.* Essex CC HEM brief, March 2005
- Gurney, D. 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper **14**
- Ingram, M. 1993 *St Peter's Hospital, Maldon, Archaeological Excavation.* Essex CC FAG report (MD18)
- Medlycott, M. 1998 *Maldon: Historic Towns Project Assessment Report*, Essex CC
- Robertson, A. 2004 *20-22 London Road, Maldon: archaeological excavation.* Essex CC FAU report 1268
- Rumble, A. (ed) 1983 *Domesday Book. Vol. 32, Essex.* Chichester
- Salmon, N. 1740 *The History and Antiquaries of Essex.* Essex Record Office
- Strutt, J. 1774 *Horda Angel-Cynnan, or a Compleat View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits & etc of the Inhabitants of England* vol 1. London

APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

CONTEXT	FEATURE	SECTION	CATEGORY	DETAILS
001	Topsoil	001	Layer	Remnant Topsoil
002		001	Layer	Made ground
003		001	Layer	Made ground
004	Natural	001	Layer	Natural Sands and Gravels
005	Topsoil	002	Layer	Remnant Topsoil
006		002	Layer	Made ground, (= 023)
007		002	Layer	Made ground (Garden soil, loam)
008		002	Layer	Made ground, (= 022)
009	Natural	002	Layer	Natural Sands and Gravels
010		003	Deposit	Fill of 016
011		003	Deposit	Fill of 016
012		003	Deposit	Fill of 016
013		003	Deposit	Fill of 016
014		003	Deposit	Fill of 016
016	Linear	003	Cut	NW-SE ditch
017		003	Cut	Landscaping
018		003	Layer	Remnant Topsoil
019		003	Layer	Natural Sands and Gravels
020	Linear	004	Cut	N-S potential ditch.
021		004	Deposit	Fill of 020
022		004	Layer	Made ground, (= 008)
023		004	Layer	Made ground, (= 006)
024	Pit	005	Cut	Modern Pit
025		005	Deposit	Fill of 024 (Backfill)
026	Pit	005	Cut	Construction cut Fill of 028
027		005	Deposit	Fill of 026
028	Posthole	005	Cut	Post Hole
029	Stake hole	005	Cut	
030		005	Layer	Fill of and seals 028 and 029
031	Natural	006	Layer	Alluvial Clays
032	Natural	006	Layer	Natural Sands and Gravels
033	Natural	7, 8, 9, 10	Layer	Natural Sands and Gravels
034	Natural	7, 8, 9, 10	Layer	Natural Sands and Gravels
035	Pit	007	Cut	
036		007	Deposit	Fill of 035
037	Posthole/Pit	007	Cut	
038		007	Deposit	Fill of 037
039	Post Pipe	007	Cut	
040		007	Deposit	Fill of 039
041	Pit	007, 010	Cut	
042		007, 010	Deposit	Fill of 041
043		007, 010	Deposit	Fill of 042
044		007, 010	Deposit	Fill of 043
045	Pit/Ditch Terminus	008	Cut	
046		008	Deposit	Fill of 064
047		008	Deposit	Fill of 064
048		008	Deposit	Fill of 045
049		008	Deposit	Fill of 045
050		008	Deposit	Fill of 045
051		008	Deposit	Fill of 045
052	Stake Hole	008	Cut	
053		008	Deposit	Fill of 052
054	Pit	009	Cut	

055		009	Deposit	Fill of 054
056	?	009	Cut	
057		009	Deposit	Fill of 056
058	Stake Hole	009	Cut	
059		009	Deposit	Fill of 058
060	Posthole	010	Cut	
061		010	Deposit	Fill of 060
062	Posthole	010	Cut	
063		010	Deposit	Fill of 062
064	Pit/ Ditch	008	Cut	

APPENDIX 2: ARCHIVE INDEX

SITE NAME: New Trees, Wellington Road, Maldon (MD35)

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief for Evaluation/Watching Brief
- 1.2 Specification for Evaluation/Watching Brief.

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Client Report

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Context Index
- 3.2 Context Record Register
- 3.3 Original Context Records 1 to 64
- 3.3.1 Sections Register
- 3.4 Survey Data
- 3.5 Site Digital Photographic Record
- 3.6 Miscellaneous maps and plans

N.B. The archive contains to finds

APPENDIX 3: EHER SUMMARY SHEET

Site Name/Address: New Trees, Wellington Road, Maldon	
Parish: Maldon	District: Maldon
NGR: TL 8466 0694	Site Code: MD35
Type of Work: Monitoring & Recording	Site Director/Group: M. Pocock, ECC FAU
Date of Work: 17 th October – 3 rd November	Size of Area Investigated: Fill foundation Trenches
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Colchester Museum	Funding Source: Knights Development Ltd
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related EHCR Nos:
Final Report: EAH Summary	
Periods Represented: Undated	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>Essex County Council Field Archaeological Unit carried out monitoring on ground works on behalf of Knight Developments at Wellington Road, Maldon, Essex, NGR TL 846 069 (Centred). The work was carried out under an archaeological condition placed on the planning application (MAL/1320/04) because of its location within a potentially sensitive archaeological area. Specific reference was given to the presence of a potential late Saxon <i>burh</i> defined through previous investigations of which remains or associated activity may have been present within the scope of ground works The application was for two new houses either side of the existing structure on the site.</p> <p>Much of the trenching revealed no archaeologically significant material or deposits due to truncation through landscaping and terracing, the SE corner of the development area proved the exception. Present were a collection of stake or post holes dispersed within an area of pitting. In addition a potential ditch was also present aligned NE-SW. All features remained un-dated, interpretation was speculative based on the known archaeological record.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: None	
Author of Summary: Matthew Pocock	Date of Summary: 12/11/05



Mapping reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of HMSO. Crown Copyright. Licence no.LA100019602.

Fig.1. Site location

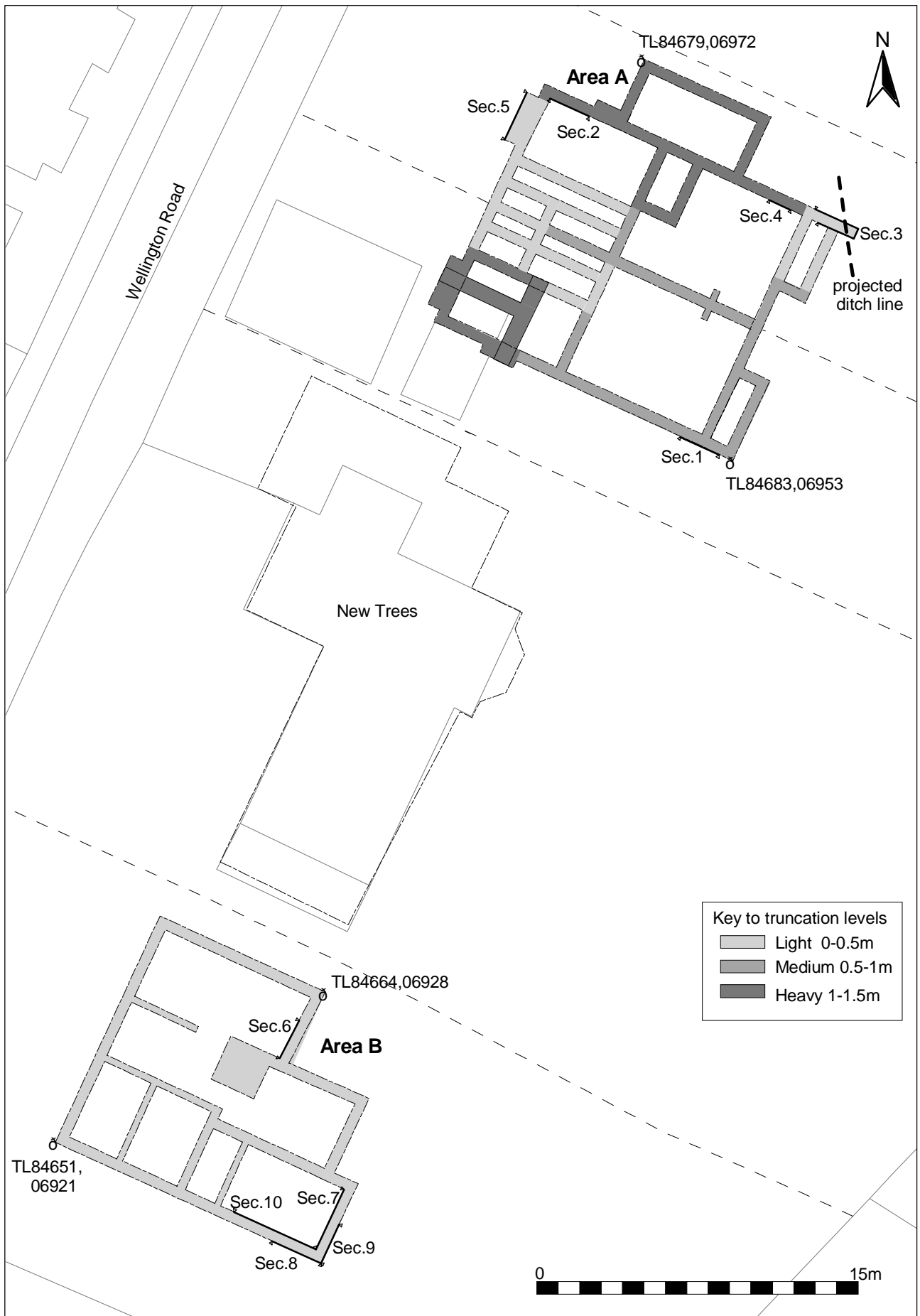
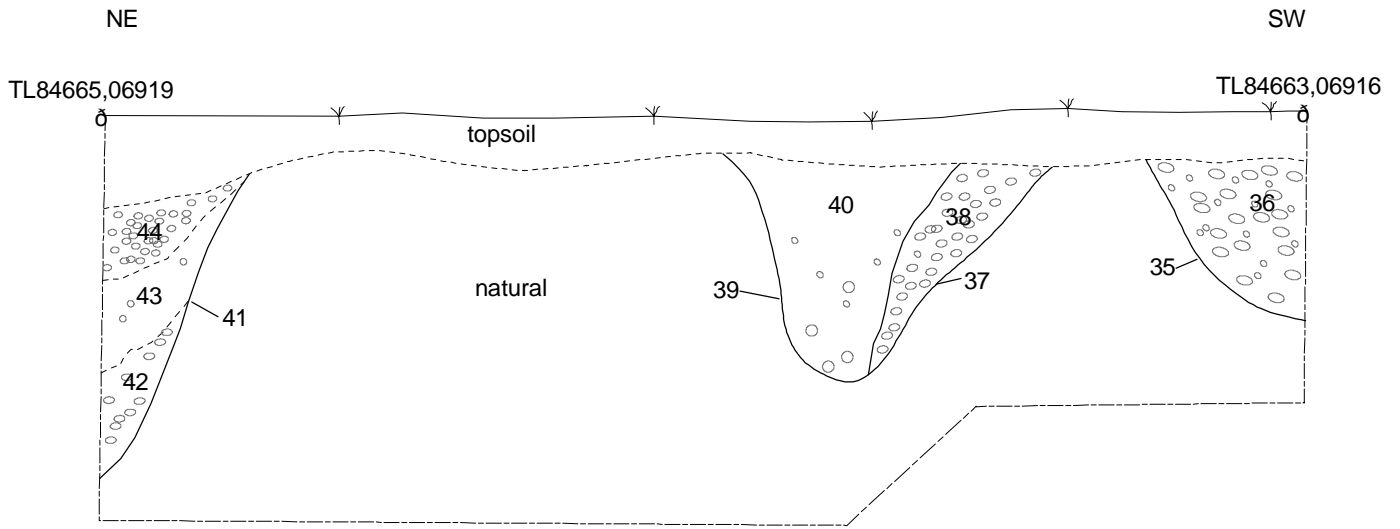
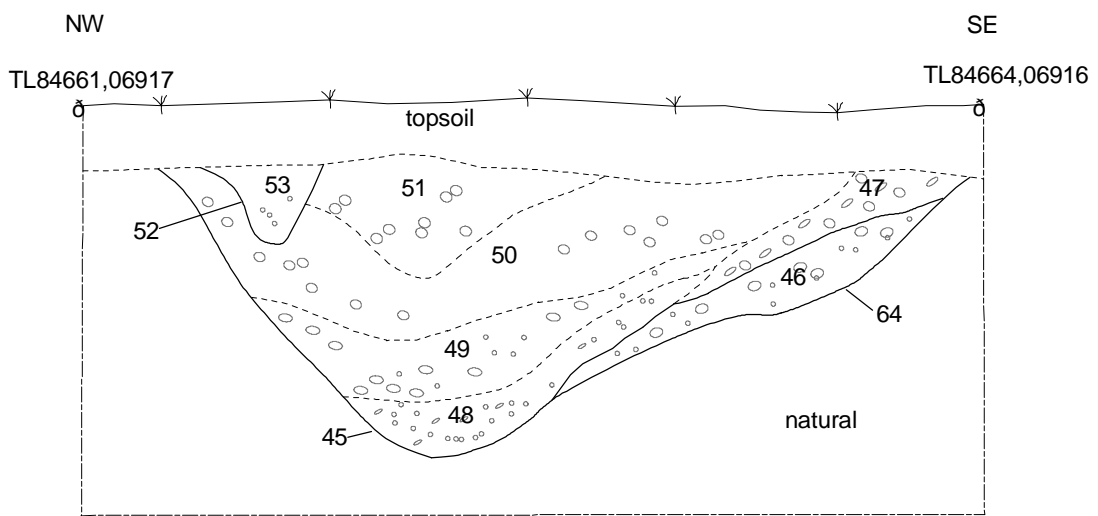


Fig.2. Monitored foundation trenches showing levels of truncation



Section 7



Section 8



Fig.3. Sections 7 & 8