

HERITAGE NETWORK



LAND AT CHIVERS WAY Histon, Cambridgeshire

HN609

Archaeological Evaluation Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

LAND AT CHIVERS WAY
Histon, Cambridgeshire

HN609

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Prepared on behalf of Carebase Ltd

by

Abigail Rothwell, BSc (HONS) PIFA

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The cover photograph shows the machining of Trench 2, looking south east

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Geoff Saunders 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 Carebase Ltd; John Stockill, DWA Architects Ltd; Newmarket Plant Hire and the staff of the County Archaeology Office, Cambridgeshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Land at Chivers Way, Histon, Cambridgeshire		
County:	Cambridgeshire	District:	South Cambridgeshire
Village/town:	Histon	Parish:	Histon
Planning reference:	S/0116/06/F	NGR:	TL 4387 6294
Client name and address:	Carebase Ltd c/o DWA Architects Ltd, 39 Blossom Street, York, YO24 1AQ		
Nature of work:	Care home construction	Former land use:	Factory
Site Status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPG16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination (as a condition)	Project brief originator:	Local authority
Size of affected area:	c.3209m ²	Size of area investigated:	82.5m ²
Site Code:	HN609	Other reference:	ECB2356
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc...	Evaluation	Archive Recipient:	Cambridgeshire CC Heritage Services
Start of work	16/08/2006	Finish of work	17/08/2006
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Modern
Oasis UID:	heritage1-17467	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis: In order to meet the requirements of an archaeological condition on the planning permission for building work at Chivers Way, Histon, Cambs., the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developers to carry out an archaeological evaluation.

Two trenches were excavated perpendicular to each other within the footprint of the proposed building. The natural geology was reached at a depth of between 0.65m and 1m. Across the site the stratigraphy consisted of layers of construction debris cut by modern services. The natural geology consisted of yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) sand with lenses of gravel.

It is likely that the ground had been reduced to the natural geology before the construction of the factory buildings which previously occupied the site. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on the instruction of *DWA Architects Ltd*, acting on behalf of *Carebase Ltd*, as part of the archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site located on land at Chivers Way, Histon, Cambridgeshire.

1.2 The investigation has been a requirement of the planning consent for the development (ref. S/0116/06/F), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The work was defined in a *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* prepared by the *Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice* (CAPCA) section of Cambridgeshire County Council (ref. KG 08/06/2006), acting as archaeological advisers to the local planning authority, South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC). A full specification for the work undertaken is contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design* dated July 2006.

1.3 The study area is in the south west of the village of Histon, centred at NGR TL 4387 6294. The site is located within the former grounds of the Chivers Factory. It lies on the northern side of Chivers Way which was formerly occupied by factory buildings. Demolition of these buildings has already taken place. The development proposes the construction of a new care home with associated car parking and landscaping on the footprint of the previous factory building (Figure 2).

1.4 Rectangular cropmarks (MCB6308 and 10735), believed to be Romano-British enclosures, are located within 1km to the west of the site. Stray finds (MCB 12121), also to the west, suggest Romano-British activity closer to the site.

1.5 The aim of the evaluation has been 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.

1.6 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 waste ground formerly occupied by factory buildings. The site lies at approximately 12mAOD.

2.2 In consultation with the client it was determined that the associated car parking and landscaping would not breach the overburden, therefore no trenches were located outside the building footprint. Two trenches were excavated perpendicular to each other within the footprint of the proposed building. Trench 1 measured 20 x 1.5m, and was orientated NE-SW. Trench 2 measured 35 x 1.5m, and was orientated NW-SE. The excavation was carried out with a JCB fitted with a 1.5m toothless bucket. The natural geology was reached at a depth of between 0.65m and 1m.

2.3 The natural geology of the area is recorded as river terrace and chalky drift of the Milton association (SSEW 1983) overlying Third Terrace River Gravels and Gault Clay. This is characterised on the present site as a yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) sand with lenses of gravel.

METHODOLOGY

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

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

Two trenches were opened using a JCB fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket, under close archaeological supervision (Figures 2 and 3).

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

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

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**

2.4 The stratigraphy observed within the trenches consisted of between 0.40m and 1m of construction debris, including large fragments of concrete, which sealed occasional lenses of heavily disturbed and stained dark grey (10YR 4/1) subsoil overlying the natural geology and also containing fragments of concrete and other building material. Some modern services were cut through the construction layers.

Trench 1

Length (m):	20	Width (m):	1.5	Maximum Depth (m):	1	Orientation	NE-SW
Level at North East End of Trench (mOD)		Top	11.19	Level at South West End of Trench (mOD)		Top	11.59
		Base	10.54			Base	10.79
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Construction Debris	Modern concrete & brick, some in isolated features	>20	>1.5	0.40		
-	Subsoil	Dark grey (10YR 4/1) silt with large amounts of construction debris. Top layer of subsoil discoloured to olive brown (10YR 5/8) by leaching.	>20	>1.5	0.40		
-	Modern Drain	Drain cut filled with pea shingle, can also be seen in Trench 2	>1.7	1.0	0.40		
-	Concrete Post Setting	Large concrete post setting orientated NW-SE removed during excavation	>1.5	1.5	0.50		

Trench 1 was aligned northeast-southwest. The trench measured 20 x 1.5m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m. The trench contained no archaeological features. A modern drain laid in a pea shingle fill, which continued into Trench 2, and a large concrete post setting were identified (Figure 4).

Trench 2

Length (m):	35	Width (m):	1.5	Maximum Depth (m):	1.6	Orientation	NW-SE
Level at North West End of Trench (mOD)		Top	11.34	Level at South East End of Trench (mOD)		Top	11.44
		Base	10.34			Base	9.69
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
-	Construction Debris	Modern concrete & brick, some in isolated features	>20	>1.5	1.0		
-	Subsoil	Dark grey (10YR 4/1) silt with large amounts of construction debris.	>20	>1.5	0.40		
-	Modern Drain	Drain cut filled with pea shingle, can also be seen in Trench 1	>1.7	1.0	0.40		
-	Service Pipe	Ceramic service pipe	>1.7	0.40	0.40		
-	Tree Root	Decaying tree root	1.0	0.20	0.20		

Trench 2 was aligned northwest-southeast. The trench measured 35 x 1.5m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.6m. The trench contained no archaeological features. A

modern drain laid in a pea shingle fill, also seen in Trench 1, a service pipe, and an area of decaying tree root were identified (Figure 4).

A sondage was excavated at the northwest end of Trench 2 to confirm that a gravel outcrop noted in this area was of natural origin.

FINDS ASSESSMENT

The spoil from the excavation was inspected and artefacts including modern brick, concrete, and glass were observed across the extent of the site. Such artefacts were not considered to be of archaeological significance and were not collected.

3. Discussion

3.1 The present evaluation was prompted by the presence of cropmarks and stray finds which are indicative of Roman activity in the area.

3.2 The excavation of two trial trenches across the footprint of the proposed new building demonstrated the presence of a considerable depth of modern construction debris, including large concrete fragments, which sealed occasional lenses of relict subsoil which were heavily disturbed. No cut features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified.

3.3 A study of historic maps for the site shows that the area started to be developed in the first quarter of the 20th century (OS 1927). Prior to that the site lay, for the most part, in enclosed fields to the south of the village which were already established by 1801 (www.british-history.ac.uk).

Conclusion

The identified stratigraphy on the present site suggests that the site was largely stripped of topsoil and subsoil prior to the construction of the factory buildings that previously occupied it. Material was then imported to raise the level of the site, presumably because of the proximity of the adjacent brook (recorded as a *public drain* on the 1st edition OS), and the risk of flooding.

No archaeological remains were recorded in the trenches, either stratified or unstratified. On this basis, the risk that development of the site might affect archaeological remains of any significance should be considered to be *Low*.

Confidence Rating

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

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5. Illustrations

Figure 1 Site location

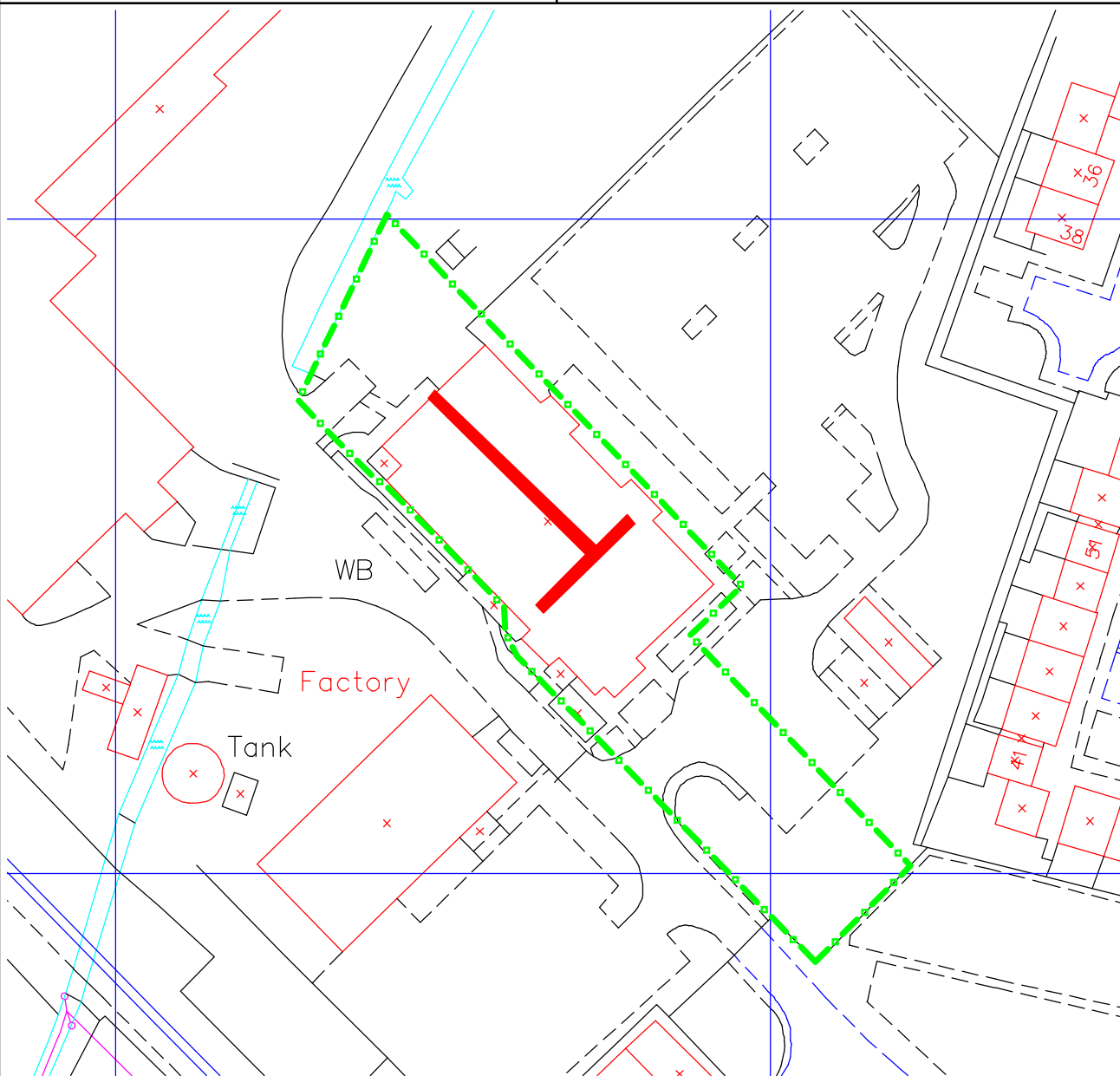
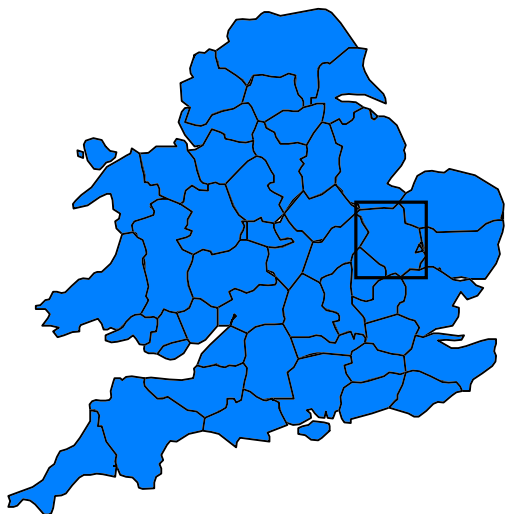
Figure 2 Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, 1887

Figure 3 Site layout

Figure 4 Trench profiles

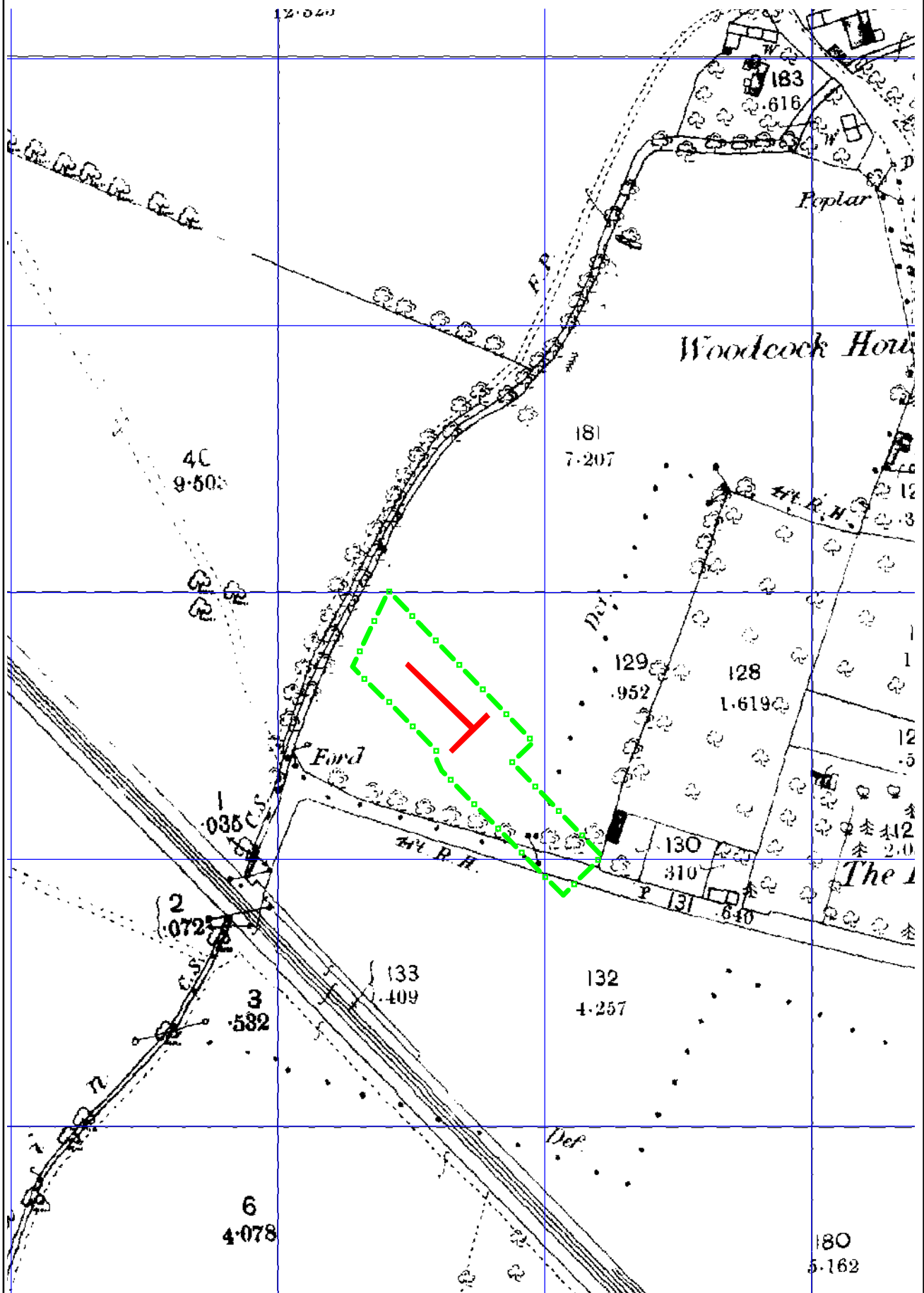
Plate 1 Trench 1, looking north-east

Plate 2 Trench 2, looking north-west



Site location plan

Scale 1:1000

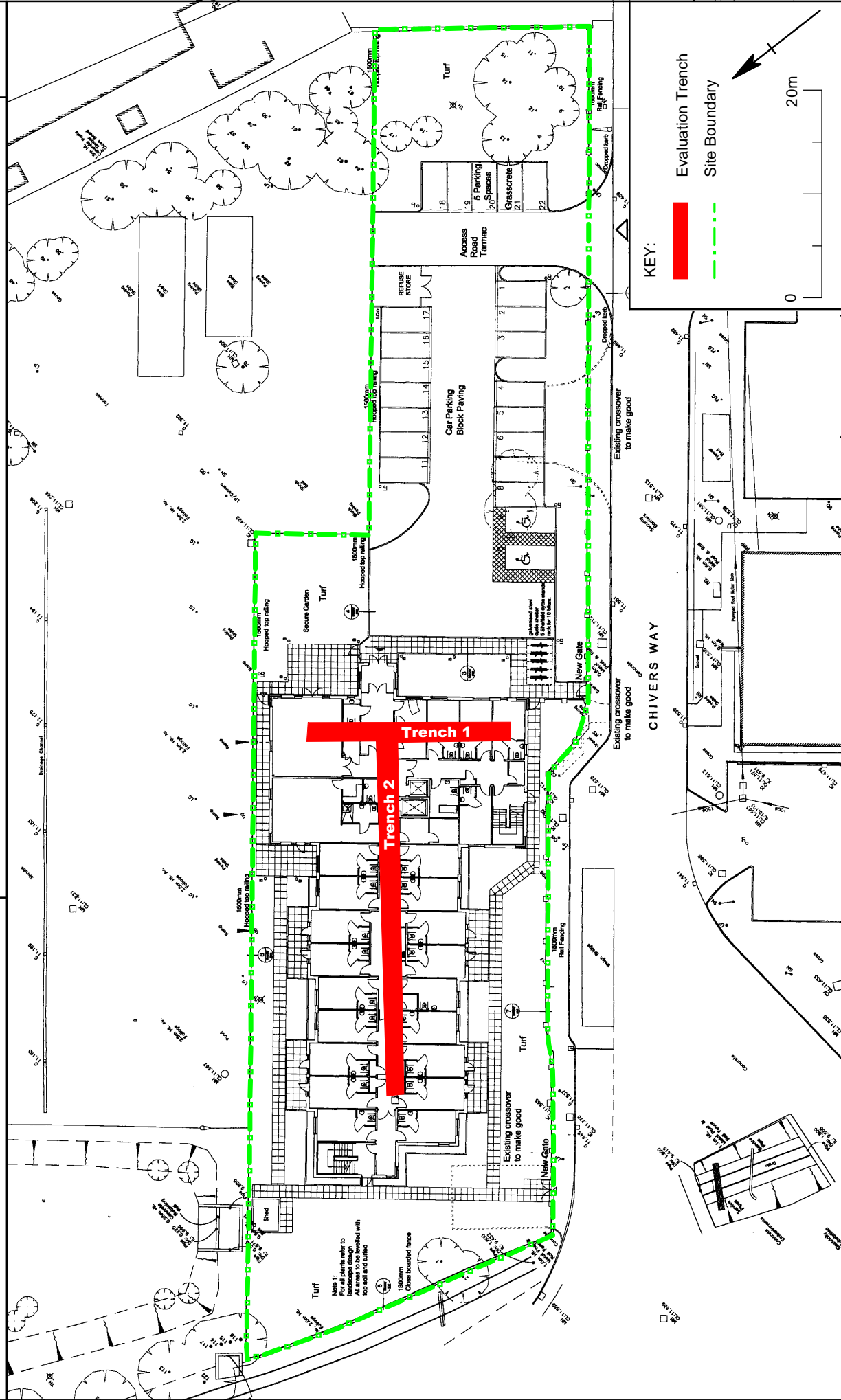


Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, 1887

Scale 1:2000

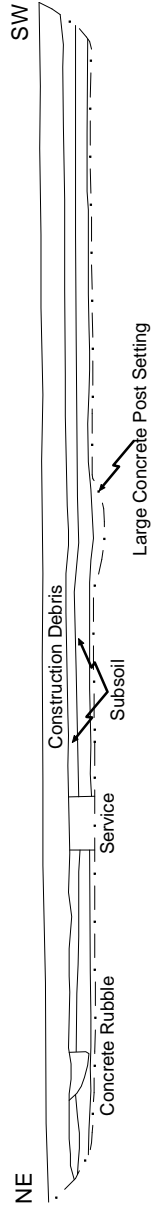
Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL100014861

Figure 2

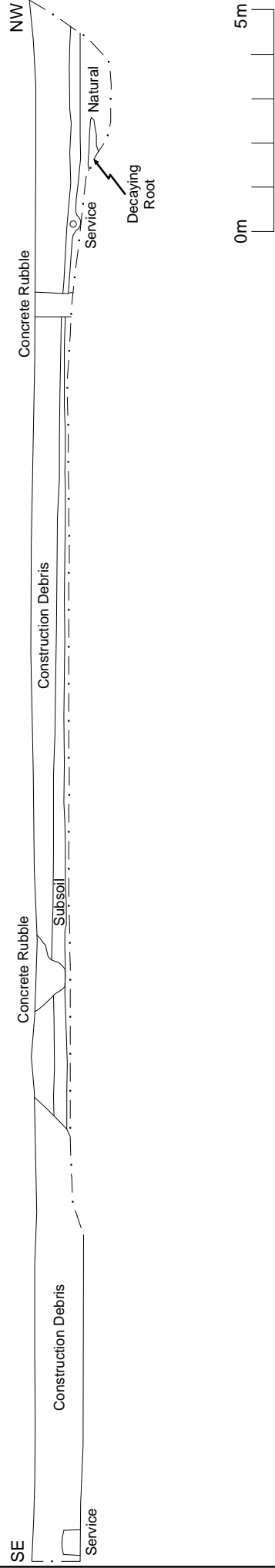


Trench location relative to proposed development

Trench 1



Trench 2



Trench Profiles

Scale 1:125

Figure 4



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north-east



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking north-west