

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

LAND ADJACENT TO FIR TREE WALK, HEYBRIDGE, ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Tom Janes (Fieldwork & Report)	
NGR: TL 8604 0814	Report No: 3928
District: Maldon	Site Code: HYF T11
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: P4357
Signed:	Date: October 2011



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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Fir Tree Walk, Heybridge, Essex</i>		
<i>In October 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land adjacent to Fir Tree Walk, Heybridge, Essex (TL 8604 0814). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two houses with associated garages and driveways (Maldon Planning Ref FUL/MAL08/00401).</i>			
<i>The Essex HER records numerous finds in the area, including Roman and Saxon artefacts (EHER 7814-6) and Iron Age remains (EHER 7814). Previous excavations to the east revealed evidence of extensive prehistoric, Roman and Saxon activity (O'Connor 2007). Within the site a large mound is present under mature trees. The mound was thought to have been a 19th century landscape feature associated with a nearby house, The Towers. Alternatively the mound may have had earlier origins, perhaps Roman or prehistoric.</i>			
<i>The site had moderate potential for archaeological remains. In the event no archaeological features were present, and the mound was shown to be a natural feature.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>6th October 2011</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>4357</i>	Site code	<i>HYF T11</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Garden</i>		
Planned development	<i>Two houses and associated garages & services</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Maldon</i>	<i>Heybridge</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER (EHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>CM9 4NS</i>		
Area of site	<i>600m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 8604 0814</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c.4m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>ECC HEM (Maria Medlycott)</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Tom Janes</i>		
Funded by	<i>Andrew Phillips</i>		
Full title	<i>Land Adjacent to Fir Tree Walk, Heybridge, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Janes T.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3928</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>October 2011</i>		

LAND ADJACENT TO FIR TREE WALK, HEYBRIDGE, ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In October 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land adjacent to Fir Tree Walk, Heybridge, Essex (TL 8604 0814). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two houses with associated garages and driveways (Maldon Planning Ref FUL/MAL08/00401).

The Essex HER records numerous finds in the area, including Roman and Saxon artefacts (EHER 7814-6) and Iron Age remains (EHER 7814). Previous excavations to the east revealed evidence of extensive prehistoric, Roman and Saxon activity (O'Connor 2007). Within the site a large mound is present under mature trees. The mound was thought to have been a 19th century landscape feature associated with a nearby house, The Towers. Alternatively the mound may have had earlier origins, perhaps Roman or prehistoric.

The site had moderate potential for archaeological remains. In the event no archaeological features were present, and the mound was shown to be a natural feature.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land adjacent to Fir Tree Walk, Heybridge, Essex (TL 8604 0814; Figs.1-2). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two houses with associated garages and driveways (Maldon Planning Ref FUL/MAL08/00401).

1.2 The trial trenching was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Management Team (HEM) of Essex County Council (Maria Medlycott; 20/08/2010), and a written scheme of investigation compiled by AS (dated 11/04/2011), and approved by ECC HEM. The project adhered to appropriate sections of Gurney, D, 2003, 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', *East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14*. The evaluation was also conducted according to the Institute of for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008).

1.3 The principal aims for the project are to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains threatened by the proposed development.

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 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site is bounded to the north and east by Fir Tree Walk, and is currently occupied by a large mound covered by mature trees and an adjacent pond. The features are likely to relate to 19th-century garden landscaping, though the mound may have earlier origins.

2.2 The site lies within an area of significant archaeological potential, with remains of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval periods known in the vicinity.

2.3 The Essex Historic Environment Record records numerous finds in the area. In the 1870s, the antiquarian EH Bentall recovered Roman stone and lead coffins, amphorae, Saxon cremation vessels and other finds (EHER 7814-6). Fragments of two bronze vessels from the mid 1st century AS may also be part of a late Iron Age burial (EHER 7814). Excavations to the east at Elms Farm and other sites have revealed evidence of extensive occupation of the area in the prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods (O'Connor 2007).

2.4 In 1873 the area of proposed development lay within the ground of The Towers, a large Italianate house with extensive and elaborate gardens (EHER 46205). The mound currently present on the site may have developed as a garden 'mount' at this time, with several such examples on the estate, though it could potentially derive from a prehistoric or Roman barrow.

3 METHODOLOGY (TRIAL TRENCHING)

3.1 The first phase of the evaluation was to mechanically remove one half of the mound down to ground level in spits of no more than 0.2m. The section was to be drawn and an on-site meeting arranged with ECC HEM and the client in order to confirm the further requirements. Thereafter a proposed trench plan provided for further trial trenching of the area of the proposed dwellings/access.

3.2 The confines of the site and the storage of spoil prevented this approach. Instead a 5-metre wide trial trench was excavated into the north-eastern quadrant of the mound, allowing two section faces to be recorded.

3.3 Topsoil and subsoil were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for finds and the trench was scanned by a metal detector. The results were reported to ECC HEM, and it was confirmed that no further trial trenching would be required.

4 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS Fig. 3, DPs1-6

Trench 1 (DP 3 - 5)

<i>Sample Section 1: Entire SW end of Trench, NE facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 4.18m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. Brown, loose, sandy silt with frequent roots and small angular and sub-angular stones.
0.22 – 0.85m	L1001	Subsoil. Yellow-brown, moderately compact, sandy silty clay
0.85m +	L1005	Natural. Orange-brown, compact, sandy gravel

<i>Sample Section 2: Entire NW side of Trench, SE facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 4.23m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.80m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.00 – 0.50m	L1004	Modern building/domestic debris
0.80 – 0.90m	L1003	Humic Layer. Dark black-brown, loose, sandy silt
0.90 – 1.80m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
1.80 – 2.60m	L1002	Natural. Yellow, compact, sandy clay towards NE end of section
2.60m +	L1005	Natural. As above

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

5 CONFIDENCE RATING

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

6 DEPOSIT MODEL

6.1 Topsoil L1000 was a brown, loose, sandy silt with frequent small angular and sub-angular flint stones. Below L1000, at the north-eastern end of the trench, was L1004, a modern dump of building rubble (wire, plastic, CBM etc) and domestic debris (drink cans, crisp packets etc) probably associated with the building of the 1970s housing estate within which the site was located.

6.2 Below L1000, Subsoil L1001 was a yellow-brown, moderately compact, sandy silty clay. It was deeper towards the outer edges of the mound as it followed the slope of the underlying natural gravels. In the south-east facing section of the trench, a thin humic layer, L1003 (DP 4 and 6), was present between the topsoil and subsoil. It represented a build-up of organic matter derived from the trees that previously occupied the site, subsequently sealed by topsoil intermittently slipping down the slope of the mound.

6.3 The natural geology varied on site. Towards the outer edges of the mound, L1002, was a yellow compact sandy clay, similar to, but much firmer than Subsoil L1001. At the south-western end of the trench, the natural geology was an orange-brown, compact, sandy gravel, rising steeply towards the centre of the mound.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 The site had moderate potential for archaeological remains, in particular prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval activity. In the event no archaeological finds or features were present. The mound was demonstrated to be formed by a natural gravel deposit, which was probably planted with trees and exploited as a landscape feature during the lifetime of the Towers estate.

8 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

8.1 The requirements for archive storage will be agreed with Colchester & Ipswich Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency, and a summary of its contents will be supplied to ECC HEM at the time of deposition.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank the client Mr Andrew Philips for commissioning and funding the work and for his assistance.

AS is also pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of MS Maria Medlycott of the ECC HEM.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gurney, D. 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper no. 14

Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 (revised 2008) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*

O'Connor, T, 2007, *Heybridge Historic Town Assessment Report*, ECC

Wickenden, N, 1986, 'Prehistoric Settlement and the Romano-British Small Town at Heybridge, Essex', *Essex Archaeology & History* 17, 7-68

**ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD/
ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY**

SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Fir Tree Walk, Heybridge, Essex, CM9 4NS	
Parish: Heybridge	District: Maldon
NGR: TL 8604 0814	Site Code: HYF T11
Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation	Site Director/Group: Tom Janes/Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Date of Work: 6 th October 2011	Size of Area Investigated: 600m ²
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: No finds/Colchester & Ipswich Museum	Funding source: Client – Andrew Phillips, Fir Tree Walk, Heybridge
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos EHER 7814
Final Report: Yes	
Periods Represented: n/a	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p><i>In October 2011, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land adjacent to Fir Tree Walk, Heybridge, Essex (TL 8604 0814). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a condition attached to planning approval for the construction of two houses with associated garages and driveways (Maldon Planning Ref FUL/MAL08/00401).</i></p> <p><i>The Essex HER records numerous finds in the area, including Roman and Saxon artefacts (EHER 7814-6) and Iron Age remains (EHER 7814). Previous excavations to the east revealed evidence of extensive prehistoric, Roman and Saxon activity. Within the site a large mound is present under mature trees. The mound was thought to have been a 19th century landscape feature associated with a nearby house, The Towers.</i></p> <p><i>The site had moderate potential for archaeological remains. In the event no archaeological features were present, and the mound was shown to be a natural feature.</i></p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:	
n/a	
Author of Summary: Tom Janes	Date of Summary: October 2011

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1
Mound, pre-excitation, looking west



DP 2
Centre of mound, pre-excitation, looking north



DP 3
Sample Section 1, looking south-west



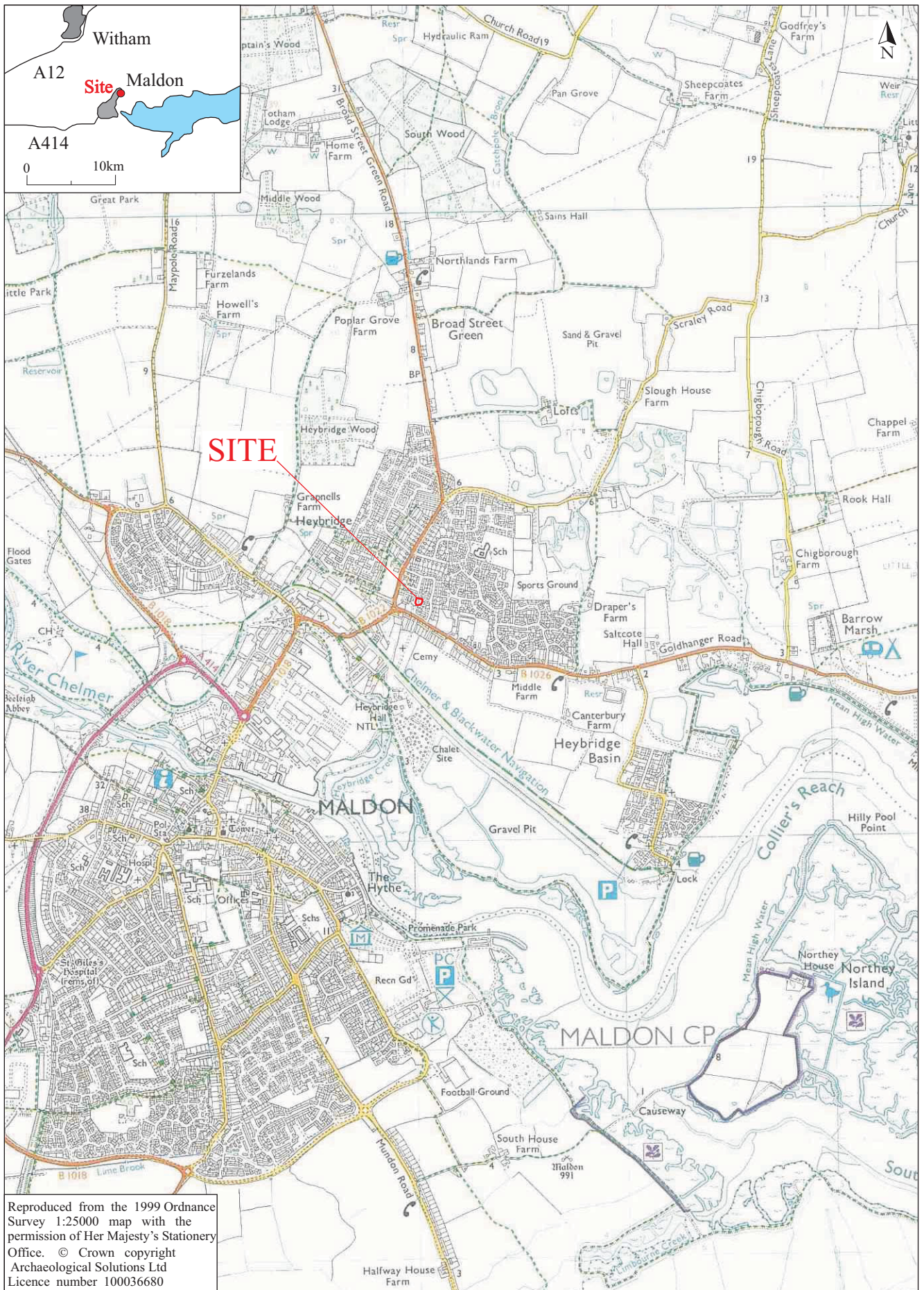
DP 4
Sample Section 2, south-western end, looking west



DP 5
Sample Section 2, south-western end, looking west

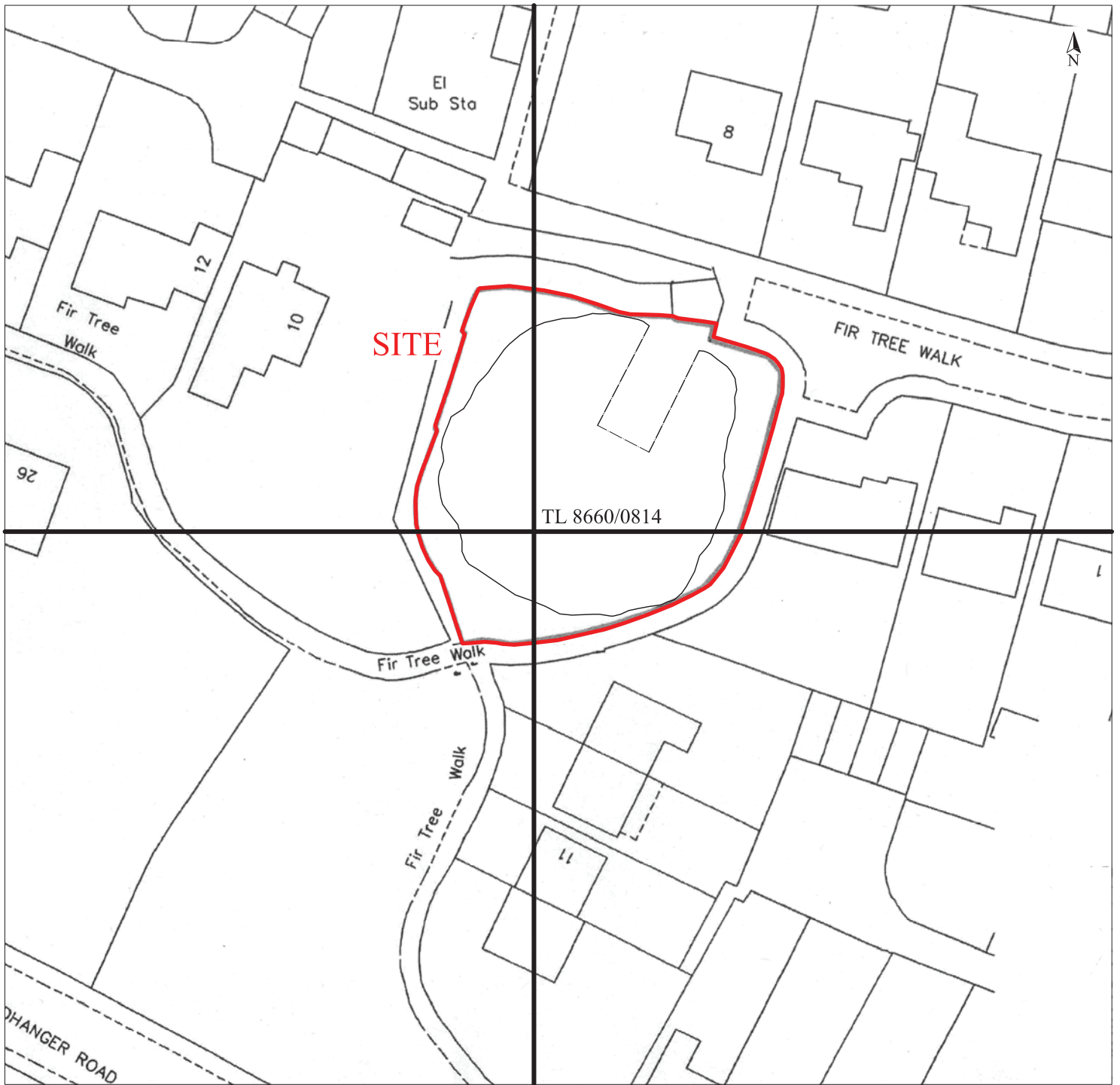


DP 6
Trench after excavation, looking south



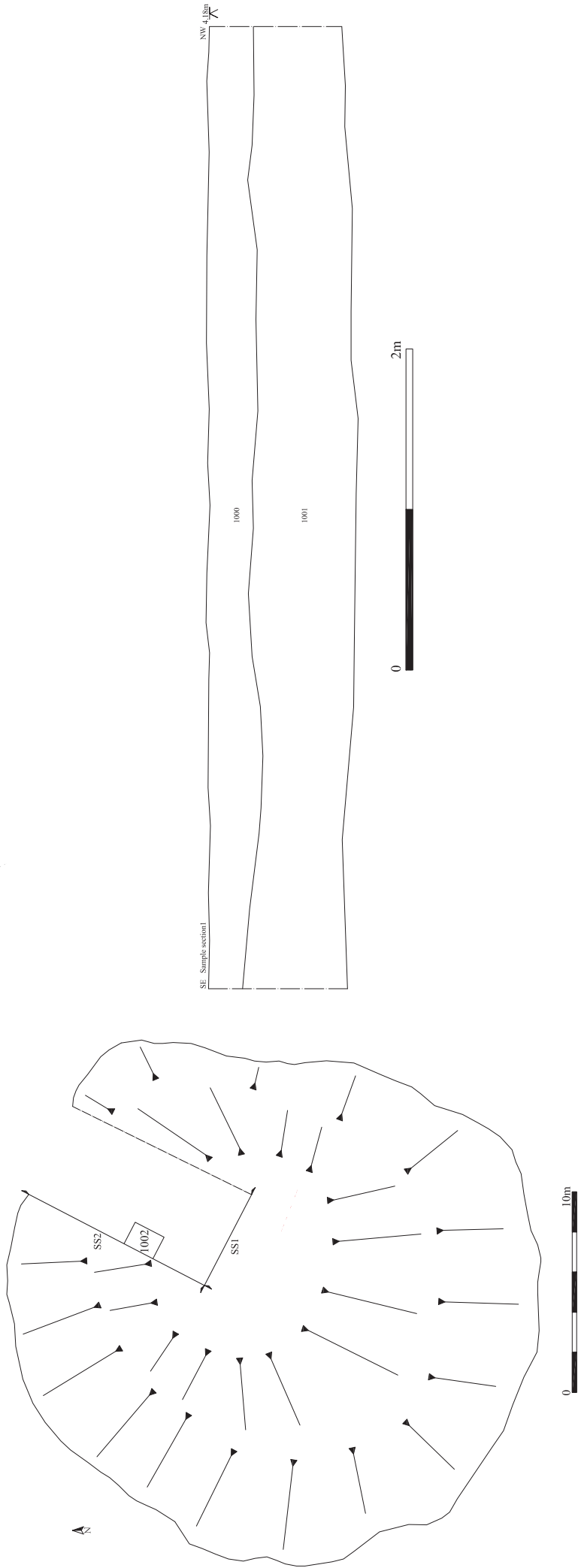
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



0 25m

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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:500 at A4



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Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections
 Scale 1:200, 1:40 and 1:25 at A4