

# HERITAGE NETWORK



## **POTTER'S HALL FARM** **Potter's Green, Little Munden, Herts.**

HN497

*Archaeological Evaluation Report*



Potter's Hall Farm  
Little Munden, Herts

HN497

*Archaeological Evaluation*

*Prepared on behalf of Marchfield Developments Ltd*

by

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Report no.263

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## Contents

	Summary.....	Page i
Section 1	Introduction.....	Page 1
Section 2	Fieldwork .....	Page 2
Section 3	Discussion & Conclusion .....	Page 8
Section 4	Bibliography.....	Page 9
Section 5	Illustrations.....	following Page 9

*The cover photo shows the site viewed from the north-east.*

## Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Geoff Saunders and Abigail Rothwell. The report text was written by Abigail Rothwell and the illustrations were prepared by Geoff Saunders. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Paul Brignell, Marchfield Developments Ltd; and Jonathan Smith, Hertfordshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

## Summary

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Potter's Hall Farm, Little Munden		
<b>County:</b>	Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b>	East Herts
<b>Village/town:</b>	Little Munden	<b>Parish:</b>	Little Munden
<b>Planning reference:</b>	3/04/1424	<b>NGR:</b>	TL 3516 2066
<b>Client name and address:</b>	Marchfield Developments Ltd, Chells Manor, Chells Lane, Stevenage, SG2 7AA		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	New Housing	<b>Former land use:</b>	Industrial & Farm Buildings
<b>Size of affected area:</b>	3400m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	145m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site Code:</b>	HN497	<b>Other reference:</b>	n/a
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Type of work:</b>	Evaluation	<b>Curating Museum:</b>	Hertford
<b>Start of work</b>	26/10/2004	<b>Finish of work</b>	29/10/2004
<b>Related HER Nos:</b>	n/a	<b>Periods represented:</b>	Modern
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	Desk-based assessment (Heritage Network report No.258)		

**Synopsis:**

In response to an archaeological condition on the planning permission for new housing on Potter's Hall Farm, Little Munden, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Marchfield Developments Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation in advance of development.

Five trenches were excavated in order to evaluate the nature of any surviving archaeological remains at the site before development commences. No archaeological features or deposits were observed within the five trenches. The lack of archaeological features in the trenches suggests that any likely archaeological activity is located outside the study area.

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report has been prepared on behalf of Marchfield Developments Ltd as part of the archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site on Potter's Hall Farm, Little Munden, Herts. The planning permission for the development controlled by East Hertfordshire County Council (EHDC), has been granted subject to a standard archaeological condition (Condition 2) in accordance with the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning. The scope of the required investigation has been defined in discussion with the County Archaeological Office (CAO) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as adviser to the planning authority. The evaluation followed the provisions set out in the Heritage Network's approved Project Design dated October 2004.
- 1.2** The site is located on a ridge of high ground on the eastern side of an access track from the road (formerly known as Badger Lane) between Dane End and the A10, centred on NGR TL 3516 2066. The majority of the site is occupied by a complex of farm and industrial buildings, silos and hardstanding. The development proposes the construction of seven new dwelling associated garage blocks together with associated access, landscaping and services.
- 1.3** The evaluation stage of work followed a desk-based archaeological assessment carried out by the Heritage Network. This noted that the risk of encountering features and artefacts of prehistoric to Roman date was moderate, but the risk of encountering features and artefacts of medieval date, particularly those associated with medieval pottery manufacture, was considered high.
- 1.4** The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any such remains that are liable to be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), if they were to be discovered.
- 1.5** The present report is intended to provide the planning authority with sufficient data to allow it to consider the archaeological implications of the proposed development, and to determine what further, if any, mitigation measures may be required to allow the development to proceed.

## 2. Fieldwork

### *SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY*

- 2.1 The site is situated at approximately 120m OD, on a ridge of higher ground around the 122m contour above a small stream, which runs southeast to join the Barwick Tributary. It is currently covered by a complex of farm and industrial buildings, silos and hardstanding.
- 2.2 The cartographic evidence shows that the study area has been occupied by a farm since at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout this time the area has been occupied by farm buildings which have undergone significant changes in layout. These changes are more likely to have had an impact on the western side of the area evaluated. The eastern and southern areas have remained undeveloped but parts have been subject to ploughing since the early 1970s.
- 2.3 The underlying geology of the area consists of chalky till. The soils of the area belong to the Hanslope association (411d) comprising of slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils, some slowly permeable non-calcareous soils and with a slight risk of water erosion (SSEW, 1983).

### *RESULTS*

#### *Stratigraphy*

- 2.4 The stratigraphy was broadly similar across four of the five trenches. It consisted of:
  - a layer of concrete, measuring between 0.10 and 0.30m in depth which was generally bedded on a layer of aggregate or building debris, this measured between 0.20 and 0.30m,
  - a buried topsoil of dark greyish brown (2.5 Y 4/2) silty clay, measuring between 0.15 and 0.25m in depth;
  - subsoil of olive brown (2.5 Y 4/3) slightly silty clay, measuring between 0.30 and 0.40m in depth.

Trench 3 was unlike the other trenches as there was no concrete present.

- The top soil was very dark brown (10YR 2/2) sandy silty clay, measuring around 0.20m,
- The subsoil was brown (10YR 4/3) silty clay, measuring between 0.10 and 0.30m.

The colour of the natural showed slight variation throughout the site ranging from yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) to dark olive grey (5Y 3/2). In general the natural was plastic clay, contained occasional flint and had bluish-grey mottling.

**Trench 1**

- 2.5** Trench 1 was 10.30m in length, 1.60m in width and reached a maximum depth of 0.85m. It was aligned northwest–southeast. The trench was located in the north-western quadrant of the site and was roughly opposite the site entrance (see fig 2).
- 2.6** The trench contained two concrete posts [102] & [103], and a ceramic drainage pipe [105] was also uncovered during excavation towards the northwest end of the trench. The remains of a modern wooden post [104] was observed in the southwest facing section.
- 2.7** No archaeological features or deposits were observed within this trench.

**Trench data:**

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)
100	Layer	Concrete.	Length:10.30m Width:1.60m Depth:0.30m (max)
101	Layer	Building debris, eg brick, tile, stone. Dark grey (2.5Y 4/1) silty clay.	Length:10.30m Width:1.60m Depth:0.25m (max)
102	Feature	Concrete post. The width of the post is not discernible as the feature was only observed in the northeast facing section.	Length:0.85m Width: n/a Depth:0.90m
103	Feature	Concrete post. As with [102] the width of the post is not discernible as the feature was only observed in the northeast facing section.	Length:0.70m Width: n/a Depth:>1.0m
104	Feature	Wooden post – decayed.	Length:0.60m Width: n/a Depth: n/a
105	Feature	Ceramic drain.	Length:>1.60m Width:0.45m Depth: n/a

**Trench 2**

- 2.8** Trench 2 was 4.60m in length, 1.60m in width, and reached a maximum depth of 1.20m. It was aligned northeast–southwest. The trench was located in the north-western quadrant of the site and was enclosed on three sides by the modern farm buildings (see fig 2).
- 2.9** This trench contained two drainage pipes, one along the trench length and the other across the width.
- 2.10** No archaeological features or deposits were observed within this trench.

*Trench data:*

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)
200	Layer	Concrete.	Length:4.60m Width:1.60m Depth:0.15m (max)
201	Layer	Aggregate.	Length:4.60m Width:1.60m Depth:0.20m (max)
202	Layer	Dark grey (2.5Y 4/1) silty clay. Possibly buried topsoil. Depth not clearly defined.	Length:4.60m Width: 1.60m Depth: n/a
203	Feature	Drainage pipe running laterally to the trench. Material including gravel & brick was used as fill.	Length:>4.60m Width: 0.25m Depth: n/a
204	Feature	Service pipe running roughly perpendicular to the trench. As with [203] material including gravel & brick was used as fill.	Length:>1.60m Width: 0.50m Depth: n/a

*Trench 3*

**2.11** Trench 3 was 20.20m in length, 1.60m in width, and reached a maximum depth of 0.82m. In some areas the trench was wider than 1.60m as the sections collapsed during the excavation of building debris including large concrete blocks. The trench was aligned northwest–southeast, was located in the south-western quadrant of the site, and was positioned on a grass bank (see fig 2).

**2.12** The stratigraphy in this trench was different from the other trenches because of the absence of concrete. Root disturbance was limited to the topsoil. Buried building debris at the northwest end caused the level of the ground to be raised creating an artificial bank.

**2.13** The trench contained a modern plastic land drain [302] and a large amount of redeposited building debris [303].

**2.14** No archaeological features or deposits were observed within this trench.



*Trench data:*

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)
300	Layer	Topsoil. Very dark brown (10YR 2/2) sandy silty clay. Loose with frequent roots	Length:20.20m Width:1.60m Depth:0.35m (max)
301	Layer	Subsoil. Brown (10YR 4/3) firm silty clay.	Length:10.30m Width:1.60m Depth:0.30m (max)
302	Feature	Land drain – located across the width of the trench.	Length:>1.60m Width: 1.0m Depth: n/a
303	Layer	Building debris eg concrete, brick & tile, probably deposited at the time the concrete yard was created.	Length:>10.20m Width: >1.60m Depth: 0.50m
304	Layer	Redeposited clay lens (2.5Y 5/4).	Length: >4.0m Width: >1.60m Depth: 0.50m (max)

*Trench 4*

**2.15** Trench 4 was 30.00m in length, 1.60m in width, and reached a maximum depth of 1.0m. The trench was aligned northeast–southwest, was located in the south-eastern quadrant of the site, and was positioned roughly in line with the existing silo bases (see fig 2).

**2.16** The trench contained a service trench [404] likely to be connected to a nearby septic tank.

**2.17** No archaeological features or deposits were observed within this trench.

*Trench data:*

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)
400	Layer	Concrete.	Length:30.00m Width:1.60m Depth:0.15m (max)
401	Layer	Aggregate- gravel.	Length:30.00m Width:1.60m Depth:0.25m (max)
402	Layer	Buried topsoil. Brown (2.5Y 4/2) silty clay.	Length:30.00m Width:1.60m Depth:0.20m (max)
403	Layer	Subsoil. Olive brown (2.5Y 4/3) Slightly silty clay.	Length:30.00m Width:1.60m Depth:0.25m (max)

404	Feature	Service trench.	Length:>1.60m Width: 0.45m Depth: n/a
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### Trench 5

**2.18** Trench 5 was 25.40m in length, 1.60m in width, and reached a maximum depth of 1.10m. The trench was aligned east–west and was located in the north-eastern quadrant of the site. (see fig 2). A section of the trench approximately 1.10m wide was left unexcavated due to the presence of an electric cable near the surface.

**2.19** The stratigraphy of the trench was not continuous throughout. At the eastern end there was a buried topsoil underneath the concrete and aggregate. At the western end, however, this topsoil was not present. It is likely that the topsoil had been cleared for the construction of the steel framed barn in this area.

**2.20** The trench contained a modern ceramic drainage pipe [503] and a narrow rubber water pipe [506]

**2.21** No archaeological features or deposits were observed within this trench.

### Trench data:

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)
500	Layer	Concrete	Length:25.40m+++ Width:1.60m Depth:0.25m (max)
501	Layer	Brick Rubble	Length:09.10m Width:1.60m Depth:0.20m (max)
502	Layer	Aggregate	Length:10.90m Width: 1.60m Depth:0.25m (max)
503	Feature	Ceramic drainage pipe	Length:>1.60m Width: 0.50m Depth: n/a
504	Layer	Buried topsoil. Brown (2.5Y 4/2) silty clay	Length:>16.45m Width: >1.60m Depth:0.30m (max)
505	Layer	Subsoil. Olive brown (2.5Y 4/3) Slightly silty clay	Length:>16.45m Width: >1.60m Depth:0.50m (max)
506	Feature	Rubber water pipe, similar in size to a hose pipe	Length: n/a Width: 0.10m Depth: n/a

*Concordance of finds*

**2.22** A total of two sherds of pottery, weighing in total 10g, were recovered unstratified from Trench 3. They are both small and abraded and appear to be late medieval or early post-medieval in date. An iron nail, weighing 25g was also recovered unstratified from Trench 3.

**2.23** No further work is proposed on these artefacts.

### **3. Discussion & Conclusion**

- 3.1** Five trenches were excavated in order to investigate the nature of any surviving archaeological remains on the site before development commences. None of the trenches in the study area revealed archaeological remains.
- 3.2** All five of the evaluation trenches contained drainage pipes of some type, and all were modern in date.
- 3.3** The presence of unstratified late medieval or early post-medieval pottery indicates that although no features were discovered in the evaluation trenches, there is likely to have been activity in the vicinity at this period.
- 3.4** It is likely that any archaeological potential for the site, as identified in the desk-based assessment (Ashworth 2004), lies beyond the limits of the study area.

#### *Conclusion*

- 3.5** The evaluation of the site has revealed no evidence of any archaeological activity. All features recorded were modern in date.
- 3.6** On this basis, it is considered unlikely that development of the site will encounter or disturb significant archaeological features or deposits of any period.

#### *Confidence Rating*

- 3.7** Although there was intermittent rain in the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. There were no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

## 4. Bibliography

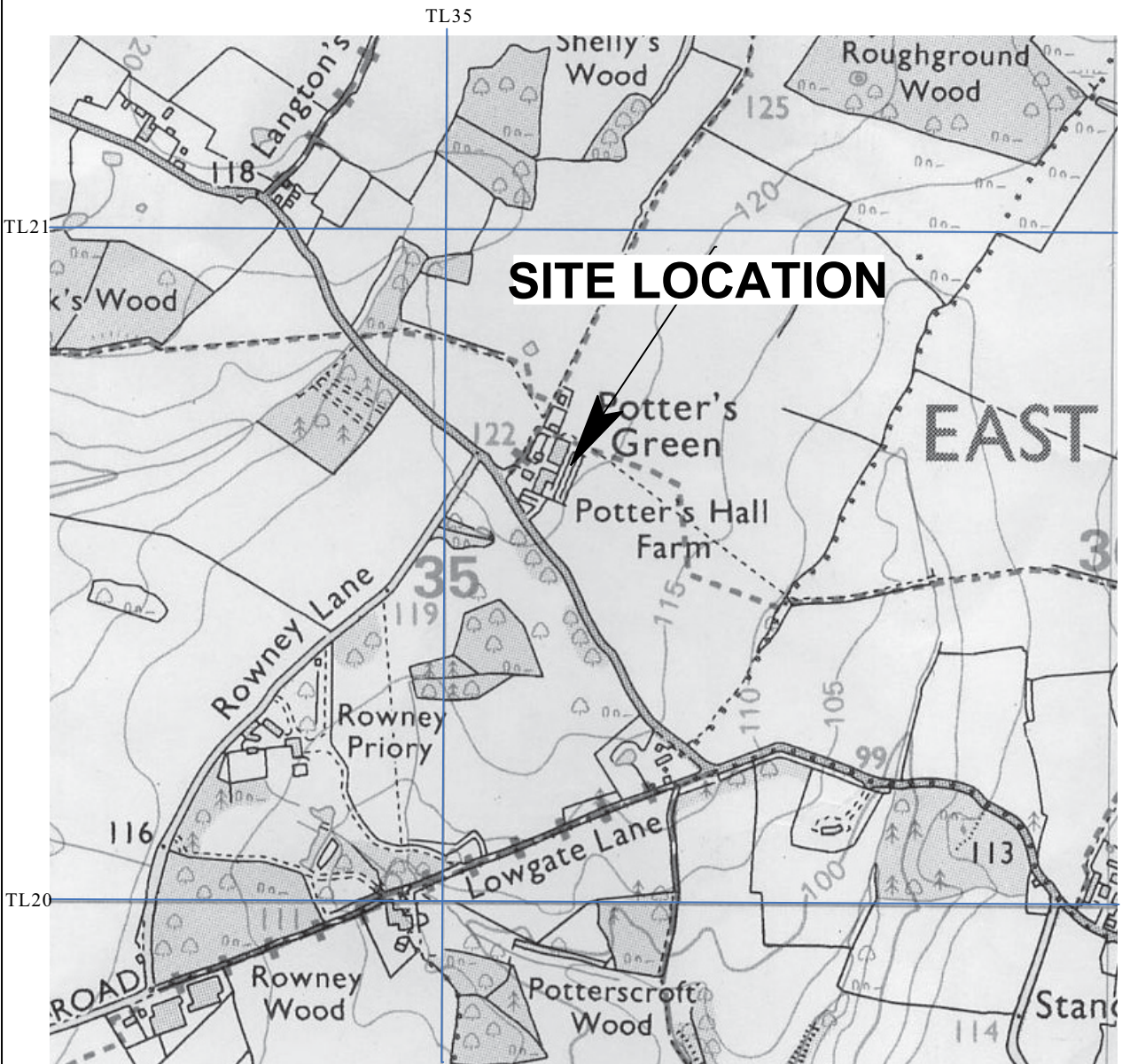
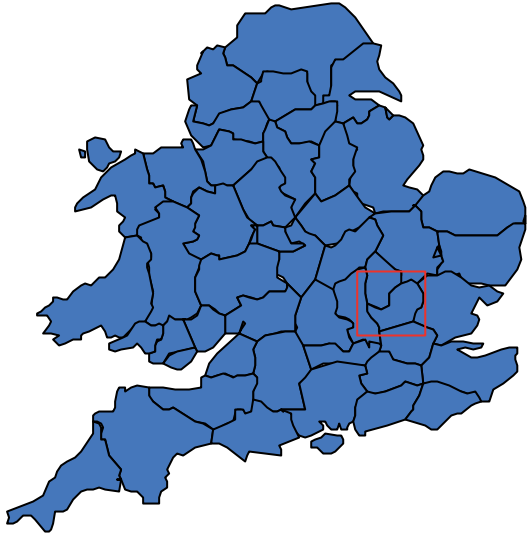
**Ashworth, H., 2004**, *Potter's Hall Farm. Desk-based Archaeological Assessment*. Heritage Network Report No. 258

**Hillelson, D., 2004**, *Potter's Hall Farm. Project Design: Archaeological Evaluation*, Heritage Network

**Soil Survey of England & Wales (SSEW), 1983**, *Sheet 4, Soils of Eastern England*. Southampton: Ordnance Survey

## 5. Illustrations

Figure 1 .....	Site location
Figure 2 .....	Trench location
Figure 3 .....	Trenches 1-3 plans and sections
Figure 4.....	Trenches 4 & 5 plans and sections

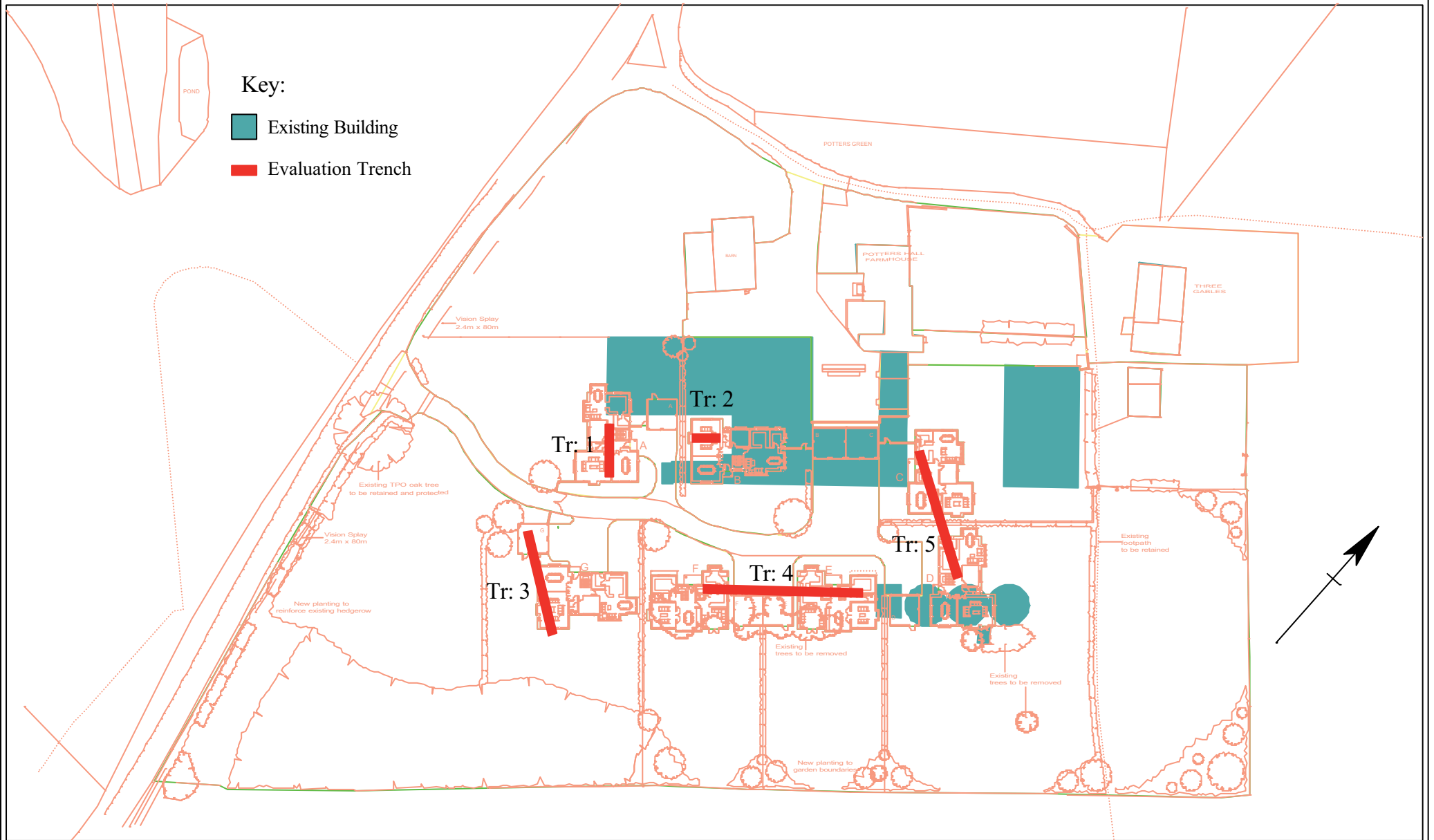


Site Location

Scale 1:2000

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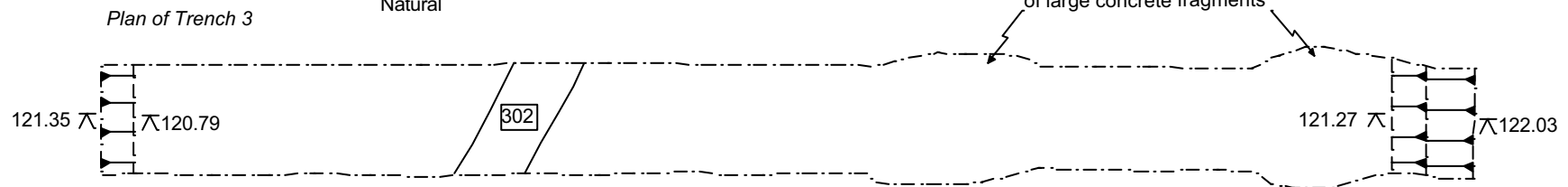
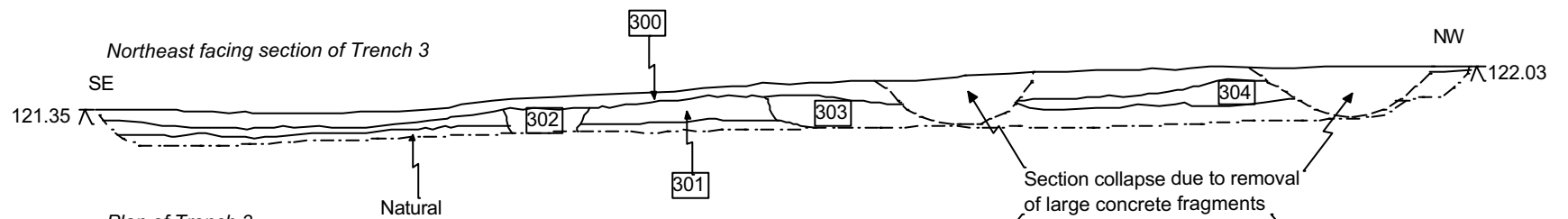
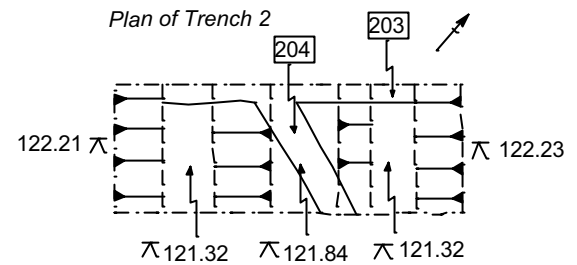
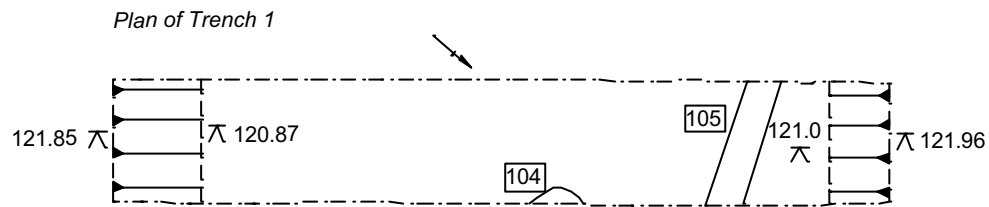
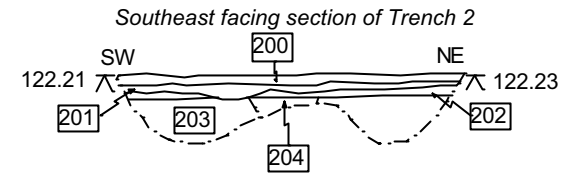
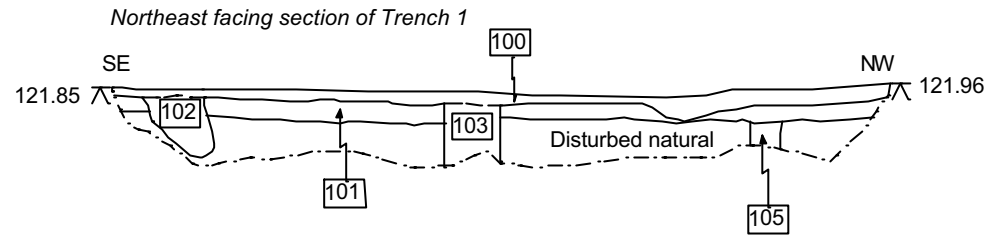
Figure 1



Trench Layout

Scale 1:1000

Figure 2

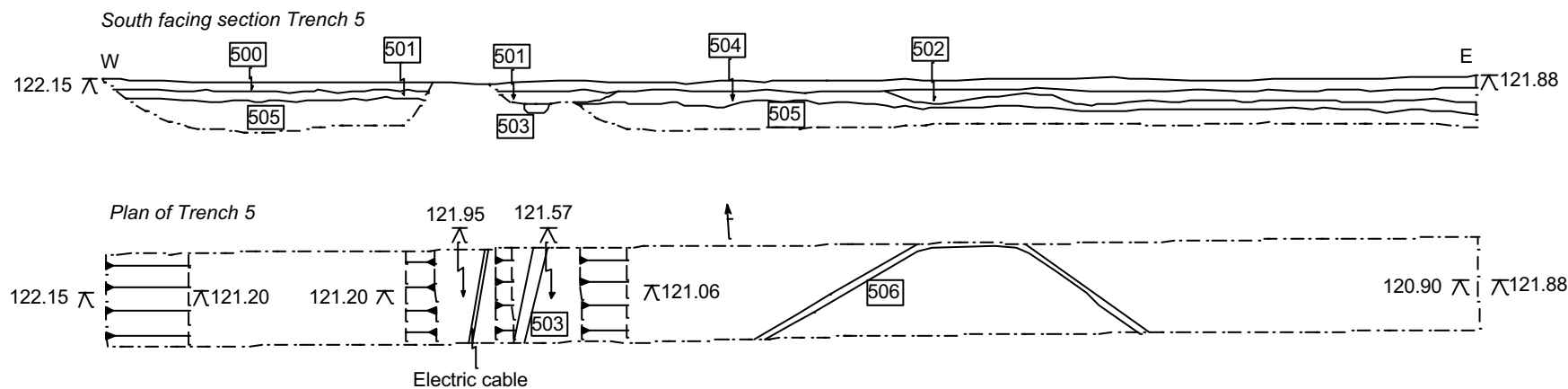
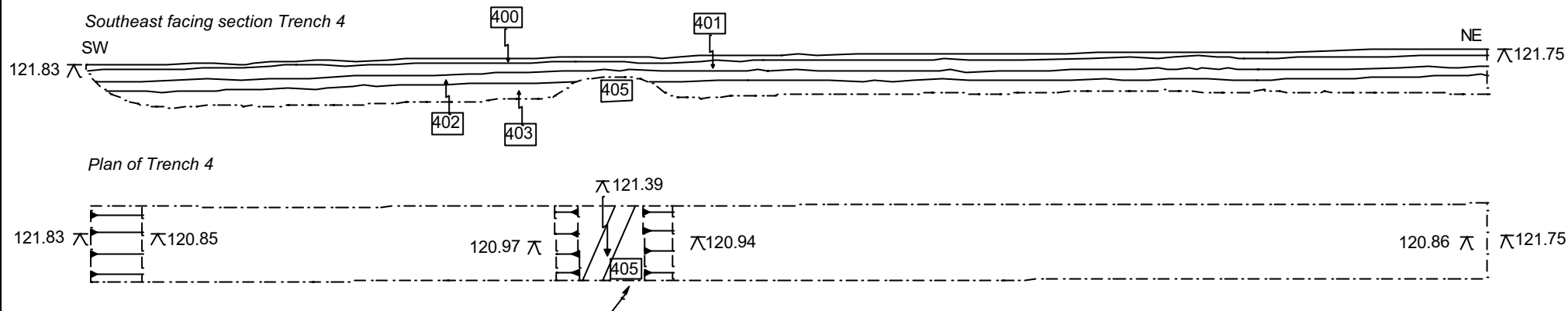


Trenches 1-3: plans and sections

Scale 1:100

Figure 3





Trenches 4 & 5: plans and sections

Scale 1:125

Figure 4