

**An Archaeological Evaluation at
Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent**

DRAFT

Planning Ref: TW/06/TEMP/0028

**NGR: TQ 7893 3779
NGR: 578935 137798**

**Project No: 2601
Site Code: SPS 09**

**ASE Report No: 2009175
OASIS ID: archaeol6-67638**

**Written by Dylan Hopkinson MA
with contributions by Lucy Allott,
Luke Barber, Sarah Porteus, and Elke Raemen**

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Abstract

An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent (NGR: 578935 137798) between the 19th and 23rd November. The work was commissioned by the Diocesan Architectural Services, on behalf of their client Sissinghurst CE Primary School, Kent.

The site lies to the west of Common Road which broadly traces the supposed route of a Roman road linking the Roman settlements at Maidstone and Hastings. The site has been used as agricultural fields since at least the late eighteenth century, and lies slightly to the northwest of the historic medieval core of Sissinghurst.

Nineteen trenches were excavated with a cumulative length of 380 metres. The work was to assess the archaeological potential of the site in advance of the construction of a new 5 classroom primary school with nursery, landscaping and the creation of car parking.

A single pit of probable 17th to 19th century date and an undated small pit or posthole were recorded. Recovered topsoil/subsoil finds ranged from late medieval to post-medieval in date. Within all trenches the topsoil/subsoil deposits overlay the natural geology, Tunbridge Wells Sands which was encountered at a maximum height of 82.52m AOD in the east of the site falling away to 79.51m OD in the south.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by Diocesan Architectural Services, on behalf of their client Sissinghurst CE Primary School, Kent to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land to the southwest of Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent (NGR 578935 137798; Figure 1).

1.2 Planning background

1.2.1 The proposed development involves the construction of a new 5 classroom primary school with nursery, landscaping and car parking. Developer plans of the proposed development were not available at the time of publication.

1.2.2 Planning consent was obtained for the development of the land (Planning Ref: TW/06/TEMP/0028); permission was subject to an archaeological planning condition advised by the Heritage Conservation Group at Kent County Council, to ensure that features of archaeological interest were properly examined and recorded. This condition states that:

'No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.'

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.'

1.2.3 Due to the archaeological potential of the site (section 2.0) the Heritage Conservation Group (HCG) of Kent County Council (KCC) Archaeological Officer, Adam Single proposed an archaeological mitigation strategy in the form of an archaeological evaluation. A *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation* was then prepared (Single, A. 2006), which outlined the aims and objectives for the fieldwork. This specification required the excavation of nineteen trenches, totalling 380 metres in combined length.

1.2.4 All work was carried out in accordance with this document and with the relevant Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance papers (IfA 2001).

1.3 Scope of the report

- 1.3.1 This report details the results of archaeological evaluation works on the site. The work was undertaken between 19th and 23rd November 2009 by Dylan Hopkinson (Archaeologist), Rob Cole (Surveyor), Dave Honess and Karine Le Hegarat (Assistant Archaeologists).
- 1.3.2 The fieldwork was managed by Neil Griffin (Project Manager) and the post-excavation analysis was managed by Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift (Project Manager).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

- 2.1.1 The site is situated to the north of Sissinghurst (Figure 1) on the western side of Common Road in orchards and fields lying to the north and west of Skinner Gardens and Cleaver Close (Figure 2).
- 2.1.2 The British Geographical Survey Map (Sheet 304) for the area shows the underlying geology to be Tunbridge Wells Sands.

2.2 Archaeological and historical potential

- 2.2.1 The site lies on land that is known to have been fields since at least the late eighteenth century and has not been previously developed, so any archaeological remains which existed were likely to be relatively undisturbed.
- 2.2.2 The medieval historic core of Sissinghurst lies approximately 500 metres to the southeast of the site.
- 2.2.3 A post-medieval windmill, now not present, is known to have stood 80 metres to the west of the site.
- 2.2.4 The site is bounded to the northeast by Common road which is thought to broadly follow the route of the Roman road between the Roman settlements at Maidstone and Hastings. Remains of a Roman metalled road surface were identified during road works outside the Bull Inn to the southeast. Ordnance Survey maps show this road leading away from the inn towards the south-east; however the north-westwards continuation is still conjectural. An alternate suggestion put forward by a local resident is that the route of the Roman road passes through the site along the course of what is now a public footpath before joining up with the road observed at the Bull Inn (Adam Single *pers. comm.*).
- 2.2.5 There has been no previous phase of archaeological investigation on the proposed development site.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

- 3.1.1 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the Specification (Single, A. 2006) and the relevant Standards and Guidance of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 2001).
- 3.1.2 The methodology comprised the mechanical excavation, under archaeological supervision, of 19 evaluation trenches, totalling some 360m of trenching, as set out in Figure 2.
- 3.1.3 Trenches were excavated by a JCB JS130 machine fitted with a flat-bladed 1.8m wide ditching bucket. Excavation was undertaken in spits of no more than 0.10m to the top of the underlying natural substrate, or to the top of archaeological deposits, whichever was higher. The clean excavated surface was then left open overnight before final inspection and recording. Suspected features were then investigated by hand excavation over the following days.
- 3.1.4 All deposits were recorded using ASE standard context sheets, with colours recorded by visual inspection. Sections were drawn at appropriate scales on plastic drafting film.
- 3.1.5 A full photographic record was made.
- 3.1.6 Spoil heaps and trench bases were scanned using a metal detector and by eye, for unstratified artefacts.
- 3.1.7 All features were drawn in plan at a scale of 1:20 on multi-context trench drawings and section drawings of the excavated profiles were drawn at a scale of 1:10, sample section drawings of the overlying deposits were also drawn at 1:10 scale.
- 3.1.8 After completion of all excavation and recording, the trenches were mechanically backfilled and compacted.

3.2 Excavation aims and objectives

- 3.2.1 The aims and objectives of the excavation were outlined in the Specification (Single, A. 2006).
- 3.2.2 The overall aim of the excavation was to establish the extent and condition of any archaeological deposits on the site and to ascertain their depth below ground surface, form, date, character and significance, and to estimate the impact of the proposed development on any such remains.

3.4 Status of site archive

3.4.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at the local museum in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

3.4.2 Table 1. Quantification of site archive

Number of Contexts / Context Sheets	30
Context Register Sheets	1
Photographic Record Sheets	6
Drawing Register Sheets	2
Levels Record Sheets	2
Trial Trench Record Sheets	19
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	2
Photographs	136
Bulk finds	116 fragments CBM
	20 fragments pottery
	1 piece of stone
	2 pieces of slag
	1 piece of glass
Registered finds	42 copper alloy objects
	10 lead objects

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Natural Geology and Overburden

- 4.1.1 The natural geology across the site comprised friable light brownish orange silty clay with some patches of localised variation in colour with areas of white, yellow and bluish grey. This was encountered at 82.52m AOD in the west of the site (Trench 1) and gradually sloped down to 79.51m AOD in the northeast of the site (Trench 7).
- 4.1.2 The overburden observed in all trenches consisted of a layer friable mid greyish brown silty clay subsoil with white, yellow and orange mottles. This generally measured between 0.09m and 0.41m in depth across the site but was not observed in Trench 8. Finds from this layer were recovered from most trenches and mainly comprised ceramic building material, mostly peg tile dating to the 17th to 19th centuries and a small amount of peg tile dating to the 19th to 20th centuries. Small amounts of pottery were also recovered and dated to the 16th to 17th centuries and to the 19th century.
- 4.1.3 The subsoil was in turn overlain by a layer of friable mid yellowish brown silt with a large organic component; this topsoil layer was present across the whole site and measured between 0.09m and 0.30m in depth. Finds from the topsoil were similar to those from the subsoil and were mostly ceramic building material, peg tile from the 17th to 19th centuries and a small amount dating to the 19th to 20th centuries. Small quantities of pottery were also recovered with dates ranging from the mid 16th to 17th centuries and mid 18th to 19th centuries.

4.2 Trench 1 (Figure 3)

4.2.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.46m
 Orientation: Northeast - Southwest

4.2.2 Table 2. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 1

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
1/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.15m
1/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.31m
1/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.2.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (1/003) was encountered between 82.32m and 82.52m AOD. This was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site.

No archaeological features were recorded and a single land drain was observed cutting the sequence aligned northwest to southeast.

4.3 Trench 2 (Figure 4)

4.3.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.49m
 Orientation: East - West

4.3.2 Table 3. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 2

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
2/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.18m
2/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.31m
2/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.3.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (2/003) was encountered between 81.94m and 82.45m AOD. This was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site.

A single land drain was observed cutting the sequence towards the east of the trench which was aligned north to south and lay within a larger modern drainage cut.

4.4 Trench 3 (Figures 5 to 7)

4.4.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.42m
 Orientation: Northeast - Southwest

4.4.2 Table 4. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 3

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
3/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.24m
3/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.20m
3/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-
3/004	Fill?	Natural variation	Tr.	0.40m	0.05m
3/005	Cut?	Natural variation	Tr.	0.40m	0.05m

4.4.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (3/003) was encountered between 82.09m and 82.15m AOD. A potential cut feature was investigated at the north-eastern end of the trench but was found to be a variation in the colour of the natural (3/005).

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site.

A single land drain was observed cutting the sequence towards the west of the trench which was aligned north to south.

4.5 Trench 4 (Figure 8)

4.5.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.44m
 Orientation: North - South

4.5.2 Table 5. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 4

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
4/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.24m
4/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
4/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.5.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (4/003) was encountered between 81.66m and 81.86m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site. There were no potential archaeological features that warranted investigation.

4.6 Trench 5 (Figure 9)

4.6.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.47m
 Orientation: East - West

4.6.2 Table 6. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 5

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
5/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.24m
5/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.28m
5/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.6.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (5/003) was encountered between 80.76m and 81.52m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

4.7 Trench 6 (Figure 10)

4.7.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.60m
 Orientation: East - West

4.7.2 Table 7. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 6

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
6/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
6/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.29m
6/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.7.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (6/003) was encountered between 79.56m and 80.27m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

A single land drain was observed cutting the stratigraphic sequence aligned northeast to southwest.

4.8 Trench 7 (Figure 11)

4.8.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.53m
 Orientation: North - South

4.8.2 Table 8. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 7

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
7/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.30m
7/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.37m
7/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.8.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (7/003) was encountered between 79.51m and 79.72m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

Three land drains were observed cutting the stratigraphic sequence towards the southern end of the trench these were aligned northeast to southwest and northwest to southeast.

4.9 Trench 8 (Figures 12 and 13)

4.9.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.30m
 Orientation: East - West

4.9.2 Table 9. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 8

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
8/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.35m
8/002	Void	Void	Tr.	Tr.	-
8/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-
8/004	Cut?	Natural variation	0.83m	Tr.	0.06m
8/005	Fill?	Natural variation	0.83m	Tr.	0.06m

4.9.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (8/003) was encountered between 78.36m and 79.02m AOD. A potential linear cut (8/004) was investigated at the eastern end of the trench aligned north to south but was found to be a variation in the colour of the natural.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

Two land drains was observed cutting the stratigraphic sequence aligned northeast to southwest and northwest to southeast.

4.10 Trench 9 (Figure 14)

4.10.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.61m
 Orientation: North - South

4.10.2 Table 10. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 9

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
9/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
9/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
9/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.10.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (9/003) was encountered between 79.72m and 79.88m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

A single land drain was observed cutting the stratigraphic sequence towards the northern end of the trench which was aligned northwest to southeast.

4.11 Trench 10 (Figure 15)

4.11.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.48m
 Orientation: East - West

4.11.2 Table 11. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 10

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
10/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.23m
10/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25m
10/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-
10/004	Cut?	Burnt root	0.15m	Tr.	0.18m
10/005	Fill?	Burnt root	0.55m	Tr.	0.18m

4.11.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (10/003) was encountered between 81.15m and 81.61m AOD. A potential curved cut (10/004) was investigated in the middle of the trench but was found to be irregular and undercut and was interpreted as a burnt out tree root.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

4.12 Trench 11 (Figures 16 to 18)

4.12.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.45m
 Orientation: East - West

4.12.2 Table 12. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 11

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
11/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.23m
11/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.25m
11/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-
11/004	Cut	Pit cut	0.15m	Tr.	0.18m
11/005	Fill	Pit fill	0.55m	Tr.	0.18m
11/006	Fill	Pit fill			

4.12.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (11/003) was encountered between 81.70m and 82.03m AOD. The natural was cut by a large irregular shallow pit (11/004) which was filled with two deposits. Firstly a soft pale yellowy brown sandy silt (11/005) containing clay tobacco pipe fragments dating to the late 17th to mid 18th centuries and 17th to 19th century brick fragments. This was overlain by a secondary fill of firm greyish brown clay (11/006) containing peg tile from the 17th to 19th centuries and 19th century field drain segments. The finds from this feature indicate that the pit is of post medieval origin. The pit was sealed by the subsoil and topsoil of the site.

A land drain was also identified in the southern extent of the trench aligned northeast to southwest.

4.13 Trench 12 (Figure 19)

4.13.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.49m
 Orientation: North - South

4.13.2 Table 13. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 12

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
12/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
12/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
12/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.13.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (12/003) was encountered between 80.91m and 81.21m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

A single land drain was observed cutting the sequence at the southern end of the trench which was aligned northwest to southeast.

4.14 Trench 13 (Figures 20 to 22)

4.14.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.42m
 Orientation: East - West

4.14.2 Table 14. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 13

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
13/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
13/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
13/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-
13/004	Fill	Gully Fill	1.49m	0.24	0.07m
13/005	Cut	Gully Cut	1.49m	0.24	0.07m

4.14.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (13/003) was encountered between 81.49m and 81.67m AOD.

At the western end of the trench two potential features were investigated that proved to be of natural origin; a tree bowl and irregular root disturbance. These natural features were overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

Two modern features were observed cutting the sequence also at the western end of the trench. These were a land drain and a shallow gully that was investigated to confirm its origin (13/005); both of these features were identically aligned roughly north to south.

4.15 Trench 14 (Figure 23)

4.15.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.49m
 Orientation: North - South

4.15.2 Table 15. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 14

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
14/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
14/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
14/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.15.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (14/003) was encountered between 81.90m and 82.11m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

4.16 Trench 15 (Figures 24 to 26)

4.16.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.53m
 Orientation: East - West

4.16.2 Table 16. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 15

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
15/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
15/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
15/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-
15/004	Cut?	Natural variation	3.00m	0.35m	0.22m
15/005	Fill?	Natural variation	3.00m	0.35m	0.22m
15/006	Cut?	Natural variation	3.00m	0.80m	0.35m
15/007	Fill?	Natural variation	3.00m	0.80m	0.35m
15/008	Cut	Pit / Posthole cut	0.50m	0.50m	0.17m
15/009	Fill	Pit / Posthole fill	0.50m	0.50m	0.17m

4.16.3 Summary

This trench was divided into two to preserve a reptile exclusion barrier that crossed the trench midway.

In the eastern side of the trench the natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (15/003) was encountered at 82.14m AOD and was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site, no features were identified worth investigating and no archaeology was recorded.

In the western half of the trench the natural was encountered at 82.14m AOD. A large irregular feature was explored with two investigative slots but was found to be a natural variation in the natural deposits (15/004), (15/006). A single posthole or small pit was recorded cutting into this variation in natural (15/008), and measured 0.50 metres in diameter and was 0.17 metres deep. The fill was very similar to the subsoil and contained no finds. This feature was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the. A single land drain cut the sequence aligned northwest to southeast.

4.17 Trench 16 (Figure 27)

4.17.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.55m
 Orientation: North - South

4.17.2 Table 17. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 16

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
16/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
16/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
16/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-
16/004	Cut	Modern drain cut	Tr.	0.62m	0.20m
16/005	Fill	Drain pipe	Tr.	-	-
16/006	Fill	Drain cut backfill	Tr.	0.62m	0.20m

4.17.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (16/003) was encountered between 81.93m and 82.08m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

A modern cut for a waste water drain was observed cutting the sequence (16/004) and was also seen to continue on the same alignment in trenches 18 and 19.

4.18 Trench 17 (Figure 28)

4.18.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.45m
 Orientation: East - West

4.18.2 Table 18. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 17

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
17/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
17/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
17/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-

4.18.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (17/003) was encountered between 81.70m and 82.22m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

4.19 Trench 18 (Figures 29 to 32)

4.19.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.40m
 Orientation: East - West

4.19.2 Table 19. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 18

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
18/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
18/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
18/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-
18/004	Cut	Modern drain cut	Tr.	0.90m	0.56m
18/005	Fill	Drain cut fill	Tr.	0.90m	0.56m
18/006	Fill?	Natural feature	3.83m	0.70m	0.55m
18/007	Cut?	Natural feature	3.83m	0.70m	0.55m

4.19.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (18/003) was encountered between 81.37m and 81.53m AOD.

An irregular linear feature was investigated in the southern end of the trench aligned northwest to southeast (18/007). In plan this feature was highly variable in width and was severely undercut with an inclination of axis of 45°. This feature appeared to be of natural origin due to its highly irregular form and undercut, possibly formed as a crack caused by drying out of the natural, or through animal burrowing.

This feature was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

A single modern drain (18/004) was investigated cutting the sequence aligned east to west and appears to be the same waste water drain identified in trenches 16 and 19, the yellowish brown silty clay back fill to this drain cut contained pottery from the early or mid 16th century to 17th century, some 19th century pot and peg tile dating to the 17th to 19th centuries.

4.20 Trench 19 (Figures 33 to 34)

4.20.1 Length: 20.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.57m
 Orientation: East - West

4.20.2 Table 20. List of Recorded Contexts – Trench 19

Number	Type	Description	Max. length	Max. width	Max. depth
19/001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.22m
19/002	Deposit	Subsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.41m
19/003	Deposit	Natural	Tr.	Tr.	-
19/004	Cut	Modern drain cut	Tr.	0.90m	0.50m
19/005	Fill	Drain cut fill	Tr.	0.90m	0.50m

4.20.3 Summary

The natural Tunbridge Wells Sands (19/003) was encountered between 80.47m and 80.96m AOD.

The natural was overlain by the subsoil and topsoil of the site and no archaeology was observed.

A large cut feature was observed along the entire length of the trench extending in width beyond the trench to the south (19/004). Investigation of this feature proved it to be a modern waste water drain. This feature appeared to be the same drain identified in trenches 16 and 19 and appears to connect the drainage systems of the developments at 'Cramptons' and 'Cleavers'.

5.0 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

5.1 Assemblage

5.1.1 Table 21: Quantification of the finds from the evaluation

Context	Pot	Wt (g)	CBM	Wt (g)	Stone	Wt (g)	Cu.AI	Wt (g)	Pb	Wt (g)	Slag	Wt (g)	Glass	Wt (g)	CTP	Wt (g)	Charcoal	Wt (g)
1/001	2	112	2	42														
3/002	1	24	1	46														
4/001			2	56														
4/002			3	134														
6/001							1	12										
6/002			5	114														
7/002			5	150			3	30			2	34						
8/001			6	128			4	18	1	8								
9/001							4	16										
9/002	1	4	3	240														
10/001	1	94																
10/002			3	60														
11/001			2	62														
11/005			3	12											1	6		
11/006			9	1072														
12/001			6	142														
12/002	1	24	6	202														
13/001			1	82														
13/002			3	184														
13/004			3	8														
3/004	5	54	11	114														
14/002			4	388														
15/001			8	322														
15/002	1	64	3	92														
15/009			1	12														
16/001	3	34	4	42			7	18	6	122								
17/001			4	176														
18/001			1	38			15	76	2	18								
18/002			3	80														
18/005	4	40	9	364	1	6							1	<2			4	2
19/001	1	14	2	34			8	16	1	20								
19/002			5	250														

- 5.1.2 A small assemblage of finds was recovered, mostly from the top-and subsoil. An overview can be found in Table 21. All finds have been washed and dried or air dried as appropriate. The finds have been quantified by count and weight and were bagged by material and context.

5.2 The Pottery by Luke Barber

- 5.2.1 The archaeological work recovered a small assemblage of pottery (20 sherds) from nine individually numbered contexts. The material is in variable condition with sherds sizes ranging from small (< 20mm across) to medium (50mm across). Although most of the material is relatively unabraded some sherds, notably the lower fired examples, are notably abraded though some of this may be due to acidic ground conditions rather than continual reworking.

- 5.2.2 The earliest pottery represented is of the Transitional/early post-medieval periods (11 sherds). Context (15/002) produced an abraded jar base in a well fired fine sand tempered oxidised fabric of probable later 15th- to mid 16th- century date. Context (13/004) produced two sherds in a similar fabric (24g) as well as three (31g) somewhat abraded/acid-attacked oxidised body sherds in a silty medium-fired earthenware. These silty sherds, together with another abraded example in (9/002) are probably of 16th- century date but could be as late as the 17th century. Indeed two similarly tempered sherds, though notably higher fired and including a plate/platter rim, from (18/005) are likely to be of mid 16th- to 17th- century date. Context (18/005) also produced a small probable Frechen stoneware sherd.

- 5.2.3 A few 18th- century sherds are present, most notably from (16/001) which produced a jar bodysherd in glazed red earthenware and a bodysherd from a London stoneware tankard. The remaining sherds can be placed in a late 18th- to mid 19th- century date range. These include a number of local glazed red earthenwares (eg a fresh jar rim from (12/002)), unglazed red earthenware flower pots (3/002) and two probable intrusive pearlware sherds in (18/005).

5.2.4 Pottery spot dates

01/001 – mid C18th – 19th

03/002 – C19th

09/002 – mid C16th – 17th

12/002 – C19th

13/004 – C16th

15/002 – late C15th – 16th

16/001 – C18th

18/005 – e/m C16th – 17th (x2 intrusive early C19th)

19/001 – mid C16th – 17th

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

- 5.3.1 A total of 116 fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) weighing a total of 4731g were recovered. The bulk of the CBM was represented by post-medieval peg tile with some later brick and tile and a few fragments which could not be dated.

5.3.2 Post-medieval CBM was represented by 95 sherds weighing 4307g. Peg tile of four different fabric types were identified: fabric 1 is a pale orange fabric with sparse red iron rich inclusions; fabric 2 is an orange fabric with abundant irregular voids, which may be burnt organics, with moderate fine to coarse black iron rich inclusions; fabric 3 is an orange fabric with abundant fine quartz with fine cream silt inclusions and coarse red iron rich inclusions. The fourth fabric is typical calcareous Kentish fabric Canterbury Archaeological Trust fabric CAT32. All peg tile in these fabrics date to between the 17th and 19th century. Fragments of post-medieval brick of a similar date were also represented in a red fabric with moderate fine to coarse black iron rich inclusions with pale cream silt inclusions. A complete segment of unglazed ceramic field drain of probable 19th century date was also recovered from context (11/006). Fragments of later post-medieval or modern CBM were represented by the same fabric types with better defined form from improved production techniques these were of 19th or 20th century date and were found in contexts (8/001), (10/002), (12/001), (12/002) and (18/002). The post-medieval and later fabrics by context, form and date are given in table 22.

5.3.3 Some of the ceramic building material was too fragmentary and abraded for date or form to be assigned, this was the case for 10 fragments from contexts (6/002), (13/004), (13/004), (15/001), (15/009) and (18/002).

5.3.4 Table 22: Post-medieval CBM by fabric, form, context and date.

Fabric	Forms	context	Date range represented
1	Peg tile	(4/002), (9/002), (11/006), (12/002), (13/001), (13/002), (13/004), (18/005), (19/001), (19/002)	C17th-C19th
1	Field drain	(11/006)	C19th
2	Peg tile	(1/001), (6/002), (8/001), (12/001), (13/004), (14/002), (15/001), (12/002)	C17th-C19th
3	Peg tile	(4/001), (7/002), (10/002), (11/001), (14/002), (15/001), (17/001), (18/001), (18/005), (19/002)	C17th-C19th
CAT32	Peg tile	(3/002), (7/002), (11/006), (13/004), (14/002), (18/005)	C17th-C19th
B1	brick	(8/001), (9/002), (11/005), (12/002), (16/001), (19/001), (19/002)	C17th-C19th
1 (later form)	Peg tile	(12/002)	C19th-C20th
2 (later form)	Peg tile	(12/001)	C19th-C20th
CAT32 (later form)	Peg tile	(8/001), (10/002), (12/001)	C19th-C20th
B1	Brick	(18/002)	C19th-C20th

5.4 The Metalwork by Elke Raemen

5.4.1 Metalwork was mainly recovered from the topsoil by metal detector. The earliest piece consists of a late medieval to early post-medieval copper-alloy spoon (trench 6).

5.4.2 The earliest button (copper-alloy) dates to the 17th-century (trench 19). Most

others, all in copper-alloy, are of 18th- to 19th-century date. Military buttons include GS (General Service) tunic buttons of late 19th- to early 20th-century date (i.e. trench 19) and a small American, WWI era button (trench 16). A naval button of 19th- to early 20th-century date was also recovered (trench 18).

- 5.4.3 Other dress accessories include trouser or knee (breeches) buckles of 19th- to early 20th-century date (trench 18). A 19th-century horse harness buckle was recovered from trench 18 and subsoil (2) in trench 7 contained a 19th- to early 20th-century horse brass.
- 5.4.4 Also recovered are a 19th-mid 20th-century copper-alloy escutcheon (trench 6), a lead dress or curtain weight of 19th-century date (trench 19), box edging (trench 18), a 19th- to early 20th-century token (trench 8) and a copper-alloy purse clip fragment dating to the 19th to early 20th century. A seal fob dating to the 18th to 19th century was recovered from (7/002).
- 5.4.5 Apart from the buttons, military equipment includes a .303 case (date illegible), a driving band fragment and a badge. The latter is an 8th Southland Regiment (New Zealand) cap badge of WWI era and was recovered from trench 16.
- 5.4.6 Lead waste and strips were recovered from the topsoil in trenches 16, 18 and 19.

5.5 The Metallurgical Remains by Luke Barber

- 5.5.1 Two pieces of iron slag were recovered from context (7/002). Both are undiagnostic of process, however, the density of one would suggest it to more likely derive from smelting.

5.6 Charcoal by Lucy Allott

- 5.6.1 Four small fragments of deciduous oak (*Quercus* sp.) charcoal, weighing 2g, were hand collected from context (18/005). These appear to derive from mature wood and are likely to derive from the same original piece.

5.7 Other Finds by Elke Raemen

- 5.7.1 A clear window glass fragment of late 19th- to 20th-century date was recovered from (18/005). The same context also contained a fragment of coal. In addition, (11/005) contained a late 17th- to mid 18th-century plain clay tobacco pipe (CTP) stem fragment.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1.1 The evaluation strategy was successful in characterising the nature of the archaeological preservation across the site. Overall there was very little in terms of cut features; all the features investigated proved to be either of natural origin or to relate to the 17th to 19th century agricultural activity; a single pit of this date was identified in Trench 11 and a large number of field drains were recorded in most trenches. One other single pit or posthole was identified in Trench 15 but contained no dating evidence.

A later drainage ditch was identified crossing the site from east to west in Trenches 16, 18, and 19 and appeared to relate to domestic developments at 'Cleavers' and 'Cramptons'.

The majority of datable material came from the topsoil and subsoil and revealed largely post medieval activity; however, a medieval to early post-medieval copper-alloy spoon was recovered by metal detection from Trench 6.

There was no evidence that shed any light on the course of the Roman road, however, it was noted that the public footpath that crossed the site was flanked on the eastern side by a low earthwork mound which may testify to an earlier origin of this right of way (figures 35 and 36), this is the course of an alternative route of the Roman road that has been suggested by a local resident (Adam Single *pers comm*).

It was not possible to estimate the impact of the proposed development on the recorded features as no developer plans were available at the time of writing this report.

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Single, A. 2006. – '*Specification for an archaeological evaluation in advance of the construction of a new primary school on land off common road in Sissinghurst near Cranbrook in Kent*'. Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council, August 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Robert Sharp a local metal detectorist affiliated to the Federation of Independent Detectorists, who kindly helped with the topsoil and subsoil inspection.

SMR Summary Form

Site Code	SPS 09					
Identification Name and Address	Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent					
County, District &/or Borough	Tunbridge Wells					
OS Grid Refs.	NGR 578935 137798					
Geology	Tunbridge Wells Sands					
Arch. South-East Project Number	2601					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. ✓	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. ✓ 19-11-09 to 23-11-09	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Diocesan Architectural Services					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Dylan Hopkinson					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other -Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent (NGR: 578935 137798) between the 19th and 23rd November. The work was commissioned by the Diocesan Architectural Services, on behalf of their client Sissinghurst CE Primary School, Kent.</i></p> <p><i>The site lies to the west of Common Road which broadly traces the supposed route of a Roman road linking the Roman settlements at Maidstone and Hastings. The site has been used as agricultural fields since at least the late eighteenth century, and lies slightly to the northwest of the historic medieval core of Sissinghurst.</i></p> <p><i>Nineteen trenches were excavated with a cumulative length of 380 metres. The work was to assess the archaeological potential of the site in advance of the construction of a new 5 classroom primary school with nursery, landscaping and the creation of car parking.</i></p> <p><i>A single pit of probable 17th to 19th century date and an undated small pit or posthole were recorded, Recovered topsoil/subsoil finds ranged from late medieval to post-medieval in date. Within all trenches the topsoil/subsoil deposits overlay the natural geology, Tunbridge Wells Sands which was encountered at a maximum height of 82.52m AOD in the east of the site falling away to 79.51m OD in the south.</i></p>						

OASIS ID: archaeol6-67638

Project details

Project name	Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological evaluation was conducted on land at Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent (NGR: 578935 137798) between the 19th and 23rd November. The work was commissioned by the Diocesan Architectural Services, on behalf of their client Sissinghurst CE Primary School, Kent.</p> <p>The site lies to the west of Common Road which broadly traces the supposed route of a Roman road linking the Roman settlements at Maidstone and Hastings. The site has been used as agricultural fields since at least the late eighteenth century, and lies slightly to the northwest of the historic medieval core of Sissinghurst.</p> <p>Nineteen trenches were excavated with a cumulative length of 380 metres. The work was to assess the archaeological potential of the site in advance of the construction of a new 5 classroom primary school with nursery, landscaping and the creation of car parking.</p> <p>A single pit of probable 17th to 19th century date and an undated small pit or posthole were recorded. Recovered topsoil/subsoil finds ranged from late medieval to post-medieval in date. Within all trenches the topsoil/subsoil deposits overlay the natural geology, Tunbridge Wells Sands which was encountered at a maximum height of 82.52m AOD in the east of the site falling away to 79.51m OD in the south.</p>
Project dates	Start: 19-11-2009 End: 23-11-2009
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	SPS 09 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	TW/06/TEMP/0028 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 10 - Orchard
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	DRAIN Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the After full determination (eg. As a condition)
planning process

Project location

Country England

Site location KENT TUNBRIDGE WELLS CRANBROOK Common ROad, Sissinghurst, Kent

Postcode TN17 2JZ

Study area 2.50 Hectares

Site coordinates TQ 7893 3779 51.1108527487 0.556488531012 51 06 39 N 000 33 23 E Point

Lat/Long Datum Position derived from charts

Lat/Long Datum m AOD
(other)

Height OD / Min: 79.51m Max: 82.52m
Depth

Project creators

Name of Archaeology South-East
Organisation

Project brief Kent County Council
originator

Project design Kent County Council
originator

Project Neil Griffin
director/manager

Project supervisor Dylan Hopkinson

Type of Architects
sponsor/funding
body

Name of Diocesan Architectural Services
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive local museum
recipient

Physical Contents 'Ceramics','Glass','Metal'

Digital Archive Local Museum

recipient	
Digital Contents	'Survey'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Survey'
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Drawing','Plan','Section'

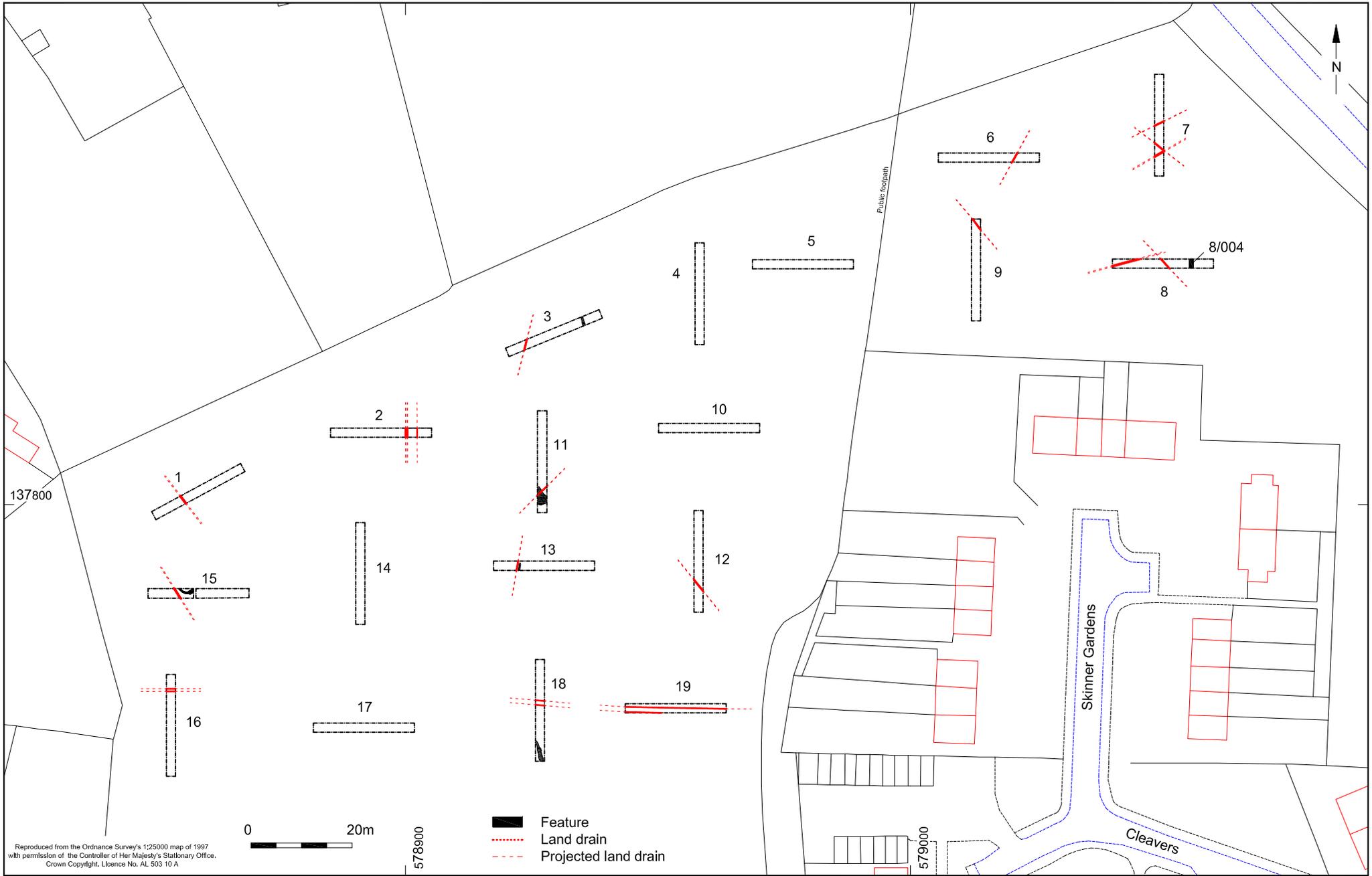
Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Evaluation at Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent
Author(s)/Editor(s))	Dylan Hopkinson
Other bibliographic details	Report Number 2009175
Date	2009
Issuer or publisher	Archaeology South-East
Place of issue or publication	Portslade, East Sussex
Description	A4 Bound 37 pages

Entered by	Dylan Hopkinson (dylan.hopkinson@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	18 November 2009



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Project Ref: 2601	Nov 2009	Site location		
Report Ref: 2009175	Drawn by: JLR			



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Project Ref: 2601	Nov 2009	Trench location		
Report Ref: 2009175	Drawn by: JLR			



Fig. 3: Trench 1 viewed looking north-east

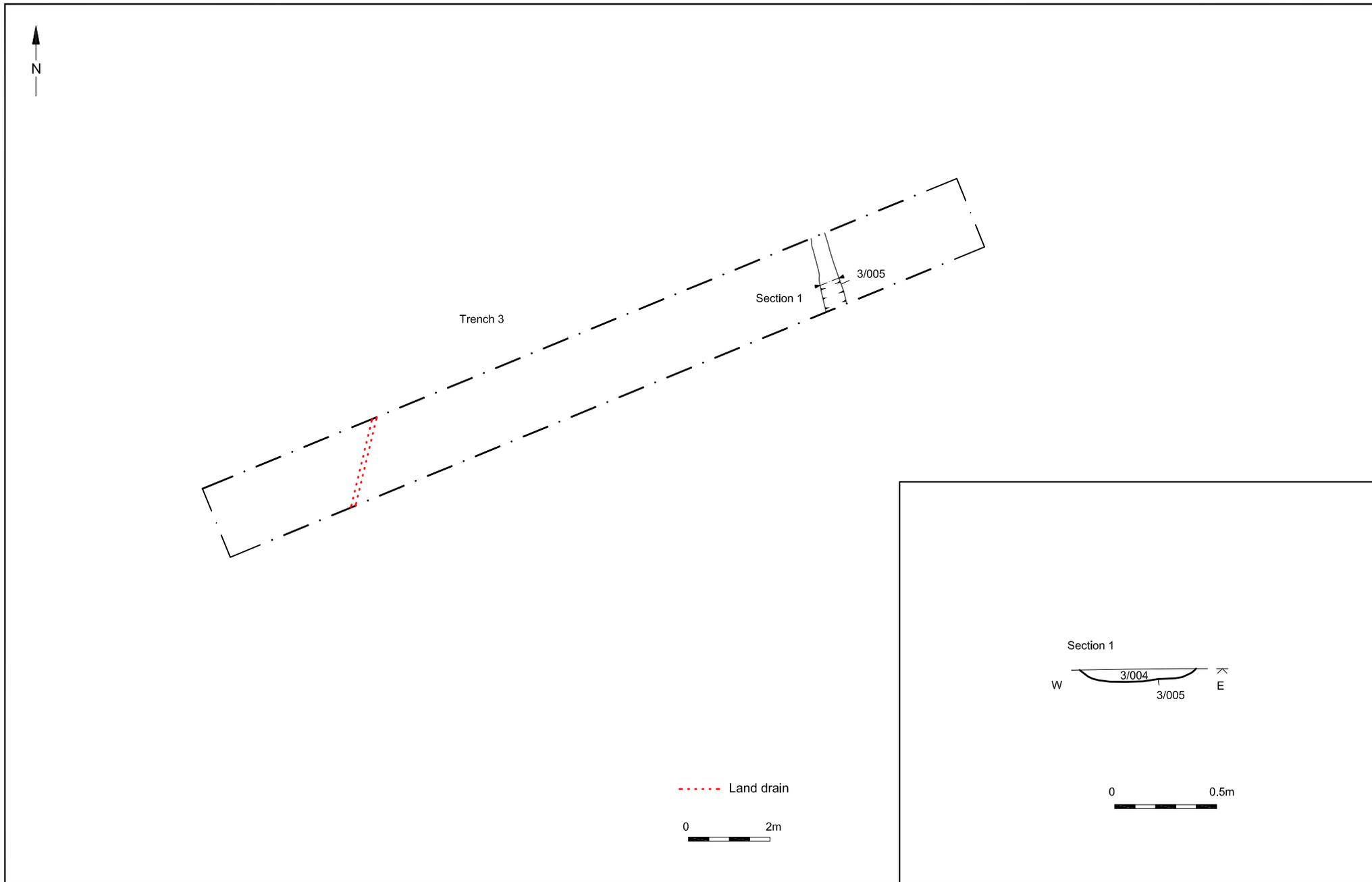


Fig. 4: Trench 2 viewed looking west



Fig. 5: Trench 3 viewed looking north-east

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Project Ref: 2601	Nov 2009	Trench 3: Plan and section	
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Fig. 7: Potential feature 3/005 - variation in natural



Fig. 8: Trench 4 viewed looking south



Fig. 9 Trench 5 viewed looking east

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Fig. 10: Trench 6 viewed looking east



Fig. 11: Trench 7 viewed looking north



Fig. 12: Trench 8 viewed looking east

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Fig. 13: Potential feature 8/004 - variation in natural



Fig. 14: Trench 9 viewed looking south



Fig. 15: Trench 10 viewed looking east

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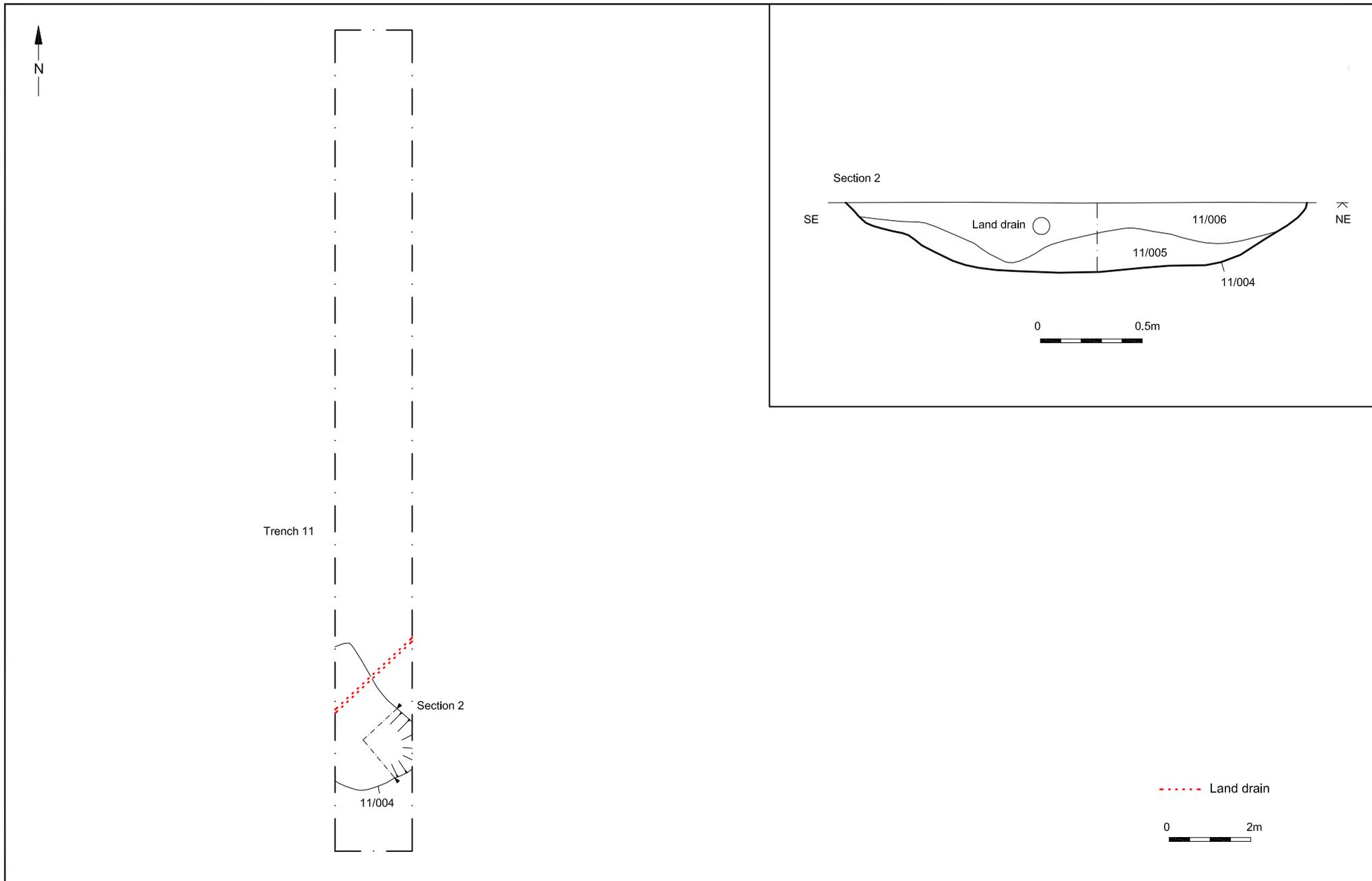


Fig. 16: Trench 11 viewed looking south



Fig. 17: Pit 11/004 viewed looking north

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Project Ref: 2601	Nov 2009	Trench 11: Plan and section	
Report Ref: 2009175	Drawn by: JLR		



Fig. 19: Trench 12 viewed looking south

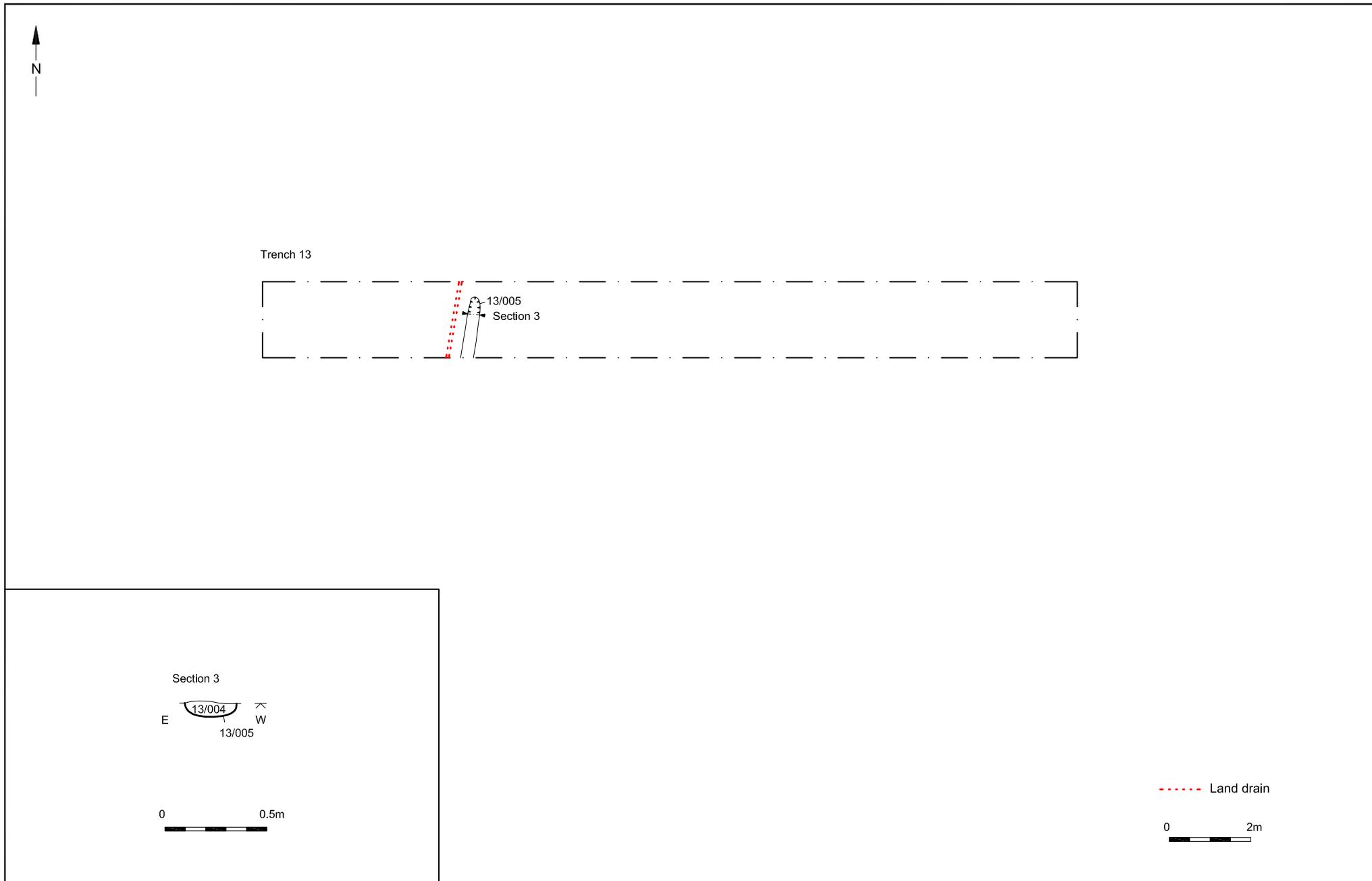


Fig. 20: Trench 13 viewed looking west



Fig. 21: Feature 13/005 and land drain viewed looking south

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Fig. 23: Trench 14 viewed looking south

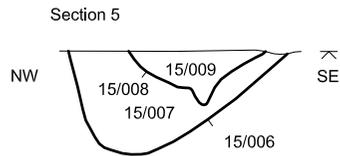
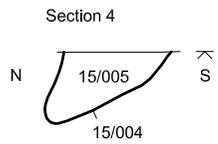
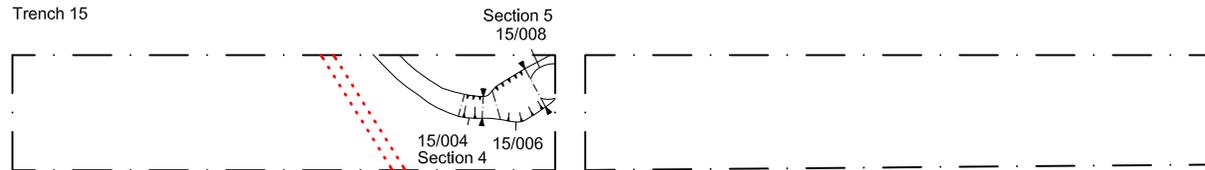


Fig. 24: Western half of trench 15 viewed looking east



Fig. 25: Potential features 15/004 and 15/006 with pit 15/008 (top right)

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..... Land drain





Fig. 27: Trench 16 viewed looking south



Fig. 28: Trench 17 viewed looking east



Fig. 29: Trench 18 viewed looking north

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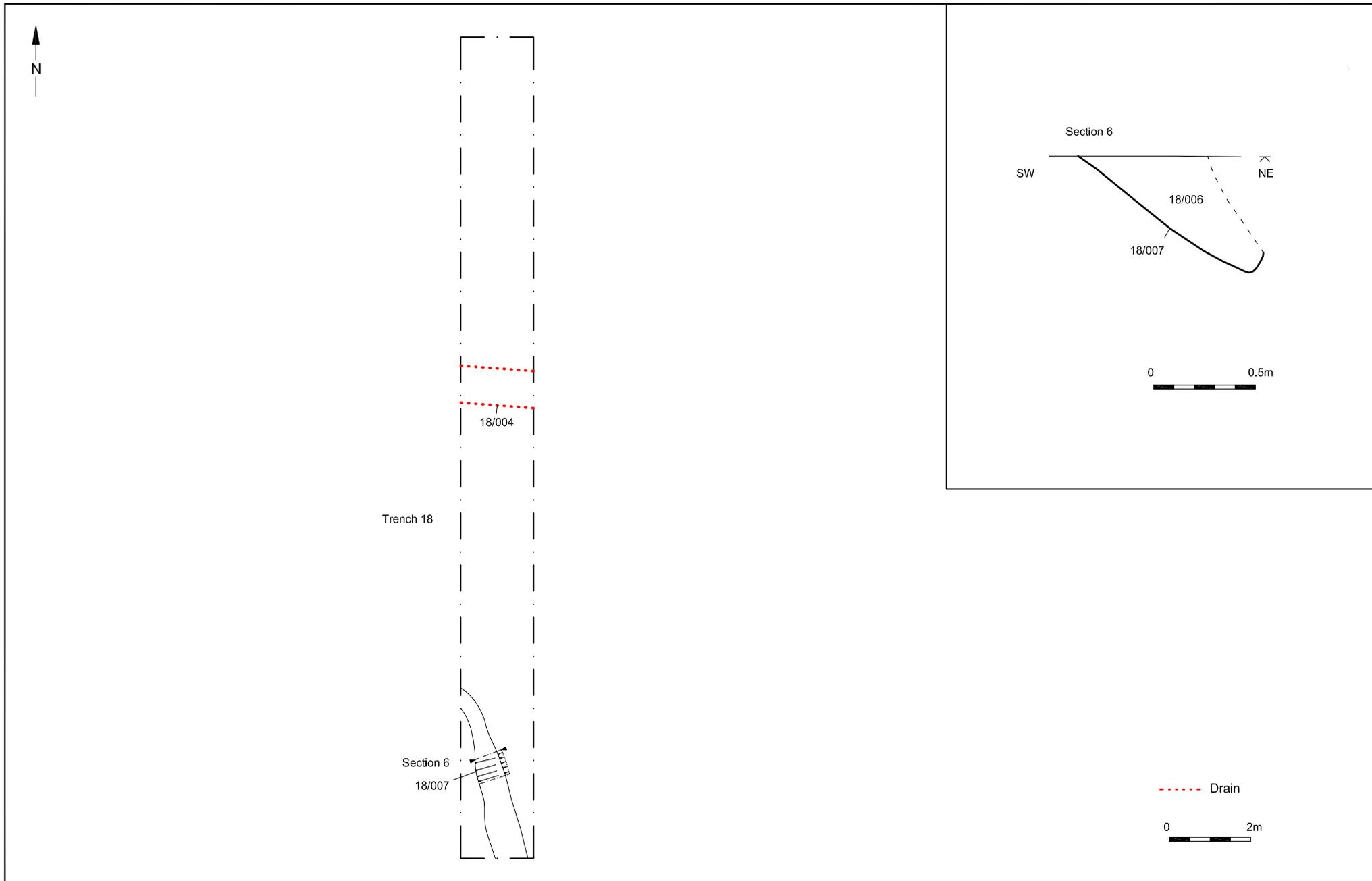


Fig. 30: Service drain 18/004 viewed looking west



Fig. 31: Natural feature 18/007 viewed looking north

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Fig. 33: Trench 19 viewed looking east



Fig. 34: Drain 19/004 viewed looking east

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Fig. 35: Earth bank flanking eastern side of footpath viewed looking south-east



Fig. 36: Earth bank flanking eastern side of footpath viewed looking south

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**An Archaeological Evaluation at
Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent**

**Site Code: SPS 09
ASE Project Number: 2601
Oasis Number: archaeol6-67638**

**Produced by
Dylan Hopkinson MA**

November 2009