

HERITAGE NETWORK



CRANSTON COTTAGE **The Street, Furneux Pelham, Herts**

HN614

Archaeological Evaluation Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

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Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

CRANSTON COTTAGE The Street, Furneux Pelham, Hertfordshire

HN614

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Prepared on behalf of Mr & Mrs Matthew Free

by

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The cover photograph shows Cranston Cottage, looking north-west

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Chris Turner, Alison Hudson and Abigail Rothwell. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Abigail Rothwell, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Mr and Mrs Free; Chris Honey, Architect; R. A. Swann Plant Hire; and the staff of the County Archaeology Office, Hertfordshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Cranston Cottage, The Street, Furneux Pelham, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	East Hertfordshire
Village/town:	Furneux Pelham	Parish:	Furneux Pelham
Planning reference:	3/05/0032	NGR:	TL 43055 27940
Client name and address:	Mr and Mrs Free, Cranston Cottage, Furneux Pelham, Herts, SG9 0LD		
Nature of work:	Building Extension	Former land use:	Residential
Site status:	AAS 65	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Local authority
Size of affected area:	c.500m ²	Size of area investigated:	25m ²
Site Code:	HN 614	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Evaluation	Archive recipient:	Hertford Museum
Start of work	08/08/2006	Finish of work	10/08/2006
Related SMR Nos:	None	Periods represented:	Medieval, Post-medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-17290	Significant finds:	Pottery - medieval
Monument types:	Ditches – medieval, post-medieval; Posthole – post-medieval; Wall – post-medieval		
Physical archive:	Pottery, Animal Bone, CBM, Shell, Flint, Slag		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In order to determine the archaeological risk posed by a proposal for building works on land at Cranston Cottage, Furneux Pelham, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owner to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation. Two trenches were excavated, one located across the footprint of an extension to the rear of the cottage, the second on the line of a new access drive.

The present evaluation has demonstrated activity on the site from as early as the 9th century onward. The nature of the features and the finds recovered suggests that the activity is domestic in nature. Two ditches parallel with the road frontage were identified and both are likely to be medieval in origin. No archaeological features earlier than medieval in date were recorded, although a single unstratified sherd of Romano-British pottery was recovered.

On the basis that Trench 1 revealed only post-medieval features of low significance, no further archaeological intervention is likely to be required in this location. The ditches exposed in Trench 2 are of greater significance but will remain unaffected by the new driveway provided the impact level does not exceed 0.90m below existing.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Chris Honey, acting on behalf of Mr and Mrs Matthew Free, as a part of a programme of archaeological work associated with building works at Cranston Cottage, The Street, Furneux Pelham, Herts. The planning permission for the work (ref. 3/05/0032), granted by the East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), has been subject to a standard archaeological condition (Condition 3) in accordance with the provisions of the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16). The scope of the required work follows the *Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* prepared by the Historic Environment Unit (HEU) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as advisers to EHDC. A full specification for the work undertaken was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design* dated July 2006.

1.2 The site, centred on NGR TL 43055 27940, lies within the Area of Archaeological Significance no. 65, which defines the medieval core of Furneux Pelham in the District Local Plan. The village is mentioned in Domesday.

1.3 Cranston Cottage, which is located approximately 100m west of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, is made up of two thatched timber framed and plastered cottages dating to the 18th century or earlier. It is Grade II listed (IoE ref.160172). The development proposes the construction of an extension to the rear of the building and the realignment of the access drive. A proposed garage on a new footprint will not now be built.

1.4 The aim of the evaluation was to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any 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 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 study area consists of the garden surrounding Cranston Cottage, where the new extension and driveway are to be located. The ground slopes gradually towards the road to the south. The site lies at approximately 100mAOD.

2.2 Two trenches were excavated. Trench 1 measured 2x5m and was located to the west of the cottage in the footprint of the new extension. Trench 2 measured 2x7.7m and was located in the area of the new driveway. Both trenches aligned north-south.

2.3 The site lies on the junction of two geological areas, the Hanslope and Melford associations, both of which are primarily chalky till (SSEW 1983). This is characterised on the present site as a yellowish red (5YR 5/6) flinty clay. The topsoil is 0.40-0.50m in depth and consists of a dark grey (10YR 4/1) silt.

METHODOLOGY

2.4 All work was carried out in accordance with the approved *Project Design*, current health and safety legislation, and both IFA and ALGAO standards.

2.5 The trenches were triangulated from known points using fibreglass tape measures.

2.6 Two trenches were opened using a tracked mini-digger fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket, under close archaeological supervision (Figure 2).

2.7 Trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

2.8 All potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.9 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate proforma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:20 and 1:50.

RESULTS

Stratigraphy

2.10 The stratigraphy observed within Trench 1 consisted of 0.45m of dark grey (10YR 4/1) loose, silty topsoil containing modern pottery and ceramic building material. The topsoil overlaid 0.35m of brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) silty clay subsoil which contained ceramic building material and chalk fragments. The natural geology was a yellowish brown (5YR 5/6) clay with flints.

2.11 The stratigraphy identified in Trench 2 was broadly similar to Trench 1. The depth of the subsoil was slightly deeper at 0.40-0.50m.

Trench 1

Length (m):	5	Width (m):	2	Maximum Depth (m):	0.90	Orientation	N-S
Level at North End of Trench (mOD)		Top	97.60	Level at South End of Trench (mOD)		Top	97.40
		Base	96.72			Base	96.74
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Topsoil	dark grey (10YR 4/1) silt with charcoal flacks, CBM & flints	>5	>2	0.45		
-	Subsoil	brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) silty clay with CBM & chalk	>5	>2	0.35		
-	Natural	yellowish brown (5YR 5/6) clay with flints	>5	>2	-		
-	Brick Structure	within the topsoil	>1.50	0.30	0.20		
01	Posthole Cut	sub-circular with steep sides and a flat base	0.25	0.25	0.10		
02	Posthole Fill	greyish brown (10YR 5/2) silty clay with occasional small flints	0.25	0.25	0.10		

2.12 Trench 1 was located to the west of Cranston Cottage on ground raised above the level of the house, and was aligned north-south. The trench measured 5x2m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.90m. Some evidence of tree root activity was identified.

2.13 The trench revealed a single isolated sub-circular feature [01] cut through the natural geology. It was shallow with steep sides and a flat base and a depth of 0.10m. The single greyish brown silty fill yielded pottery, ceramic building material and slag. This material appears to be packing and suggests the feature is a posthole.

2.14 The remains of a brick structure was also identified at the northern end of the trench within the topsoil. The structure formed a right angle and was aligned east-west and north-south (Figure 3). The bricks used in construction measured 22.5x11x7cm ($8^{7/8} \times 4^{3/8} \times 2^{3/4}$ inches), were frogged, and bonded with cement mortar. This structure is known to represent the remains of a modern outhouse (M. Free, pers.comm.). Evidence of the structure's demolition, including tile and brick, were identified in the surrounding topsoil.

Trench 2

Length (m):	7.70	Width (m):	2	Maximum Depth (m):	0.90	Orientation	N-S		
Level at North End of Trench (mOD)			Top	96.28	Level at South End of Trench (mOD)			Top	96.04
			Base	95.47				Base	95.35
Context	Type	Description			Dimensions (m)				
					Length	Width	Depth		
-	Topsoil	dark grey (10YR 4/1) silt with charcoal flacks, CBM & flints			>5	>2	0.45		
-	Subsoil	brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) silty clay with CBM & chalk			>5	>2	0.45		
-	Natural	yellowish brown (5YR 5/6) clay with flints			>5	>2	-		
20	Ditch Cut	linear feature with concave sides and base, orientated east -west			>2	0.65	0.20		
21	Ditch Fill	dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) friable silty clay with occasional flints			>2	0.65	0.20		
22	Ditch Cut	linear feature with steep sides on the southern side and stepped sides on the northern side, with a concave base, orientated east-west			>2	1.90	0.35		
23	Ditch Fill	dark yellowish brown (10YR4/4) compact silty clay with occasional flints and roots			>2	1.90	0.35		

2.15 Trench 2 was located at the eastern side of the site and was aligned north-south. The trench measured 7.70x2m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.90m.

2.16 The trench revealed two parallel ditches running east-west. Ditch [20] was both narrower and shallower than ditch [22] 0.70m to the south. Both ditches extend beyond the limits of the current trench (Figure 3, Plate 2).

2.17 Linear feature [20] was cut through the natural geology. It was a relatively shallow feature with a depth of 0.20m. The feature had concave sides and base. The single dark yellowish brown silty clay fill [21] yielded pottery and ceramic building material.

2.18 Linear feature [22] was also cut through the natural geology. It was a deeper feature with a depth of 0.35m. The feature had steep sides on the southern side and was stepped on the northern side. The base was concave. The single dark yellowish brown silty clay fill [23] yielded pottery and ceramic building material.

FINDS ASSESSMENT

Context	Pottery		Animal bone		CBM		Shell		Glass		Flint		Slag	
	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.
Tr 1 u/s	5	60	1	<5					1	110	1	<5		
Tr 2 u/s	4	40	3	40	3	85	1	25						
02	2	15			5	125							2	75
21	1	5			1	260								
23	15	115	3	40										
Total	25	235	7	80	9	236	1	25	1	110	1	<5	2	75

Pottery

2.19 A total of 25 pottery sherds, weighting 235g, were recovered from three stratified and two unstratified contexts during the present investigation. The pottery ranged in date from Roman to post-medieval. In general the assemblage consisted of small abraded sherds. The sherds appear to suggest local domestic activity.

2.20 Posthole [01] yielded 2 sherds of pottery, weighing 15g, both were post-medieval in date and one sherd was identified as Dutch Red ware.

2.21 A single sherd of late medieval - early post-medieval pottery was recovered from linear feature [20].

2.22 The fill of ditch [22] yielded the most pottery fragments, 15 in total. The fragments represent a 9th-13th century assemblage including Hertfordshire grey ware. A couple of the fragments appear to be post-medieval in date but it is possible that these are intrusive.

2.23 The unstratified pottery from the site consisted primarily of post-medieval sherds including 18th century black glazed ware and stoneware. A single abraded sherd of Romano-British pottery was identified in Trench 2.

Recommendations

2.24 Due to the small and abraded nature of this assemblage no further work is proposed at this stage. It is recommended that this assemblage should be included for analysis with that from any further stage of work on the site, if appropriate.

Animal Bone

2.25 A total of 7 animal bone fragments, weighing 80g, were recovered from one stratified and two unstratified contexts. The assemblage consisted of small undiagnostic fragments. Some gnaw marks were identified on the bones but no butchery was observed, this could be due to the poor condition of the remains. Most of the fragments appear to come from medium sized mammals such as sheep/goat or pig, and a cattle tooth was also identified.

Recommendations

2.26 The fragmentary nature and small size of the assemblage means that further analysis is unlikely to yield significant additional information.

Ceramic Building Material

2.27 Nine pieces of CBM, weighing a total of 236g, were recovered from two stratified and one unstratified context during the present investigation. All the fragments are post-medieval in date with the exception of the fragment from [21], which appears to be a late medieval-early post-medieval floor tile. The tile is decorated with incised lines.

Recommendations

2.28 The fragmentary nature and small size of the assemblage means that further analysis is unlikely to yield significant additional information.

Shell

2.29 A single fragment of oyster shell, weighing 25g, was recovered unstratified from Trench 2.

Recommendations

2.30 Due to the unstratified nature of this assemblage no further work is proposed.

Glass

2.31 A single piece of glass, weighing 100g, was recovered unstratified from Trench 1. The glass is in the form of an incomplete round bottomed bottle. The words STREET and C^o can be identified on the bottle. It is possible that this bottle originates from the brewery at near by Barleycroft End, which was located on The Street. It was founded in 1860 and remained in use until 1997 (Whitaker 2006).

Recommendations

2.32 Due to the small size and fragmentary nature of this assemblage no further work is proposed.

Flint

2.33 A single piece of worked flint was recovered unstratified from trench 1. It measures 30x15x4mm and is a retouched flake.

Recommendations

2.34 Due to its unstratified nature no further work is proposed on this item.

Slag

2.35 Two fragments of iron slag, weighing 75g, were recovered from posthole [01]. The presence of slag is not necessarily an indication of metal working in the vicinity. It appears that the fragments were used as posthole packing.

Recommendations

2.36 Due to the small size of this assemblage no further work is proposed on these items.

3. Discussion

3.1 The present site is located within Area of Archaeological Significance no.65 which defines the medieval core of Furneux Pelham. Cranston Cottage, which is located approximately 100m west of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, is made up of two thatched timber framed and plastered cottages dating to the 18th century or earlier. It is Grade II listed (IoE ref.160172). Two trial trenches were located across the site to investigate the potential survival of archaeological remains.

3.2 Trench 1, to the west of the house, contained the remains of a modern outhouse within the topsoil, approximately 0.50m above the natural geology. Posthole [01] was also probably post-medieval in date, but no other surrounding features were identified which may have given an indication of its purpose.

3.3 The recorded archaeology within Trench 2 consisted of two parallel ditches running parallel with the road frontage. These may represent earlier plot boundaries.

3.4 The decorated floor tile and pottery in ditch [20] indicates that the ditch is late medieval to early post-medieval in date. The sherds of pottery recorded from ditch [22] give a date of 9th-13th century. This would suggest that ditch [22] was the earlier of the two ditches and that it is likely to pre-date the construction of Cranston Cottage.

3.5 The fact that the ditches in Trench 2 are so close to each other and parallel indicates that although they may not have necessarily been contemporary they follow an established alignment.

3.6 The unstratified nature of the Romano-British pottery means activity at this point in the immediate vicinity can not be confirmed but suggests activity in the local area.

Conclusion

3.7 The present evaluation has demonstrated activity on the site from as early as the 9th century onward. The nature of the features and the finds recovered suggests the activity is domestic in nature. Two ditches parallel with the road frontage were identified. Their medieval date adds to the understanding of the structure of the village in this period. No archaeological features earlier than medieval in date were recorded, although a single unstratified sherd of Romano-British pottery was recovered.

3.8 The risk that development would affect archaeological remains of any significance should be considered to be low. The footprint of the building extension was largely covered by Trench 1 and any archaeological remains in the area of the new driveway would not be affected unless the impact level exceeded 0.90m.

Confidence Rating

3.9 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. Bibliography

Hillelson, D, 2006., Cranston Cottage, The Street, Furneux Pelham, Herts. Project Design: Archaeological Evaluation. Heritage Network.

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983.

Whitaker, A, 2006., Brewers in Hertfordshire, A Historical Gazetteer, Hertfordshire Publications, Hatfield

5. Illustrations

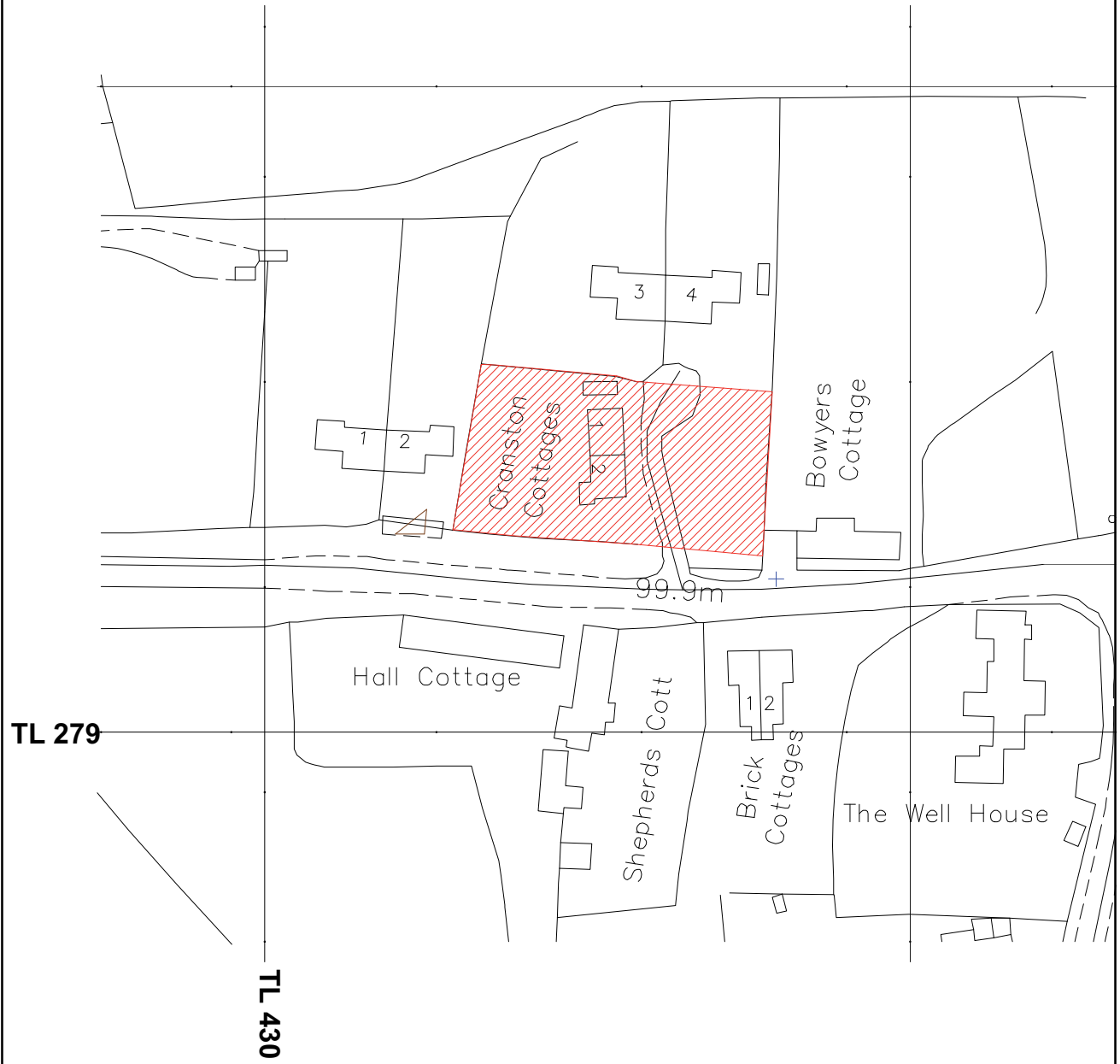
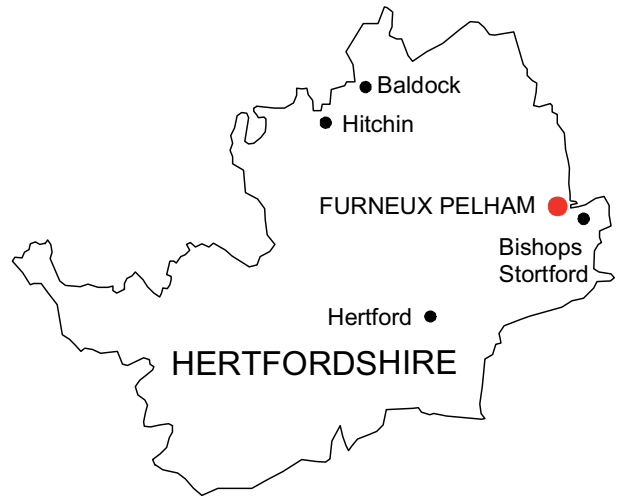
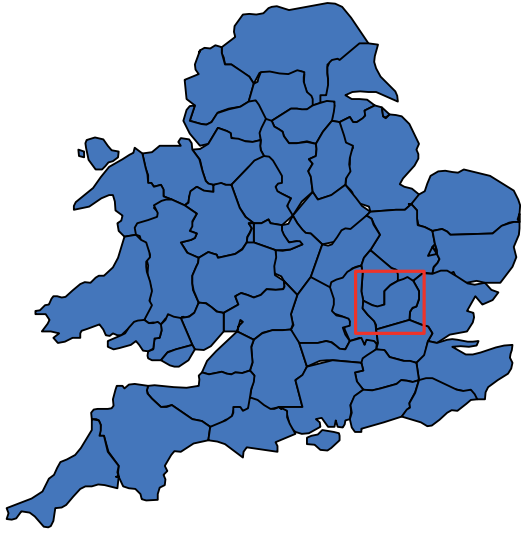
Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Site layout, existing and proposed

Figure 3 Trench plans and sections

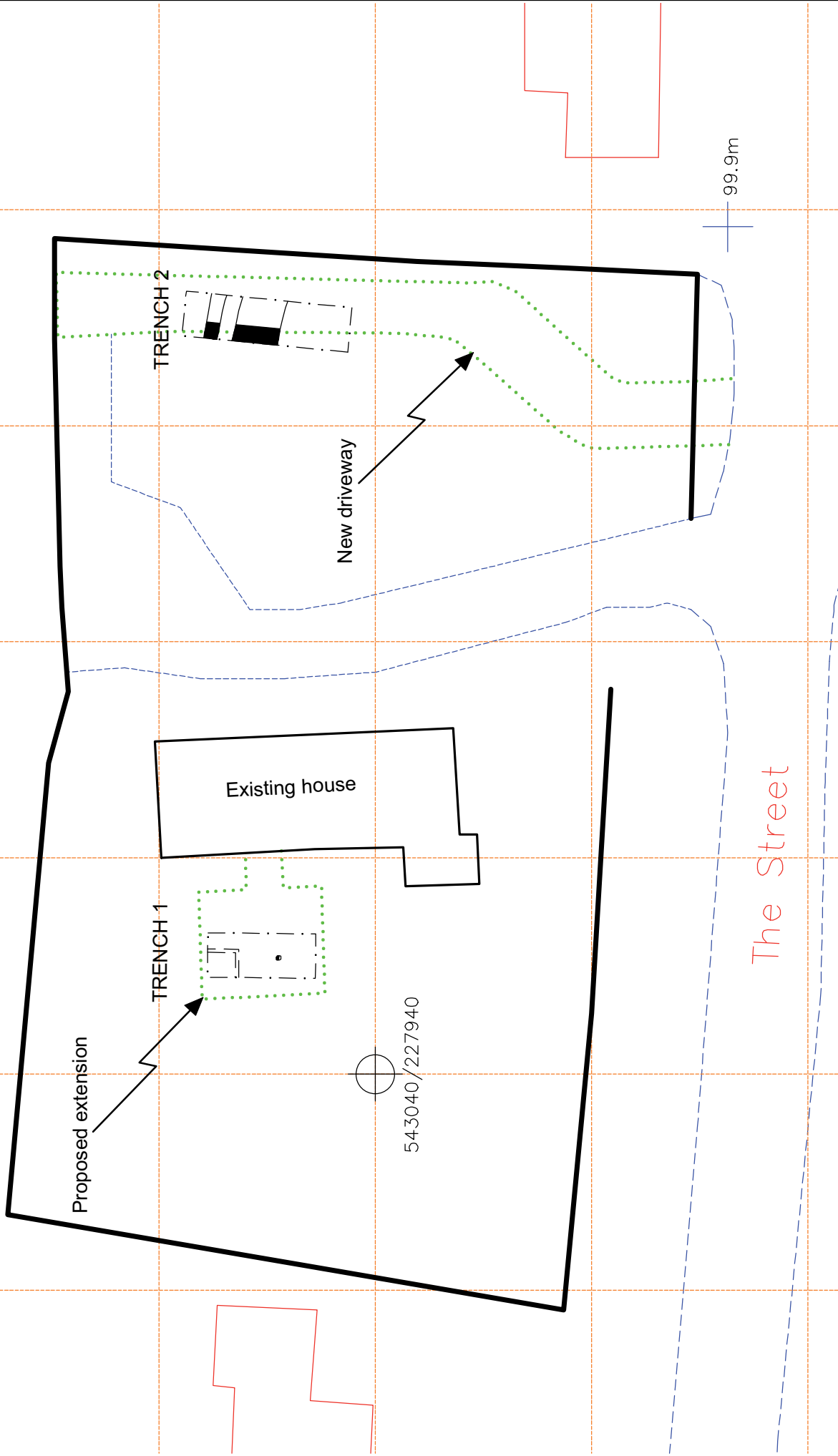
Plate 1 Trench 1, looking north

Plate 2 Trench 2, looking north



Site Location

Scale 1:1000



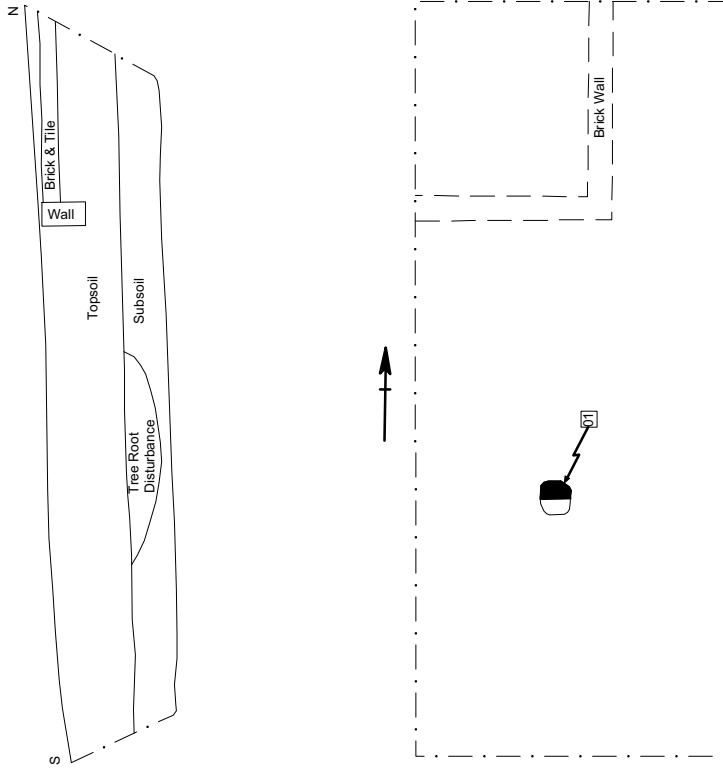
Site Layout and Trench Location

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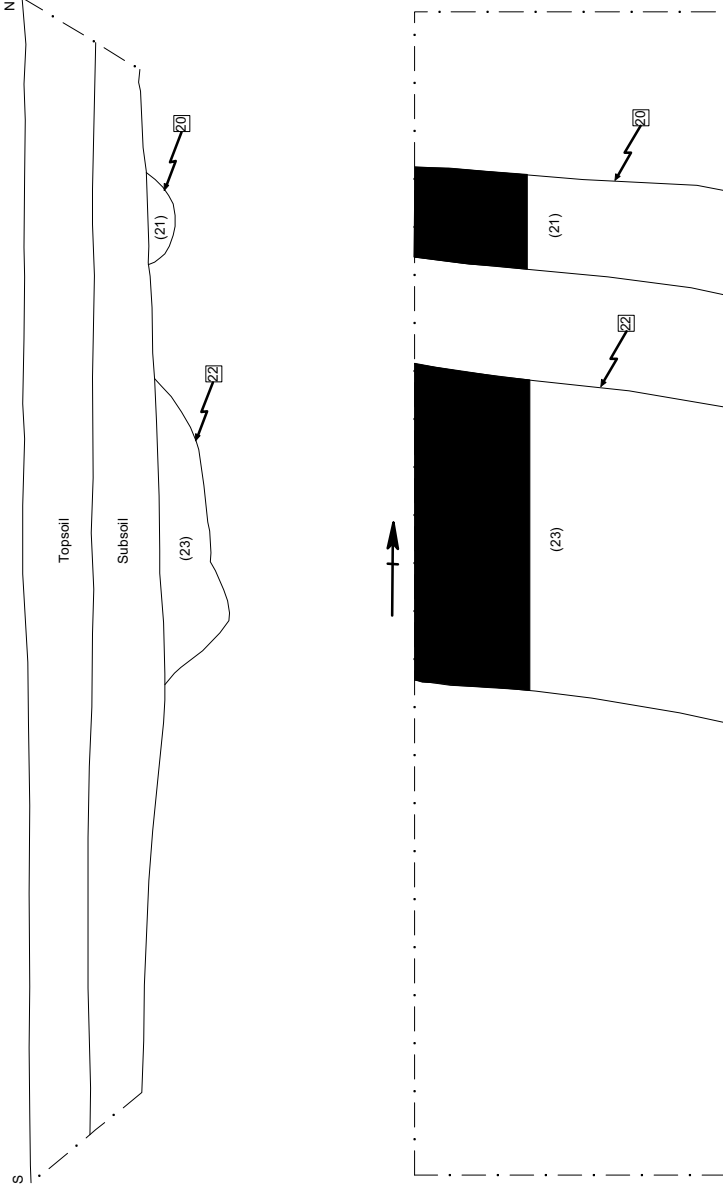
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Figure 2

Trench 1



Trench 2



0m 2m

Trench plans and sections



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north

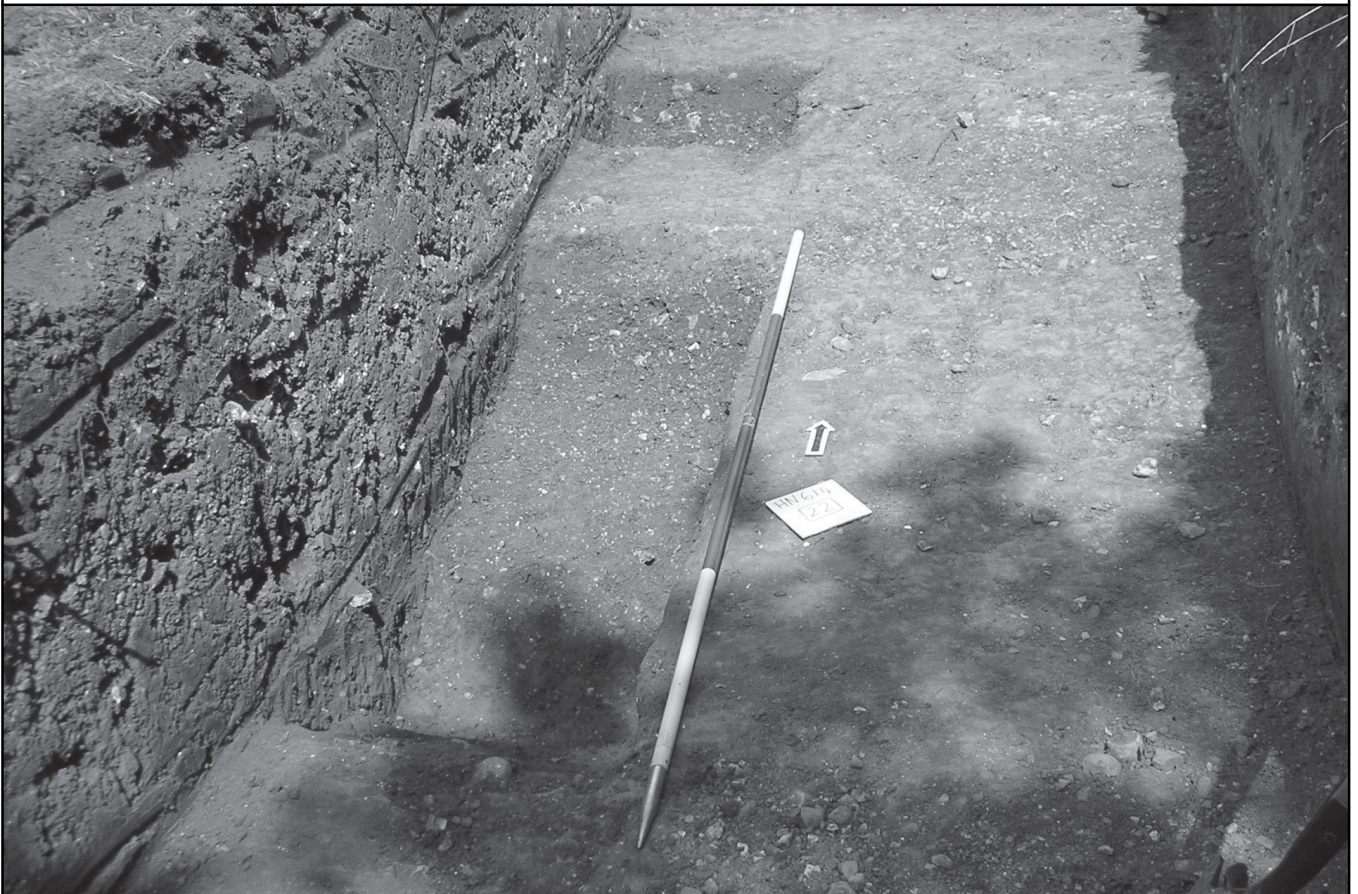


Plate 2: Trench 2, looking north