

**FORMER SUN PUBLIC HOUSE
GOLD STREET, SAFFRON WALDEN
ESSEX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

February 2013

ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD / ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Former Sun Public House, Gold St, Saffron Walden	
Parish: Saffron Walden	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 53797 38236	Site Code: SW60
Type of Work: Monitoring & Recording	Site Director/Group: Fiona Moore, ECC FAU
Date of Work: 21/01/2013 to 24/01/2013	Size of Area Investigated: approx 40sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden	Funding source: Client
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos: 446, 447
Final Report: EAH summary	OASIS Ref: 138405
Periods Represented: medieval, post-medieval, modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>Following the discovery of a surviving section of the medieval town ditch (the magnum Fossatum) during evaluation of the site in November 2012, archaeological monitoring was subsequently undertaken to record and investigate its further extents during contractor's ground reduction ahead of construction.</p> <p>The brick retaining wall separating the former pub garden and car park areas, immediately north of evaluation Trench 1, was removed. The raised garden to the south of the wall was reduced by a depth of c.1.4m, down to the level of the tarmac car park which was left undisturbed. The material comprising the higher ground was excavated back (south) from the retaining wall for a distance of some 4-5m. All ground reduction was carried out by machine.</p> <p>During the course of this ground reduction, the southern edge of the medieval town ditch was exposed in plan, east to west, over a distance of some 8m (Figs 1 and 3, Plate 1). Approximately 1.8m of the ditch width survived, the remainder having been removed by the construction of the car park and insertion of its retaining wall. The ditch remains displayed a well-defined southern edge cut into natural chalk. At its eastern end, the ditch had been truncated by the cut for a modern drainage pipe extending north-south.</p> <p>A box section was excavated across the ditch by machine, to determine its depth and the nature of its fill material. The initial trial trenching had exposed the ditch at a depth of 1.2m below the upper surface of the raised terrace south of the retaining wall; the removal of the terrace material is therefore assumed to have removed approximately 0.2m of the upper levels of the medieval ditch.</p> <p>The section was excavated under close archaeological supervision using a back-acting, mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. This revealed the surviving ditch cut to be in excess of 2.5m deep, with a steeply-sloping southern side (Fig. 2, Plate 2). The base was not exposed in section, as the ditch clearly intruded lower than the level of the parking area and clearly extends northward beneath it. The ditch was observed to contain a number of fills. The uppermost fill visible in section, (30), appeared to be related to the construction of the retaining wall and consisted of a dark greyish brown sandy clay with a 20% red brick content. This deposit may represent the fill of a foundation cut for the retaining wall; a foundation cut was not however visible</p>	

across the majority of the exposed area. Below, ditch fills 31, 32, 11 and 33 were relatively similar to one another, consisting of orangey brown sandy clays with varying levels of chalk inclusions. All are likely to relate to the back-filling of the ditch, but no diagnostic dating evidence was recovered from them - or indeed any artefacts of any kind. Context 34 denotes a sequence of finely banded multiple silts and chalk occupying the base of the ditch that are accumulated weathering deposits in the open ditch. These are typical of basal deposits seen elsewhere in the town ditch. No artefacts were collected from these deposits either.

An irregular feature was observed adjacent to the retaining wall foundation, at the eastern end of the reduced area, which may represent the remains of a foundation trench of unknown date which had been cut through the ditch.

Monitoring of the ground reduction works has demonstrated that the southern edge of the Magnum Fossatum survived in a relatively little truncated state and extended east-west across much the development site. Although significantly truncated by the creation of the pub car park, it is clear that a further part of the medieval ditch survives below its tarmac surface; albeit limited to its lower portion.

Previous Summaries/Reports:

Moore, F. 2012 *Archaeological Evaluation: Former Sun Public House Site, Gold Street, Saffron Walden* ECC FAU rep.2616a

Author of Summary: F. Moore / M. Atkinson

Date of Summary: 15 February 2013



Plate 1. View of reduced area and exposed ditch, looking NW (1m and 2m scales)



Plate 2. East-facing section through the medieval ditch (2m scale)

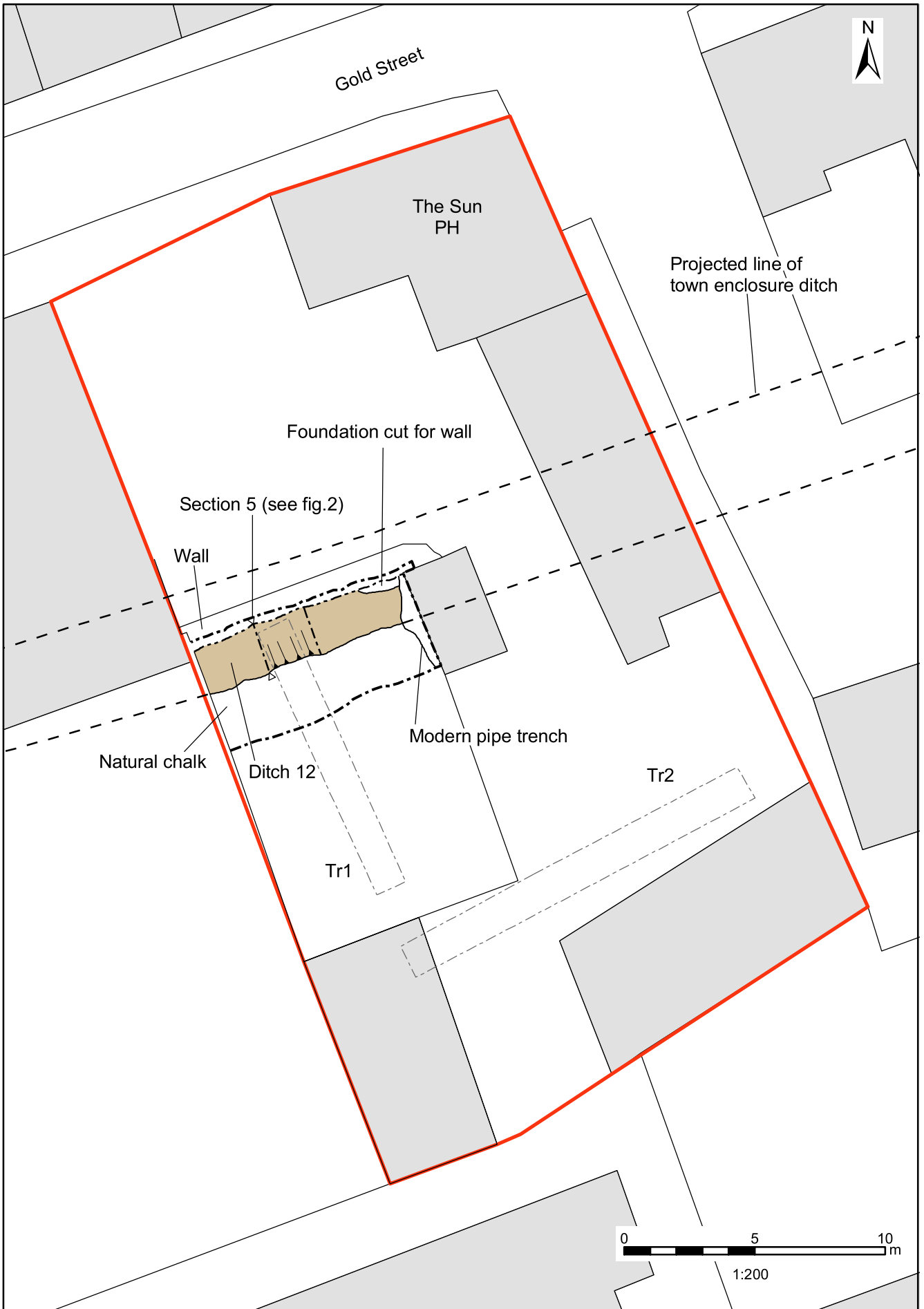


Fig.1. Site location

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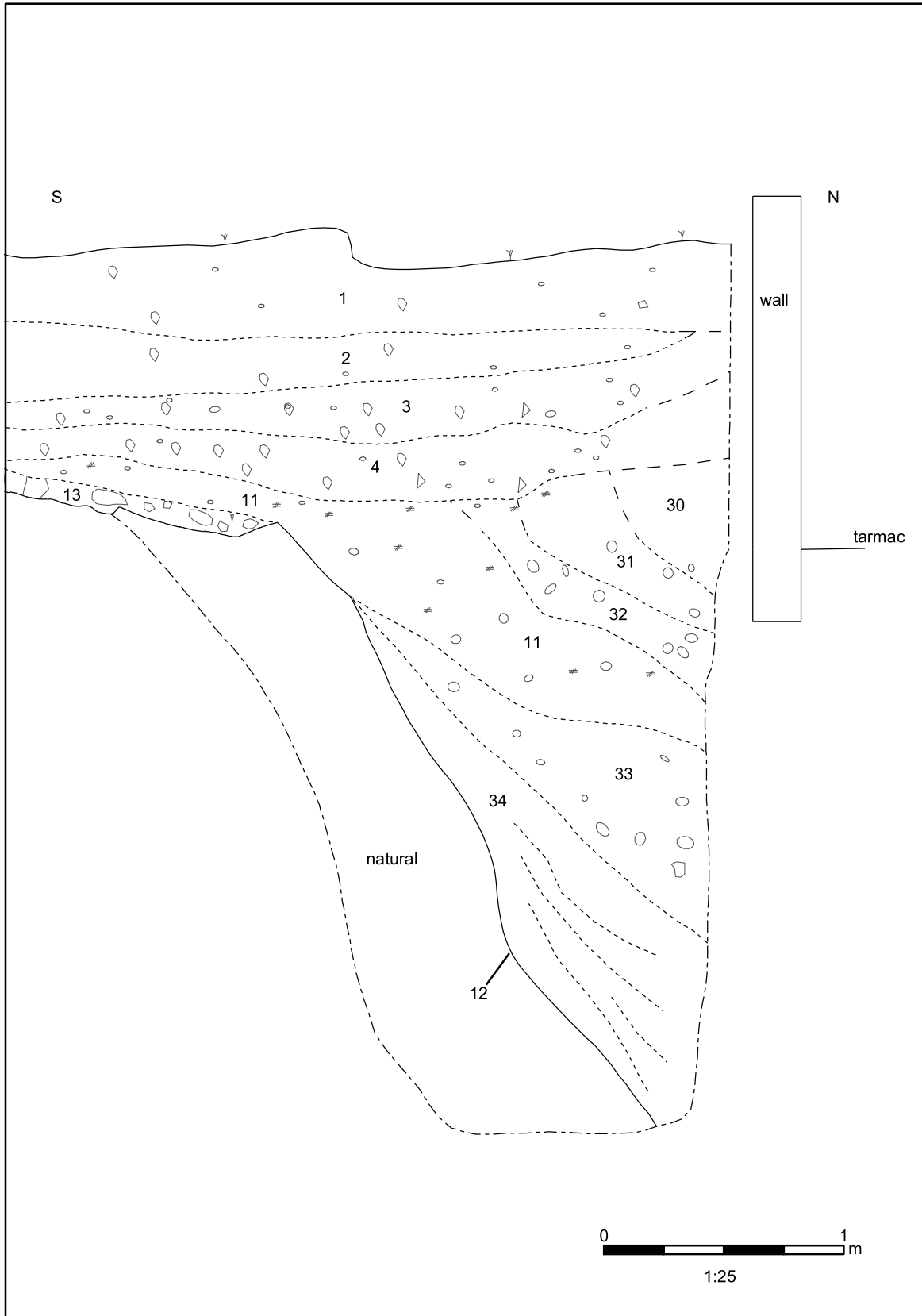


Fig.2. Section 5