

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
On Land at 21 Lower Road, Orpington, Bromley  
(NGR TQ 47029 67306)**

**By**

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**Project No. 2173**

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## ***Archaeology South-East***

*Archaeology South-East is a division of the University College London Field Archaeology Unit. The Institute of Archaeology at UCL is one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.*

*The Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted worldwide, Archaeology South-East retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.*

*Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England Archaeology South-East can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.*

*Archaeology South-East, as part of the Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.*

## Abstract

*An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at 21 Lower Road, Orpington, Bromley. No archaeological features were observed. Wall footings, concrete flooring and a levelling deposit associated with the construction of the Pentecostal church, which previously occupied the north western corner of the site, were identified within Trenches 3 and 4. Two sherds of pottery, which dated to the Roman Period, were recovered from a sub-soil deposit in Trench 5.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit, was commissioned RSM Developments (UK) Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at 21 Lower Road, Orpington, London Borough of Bromley prior to the construction of four new residential dwellings (NGR TQ 47029 67306) (Fig. 1).
- 1.2** The proposed redevelopment of the site will comprise of the construction of a four semi detached dwellings, two fronting Wellington Road and two fronting Lower Road with associated parking.
- 1.3** The proposed redevelopment is located within an Area of Archaeological Interest as defined by the Unitary Development Plan. The Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service of English Heritage (GLAAS) advised the local planning authority that a condition should be attached to the planning consent requiring a programme of archaeological work. A programme of Trial Trenching, to evaluate the site prior to any development taking place, was implemented (Planning reference: 04/04672/O).
- 1.4** A Written Scheme of Investigation outlining the requirements and methodology of the evaluation was prepared by Archaeology South-East (ASE) and duly approved by GLAAS. All variations to this methodology necessitated by adverse conditions on site were agreed with GLAAS as advisors to the local planning authority.
- 1.5** The fieldwork was undertaken by Jon Sygrave and Alice Thorne on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2005. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and Louise Rayner (Post-excavation Manager).

## **2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The site is bounded to the north and south by existing residential development, and to the east and west by Wellington Road and Lower Road respectively (Fig. 1). The north western extent of the plot was previously occupied by the recently demolished Orpington Pentecostal Church.
- 2.2** The site lies in an Area of Archaeological Interest as defined by the Unitary Development Plan. Several archaeological finds have been made in the area including Roman period finds to the north of Kent Road, west and south of Lower road and the allotments and east of the site on Wellington Road, with Saxon period occupation being recorded to the north, again on Kent road. A Scheduled Ancient monument (Sam No. LO145), comprising a Romano-British masonry building and Saxon cemetery lies 350m to the northwest.
- 2.3** The British Geological Survey map Sheet 271 (Area Dartford) Drift Edition (1:50,000 scale) indicates that the site lies on Upper Chalk, adjacent to a deposit of Flood Plain Gravel.

### **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1** The objectives of this archaeological evaluation were to contribute to the knowledge of Orpington, and the Area of Archaeological Interest in which the site was located, as defined by the Unitary Development Plan. The general aim of the evaluation was to characterise archaeological deposits on the site, to gauge their significance and to ascertain the site's potential for further archaeological remains.
- 3.2** All work was carried out in accordance with GLAAS Archaeological Guidance Paper No.3 (AGP) unless otherwise stated below.
- 3.3** The trench layout was agreed between the developer and Mark Stevenson of GLAAS. Four 1m by 10m trenches were located to specifically target the footprints of the new dwellings (Fig. 2). These were to be excavated centrally through the long axis of each of the proposed houses. The developer set out the location of each trench in accordance with the agreed plan.
- 3.4** During excavation of the trial trenches several services were encountered, requiring the modification of the original trench layout. Within Trench 1, a gas pipe was encountered, and following discussion with Robert Whytehead of GLAAS, excavation of this trench ceased. Unidentifiable pipes were also encountered in Trench 2, making full excavation of the trench to depth impossible. However, an allowance of contingency trenching up to a limit of 2m x 10m had been made available. Following discussion and confirmation of the new location with Robert Whytehead, one additional contingency trench (Trench 5) measuring 1m x 10m was excavated, located centrally along the properties' boundary, in the south eastern side of the site (Fig. 2). After the excavation of Trench 5 the client offered to pot the gas pipe in Trench 1 to allow its full excavation, this was communicated to Robert Whytehead (GLAAS) who advised this was not necessary as Trench 5 provided a sufficient sample of the eastern extent of the site.
- 3.5** The concrete flooring of the Pentecostal church was encountered in the location of Trenches 3 and 4. Therefore a breaker had to be initially used in this area to remove the concrete before excavation could begin.
- 3.6** All encountered deposits, features and finds were recorded according to accepted professional standards in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation using standard Archaeology South-East context record sheets.
- 3.7** A full photographic record of the work was kept (black and white prints and colour slides) and will form part of the site archive. The archive is presently held at the Archaeology South-East offices at Ditchling and will be offered to a suitable local museum.
- 3.8** All deposits were levelled to Ordinance datum using an OS benchmark.

## 4.0 FINDS

- 4.1** The archaeological work produced only a very small assemblage of material from Context 3. The pottery is Roman in date and includes a fine oxidised ware footring base (complete) and a sherd of grog-tempered coarseware base, possibly Patchgrove or Patchgrove-like. The sherds are in good condition with fresh edges, suggesting little re-deposition has taken place. Unfortunately neither of these sherds is closely datable so only a general Roman date can be assigned, likely to be late 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.
- 4.2** Aside from the pottery, the material recovered is fragmentary and difficult to place chronologically (see Table 1). The fragment of bone is very small and friable which prevents close identification but appears to be animal bone.

Context	Pot	CBM	Struck Flint	Other	Comment (Spot Dates)
	No/g				
(3) NE corner of Tr 5	2/112g	2/14g	1/10g	Bone 1/1g	Roman

Table 1: Finds assemblage quantification

## 4.3 Potential and Significance

Beyond contributing an additional finds spot for Roman activity in the Orpington area, this assemblage has little significance and no potential for further study. The presence of Roman pottery, in good condition, suggests activity in the immediate vicinity but the current assemblage is too small to characterise this further.

## 5.0 RESULTS

### 5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was abandoned due to the presence of a plastic yellow gas pipe orientated centrally along the length of the trench. This was encountered immediately upon commencing excavation, at a depth of c. 0.50m below ground surface.

### 5.2 Trench 2

Two lead pipes were encountered during excavation of this trench. These were revealed to run along the length of the trench towards the location of the demolished church that had occupied the north western side of the development site. This trench was therefore immediately backfilled and its width extended by 0.45m to the south at its south eastern extent, in an attempt to avoid the services (Fig 2). This extension revealed another thick

pipe at a depth of 0.70m, from which an electrical signal was recorded with a CAT detector, and as a result this trench was also abandoned.

- 5.3** The stratigraphic sequence revealed was as follows: Context 1, a levelling deposit, comprised flint fragments and concrete rubble to a depth of 0.20m below the present ground surface. Context 1 sealed Context 2, a brick rubble deposit, which was recorded to a depth of 0.22m. Context 2 sealed Context 3, a dark greyish brown silty clay deposit of made ground, excavated to a depth of 0.30m, which contained rounded flint pebbles, small rounded – sub angular flint nodules and fragments of yellowish brick and red tile. The underlying natural sediments were not reached in this trench.

**5.4 Trench 3**

Following the removal of the concrete from this area, trench 3 was shifted 0.40m to the north in order to avoid a yellow stock brick wall footing. It was also shorted by 1.8m to the south east due to a substantial concrete and steel footing. No archaeological features were identified.

- 5.5** The stratigraphic sequence was as follows: A deposit of overburden was initially encountered, to a maximum depth of 0.44m. Below this a deposit of made ground or buried soil was encountered (Context 5). Context 5 was a mid greyish brown silty sand, containing occasional flint gravels occasional stock brick, 19<sup>th</sup> century red brick and tile fragments, and occasional building material flecks. In the north western extent of the trench a sondage was excavated to ascertain the depth of the natural ground. Context 5 was revealed to have a maximum depth of 1.18m and the brownish yellow clayey sand natural (Context 6) containing occasional flint gravels was encountered at 48.70m OD (Fig. 3).

**5.6 Trench 4**

The excavation of trench four had to be stopped short by 5.5m south eastwards as substantial concrete footings were encountered. No archaeological features were observed within the trench. To the north west a stock brick and hardcore rubble wall footing was encountered cut into the top of Context 7 (see below) (Fig. 4).

- 5.7** The stratigraphic sequence revealed was as follows: Context 7 was a mid greyish brown silty sand, containing occasional flint gravels occasional stock brick, 19<sup>th</sup> century red brick and tile fragments, and occasional building material flecks. A sondage was excavated revealing the deposit to have a maximum depth of 1.20m. Below this a brownish yellow clayey sand natural (Context 8) containing occasional flint gravels was encountered at 48.85m OD (Fig. 4).

**5.8 Trench 5, Contingency trench.**

This trench was orientated north west – south east and located between



Trenches 1 and 2 (Fig. 2). Substantial modern wall footings were encountered in its north western extent. Trench 5 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.10m.

**5.9** A possible archaeological feature was investigated in the south eastern corner of Trench 5, as two fragments of Roman pot were recovered from this area during machining. However, following cleaning and investigation it was ascertained that the fragments of pot were not stratified within a secure context, and were proved to derive from the base of Context 3, at the interface with the natural.

**5.10** The stratigraphic sequence revealed was as follows: Context 1, the mid-dark grey surfacing deposit, comprising flint fragments and rubble was encountered to a depth of 0.20m. Context 1 sealed a brick rubble deposit (Context 2), which was recorded to a depth of 0.22m. Context 2 sealed a dark greyish brown clayey silt, probable sub-soil, deposit (Context 3), which contained charcoal smears, flint pebbles and nodules, and fragments of red and yellow late 19<sup>th</sup> century stock brick and was recorded to a depth of 0.59m. There was a diffuse horizon between Context 3 and the natural ground below (Context 4). Context 4 comprised a mid orangish brown silty clay containing occasional small sub – angular flints and occasional small rounded pebbles. Its surface had a mottled appearance, as a result of bioturbation caused by intrusion from Context 3 above (50.25m OD) (Fig. 4).

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

**6.1** No archaeological features were identified during the evaluation of the site. Evidence for substantial ground disturbance was encountered in the south eastern side of the site, with several service pipes encountered, running back across the development plot in the direction of the recently demolished Pentecostal Church which had occupied the north western side of the evaluation site. Therefore Trenches 1 and 2 had to be abandoned. However, the surface of the natural was reached in contingency Trench 5. No archaeological features were observed.

**6.2** In the area of Trenches 3 and 4 the concrete flooring of the Pentecostal Church was encountered, necessitating use of a breaker before work could begin. Below a layer of overburden, a sterile dark deposit of made ground (Contexts 5 and 7) was identified in both trenches, before natural ground was encountered through the excavation of sondages (Context 6 and 8). The deposit of made ground pre- dates the construction of the church, as it is sealed by the concrete floor surface, and evidence of brick and hardcore footings cut into the surface of Context 7 are visible in Trench 4 (Fig 4). This context may form a levelling deposit which underlay the church, raising the level of the site up to the height of Wellington road, and requiring the steps still visible to provide access down to Lower road on its north western street frontage.

- 6.3** Although the services encountered in Trenches 1 and 2 prevented the evaluation of cut features in the underlying undisturbed sediment, natural ground was reached in Trenches 3, 4 and 5. No cut archaeological features were observed in any of the trenches,
- 6.4** Although Trenches 1 and 2 were stopped by the presence of services the addition of Trench 5 allowed the evaluation to sample both the areas of impact. The underlying natural sediment was reached in Trenches 3, 4 and 5 and no archaeological deposits or cut features were observed. The only evidence of archaeological activity derived from two sherds of Roman pottery recovered from the horizon between the underlying natural and Context 3 in Trench 5. The presence of Roman pottery in the vicinity of the site suggests nearby activity but the current assemblage is too small to characterise this further. On this basis the potential for the site to reveal further archaeological remains is considered to be low. It is the opinion of Archaeology South-East that no further work is required, but the final decision must rest with GLAAS.

### **Acknowledgements**

Archaeology South- East would like to acknowledge the assistance provided for this project by Richard McAllister of RSM Developments (uk) Ltd, and Robert Whytehead of English Heritage.

### **Bibliography**

Griffin, Neil 2005 *Written Scheme of Investigation*, ASE unpub. report

## OASIS Summary Form

### Project details

Project name	21 Lower Road, Orpington
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at 21 Lower Road, Orpington, Bromley. No archaeological features were observed. Wall footings, concrete flooring and a levelling deposit associated with the construction of the Pentecostal church, which previously occupied the north western corner of the site, were identified within Trenches 3 and 4. Two sherds of pottery, which dated to the Roman Period, were recovered from a sub-soil deposit in Trench 5.
Project dates	Start: 17-08-2005 End: 18-08-2005
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	LRX05 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	04/04672/O - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Significant Finds	CERAMIC Roman
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON BROMLEY ORPINGTON 21 Lower Road
Postcode	BR5
Study area	605.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 47029 67306 Point
Height OD	Min: 48.70m Max: 50.25m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Darryl Palmer
Project supervisor	Jon Sygrave
Sponsor or funding body	Developer

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LARC
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	LARC
Digital Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Stratigraphic','Survey'
Digital Media available	'Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LARC
Paper Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Diary','Drawing','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey',

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	an archaeological evaluation on land at 21 lower road orpington
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Alice Thorne
Date	2005
Issuer or publisher	archaeology south-east
Place of issue or publication	grey report
Description	evaluation report

Entered by	Jon Sygrave (jonsygrave@yahoo.co.uk)
Entered on	23 September 2005

### Appendix 1: Levels.

Level no.	Trench	Value	Notes
1	Trench 3	50.46	G/S NW end
2	Trench 3	49.31	Base NW end
3	Trench 3	48.78	Base, Sondage

4	Trench 3	49.25	Base SE end
5	Trench 3	50.57	G/S SE end
6	Trench 4	50.60	G/S SE end
7	Trench 4	49.19	Base SE end
8	Trench 4	48.83	Base, Sondage
9	Trench 4	49.29	Base NW end
10	Trench 4	50.24	G/S NW end
11	Trench 5	51.37	G/S SE end
12	Trench 5	50.25	Base SE end
13	Trench 5	50.10	Base NW end
14	Trench 5	51.17	G/S NW end
15	Trench 5	50.08	Base, Sondage



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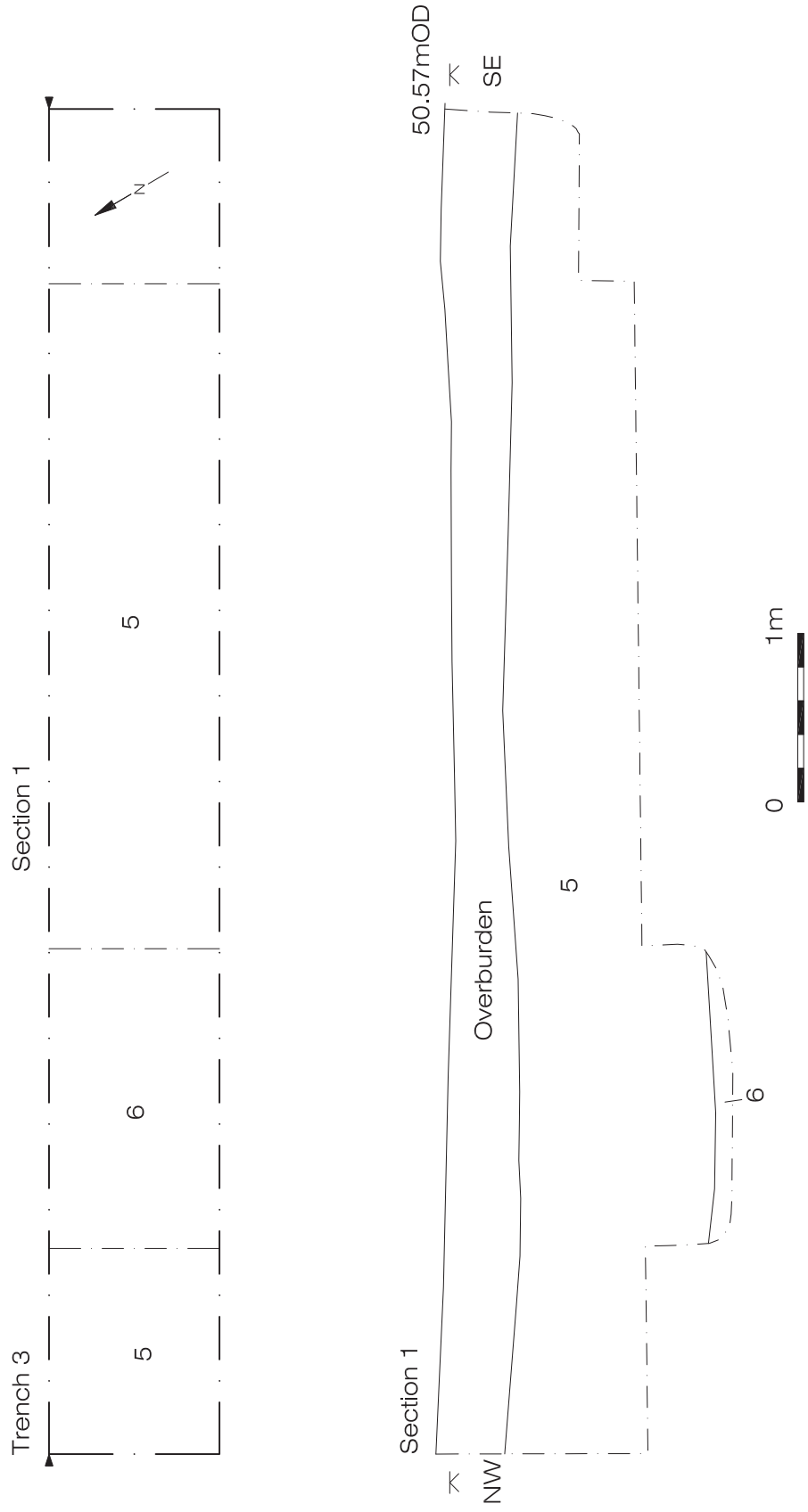
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© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST			21 Lower Road, Orpington	Fig. 1
Ref: 2173	Sept 2005	Drawn by: JLR	Site Location Plan	

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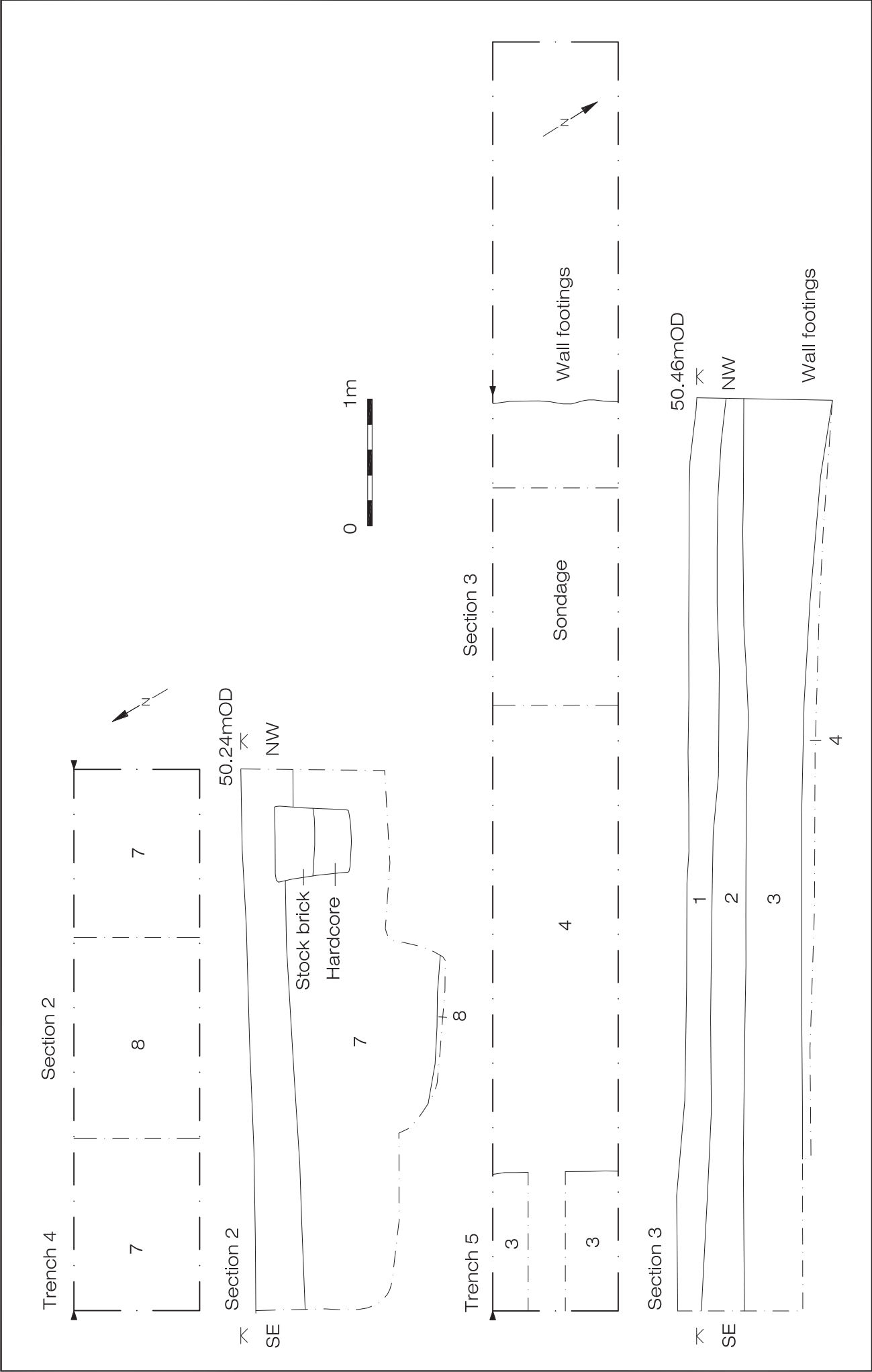






© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST			21 Lower Road, Orpington	Fig. 3
Ref: 2173	Sept 2005	Drawn by: JLR	Trench 3: Plan and Section	





© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST	21 Lower Road, Orpington	Fig. 4
Ref: 2173	Sept 2005	
Drawn by: JLR	Trenches 4 and 5: Plans and Sections	