

**MALLARDS, SOUTH STREET,  
GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**

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NGR: TL 5078 4274	Report No. 3758
District: Uttlesford	Site Code: GC 50
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 4034
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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
<b>Project name</b>	<i>Mallards, South Street, Great Chesterford, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In December 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring at Mallards, South Street, Great Chesterford, Essex (NGR TL 5078 4274). The monitoring was commissioned by Mr Frank Palmer in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new house to replace an existing bungalow.</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within the southern part of the area of the medieval and post-medieval town of Great Chesterford and possibly within the suburban area of the Roman town, associated with a walled enclosure around the church. Therefore the site had a potential for Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the monitoring revealed two undated pits or ditches and a residual Roman pottery sherd.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>07, 13 &amp; 17/12/2010</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>4034</i>	Site code	<i>GC 50</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Monitoring</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Single bungalow (demolished)</i>		
Planned development	<i>New residential dwelling</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Two undated pits</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>One residual roman pottery sherd</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Great Chesterford</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>CB10 1NW</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 375m<sup>2</sup></i>		
NGR	<i>TL 5078 4274</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c. 39m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>ECC HEM</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr Frank Palmer</i>		
Full title	<i>Mallards, South Street, Great Chesterford, Essex. Archaeological Monitoring</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3758</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>March 2011</i>		

# MALLARDS, SOUTH STREET, GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

### SUMMARY

*In December 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and excavation at Mallards, South Street, Great Chesterford, Essex (NGR TL 5078 4274). The monitoring was commissioned in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new house to replace an existing bungalow.*

*The site lies within the southern part of the area of the medieval and post-medieval town of Great Chesterford and possibly within the suburban area of the Roman town, associated with a walled enclosure around the church. Therefore the site had a potential for Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.*

*In the event the monitoring revealed two undated pits or ditches and a residual Roman pottery sherd.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2010 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and excavation at Mallards, South Street, Great Chesterford, Essex (NGR TL 5078 4274; Figs. 1 & 2). The monitoring was commissioned by Mr Frank Palmer in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a new house to replace an existing bungalow (Uttlesford District Council Planning Ref. UTT/1192/10/FUL & UTT/1193/10/CA).

1.2 The monitoring and excavation was undertaken in accordance to a brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (ECC HEM; dated 13/08/2010), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 17/08/2010). The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 2008), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The project aimed to record any buried archaeological remains revealed during the groundworks. It also aimed to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains. Particular attention was given to recording:

- Evidence of the suburban area of the Roman town associated with the second walled enclosure around the church

- Evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation of this part of the settlement.

### *Planning policy context*

1.4 PPS5 states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

2.1 The site is located on the southern side of South Street in Great Chesterford, Essex (Figs. 1-2). It consists of a small (c. 375m<sup>2</sup>) plot of land until recently occupied by a bungalow (now demolished), and a small rear garden. Residential properties fronting the South Street are located the east of the site, and an area of green lies to the west and south. The course of River Cam or Granta lies just 40m south of the site. The M11 Motorway is located 500m to the west of the site.

## **3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

3.1 The site is located within an area that slopes very gradually to the south, toward the River Cam or Granta. It lies at approximately 39m AOD. The village of Great Chesterford is located upon a solid geology of Upper Cretaceous Upper Chalk and Middle Chalk, which is overlain by chalky till (British Geological Survey 1978). Soils of the area comprise those of the Moulton and Swaffham Prior Associations, which are described as well drained and fine loamy soils over chalk (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### *Prehistoric*

4.1 Earlier prehistoric activity in Great Chesterford is represented by scatters of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic flint work particularly in the southern area of the town close to the site, and to the north of the modern

town in the area of the late Iron Age/Roman Fort. Bronze Age burials and hoards have also been recorded in and around the town, within a 2km radius of the modern settlement.

### *Romano-British*

4.2 The earliest Roman settlement at Great Chesterford was a fort, which appears to have been founded in the period immediately following the Boudiccan revolt of AD60. A settlement developed and expanded outside the southern gate and achieved urban status during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. After the abandonment of the fort the town expanded into the area of the fort and by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD filled an area of approximately 12 hectares. The town declined in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD before expanding again in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, culminating in the construction of the town walls. In addition, a local antiquarian, Dr Gower, discovered the remains of a second walled enclosure south of Newmarket Road in 1756. On the outskirts of the town at least five cemeteries have been identified, one of which may be located under the area of the adjacent public house (Havis 2009). A Roman temple (built c. AD70 on the site of a late Iron Age shrine) has been located approximately 1km north-east of the town. However, the site is to the south and east of the defined areas of late Iron Age and Roman occupation and activity.

### *Anglo-Saxon*

4.3 The archaeological evidence, principally in the form of burials, suggests a large Saxon population at Great Chesterford from the end of the Roman period to at least the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The location of the Early Saxon settlement is uncertain but it may have been at Hinxton Hall, Cambridgeshire, and later settlement may have been on the same site as the medieval town of Great Chesterford. In 1066 Great Chesterford was held by Earl Edgar, King Edward the Confessor's nephew. The town's church probably stood on the same site as 13<sup>th</sup> century parish church.

### *Medieval*

4.4 Following the Norman Conquest, Great Chesterford became a royal manor and was reasonably prosperous during the medieval period, largely due to the cloth trade. It is of interest as an example of an Essex settlement that has developed according to the Midlands tradition, both in morphology and in building types. Great Chesterford is one of the few areas of Essex that retained its strip-fields until the enclosure acts of 1804. The site is close to the medieval market place and within the built-up area of medieval Great Chesterford. The parish church of All Saints is located 300m to the west of the site. The church is of 13<sup>th</sup> century origin with several later alterations. Immediately south of the church the possible site of The Hall is located. The area to the north of the site, between School Street, South Street and Carmel Street was probably the open green which began to be in-filled by the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century (Medlycott 1999).

## Post-medieval

4.5 The post-medieval period was a period of decline for Great Chesterford, mainly because of the collapse of the cloth trade. A possible public building was located within medieval market area, at South Street. There were also almshouses at the South Street, to the east of the site. The 18<sup>th</sup> century brought some revival to the town as it was located on the road to Newmarket and its developing race course. The railway linked Great Chesterford with London and Cambridge in 1840s.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1. The archaeological monitoring comprised the observation of all groundworks, the inspection of the subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the excavated area was scanned by metal detector.

5.2 The principal elements monitored were the removal of the concrete floor of the bungalow, the ground reduction within the site required prior to the construction of the replacement dwelling, the mechanically-excavated foundation trenches and the excavation for a new soakway (Fig. 3).

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

### 6.1 Foundation Trenches

Foundation trenches for a new house:

<i>E foundation trench, Sample Section 1, facing W (DP 4)</i>		
<i>0.00 = 39.12m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.07m	L1000	Made Ground. Loose CBM fragments mixed with dark grey, sandy silt.
0.07 – 0.62m	L1001	Made Ground. Greyish brown, friable, sandy silt with occasional CBM fragments.
0.62m+	L1003	Natural. White, compact, chalk.

<i>S foundation trench, Sample Section 2, facing N (DP 6)</i>		
<i>0.00 = 39.24m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.04m	L1000	Made Ground. As above.
0.04 – 0.40m	L1001	Made ground. As above.
0.40m+	L1002	Natural. Mid yellow, compact, clay.

*Description:* Two undated pits or ditches were revealed within the western foundation trench, and also a residual sherd of Roman pottery was recovered.

F1004 was a pit or a ditch (1.20 x 0.60m; DP 7), aligned east-west and located in the central part of the western foundation trench. It had an irregular profile. Its fill, 1005, was a dark grey, friable, clayey silt. No finds were recovered from this deposit.

F1006 was also a pit or a ditch (0.80 x 0.45m; DP 8) located in the northern end of the western foundation trench. It had nearly vertical sides and flattish base. Its fill, L1007, was a dark grey, friable, clayey silt. No finds were recovered.

Both features were truncated by the foundations of the recently-demolished modern bungalow and were recorded only within the western section of the new foundation trench.

## 6.2 Soakaway

The excavation for a new soakaway (2.50 x 2.50m) was located in the southern part of the site (Fig.3; DP 9).

<i>Trench for a new soakaway, facing W (DP 10)</i>		
<i>0.00 = 38.91m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.42m	L1008	Topsoil. Brownish grey, soft, sandy silt.
0.42 – 0.73m	L1009	Dark grey, compact, clayey silt.
0.73 – 1.60m	L1002	Natural clay. As above.
1.60m+	L1003	Natural chalk. As above.

*Description:* No archaeological remains or finds were revealed.

## 7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the archaeological monitoring.

## 8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The southern part of the site (formerly the rear garden) was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1008, a brownish grey, soft, sandy silt (0.30 – 0.50m thick). L1008 overlay a layer of dark grey, compact, clayey silt (L1009, 0.30m thick). Within the area of the former bungalow the main deposit present was L1001, a layer of modern made ground consisting of a greyish brown, friable, sandy silt with occasional CBM fragments (0.40 – 0.80m thick).

8.2 The natural geology was present at c. 50 – 0.80m below existing and comprised a mid yellow, compact, clay (L1002) overlying white, compact, chalk (L1003).



## 9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval archaeology. Such remains may have been associated with the Roman settlement to the north-west of the site and, in particular, the walled enclosure around the church to the west of the site. The site is also located within the medieval and post-medieval area of the town.

9.2 In the event two undated pits or ditches were revealed. The features are undated and may have been linear features (ditches) aligned east-west. The main ground reduction across the footprint of the replacement dwelling was relatively shallow and did not penetrate the modern deposits. No indication of any previous development of the site was identified excepting the modern bungalow.

9.3 The only find recovered during the monitoring was a residual sherd of Roman pottery, found in the central part of the site.

## 10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Saffron Walden Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Frank Palmer for funding the project and for his assistance. AS would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the Project Manager Mr Pat Grange of Grange Developments.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Richard Havis of Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team.

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## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. South Street, Great Chesterford, Essex. View ESE.



DP 2. The site. View S.



DP 3. E foundation trench. View SSE.



DP 4. E foundation trench. Sample section 1. View E.



DP 5. S foundation trench. View WNW.



DP 6. S foundation trench. Sample section 2. View S.



DP 7. W foundation trench. F1004. View W.



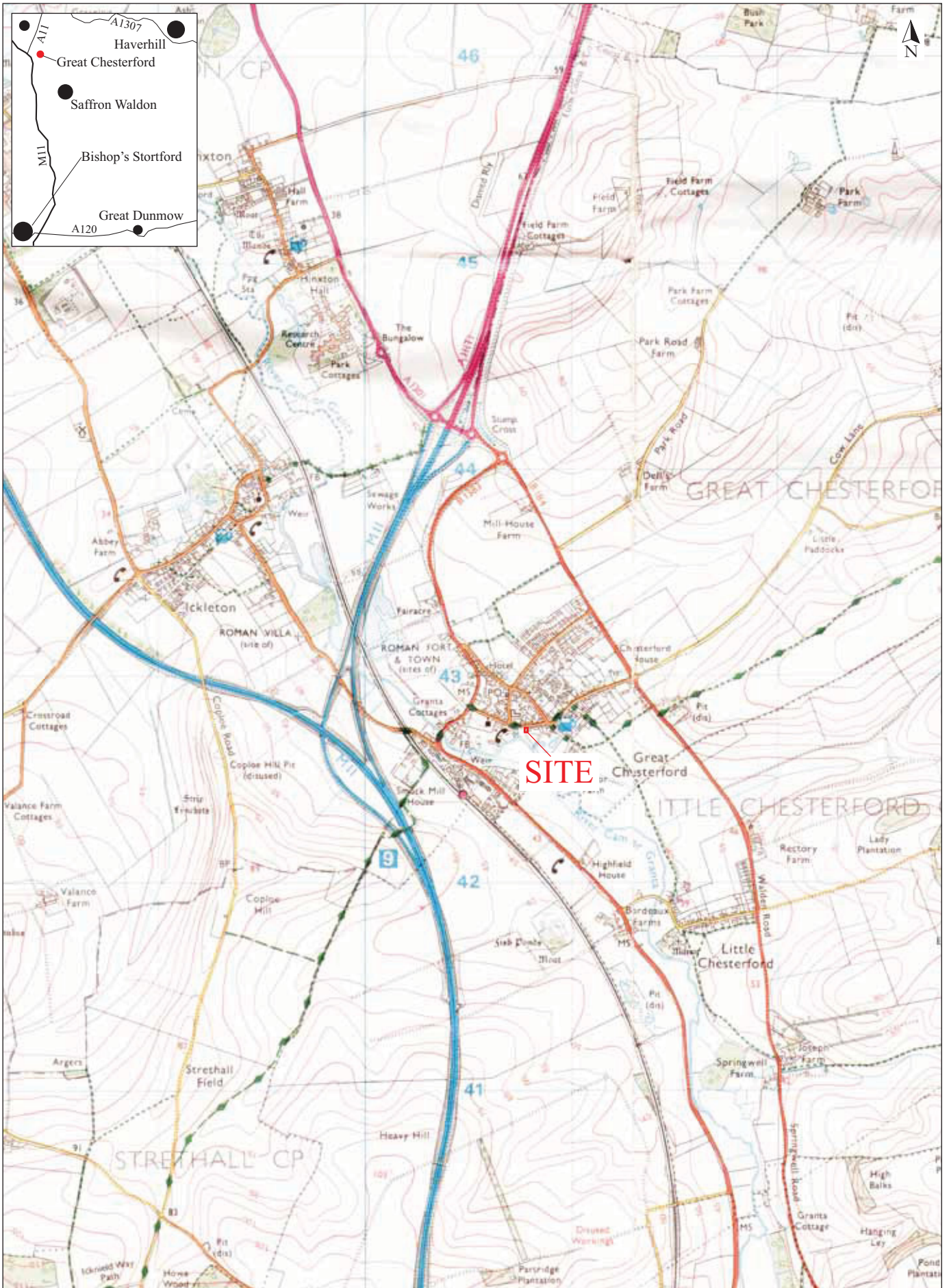
DP 8. W foundation trench. F1006. View W.



DP 9. Trench for a new soakway, S part of the site. View SW.

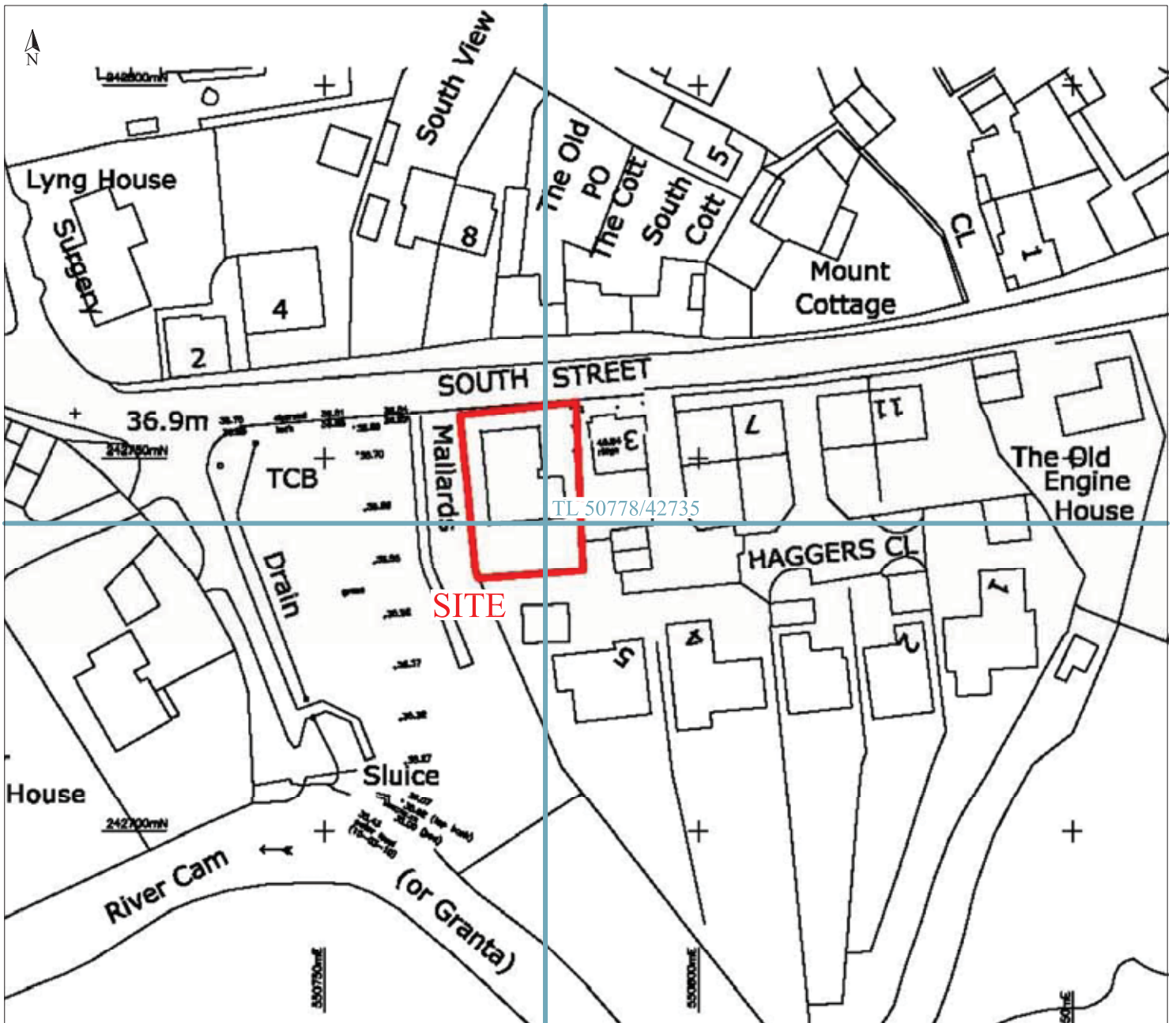


DP 10. Trench for a new soakway. Sample section 3. View E.



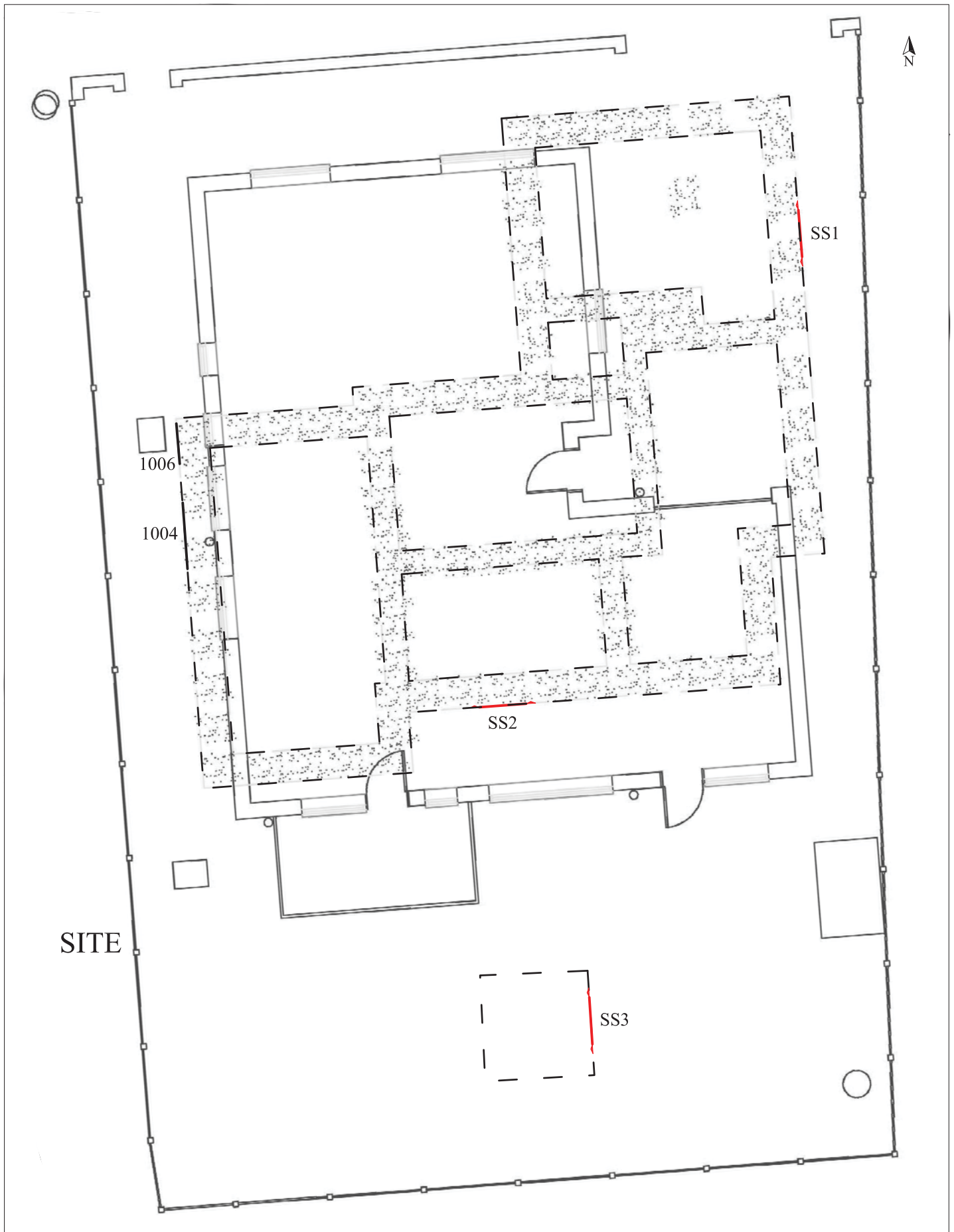
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



0 50m

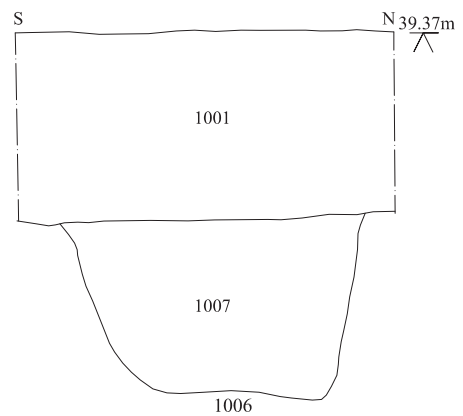
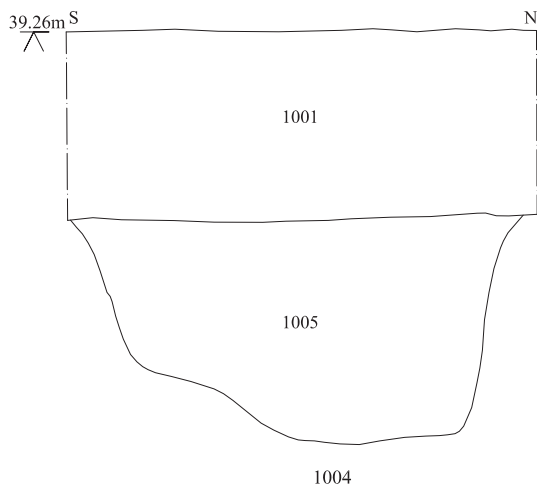
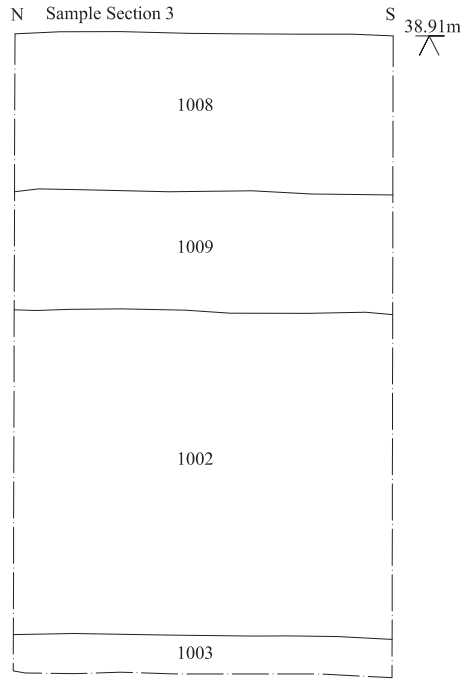
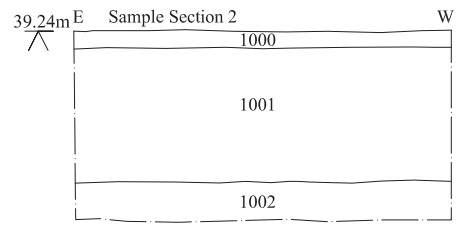
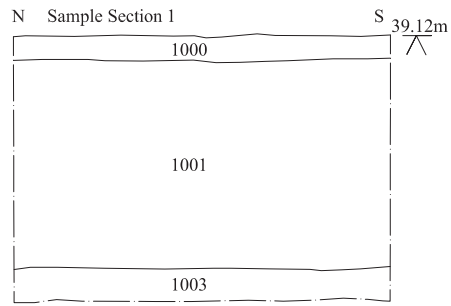
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 Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan  
 Scale 1:800 at A4



SS = Sample section  
 - - - New trenches  
 ——— Old foundations

0 5m

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**Fig. 3 Section location plan**  
 Scale 1:100 at A4



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**Fig. 4 Trench sections**

Scale 1:20 at A4