

**An Archaeological Evaluation
at rear of 40 Fishers Green
Stevenage
Hertfordshire**

NGR: TL 52232 22597

Planning Ref: 13/00043/FP

**ASE Project No: E2281
Site Code: SVFG 13**

**ASE Report No: E2281
OASIS id: 151703**

**Lukasz Miciak
With contributions by
Luke Barber, Gemma Driver & Susan Pringle
Illustrations by Andrew Lewsey**



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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Russell Linard of Garrard Developments Ltd. to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land to rear of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage, in advance of the construction of two semi-detached houses.

The site is located to the northwest of the centre of Stevenage, within a housing estate that is bounded by the M1 motorway to the west and Clovelly Way to the east. The development area, to the rear of 40 Fishers Green, is surrounded by residential dwellings and Fishers Green, which encircles that part of the housing estate

Number 40 Fishers Green is a late 18th/early 19th century two-storey house, which still retains most of its original plot within the modern housing estate. Bricks used for the construction of a later extension and renovation of the house were presumably produced at a nearby brickfield, situated approximately 100m to the southeast of the site. The brickworks were operational between 1857 and 1907 and during the sourcing of brickearth Palaeolithic implements comprising three handaxes, one partly worked flint axe, a scraper and a flake, were discovered (HER 608). Another Palaeolithic stone implement and a Mesolithic core were also found within a 200m radius of the site (HER 417, 421), during the construction of the A1 (M1) Stevenage Bypass.

Despite the discovery of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic artefacts in the vicinity of the site no archaeological features and finds dating to these periods were present within the evaluation trenches.

A small undated feature revealed in trench 1 may be a posthole resulting from the construction of a fence or similar structure associated with the house, while a large feature discovered at the southeast end of trench 2 is most likely a quarry or brick earth extraction pit dating from the second half of the 17th century or later.

The majority of datable finds appear to belong to the second half of the 17th century and the earlier material, which includes a fragment of Roman CBM and three sherds of early/mid 13th to 14th century medieval pottery is likely to be residual. However, the presence of a fragment of late 17th to 19th century brick may suggest that virtually all of the material is residual, most likely having been discarded in the former quarry or brick earth extraction pit.

The absence of any significant remains in the evaluation trenches, which covered over 30% of the proposed house footprints, suggests that the development will have little impact upon the archaeological record.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Russell Linard of Garrard Developments Ltd. to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land to rear of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage, in advance of the construction of two semi-detached houses.

1.2 Geology and Topography (Figure 1)

1.2.1 The site is located to the northwest of the centre of Stevenage, within a housing estate that is bounded by the M1 motorway to the west and Clovelly Way to the east. The development area, to the rear of 40 Fishers Green, is surrounded by residential dwellings and Fishers Green, which encircles that part of the housing estate.

1.2.2 The underlying geology consists of the Lowestoft Formation comprising sheets of chalky till together with outwash sands, gravel, silts and clay that are underlain by the Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and the New Pit Chalk Formation.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning application 13/00043/FP to build two semi-detached houses was submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Stevenage Borough Council. As the site is situated in an area of some archaeological potential, in which important archaeological remains may survive, HCC CHEU recommended that a full archaeological condition be placed on any grant of planning consent, based upon guidance given in the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.3.2 The recommendation states that:

No development or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work and recording in accordance with the written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant, and approved by the planning authority.

1.3.3 Following on from this, HCC CHEU requested that a trench-based evaluation be undertaken in the first instance, which this WSI relates to. Further details concerning the aims and objectives and methodology for the investigation follow below.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The initial aim of the archaeological work was to determine the presence or absence, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any surviving

remains in order to provide information that would be used by the HCC CHEU monitoring officer to determine the necessity for any further work.

1.4.2 Particular attention was paid to:

- Evidence for any prehistoric activity on the site
- The post-medieval development of land at Fishers Green

1.4.3 In the event that significant archaeological remains were encountered this report would have aimed to place the results in context with the research objectives laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and the more-recent *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2012). As no significant archaeological remains were identified the project has little potential to contribute to any of the research agendas.

1.5 Scope of Report

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation on land to rear of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage carried out between 29th and 30th of April 2013 in advance of the construction of two semi-detached houses.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 No previous archaeological work has been undertaken at the site which is located to rear of 40 Fishers Green, a late 18th/early 19th century two storey house that still retains most of its original plot within the modern housing estate. For the past two centuries the land had been used as a domestic garden.

2.2 Palaeolithic c 450,000 – 10,000 BC

2.2.1 Six Palaeolithic implements, comprising three handaxes, one partly worked flint axe, a scraper and a flake, were discovered in brickearth pits located approximately 100m to the south of the site (HER 608). One more implement dated to this period was found during works at the A1 (M1) Stevenage bypass, which runs approximately 200m to the east of the site.

2.3 Mesolithic 10,000 – 4000 BC

2.3.1 A Mesolithic flint core was also discovered during works at the A1 (M1) Stevenage bypass (HER 421)

2.4 Post-medieval

No. 40 Fishers Green is a late 18th/early 19th century two-storey house, with later extensions, which retains most of its original plot and now stands within a modern housing estate (HER 13650). Situated approximately 100m to the southeast of the site is a brickfield, where brick-making started in 1857 and continued for a period of approximately 50 years.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY (Figure 1)

- 3.1** Two evaluation trenches each measuring 10m long by 1.8m wide were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the constant supervision of an archaeologist. One trench was located in the footprint of each house.
- 3.2** The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at Stevenage museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	8
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	2 drawing sheets (1:10, 1:20)
Bulk Samples	N/A
Photographs	15 colour prints from digital images
Bulk finds	1 small box
Registered finds	N/A
Environmental flots/residue	N/A

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1 (Figure 2, plates 1 & 3)

- 4.1.1 Northeast/southwest aligned trench 1 measured 10m long by 1.8m wide and was excavated to 0.52m below the existing ground surface, where the top of the undisturbed drift geology was encountered.
- 4.1.2 The revealed deposit sequence comprised a mid-brownish orange soft silt clay natural deposit overlain by 0.32m of mid-greyish brown soft silt clay subsoil that was in turn overlain by 0.2m of dark brownish grey soft clay silt topsoil.
- 4.1.3 One archaeological feature was identified, excavated and recorded (plate 1).
- 4.1.4 A small, oval pit [1], measuring 0.35m by 0.31m by 0.12m deep, was located at the northeast end of the trench, sealed beneath the subsoil layer. The single undated fill consisted of a mid-grey orange soft clay silt with rare small stones.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.2m
	Layer	Subsoil	Trench	Trench	0.32m
	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	-
1	Cut	Pit	0.35m	0.31m	-
2	Deposit	Fill of 1	0.35m	0.31m	0.12m

Table 2: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

4.2 Trench 2 (Figure 2, plates 2 & 4)

- 4.2.1 Trench 2 measured 10m long by 1.8m wide and the undisturbed natural geology was revealed at a depth varying between 0.5m below existing ground level at the northwest end of the trench and 0.7m at the southeast end.
- 4.2.2 As with Trench 1, the drift geology consisted of a mid-brownish orange soft silt clay overlain by 0.3-0.4m of mid-greyish brown soft clay silt subsoil that was in turn sealed by a 0.2m layer of dark brownish grey soft clay silt topsoil.
- 4.2.3 One archaeological feature was recorded (plate 2).
- 4.2.4 A large pit [3] containing two fills and measuring over 2.39m long, in excess of 1.8m wide and 0.73m deep, was located at the southeast end of the trench. The primary fill comprised a 0.34m deposit of mid-yellowish brown compact silty clay [4] that was sealed by a 0.39m thick layer [5] of mid brownish grey compact silty clay with flecks of charcoal and infrequent

stone inclusions. The latter context produced a small assemblage of finds including a few abraded sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery and a piece of clay pipe, with the latest material comprising a brick fragment of late 17th to early 19th century date. Feature [3] was sealed by the subsoil layer, which in this part of the trench was overlain by a layer of mid-greyish black friable silt clay [7] that in turn was sealed by a layer [8] of mid-brownish grey friable clay silt mixed with brownish yellow compact silt clay. Directly above this was topsoil.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.2m
	Layer	Subsoil	Trench	Trench	0.32m
	Layer	Natural	Trench	Trench	-
3	Cut	Pit	2.39m+	Trench	-
4	Deposit	Fill of 3	1.15m+	Trench	0.34m
5	Deposit	Fill of 3	1.8m+	Trench	0.39m
7	Layer	Buried topsoil	3m+	Trench	0.15m
8	Layer	Made ground	3m+	Trench	0.4m

Table 3: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

In total 10 sherds of pottery spanning the medieval and post-medieval periods, seven fragments of CBM, two iron nails, a clay pipe bowl and a few small fragments of animal bone were recovered from one context [5] in trench two.

5.2 Medieval and/or Post-Medieval Pottery by Luke Barber

The archaeological work recovered a small assemblage of pottery from the site. Sherd size varies from small to medium (to 60mm across) and although most sherds show signs of abrasion the worst affected are always the lower fired types. As such the assemblage can be seen as having been subjected to limited reworking. All of the material was recovered from context [5].

The earliest pottery consist of two sherds (34g) in an oxidized medium sand tempered ware and a 36g sherd in a South Hertfordshire-type grey sandy ware. All appear to be from cooking pots, but only one oxidized club rim is present. An early/mid 13th to 14th century date range is likely for all.

The majority of the assemblage is of 17th century date. There are four somewhat weathered sherds (88g) from four different fine Essex-type redware vessels with varying degrees of glaze. In addition there is a rim sherd from a Metropolitan slipware plate (28g), from the same source as the redwares. The final two sherds (26g) are again glazed redwares but of slightly more developed type which could easily run into the first half of the 18th century. However, there is no reason why all the early post-medieval pottery could not be placed between 1650 and 1700.

5.3 Ceramic Building Material (CBM) by Susan Pringle

Seven abraded fragments of CBM were recovered from context [5]. The assemblage includes a flake of Roman tile, possibly imbrex. Five fragments of peg tile in two different fabrics could date to AD 1200-1800. The latest material is a brick fragment of late 17th- early 19th century date.

5.4 The Clay Tobacco Pipe by Luke Barber

Context [5] produced a slightly weathered near complete spurred bowl of 1640-1660 type.

5.5 The Iron by Luke Barber

Two nail fragments were recovered from context [5]. Both have thick adhering corrosion products and are not diagnostic of type/date.

5.6 Animal Bone by Gemma Driver

Four fragments of animal bone were recovered by hand-collection from

context [5]. Although it has not been possible to identify these fragments to species, they derive from a large mammal most probably cattle or horse. The elements represented include a rib, a long-bone fragment and a small section of a scapula, both the rib and scapula display evidence of butchery in the form of cut and saw marks.

5.7 Discussion

The majority of datable finds appear to belong to the second half of the 17th century and the earlier material, which includes a fragment of Roman CBM and three sherds of early/mid 13th to 14th century medieval pottery is likely to be residual. However, the presence of a fragment of late 17th to 19th century brick may suggest that virtually all of the material is residual, most likely having been discarded in the former quarry or brick earth extraction pit. Due to the size of the assemblage it holds no potential for further analysis.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1** Despite the discovery of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic artefacts in the vicinity of the site no archaeological features and finds dating to these periods were present within the evaluation trenches or in the spoil heaps produced during the archaeological works.
- 6.2** The small undated feature [1] revealed in trench 1 may be a posthole resulting from a small-scale construction such as a fence or similar structure, while the large feature [3] discovered at the southeast end of trench 2 is most likely a quarry or brick earth extraction pit dating from the second half of the 17th century or later.
- 6.3** The disturbance in the deposit sequence observed directly above feature [3] was presumably created during later landscaping works, which involved placing a layer of mixed soil [8] directly onto the original topsoil [7], in order to level or raise the existing ground levels.
- 6.4** The absence of any significant remains in the evaluation trenches, which covered over 30% of the proposed house footprints, suggests that the development will have little impact upon the archaeological record.

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**HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD
SUMMARY SHEET**

Site name and address: Land to Rear of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: Stevenage	
Village/Town: Stevanage	Parish: Stevenage	
Planning application reference: 13/00043/FP		
HER Enquiry reference: N/A		
Funding source: Developer		
Nature of application: Two semi-detached houses		
Present land use: Garden		
Size of application area: 600 sqm	Size of area investigated: 36 sqm	
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 52232 22597		
Site code (if applicable): SVFG 13		
Site director/Organization: L Miciak, Archaeology South-East		
Type of work: Archaeological Evaluation		
Date of work:	Start: 29/04/13	Finish: 30/04/13
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Stevenage		
Related HER Nos: N/A	Periods represented: N/A	
Relevant previous summaries/reports: N/A		
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Russell Linard of Garrard Developments Ltd. to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land to rear of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage, in advance of the construction of two semi-detached houses.</p> <p>Number 40 Fishers Green is a late 18th/early 19th century two-storey house, which still retains most of its original plot within the modern housing estate. Bricks used for the construction of a later extension and renovation of the house were presumably produced at a nearby brickfield, situated approximately 100m to the southeast of the site. The brickworks were operational between 1857 and 1907 and during the sourcing of brickearth Palaeolithic implements comprising three handaxes, one partly worked flint axe, a scraper and a flake, were discovered (HER 608). Another Palaeolithic stone implement and a Mesolithic core were also found within a 200m radius of the site (HER 417, 421), during the construction of the A1 (M1) Stevenage Bypass.</p> <p>A small undated feature revealed in trench 1 may be a posthole resulting from the construction of a fence or similar structure associated with the house, while a large feature discovered at the southeast end of trench 2 is most likely a quarry or brick earth extraction pit dating from the second half of the 17th century or later.</p> <p>The majority of datable finds appear to belong to the second half of the 17th century and the earlier material, which includes a fragment of Roman CBM and three sherds of early/mid 13th to 14th century medieval pottery is likely to be residual. However, the presence of a fragment of late 17th to 19th century brick may suggest that virtually all of the material is residual, most likely having been discarded in the former quarry or brick earth extraction pit.</p>		
Author of summary: L Miciak	Date of summary: May 2013	

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-151703

Project details

Project name	Fishers Green, Stevenage
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Russell Linard of Garrard Developments Ltd. to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land to rear of 40 Fishers Green, Stevenage, in advance of the construction of two semi-detached houses A small undated feature revealed in trench 1 may be a posthole resulting from the construction of a fence or similar structure associated with the house, while a large feature discovered at the southeast end of trench 2 is most likely a quarry or brick earth extraction pit dating from the second half of the 17th century or later. The majority of datable finds appear to belong to the second half of the 17th century and the earlier material, which includes a fragment of Roman CBM and three sherds of early/mid 13th to 14th century medieval pottery is likely to be residual. However, the presence of a fragment of late 17th to 19th century brick may suggest that virtually all of the material is residual, most likely having been discarded in the former quarry or brick earth extraction pit.
Project dates	Start: 29-04-2013 End: 30-04-2013
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	E2281 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	QUARRY PIT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE BOWL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	TILE FRAGMENT Roman
Significant Finds	TILE FRAGMENT Post Medieval

Significant Finds	BRICK FRAGMENT Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Small-scale (e.g. single house, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE STEVENAGE, Rear of 40 Fishers Green
Postcode	SG1 2JA
Study area	600 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 52232 22597
Lat/Long Datum	Position derived from charts

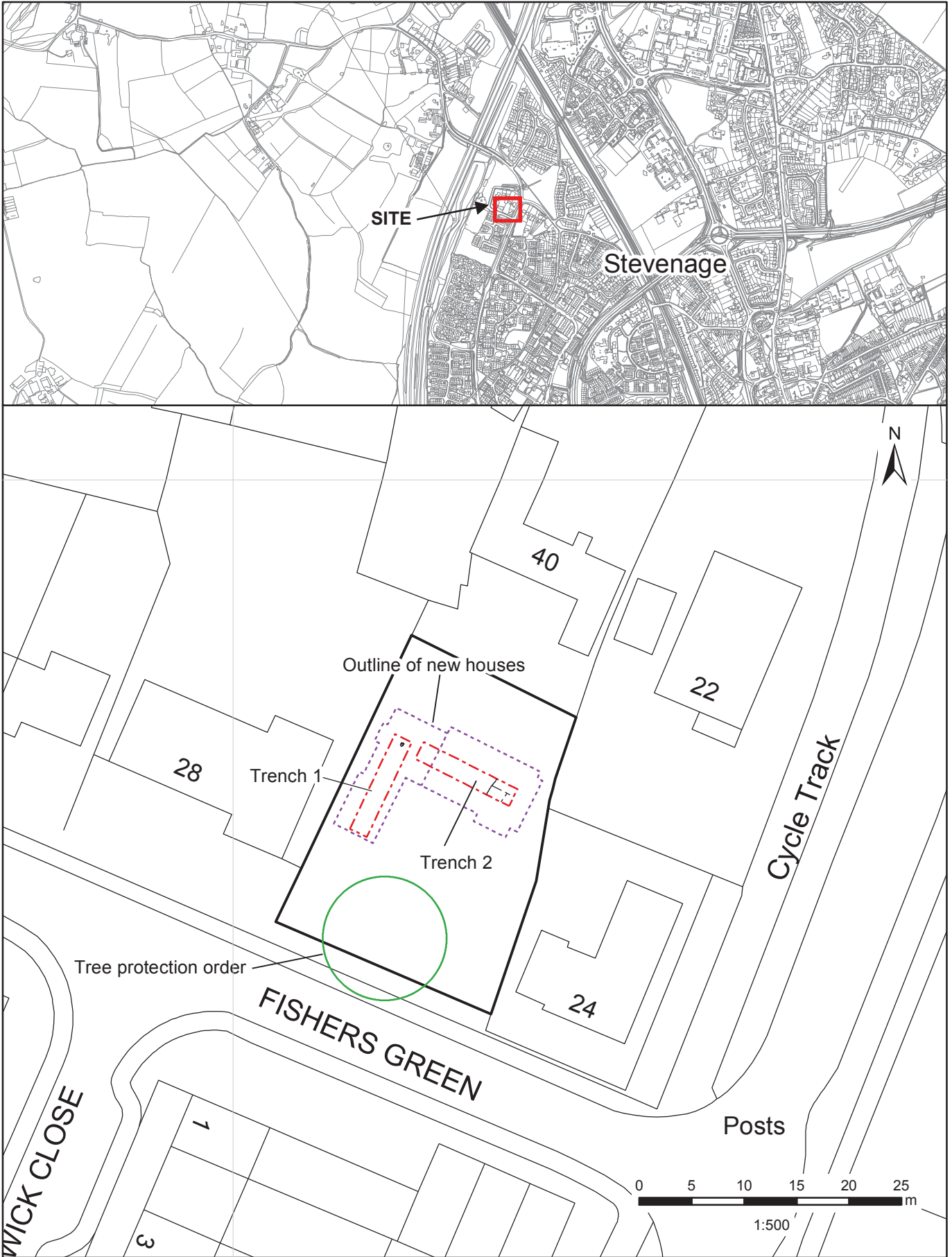
Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
Project design originator	Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
Project director/manager	Adrian Scruby
Project supervisor	Lukasz Miciak
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Garrard Developments Ltd.

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Stevenage Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	Stevenage Museum
Digital Contents	"Ceramics","Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Stevenage Museum
Paper Contents	"Ceramics","Stratigraphic","other"
Paper Media available	"Section","Unpublished Text","Photograph","Plan","Report"

Entered by	Lukasz Miciak (l.miciak@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	30 May 2013



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Fig.1. Location of archaeological evaluation trenches

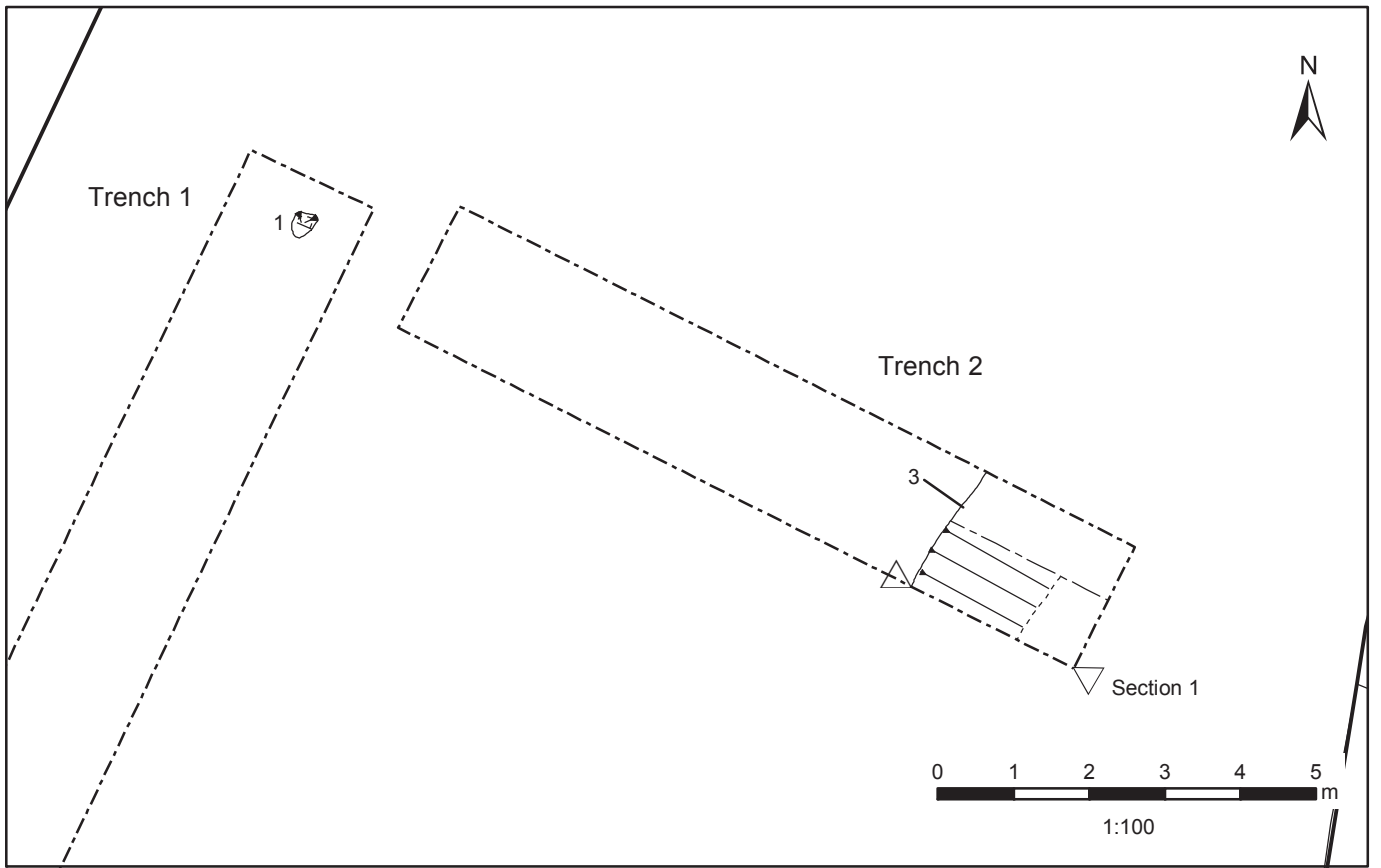


Fig.2. Trenches 1 & 2

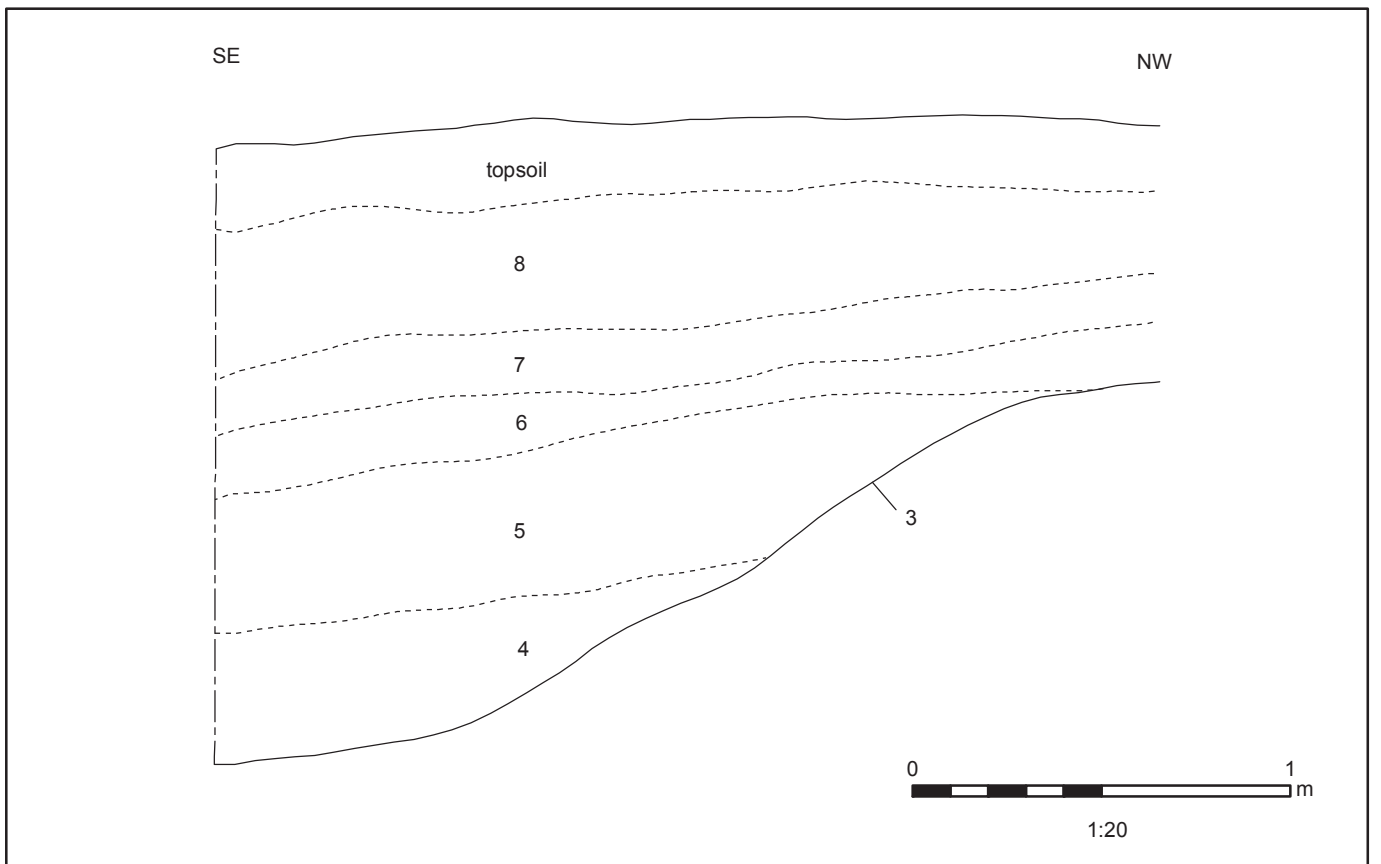


Fig.3. Section 1



Plate 1. Pit 1 in trench 1.



Plate 2. Pit 3 in trench 2.



Plate 3. Trench 1.



Plate 4. Trench 2.