

HERITAGE NETWORK



**Land South-West of  
REED HALL  
Church Lane, Reed, Herts.**

*(HN617)*

*Archaeological Monitoring Report*



*THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD*

*Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation*

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

Land South-West of  
REED HALL  
Church Lane, Reed, Hertfordshire

HN617

*Archaeological Monitoring Report*

*Prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Chambers*

by

David Kaye, BA PIFA

Report no. 361

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*The cover illustration shows*

## Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Kaye. The report text and illustrations were prepared by David Kaye, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Mr and Mrs Robert Chambers; Charles Britton Equestrian Constuction; Debbie Priddy, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments; and Andy Instone and the staff of the County Archaeology Office, Hertfordshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

## Summary

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Reed Hall, Church Lane, Reed, Hertfordshire		
<b>County:</b>	Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b>	North Hertfordshire
<b>Village/town:</b>	Reed	<b>Parish:</b>	Reed
<b>Planning reference:</b>	1/06/0797	<b>NGR:</b>	TL 35986 35542
<b>Client name and address:</b>	Mr and Mrs Robert Chambers, Reed Hall, Reed, Hertfordshire		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	Riding arena	<b>Former land use:</b>	Pasture
<b>Site Status:</b>	AS71, Adjacent to SAM 11569	<b>Reason for investigation:</b>	Direction of local planning authority (PPG16)
<b>Position in planning process:</b>	After full determination (as a condition)	<b>Project brief originator:</b>	Local authority
<b>Size of affected area:</b>	c.902m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	c.902m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site Code:</b>	HN617	<b>Other reference:</b>	n/a
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Project type, methods etc...</b>	Monitoring	<b>Archive Recipient:</b>	North Herts Museum Service
<b>Start of work</b>	31/07/06	<b>Finish of work</b>	1/08/06
<b>Related SMR Nos:</b>	4026	<b>Periods represented:</b>	unknown
<b>Oasis UID:</b>	heritage1-17061	<b>Significant finds:</b>	None
<b>Monument types:</b>	Ditch & Gullies		
<b>Physical archive:</b>	Three sherds of Medieval pottery		
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	n/a		

**Synopsis:** In order to meet the requirements of an archaeological condition on the planning permission for building work at Reed Hall, Reed, Hertfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners, Mr and Mrs Chambers, to monitor the groundworks associated with the construction of a new riding arena.

Two site visits were made to monitor the topsoil strip and ground reduction. The groundworks were carried out with 360° tracked digger fitted with a 1.5m toothless bucket. The ground was levelled by reducing the eastern side of the site by approximately 0.75m and building up the western side by a similar amount.

Beneath 0.3m of very dark brown (10YR 2/2), silty clay topsoil, and 0.2m of dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2), silty clay subsoil, the natural geology consisted of a mixture of yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) gravel and clay.

A ditch [01] and two gullies [04] & [06] were revealed during the levelling of the site. Ditch [01] and gully [04] were orientated east-west and gully [06] was curvilinear. Ditch [01] may have defined an early boundary. The terminals of these features were all located in the area that was not reduced to the natural geology so their extent could not be accurately ascertained. Features [03], [08] & [09] all contained brick. [03] was probably the remnants of a garden feature or path. [08] & [09] were probably post holes from a disused fence line.

The only datable artefacts recovered were three sherds of unstratified Hertfordshire Greyware pottery dating to the 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century.

# 1. Introduction

**1.1** This report has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Robert Chambers, as part of a programme of archaeological monitoring of development works on land to the south west of Reed Hall, Church Lane, Reed, Herts.

**1.2** The investigation is a requirement of the planning consent for the development granted by North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) (ref. 1/06/0797), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The extent of the work has been defined a *Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* prepared by the Historic Environment Unit (HEU) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as archaeological advisers to the NHDC (ref. AI 17/07/2006).

**1.3** The site is located in the south of the historic core of Reed, approximately 250m to the south west of St Mary's Church, centred on NGR TL 35986 35542 (Figure 1). Currently the site is part of the gardens of Reed Hall. The development proposes the construction of a new rectangular riding arena 100m south west of Reed Hall itself (Figure 2).

**1.4** The development lies within Area of Archaeological Significance (AS71), as designated in the NHDC District Local Plan. This defines Reed as a medieval settlement with at least twelve Medieval moated sites in or close to the village, and notes that St Mary's Church dates to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Reed Hall is listed as being of architectural and historical importance. The proposed riding arena is situated immediately adjacent to the remains of a moated enclosure, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 11569).

**1.5** The aim of the present project has been to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which were uncovered; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements which would allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with current regional research agenda (Brown and Glazebrook, 2000).

**1.6** The present report describes the findings of the monitoring programme, and is intended, together with the deposition of the site archive with the North Herts Museum Service, to complete the requirements of the planning condition.

## 2. Fieldwork

### TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

**2.1** The site lies on pastureland 100m south west of Reed Hall. The ground level falls 1.5m from the east to the west over the development area. The geology consists of 0.30m of very dark brown (10YR 2/2) silty clay top soil, overlying 0.20m of dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) silty clay with flints. The natural geology is a mixture of yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) gravel and clay.

### METHODOLOGY

**2.2** The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's groundwork schedule. Two site visits were made to monitor the ground reduction and record the subsequently identified archaeology.

**2.3** The machining was undertaken using a tracked 360<sup>0</sup> excavator fitted with a 1.5m toothless bucket.

**2.4** Spoil from the ground reduction was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

**2.5** The project was carried out in accordance with the approved *Project Design*, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IFA and ALGAO guidance documents.

### MONITORING AND RECORDING

#### **Ground reduction**

**2.6** The uneven topography required ground reduction of 0.75m from the eastern side of the arena footprint, the spoil being used to level the western side.

**2.7** Approximately one third of the total area was reduced to the level of the natural geology. Within that area a ditch [01] and two gullies [04] and [06] were revealed. There were also the remains of a probable garden feature or path [03] and a disused fence line [08] and [09] (Figure 3).

**2.8** The ditch [01] measured 1.4m wide, 0.46m deep and was greater than 10.6m in length. It was clearly visible in the subsoil up to 3m beyond the reduced area on the eastern side, where the edge of the excavation had been battered. It was orientated NW-SE and may have been a boundary ditch.

**2.9** The fill [02] consisted of a firm, light olive brown (2.5Y 5/6), slightly silty clay with frequent sub-ovoid flints less than 50mm in length.

**2.10** The garden feature or path [03] consisted of approximately 12 whole or part bricks in an unbonded single layer which continued beyond the limits of the excavation, into the eastern baulk. The bricks appear to date from the post Medieval or Victorian period.

**2.11** Gully [04] was 0.6m wide, 0.14m deep and greater than 4.3m in length. Its fill consisted of a firm, light olive brown (2.5Y 5/4), slightly silty clay with occasional sub-ovoid flints less than 30mm in length.

**2.12** Gully [06] was a curvilinear feature 0.7m wide, 0.17m deep and greater than 3.5m in length. Its fill consisted of a firm, dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/6), slightly silty clay with flecks of ironstone and occasional sub-ovoid flints less than 30mm in length.

**2.13** Features [08] and [09] consisted of 2 clusters of 6-8 whole or part bricks. Some were of a relatively modern, frogged type. They were probably used as post packing for a disused fence line.

### *Drainage*

**2.14** The drainage for the arena consisted of three shallow French drains joining at the south west corner then draining into the open ditch to the west. They were of insufficient depth to impact on any potential archaeology.

### *Finds Concordance*

Context	Pottery		CBM		An bone		Comments
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
U/S	6	80	3	155	1	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	

**2.15** The finds recovered during the fieldwork were all unstratified within the overburden and abraded in nature. This indicates that the material was not in its place of primary deposition.

**2.16** Three abraded and undiagnostic bodysherds of Hertfordshire Greyware of 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century date are the earliest artefacts recovered during the present project. Although abraded and unstratified, the pottery is an indication of activity of this period in the vicinity of the site.

**2.17** Later activity on the site is indicated by the presence of one sherd of slip trailed ware of 17<sup>th</sup> century date, one sherd of Dutch Red ware of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century date, and a fragment of peg tile of probable 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century date.

### *Recommendations*

**2.18** Given the small size of the assemblage from the site, its abraded nature, and the fact that the material was unstratified and not in its primary place of deposition, no further work is proposed on this assemblage.

### 3. Discussion

**3.1** The development is situated immediately adjacent to the remains of a moated enclosure, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 11569), within Area of Archaeological Significance (AS71) as designated in the NHDC District Local Plan. This defines Reed as a medieval settlement with at least twelve Medieval moated sites in or close to the village, and notes that St Mary's Church dates to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Reed Hall is listed as being of architectural and historical importance.

**3.2** Approximately one third of the arena's footprint was reduced to the natural geology, revealing part of three linear features, the remnants of a garden feature or path and a disused fence line.

**3.3** Linear [01] is orientated NW-SE and is probably a boundary ditch though it is not aligned either parallel or perpendicular to any of the existing boundaries, ditches or moats. Its terminals were not exposed during the ground reduction so it is unclear whether it meets either of the open ditches to the east and west.

**3.4** The fill of this feature consisted of a firm, light olive brown, slightly silty clay with frequent sub-ovoid flints less than 50mm long. This type of fill is generally more consistent with backfilling rather than silting-up. However, as no dating evidence was recovered from the fill it is impossible to ascertain either the period of its construction or length of time it was open.

**3.5** Linears [04] and [06] appear to be gullies. Their exact function is unclear although it may be related to land management and drainage. The terminals were not exposed during the ground reduction so it is unclear whether [04] meets the open ditch to the east. The potential point of intersection between [04] and [06] remained unexposed so it is impossible to ascertain the stratigraphic relationship between the two features.

**3.6** No dating evidence was recovered from the fills of these features so it is impossible to assess either the period of their construction or length of time they were open.

**3.7** Later activity on the site is represented by the possible garden feature or path of late post Medieval or Victorian date [03], and modern post holes [08] and [09] which appear to form part of a disused fence line.

**3.8** Three sherds of 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century Herfordshire Greyware were recovered from unstratified contexts during the ground reduction. No artefacts were recovered from the spoil.

#### *Conclusion*

**3.9** The ground reduction for the construction of a riding arena at Reed Hall revealed three linear features which were undated but may be associated with the known medieval activity in the immediate vicinity of the study area.



**Confidence Rating**

**3.10** In the course of the fieldwork, weather and ground 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. Schedule of site visits**

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
31/7/06	DGK	10	Monitor topsoil strip
1/8/06	DGK	9	Monitor ground reduction & record archaeology

**5. Bibliography**

Turner, C, 2006 ‘Land to the South West of Reed Hall, Church Lane, Reed, Herts. *Project Design: Archaeological Monitoring*. Heritage Network.

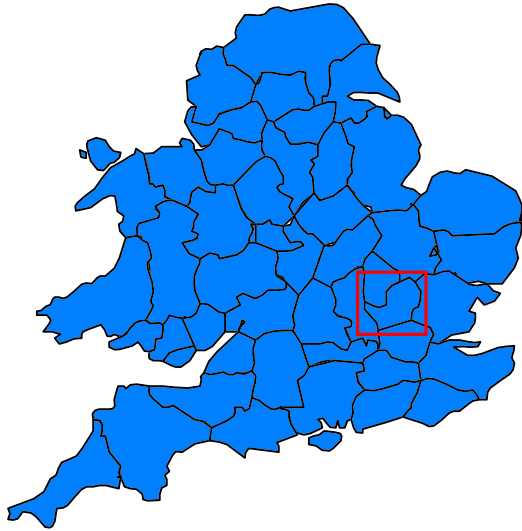
**6. Illustrations**

Figure 1 ..... Site location

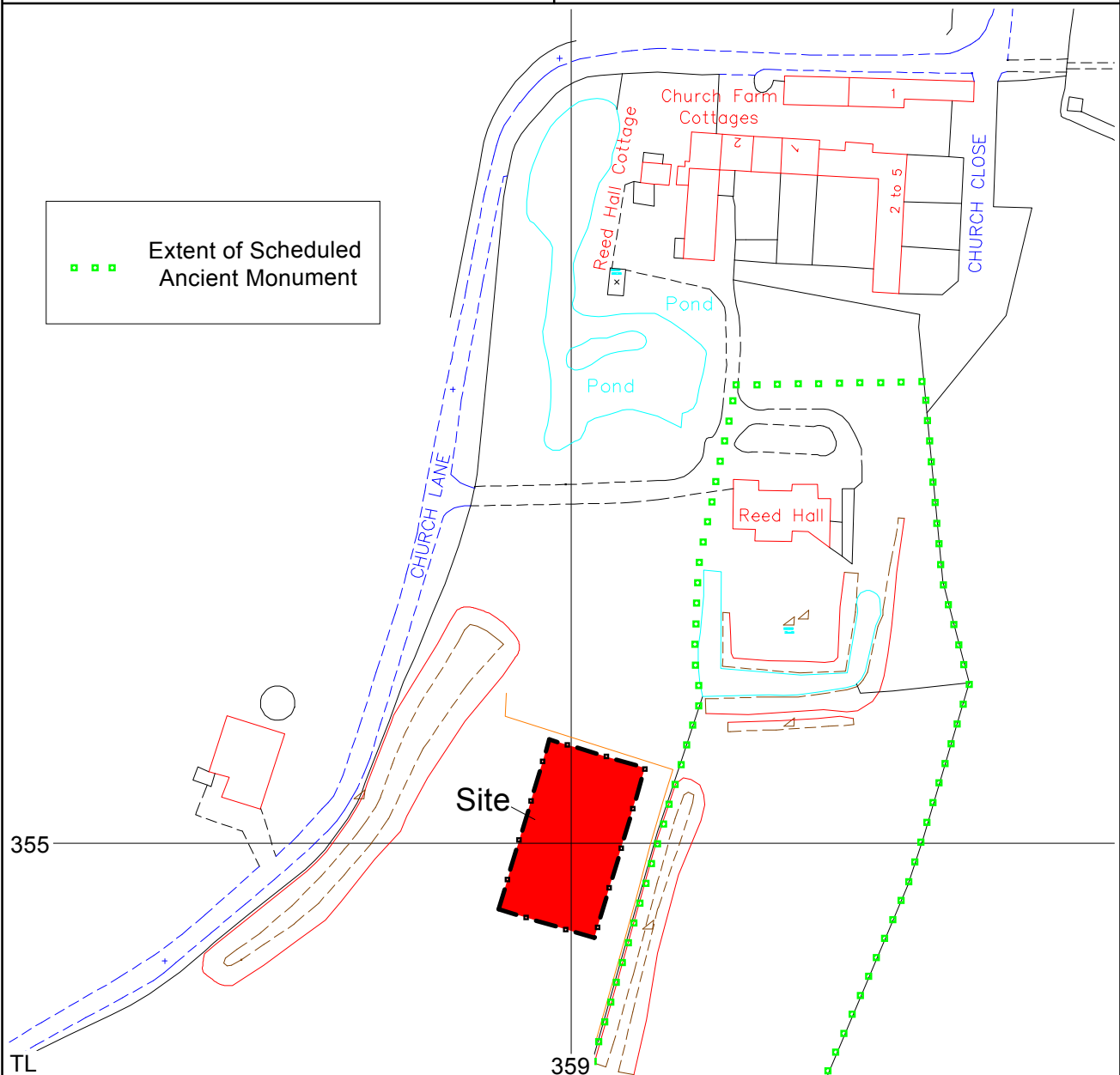
Figure 2 ..... Site layout

Figure 3 ..... Feature location

Figure 4 ..... Sections

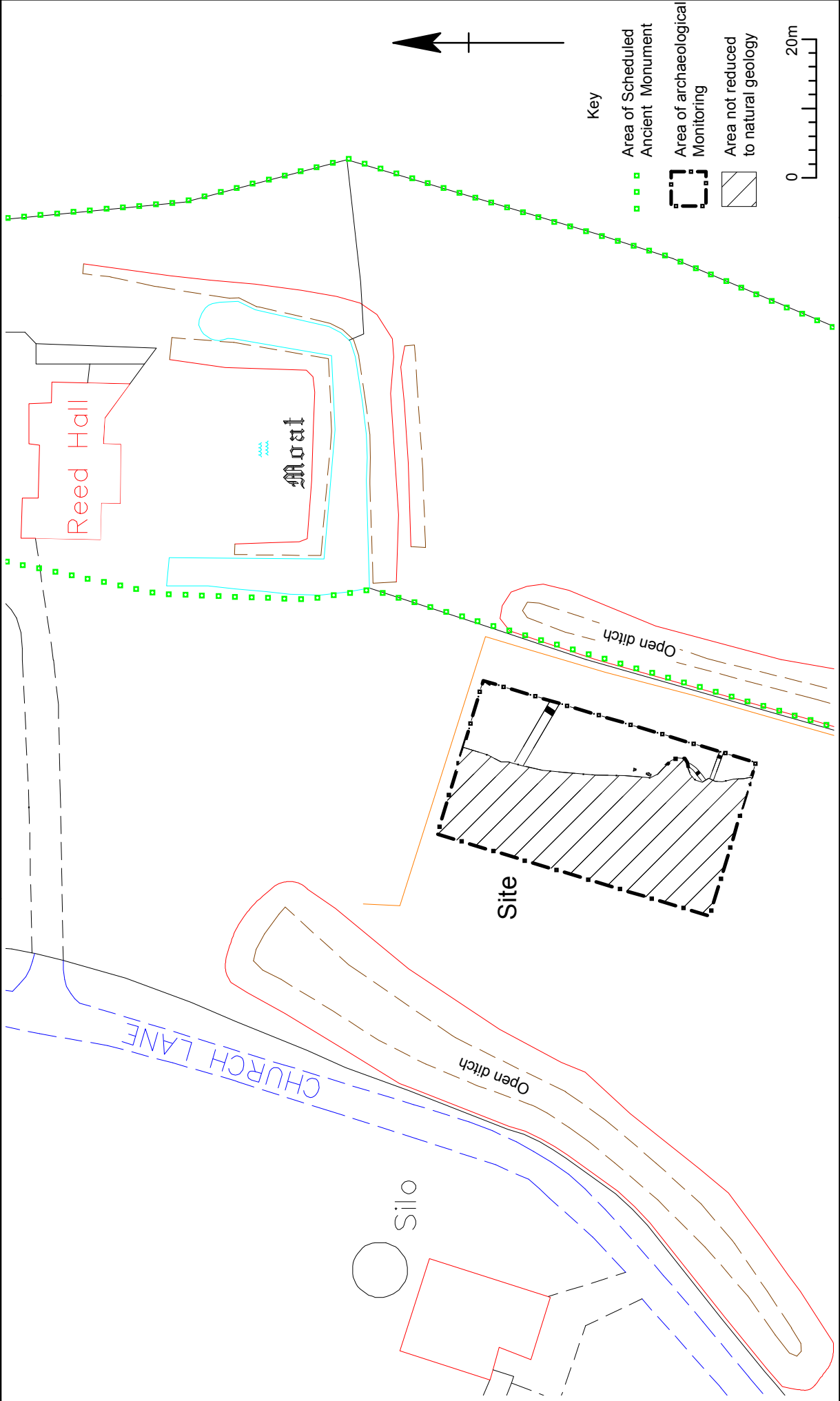


■ ■ ■ Extent of Scheduled Ancient Monument

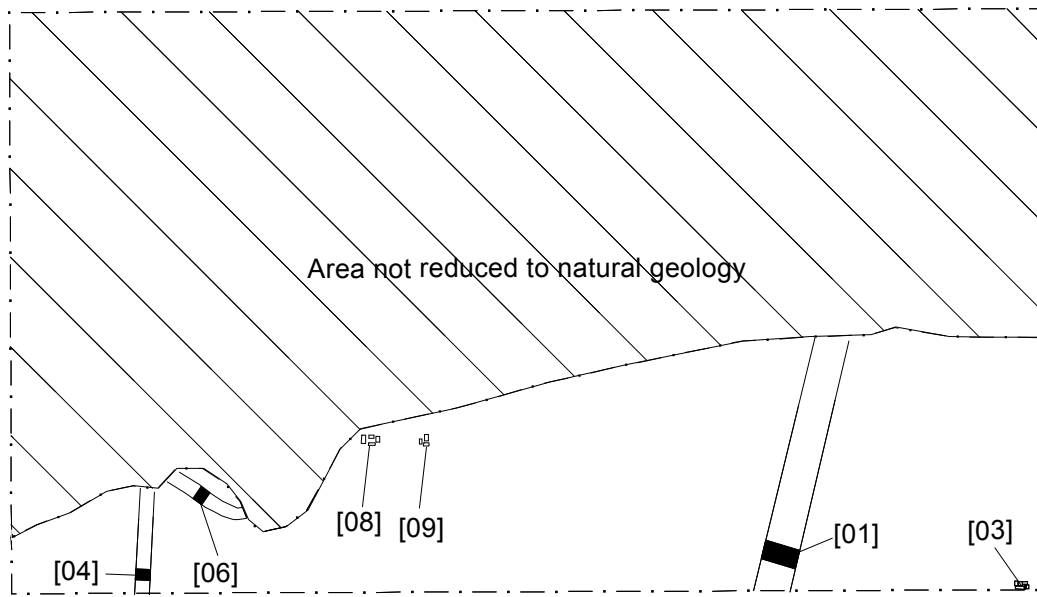


Site location

Scale 1:1500



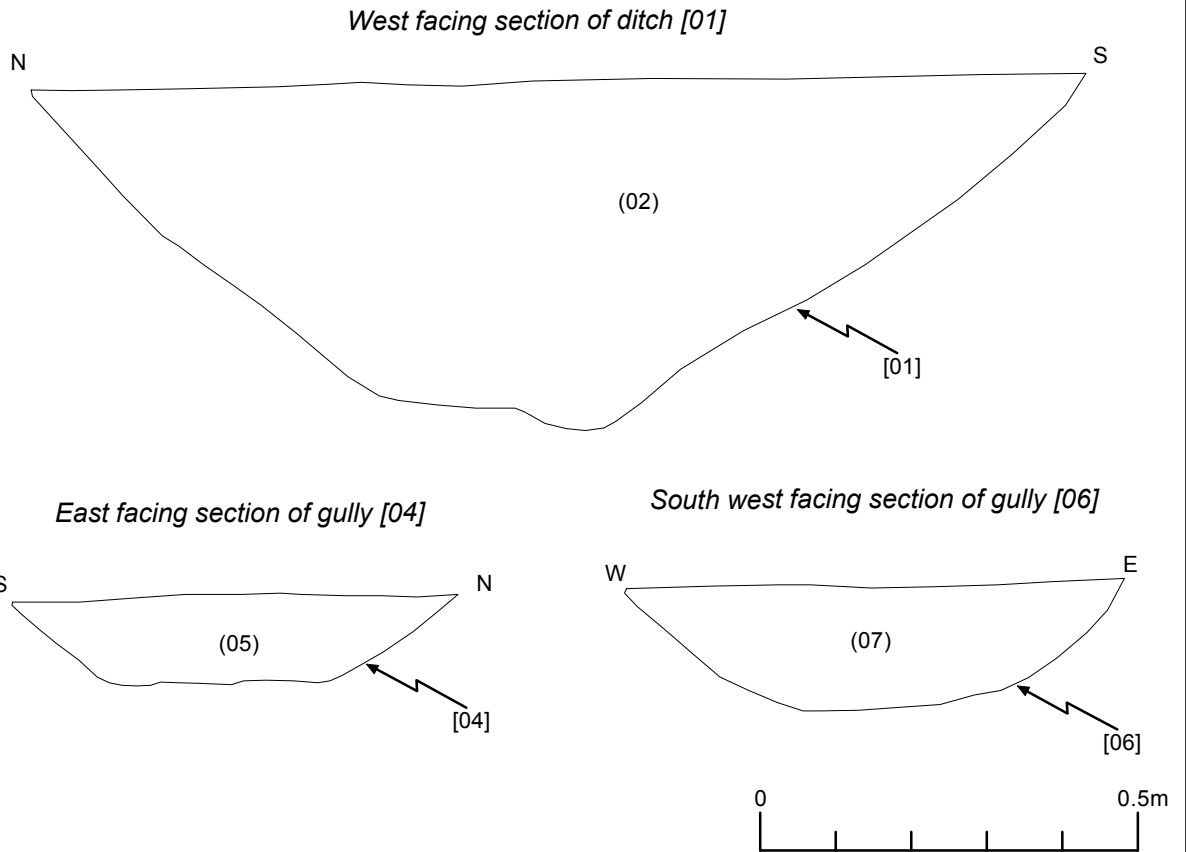
Site layout



Feature location

Scale 1:250

Figure 3



Sections

Scale 1:10

Figure 4