

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Knole House
Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 0RP**

NGR: 5539 1542

**ASE Project: 6456
ASE Report No: 2014033**

**SITE CODE: KTC13
OASIS ID: archaeol6-169339**

**By Rachel Cruse
With contributions by
Gemma Ayton, Luke Barber, Sue Pringle,
Trista Clifford and Sue Pringle**

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief along a new service trench at Knole Estate, Sevenoaks, Kent (NGR 5539 1542), between 19th and 25th November 2013. The works consisted of the monitoring of the excavation of a narrow service trench and a small area excavation in the entrance of the western wing of Stable Court (known as the barn). Occupation layers of 18th to 19th Century date were identified in the service trench and a wall, probably pre-dating the existing barn, was recorded in the small area excavation.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London (UCL) Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA) was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the machine excavation of a service trench at Knole Estate, Sevenoaks, Kent (Figures 1 and 2; NGR 5539 1542).

1.1.2 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) for the archaeological watching brief was prepared (ASE 2013a) and submitted to Nathalie Cohen (National Trust Archaeologist) for approval prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.1.1 The site is located in Knole Park, about 0.8 kilometres south-east of Sevenoaks in Kent.

1.1.2 According to current data available from the British Geological Survey, the underlying bedrock is mainly the Hythe Beds Formation of sandstone and limestone. There are protruding elements of the folkstone formation-sandstone and also the sandstone sandgate formation which consists of sandstone and mudstone. There is no recorded superficial geology (BGS 2013).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 The proposed development was to excavate a trench to contain new services for a temporary catering unit.

1.3.2 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken as best practice following the advice of the National Trust Archaeologist. No planning application was required for the work, however the KCC Heritage Conservation Group was informed that the works were taking place and a copy of this report will be provided to the Kent HER. As best practice for archaeological works in Kent the standard conditions for an archaeological watching brief were followed.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The general aim of the archaeological watching brief was to record the extent and nature of any archaeological deposits encountered during the service trenching. The specific objective of the archaeological watching brief was to contribute to heritage of the area through any archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations (ASE 2013a).

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 The current report details the findings of the archaeological watching brief which was undertaken between 19th to 25th November 2013 by Rachel Cruse, Pip Stephenson, and Jim Ball. The project was managed by John Sygrave (Fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (Post-excavation).

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The following archaeological background is summarised from the WSI (ASE 2013a) with due acknowledgement.

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

- 2.2.1 Knole House comprises one of the largest private houses in England. The house as it stands today dates from the 15th century when Thomas Bouchier acquired Knole manor and built a fortress-style building surrounding what is now known as Stone Court, accessed by the turreted gatehouse known as Bouchier's Tower. Bouchier also enclosed the surrounding parkland in a pale. The house was further expanded in the later 15th and early 16th century with the construction of Green Court in front of Bouchier's Tower. The house saw little further alteration until Thomas Sackville acquired the property in 1570 and initiated an extensive programme of refurbishment and expansion of the house, including the construction of further courtyards to the northeast of the main house, including Brewhouse Court and Stable Court. Further alterations were undertaken in the 18th century with the addition of a colonnade in Stone Court and the completion of the Orangery in 1823.
- 2.2.2 Several phases of archaeological fieldwork have been undertaken at Knole House in recent years. A watching brief undertaken during groundworks in 2006 revealed evidence for an extensive water management system of uncertain date in Stone Court, including a large cistern (ASE 2007a), Monitoring of intrusive works associated with additional drainage works in and around Knole House in 2007 and 2009 failed to identify any archaeological deposits (ASE 2007b; ASE 2009), while further monitoring of drainage works to the east of the main house in 2010 revealed garden features and structural remains of 18th-20th century date (ASE 2010a). Most pertinent to the current phase of work was a watching brief undertaken during new sewerage works, also in 2010, which including monitoring of groundworks in Brewhouse Court and around the northern and western perimeter of Knole House. This, however, only identified made ground of 18th-20th century date thought to represent levelling deposits (ASE 2010b). A further watching brief was undertaken in 2013 (ASE 2013b) during the excavation of engineer's trial pits on the site of the new Conservation Studio and Restaurant. Apart from an 18th/19th century brick floor, no archaeological remains were found during this work.
- 2.2.3 Part of the current watching brief entailed excavations across the threshold of the upstanding stone-built building forming the western wing of Stable Court. This building is referred to as the barn in this report.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of the Groundwork

- 3.1.1 The excavation of a service trench (labelled Trench 1 on Figure 3), measuring 35 m in length, 0.60 wide and 0.90m deep was archaeologically monitored. The excavation was widened at its southwest end at the request of the National Trust Archaeologist (Trench 2 and Trench 3 on Figure 3) to further clarify potential archaeological remains.
- 3.1.2 Trenches 2 and 3 were located across the threshold of the upstanding stone barn forming the west wing of Stable Court (see 2.2.3).

3.2 Archaeological Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.2.1 The adopted methodology was as detailed in the WSI (ASE 2013a).
- 3.2.2 All machine excavation was undertaken by a mini digger. Revealed deposits were hand cleaned/ excavated and examined for archaeological features, deposits and artefacts. The removed spoil was scanned for any stray, unstratified artefacts. The uncovered deposits were recorded according to accepted professional standards (IFA 2008).
- 3.2.3 A digital and black and white photographic record was kept for the duration of the excavation in a day-to-day record of site work. These photographs form part of the site archive. Monitored areas were marked on existing site plans and were then tied into the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 scale map of the area.

3.3 The Archive

- 3.3.1 ASE informed the National Trust prior to the commencement of field work that a site archive would be generated. The site archive is currently held at the ASE offices in Portslade, East Sussex pending submission to The National Trust. The contents of the site archive are summarised below in Table 1.

Number of Contexts	19 over two trenches
Number of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	3
Photographs	82 digi, 2 films

Table 1: Quantification of the site archive

4.0 RESULTS (Figures 2-4)

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Archaeological watching brief monitoring was maintained from 19th to the 25th November 2013 over a course of five site visits. Three areas were monitored: Trenches 1, 2 and 3 (Figure 3).

4.1.2 Nineteen contexts were recorded during the groundwork (summarised and tabulated below in Tables 2 and 3). Each context is prefixed with its trench number.

4.2 Service trench excavation (fieldwork dates: 19.11.13-21.11.13)

4.2.1 The typical stratigraphic sequence identified during the service trench excavation (Trench 1) was natural sand [1/016], overlain by either made ground, [1/014] or topsoil [1/015], overlain by hardcore [1/013] and the modern road surface, [1/012] (Table 2).

Context Number	Context Type	Context Description	Deposit Thickness
1/001	Fill	Modern Iron Waste Pipe	-
1/002	Cut	Cut for modern Iron pipe	>0.60
1/003	Deposit	Contains degraded brick and tile	0.06
1/004	Fill	Fill of 1/005	-
1/005	Cut	Linear cut	-
1/006	Deposit	Layer	0.07
1/007	Deposit	Charcoal rich layer	0.06
1/008	Deposit	Layer	0.07
1/009	Cut	Modern pipe cut	>0.60
1/010	Fill	Fill of 1/009	>0.60
1/011	Deposit	Layer	>0.20
1/012	Deposit	Tarmac road surface	0.04
1/013	Deposit	Hardcore	
1/014	Deposit	Made ground	0.52
1/015	Deposit	Topsoil	0.16
1/016	Deposit	Natural sand	0.25+
1/017	Deposit	Layer	0.40

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

4.2.2 A discrete area of archaeological activity was identified in a short (4m) section of the service trench (shown in detailed plan in Figure 4). The archaeological remains were present at the base of the trench, below the impact level of the service and only limited hand investigation was able to be undertaken given the trench confines. These remains comprised of a series of deposits, representing domestic dumps and demolition layers (contexts [1/011], [1/003], [1/006], [1/007], [1/008]) and a possible linear cut [1/005]).

4.2.3 The lowest deposit was [1/011], a mid brown silty lay containing fragments of roof tile. Overlying this were charcoal flecked sandy silt layers [1/006], [1/008] and [1/007]. [1/007] and [1/008] produced a small amount of local glazed red earthenware pottery of 18th to 19th century date and a similarly small amount of CBM. Animal bones (cattle) were also recovered from context [1/007] and

show butchery marks, in keeping with the suggestion that these remains represent a sequence of dumps of domestic material.

- 4.2.4 Cutting [1/006] was an ephemeral linear cut [1/005], of unclear function, which was sealed by [1/003], a layer containing degraded CBM and pottery of 18th – 19th century date. Overlying this was a layer of mid orange brown silty sand [1/017] which was sealed by the road surface.
- 4.2.5 Modern services were also recorded, cutting [1/017]; (cuts [1/001] and [1/009]).

4.3 Trench 2 (fieldwork dates 21.11.13-22.11.13)

- 4.3.1 The service trench was widened in the vicinity of the entrance to the barn at the request of the National Trust archaeologist to clarify the exposed deposits.
- 4.3.2 The trench exposed two phases of building construction pre-dating the modern concrete threshold; [2/002] and [2/001] (Figure 4). The area was heavily truncated by modern service trenches.

Context Number	Context Type	Context Description	Deposit Thickness
2/001		Bullnosed brick threshold	>0.65
2/002		Wall/ foundation	0.40

Table 5: List of recorded contexts

- 4.3.3 Build [2/002] was a wall orientated northwest-southeast, running nearly parallel to the North wall of the barn, but angled slightly further north, and off-set by 1.25m to the north-east. It extended width-wise under the outer 10cm of the modern threshold and was truncated by three modern service trenches. The base of the foundation was not attained. The maximum dimensions of the observed structure were 2.60m x 1.30m x 0.70m deep. The upper surface of the foundation was truncated near the modern wall to allow the construction of the later brick threshold [2/001].
- 4.3.4 The lower part of the exposed build (Section 2, Figure 4) constitutes a foundation and was built of large, undressed, limestone blocks of irregular size set in uneven courses within a thick yellow sandy mortar obscuring most construction details. The observed average block size was 0.25m x 0.19m x 0.15m. On the northeast side of the wall, and its outer face, the lower observed course of the foundation was stepped out allowing the construction of an inset facing course. This was built of rough limestone blocks, broadly rectangular, crudely dressed on the outer face, 0.40m x 0.30m x 0.23m in size where clearly observed, and set on edge on the stepped foundation. No bonding agent was present. A single course of smaller, flat-placed rough tabular limestone blocks, also without bonding agent, was conserved behind the facing stones on the higher part of the foundation. The absence of bonding agent in the facing stones and upper part of the structure may indicate a re-build of the original wall.

- 4.3.5 The date of this wall was not established. No dateable material was present within its construction, and the small quantities of CBM present within the service trenches would not provide viable dating given the extent of the modern disturbance. Although following an orientation close to that of the current barn, it is not clear that it constitutes an earlier phase of the present building and may belong to a previous construction occupying this plot.
- 4.3.6 [2/001] is a phase of the threshold for the current door of the barn, immediately predating the modern threshold. It is situated immediately to the outside of the door stanchions and extends in length to where the wall curves out from these stanchions on either side of the door, a distance of 3.55m. It is built of a single course of bull-nosed bricks, one row wide, 0.75m x 0.23m x 0.12m in size and set on edge. The bonding agent is a light grey fine mortar. The bricks are set into a concrete plinth 0.15m deep which sits directly on the conserved wall base [2/002]. The threshold lies near flush with the concrete, projecting from its surface only 3cm centimetres. The gate stop for the outer iron gate of the doorway is built into this. This feature may correspond to a Victorian threshold of the building, but no clear dating evidence is available (Figure 4).

4.4 Trench 3 (fieldwork dates 25.11.14)

- 4.4.1 Trench 3, located inside the upstanding building was entirely disturbed by modern services.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the watching brief at Knole Estate, Kent. Finds were all washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. They were subsequently quantified by count and weight (Table 6) and were bagged by material and context. Packaging and storage was carried out following IFA guidelines (2008). No further conservation is required.

Context	Pottery	Wt (g)	CBM	Wt (g)	Bone	Wt (g)	Stone	Wt (g)	Copp	Wt (g)
[1/003]	1	32	2	142					1	18
[1/007]	3	70			24	418				
[1/007/8]	2	22	4	64	6	32	9	148		
[1/0011]			8	174	2	30	1	4		
Total	6	124	14	380	32	480	10	152	1	18

Table 6 Summary of the finds assemblage

5.2 The Pottery by Luke Barber

5.2.1 The archaeological work recovered just five sherds of pottery from the site all of which consists of local glazed red earthenwares of the 18th to 19th centuries. The earliest sherd consists of a somewhat abraded club rim from a notably sandy bowl likely to be of the first three quarters of the 18th century (context [1/007]/[1/008]). This same deposit also produced a finer bowl sherd (which conjoins with that in context [1/007]) with a better internal green-brown glaze, more typical of the mid/late 18th to 19th centuries. Three fresh pieces (69g) of this bowl were recovered from [1/007]. Context [1/003] produced a partial rim from another bowl in a similar fabric but with a clear (tan) glaze.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Materials by Susan Pringle

5.3.1 The CBM assemblage consists of 15 fragments of roof tile weighing 354g. All the material was severely abraded but probably included medieval and early post medieval tiles. All the tile has been retained.

5.3.2 Five tile fabrics were identified. Fabrics T1, T2, T3 and T4 had light orange fabrics containing inclusions of calcium carbonate and red iron rich material. Fabrics T1 and T2 had fine moulding sand; fabrics T3 and T4 had coarse moulding sand containing rose quartz. Fabric T5 contained abundant fine black iron oxide inclusions, probably indicating a different clay source.

5.3.3 Context [1/003]

This context contained two fragments of tile in fabric T1 one of which was overfired with a reduced core.

5.3.4 Contexts [1/007/008]

This context contained 5 fragments of tile, two of which were conjoining. Fabrics T1, T2 and T3 were present.

5.3.5 Context [1/011]

This context contained eight fragments of roof tile, one of which in fabric T1 had part of an angular nail hole present. All fabrics were present in this context.

5.3.6 Summary

The tile assemblage appeared to contain small quantities of abraded roof tiles from different periods and various sources. The tile cannot be closely dated but is consistent with dates between c.1200 and 1700AD.

5.4 Geological Material by Luke Barber

5.4.1 Two contexts at the site produced stone, the vast majority of which is natural to the site. The assemblage from context [1/007/008] contains weathered Lower Greensand chert (4/45g), Lower Greensand 'Haddock-type' sandstone (1/3g) and Ferruginous Carstone (2/91g), also from the Lower greensand series. The single piece of coal (3g) from this deposit is the only non-local stone from the site. The stone from [1/011] consists of a single 4g fragment of Lower Greensand chert.

5.5 The Slag by Luke Barber

5.5.1 Context [7/8] produced a 4g fragment of partially burnt coal/clinker, undoubtedly of late post-medieval date.

5.6 The Metalwork by Trista Clifford

5.6.1 A highly corroded copper alloy object weighing 18g was recovered from context [3]. The object, possibly a vessel fragment, consists of sheet copper alloy with a folded, thickened edge/rim below which are three relief pressed circular motifs at regular intervals. The fragment measures 61 x 36mm with a thickness of 2.3mm at the edge, thinning to 1mm at the broken edge. The fragment is clearly part of a larger object and may form part of an architectural element, or a larger vessel. It cannot be closely dated but a post medieval date is likely.

5.7 The Animal Bone by Gemma Ayton

5.7.1 An archaeological watching brief on the Knole estate, Sevenoaks, Kent produced an animal bone assemblage containing 32 fragments of bone weighing 480g. The bone has been hand-collected from three contexts including [1/007], [1/07/08] and [1/011]. The bone is in moderate condition with evidence of surface weathering but no complete bones remaining. The majority of the assemblage, 25 specimens, derives from context [1/007] and includes large-mammal long-bone and rib fragments as well as a butchered, cattle astragalus. Cut marks were also noted on two of the large-mammal long-bone fragments suggesting that the assemblage derives from butchery waste. Context [1/011] contains two fragments of large mammal rib and context [1/007/008] contains large-mammal vertebrae and ribs.

5.7.2 Due to the size and condition of the assemblage, it holds no potential for further analysis and no further work is required.

5.8 Summary

- 5.8.1 Pottery consists of a single type and is of 18th-19th century date; the CBM slightly earlier but probably residual. This small assemblage represents domestic refuse and butchery waste.

6.0 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The watching brief excavations reached a depth of 0.90m. The underlying natural sand (Hythe Beds) was exposed in Trench 1.
- 6.2 The watching brief exposed two areas of archaeological interest both situated to the eastern side of the barn.
- 6.2 At a distance of 6.5m from the north-eastern wall of the barn, and identified over a distance of 4.0m parallel to it, was an area of 18th to 19th activity, characterised by occupation dumps, demolition spreads and a possible linear cut. Some residual abraded fragments of medieval and early post-medieval CBM testify to the known earlier periods of activity at Knole house
- 6.3 A short segment of northwest to southeast aligned wall was exposed to the immediate exterior of the eastern door of the barn. Projecting 1.30m to the exterior of the modern threshold, it extended 0.10m beneath this. It does not represent a foundation for the walls of the present building but would appear to belong to an earlier, at present, undated phase of construction following a similar orientation and alignment. The construction material is, however, similar in type to that of which the barn was originally built.
- 6.4 At the eastern door, a threshold predating that currently in use was identified. Built of black bull-nosed bricks laid on edge set into concrete, it belongs to the modern period.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank the National Trust for commissioning the work and for their advice and guidance throughout the project.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	KTC 13					
Identification Name and Address	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Knole House Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 0RP					
County, District &/or Borough	Sevenoaks, Kent					
OS Grid Refs.	553900 154200					
Geology	Hythe Beds (sandstone and limestone)					
Arch. South-East Project Number	6456					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief ✓	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other <i>Listed Building</i>		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 19.11.13 to 22.11.13	Other		
Sponsor/Client	National Trust					
Project Manager	Jon Sygrave/Jim Stevenson					
Project Supervisor	Rachel Cruse					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief along a new service trench at Knole Estate, Sevenoaks, Kent (NGR 5539 1542), between 19th and 25th November 2013. The works consisted of the monitoring of the excavation of a narrow service trench and a small area excavation in the entrance of the western wing of Stable Court (known as the barn). Occupation layers of 18th to 19th Century date were identified in the service trench and a wall, probably pre-dating the existing barn, was recorded in the small area excavation.</i></p>						

OASIS ID: archaeol6-169339**Project details**

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Knole House Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 0RP
Short description of the project	Archaeology South-East was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief along a new service trench at Knole Estate, Sevenoaks, Kent (NGR 5539 1542), between 19th and 25th November 2013. The works consisted of the monitoring of the excavation of a narrow service trench and a small area excavation in the entrance of the western wing of Stable Court (known as the barn). Occupation layers of 18th to 19th Century date were identified in the service trench and a wall, probably pre-dating the existing barn, was recorded in the small area excavation.
Project dates	Start: 19-11-2013 End: 22-11-2013
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	6456 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	KTC13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Development type	Service infrastructure (e.g. sewage works, reservoir, pumping station, etc.)
Prompt	Listed Building Consent
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT SEVENOAKS SEVENOAKS Knole
Postcode	TN15 0RP
Study area	50.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 539 542 51.2656104705 0.206207515759 51 15 56 N 000 12 22 E Point

Project creators

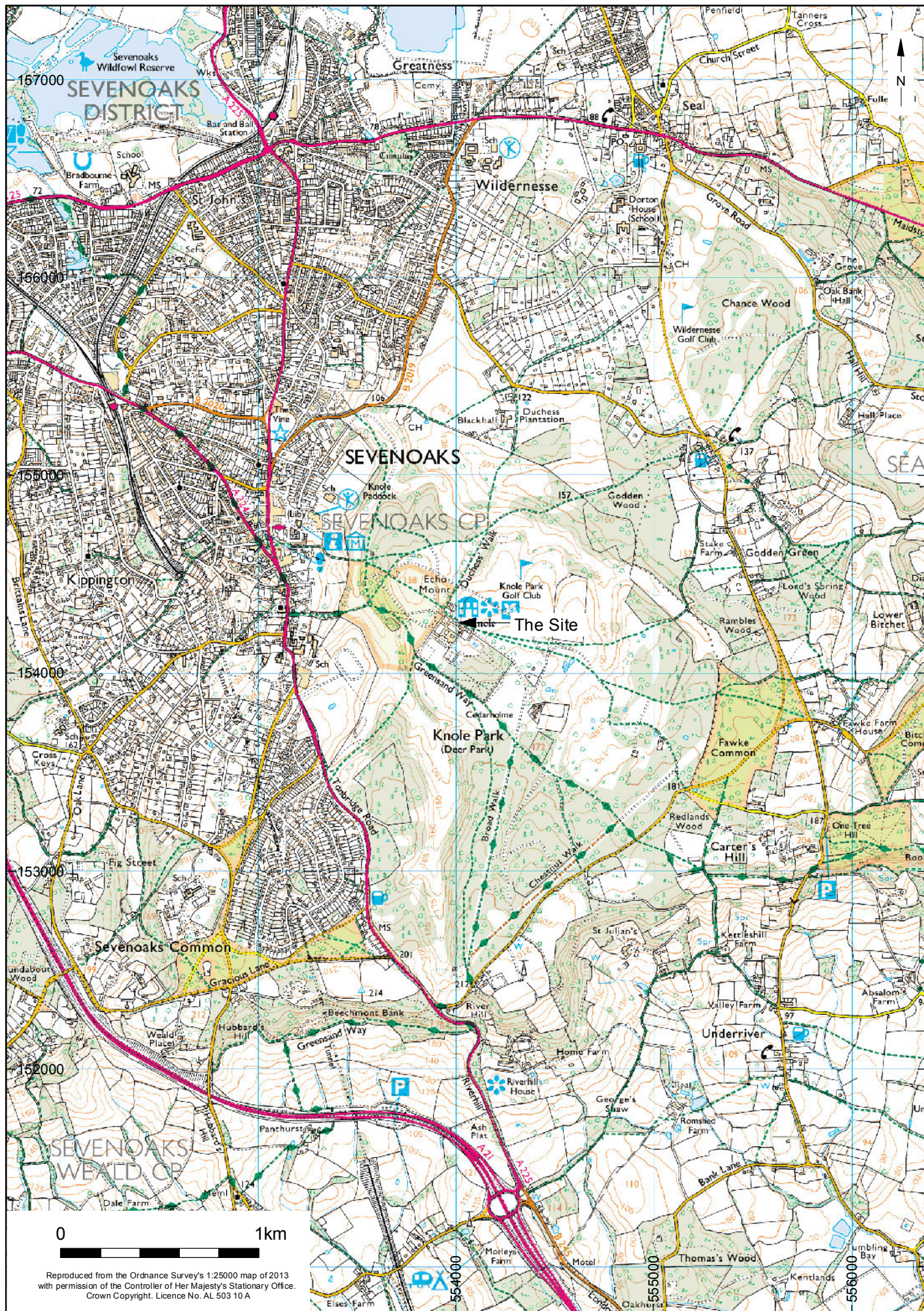
Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	National Trust
Project design originator	Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group
Project director/manager	Jon Sygrave

Project supervisor Rachel Cruse
Type of sponsor/funding body National Trust

Project archives

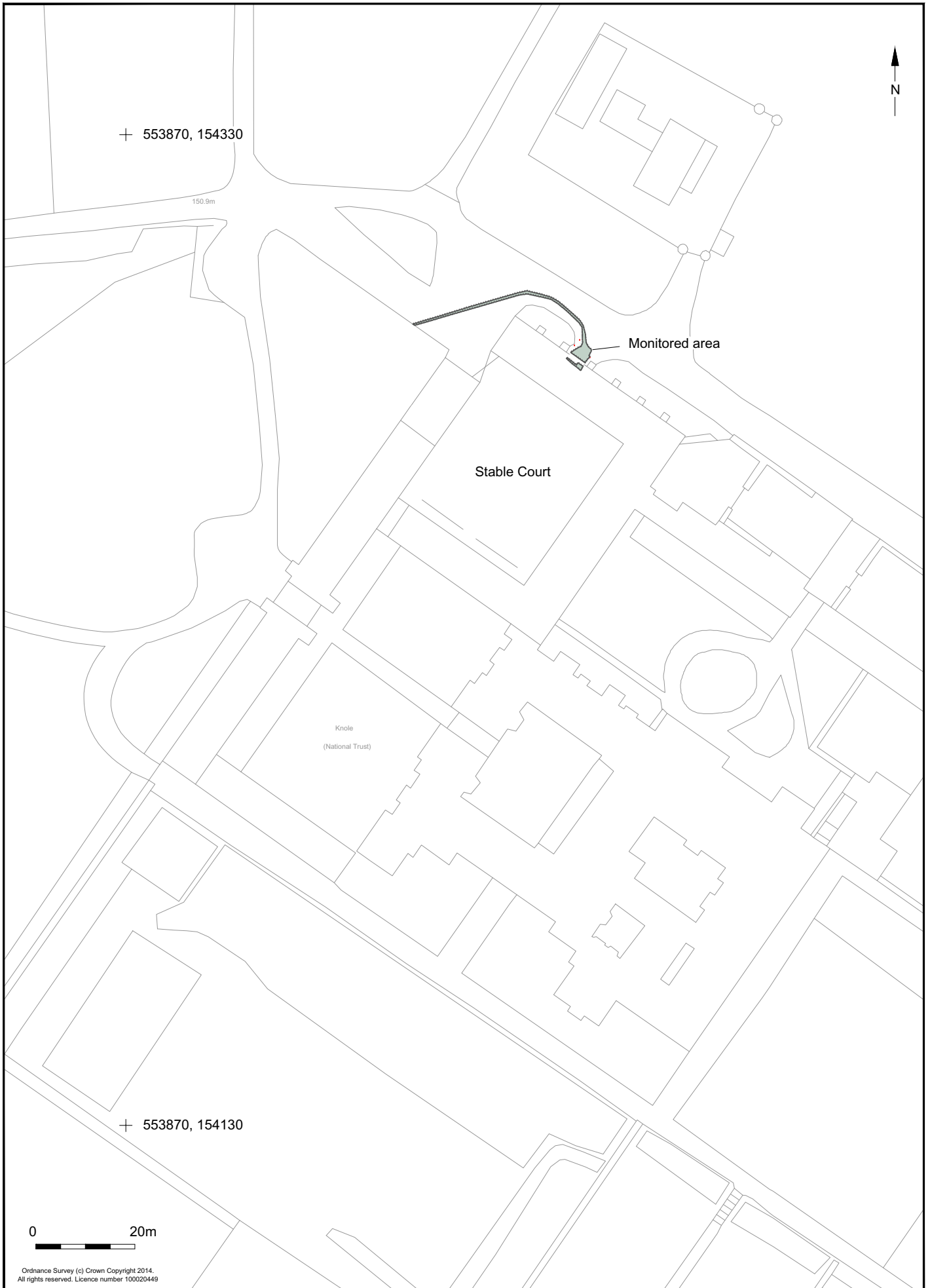
Physical Archive recipient National Trust
Digital Archive recipient National Trust
Paper Archive recipient National Trust

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Entered on 23 January 2014



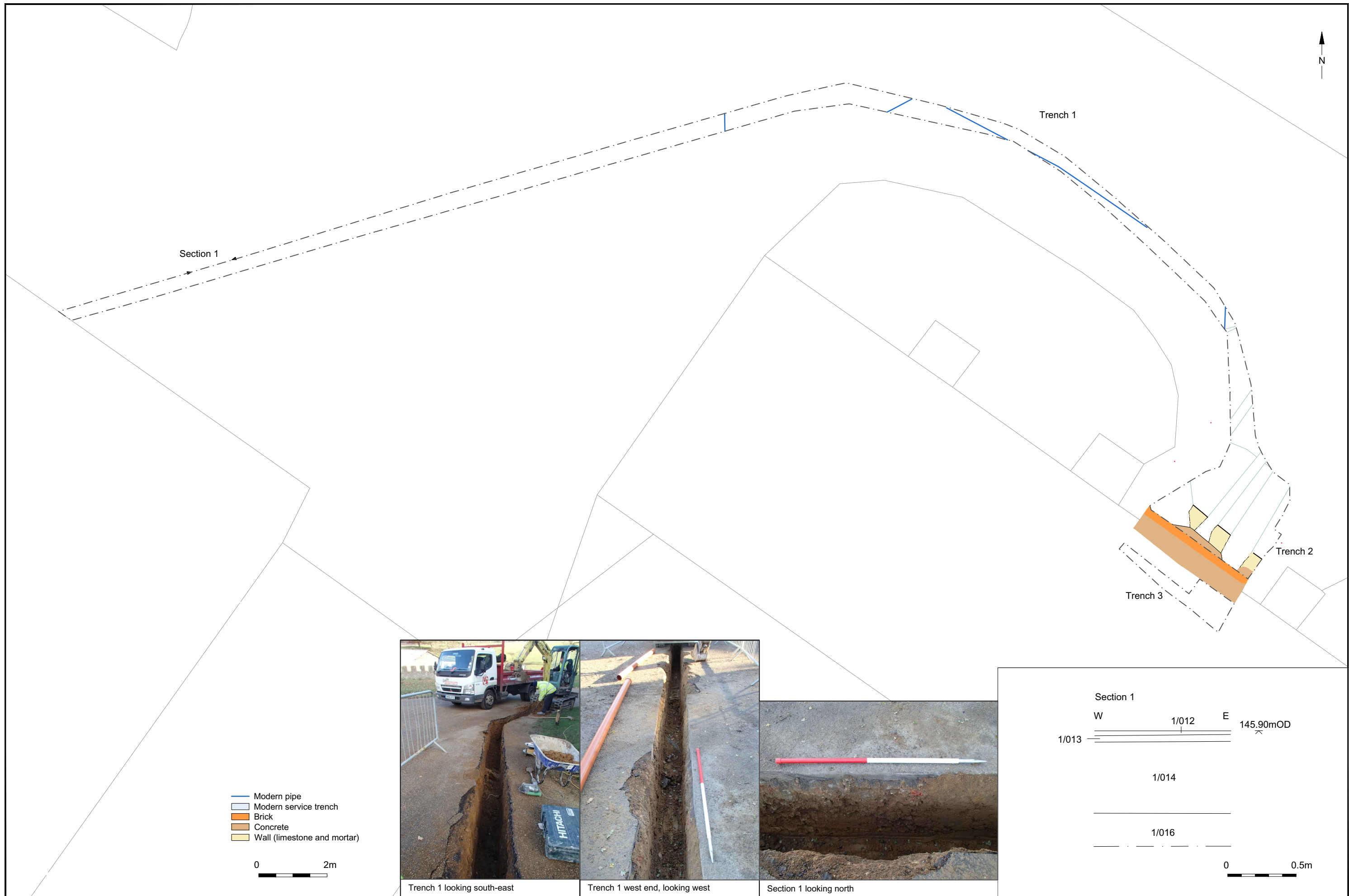
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© Archaeology South-East		Knole House Knole, Sevenoaks		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 6456	December 2013	Site location		
Report Ref: 2014033	Drawn by: RC			



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© Archaeology South-East		Knole House, Knole, Sevenoaks	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 6456	December 2013	Monitored area	
Report Ref: 2014033	Drawn by: RMC		



- Modern pipe
- Modern service trench
- Brick
- Concrete
- Wall (limestone and mortar)

0 2m



Trench 1 looking south-east



Trench 1 west end, looking west



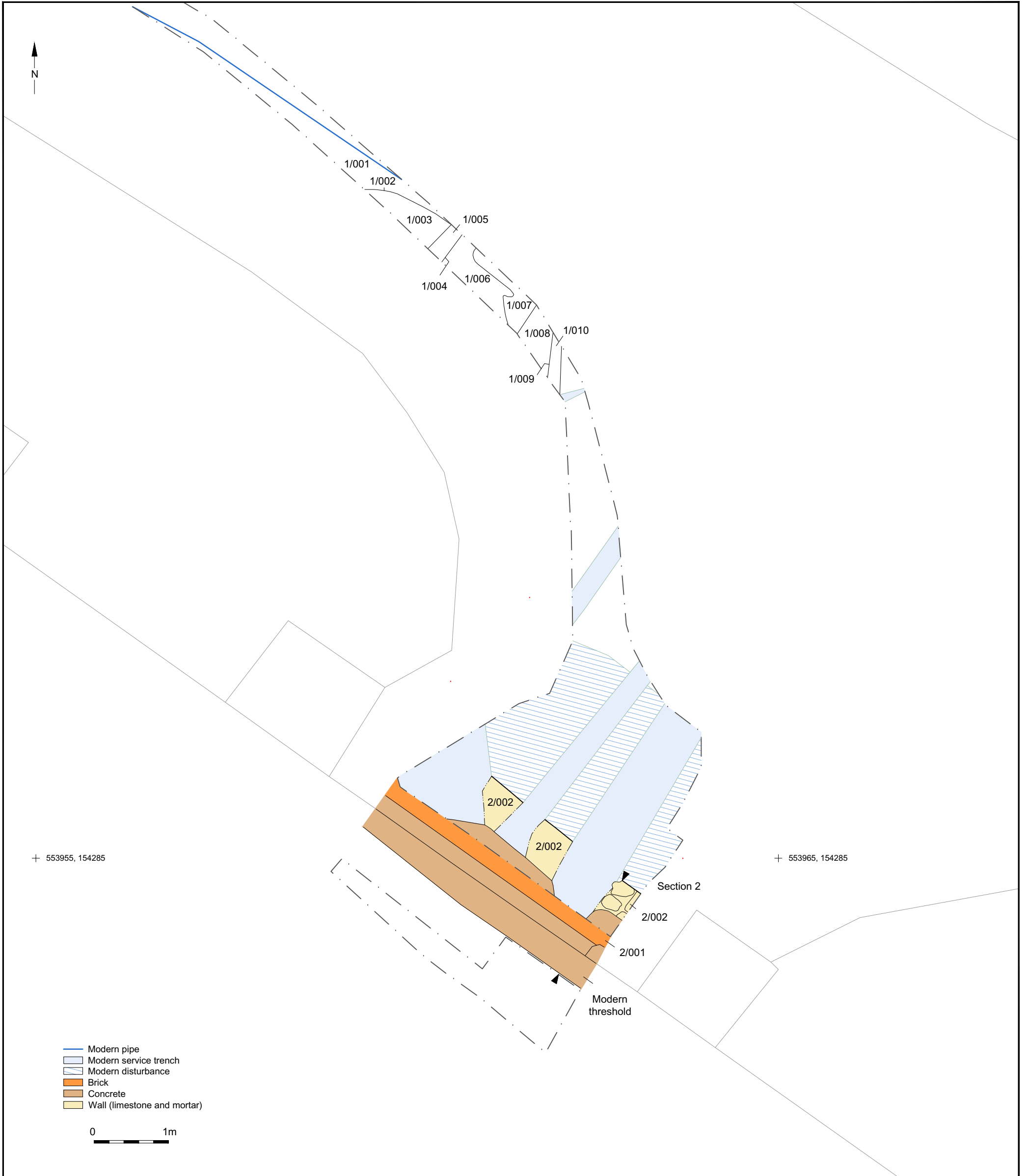
Section 1 looking north

Section 1
 W 1/012 E 145.90mOD
 1/013

1/014

1/016

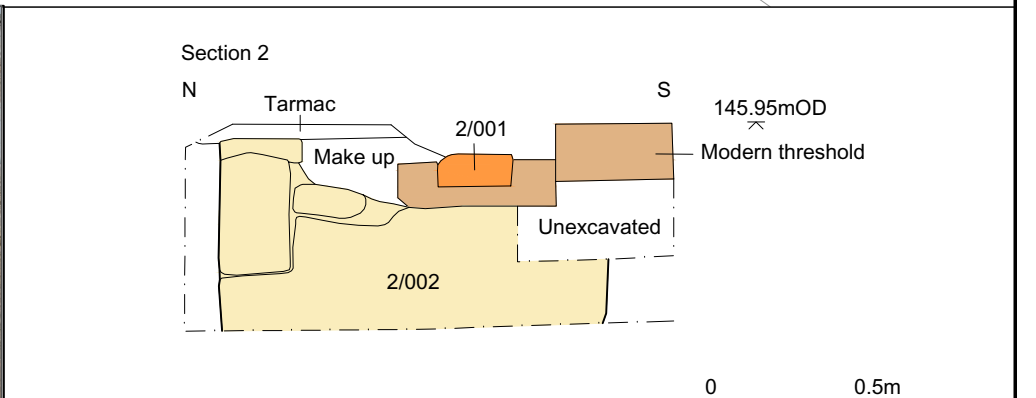
0 0.5m



South facing shot of trench 2, 2/001 and 2/002



South facing shot of wall 2/002



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