

**16 NORTH STREET, LEIGHTON BUZZARD,
BEDFORDSHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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NGR: SP 9226 2516	Report No. 3776
District: Central Bedfordshire	Site Code: AS 1371
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 4141
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CONTENTS

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY

- 1 *INTRODUCTION***
- 2 *DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE***
- 3 *TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS***
- 4 *ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND***
- 5 *METHODOLOGY***
- 6 *DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS***
- 7 *CONFIDENCE RATING***
- 8 *DEPOSIT MODEL***
- 9 *DISCUSSION***
- 10 *DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>16 North Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire</i>		
<p><i>In March 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at No.16 North Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire (NGR SP 9226 2516). The evaluation was commissioned by Bob Harrington Design Ltd on behalf of Buckmaster Garages Ltd, and was undertaken in advance of the submission/determination of a planning application for the redevelopment of the site.</i></p> <p><i>The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for medieval and post-medieval archaeology. In the event seven archaeological features were revealed. F1020 contained two medieval pottery sherds (11th – 13th century), and it may have been a boundary ditch between former land plots. The remaining features contained modern finds or were sterile. The majority of recorded features may be associated with the former garden.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>21-22/03/2011</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>4141</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1371</i>
Type of project	<i>An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Workshops and parking area</i>		
Planned development	<i>-</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>15th century ditch and pit, undated pits</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Bedfordshire</i>	<i>Central Bedfordshire</i>	<i>Leighton Buzzard</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Central Bedfordshire and Luton HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>LU7 1EN</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 3000m²</i>		
NGR	<i>SP 9226 2516</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>91.50/94m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Central Bedfordshire Council</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Buckmaster Garages Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>16 North Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z., Higgs, K.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3776</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>March 2011</i>		

16 NORTH STREET, LEIGHTON BUZZARD, BEDFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In March 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at No 16 North Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire (NGR SP 9226 2516). The evaluation was commissioned by Bob Harrington Design Ltd on behalf of Buckmaster Garages Ltd, and was undertaken in advance of the submission/determination of a planning application for the redevelopment of the site.

The site is located along the eastern frontage of North Street, at the north-eastern extent of the historic core of the town of Leighton Buzzard. The site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.

In the event seven archaeological features were revealed. F1020 contained two medieval pottery sherds (11th – 13th century), and it may have been a boundary ditch between former land plots. The remaining features contained modern finds or were sterile. The majority of recorded features may be associated with the former garden.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2011 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried an archaeological evaluation at No 16 North Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire (NGR SP 9226 2516; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Bob Harrington Design Ltd on behalf of Buckmaster Garages Ltd, and was undertaken in advance of the submission/determination of a planning application for the redevelopment of the site.

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists (CBC; dated 06/10/2010) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 25/02/2011) and approved by CBC. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological remains that may have been present. It also aimed to provide information on the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or finds. Should the evaluation have been completed

the results would be used in support the planning application in order to define the significance of the archaeological heritage asset.

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 along the eastern frontage of North Street, which runs from the historic core of the town of Leighton Buzzard. It consists of No.16 North Street and its associated yards and back-yard plots. The site backs on to Nos. 6 – 14 North Street as well as Nos. 13 – 25 Hockliffe Street. The site is currently occupied by three standing buildings in use as an office, garage and printing factory. The majority of the site is overlain by the tarmac hardstanding remnant of a former garage and bus depot. The site also lies partly within, and to the immediate north, of the town's Conservation Area (CA).

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The solid geology of the area surrounding Leighton Buzzard is Lower Greensand (British Geological Survey 1978) overlain by river gravels and alluvium. The site is located approximately 500m to the east of the River Ouzel, which flows through the town. It lies on land rising to the south, between 91.50m and 94m AOD. The site is also situated on soils of the Evesham 3 Association, which are described as slowly permeable calcareous clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). A recent geotechnical investigation carried out within the site revealed that it was subject to extensive excavation and infilling in the mid 20th century (Bob Harrington *pers. comm.*).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

4.1 Prehistoric occupation of the Leighton Buzzard area is known to date from the Palaeolithic period onwards, given the discovery of such artefacts in clay pits and gravel pits around the town. The earliest findspot from the area surrounding the site comprises an Iron Age gold coin found in 1849 approximately 300m to the south-west of the site (HER 17).

Romano-British

4.2 Although the area surrounding the site has not revealed any Romano-British findspots, the early 20th century archaeologist Fred Gurney highlighted the interesting distribution of Roman pottery in the general area of Leighton Buzzard (Simco 1984). It is noted that Roman pottery is abundant on the boulder clay ridges but virtually impossible to find in the gault clay valleys, thus indicating that Roman settlement was concentrated higher ground, avoiding the poorly drained land in the valley bottoms. The Leighton Buzzard area has also been identified as the potential likely location for a Roman villa (Simco 1984). Romano-British remains located in Leighton Buzzard have included a well discovered at the Union Workhouse in the 1920s, a possible cemetery at Tiddenfoot Waterside Park, and an urned cremation burial found beside the River Ouzel (Bedfordshire Community Archives website).

Anglo-Saxon

4.3 The settlement of Leighton Buzzard is known to date to the Saxon period, when it former part of the manor of *Lestone* listed on the Domesday Book of 1086. Place-name evidence variously suggests it derives from the Old English *leactun*, meaning 'a kitchen garden' (Mawer & Stenton 1926) or 'the place where leeks are grown' (Mills 2004), whilst the suffix Buzzard was not added until 1242 (Bedfordshire Community Archives website). As previously, the area surrounding the site has not revealed any find or features known to date to the Anglo-Saxon period. In the wider area, two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were excavated in the early 20th century on the outskirts of the town, from which 92 inhumations and a number of cremations were recorded (Morris 1962).

Medieval

4.4 The present street pattern of Leighton Buzzard is judged to date to the medieval period, and specifically the 12th century when the basic 'Y'- shaped formation of streets was probably laid out (Coleman 1996). The site lies at the north-eastern extent of the town's historic core centred upon the High Street and Market Square (HER 16871). In addition to residential and commercial buildings, medieval features comprise the Market Cross (HER 7), former stocks and post-medieval pound 100m to the north along North Street (HER

11060) and the discovery of 13 silver coins inside pottery vessel of c. 15th century date discovered 150m to the south-west of the site (HER 11067).

4.5 The site lies along the eastern frontage of North Street, which is known to have funneled traffic northwards from the eastern end of the High Street and Market Square from as early as the 12th century. The road was previously known as *Woburn Highway*, *Woburn Street* or *North End* (Bedfordshire Community Archives website) and was occupied by smaller properties than those in the High Street or Lake Street that were typically of a lower status, such as the Parish Workhouse to the north (HER 7997), or industrial in nature (Coleman 1996). To its immediate west, the site fronts on to Nos. 4 – 14 North Street, which are known to range in date from the 17th – mid 19th century (HERs 4642, 4643, 4644 & 4645). Prior to the construction of the West Street ring-road c. 1975, No. 18 North Street, which was a 17th century grade II listed building and associated tannery, stood to the immediate north of the site (HER 4646).

Post-medieval & modern

4.7 To the immediate south of the site lie the rear property boundaries associated with Nos. 13 – 25 Hockliffe Street. The street was formerly known as *Jeffs Lane* and *Gigg Lane* and may have been a later development to the town plan but was established by the 15th century (Coleman 1981). The Hockliffe Street properties to the south of the site are predominantly Grade II listed buildings range in date from the 16th or 19th centuries (HERs 4598, 4599, 4600 & 4601) and include the Baptist Church built in the 1890s to the immediate east of the site (HER 2244). Significant development of Leighton Buzzard took place after the arrival of the London and North Western Railway at Linslade in 1838 and the enclosure of the town in 1848, the latter of which broke up the medieval open field system (Page 1912).

The site

4.8 Despite its prominent location along North Street, relatively little is known of the history of the site itself, and there no entry for No. 16 High Street in the HER database. However, historic cartographic sources clearly depict the early modern and modern development of the site and reveal that the majority of the site has consistently comprised yards located to the rear of North Street. Bevan's map of 1819 reveals that the site was occupied by no less than six buildings variously owned by Julian Franklin, T. Chew and T. White (Fig.3). The parish of Leighton Buzzard tithe map from 1840 does not depict significant development within the site (Fig.4), although the enclosure map of 1848 suggests that many of the former structures in the southern or eastern section of the site were no longer extant (Fig.5).

4.9 Later cartographic sources also suggest that the site was not significantly built upon in the later 19th and 20th centuries (Figs. 6 – 9), although the aforementioned geotechnical investigation carried out within the site revealed that it had been subject to extensive excavation and infilling in the mid 20th century. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map dating from 1879

suggests that much of the site, particularly its northern edge and southern section contained established trees and thus possibly consisted of domestic gardens. Subsequent Ordnance Survey maps from 1901 and 1926 depict very little change or development within the site, yet by 1970 No. 16 North Street had been supplemented by a 'garage' to its rear and the southern section of the site had been cleared of any former standing buildings.

4.10 A number of pictorial sources reveal details of the past usage of the site and are consistent with the cartographic evidence. Historic photographs confirm that the site was occupied by a garage owned and occupied by Buckmaster from as early as 1913, whose offices were located at No. 16 North Street. Later historic photographs dating from the later 20th century confirm the presence of the modern garage building to the rear of No. 16 North Street, which was probably constructed following the demolition of No. 18 North Street and the construction of the West Street ring-road c. 1975. An aerial photograph dating from 1973 pre-dates the garage and ring-road development, and clearly depicts the cleared southern area of the site in use as parking and storage for Buckmaster Coaches (Fig.10).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Five trenches were excavated using a mechanical 180° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The trench locations were approved by CBC. Trench 1 measured 7 x 1.80m; Trench 2 30 x 1.80m and Trenches 3, 4 and 5 measured 10 x 1.80m. The trenches were sited so as to allow continuing usage of the site by the businesses operating from it during the evaluation.

5.2 Topsoil and undifferentiated overburden 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 trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Trench 1 (Fig. 2, DP 2-3)

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 4): E end, S facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 91.73m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.14m	L1000	Concrete.
0.14 – 0.28m	L1001	Base layer for concrete. Compacted CBM rubble.
0.28 – 0.40m	L1002	Mid brown, friable, clayey silt.
0.40 – 0.62m	L1003	Subsoil. Grey brown, loose, sandy silt.
0.62m +	L1004	Natural, loose, greenish yellow sand.

Description: No archaeological remains or finds were revealed.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2, DP 5-6)

<i>Sample section 2 (DP 7): E end, SE facing</i> 0.00 = 93.10m AOD		
0.00 – 0.16m	L1005	Modern, compacted, CBM rubble.
0.16 – 0.40m	L1006	?Buried Topsoil. Light to mid brown, compact, sandy silt.
0.40 – 0.93m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.93m +	L1004	Natural sand. As above, Tr. 1.

<i>Sample section 3 (DP 8): W end, NW facing</i> 0.00 = 92.92m AOD		
0.00 – 0.14m	L1005	CBM rubble. As above.
0.14 – 0.40m	L1006	?Buried Topsoil. As above.
0.40 – 0.70m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.70m +	L1004	Natural sand. As above, Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 2 contained two pits (F1015 & F1018) and a ditch (F1020).

Pit F1015 was oval (2.90 x 0.73+ x 0.49m; DP 9), and located in the western part of the trench. It had moderately sloping sides, a flattish base and it extended beyond the southern limit of the trench. Its fill, L1016, was a mid to dark greyish brown, compact, sandy silt. A fragment of CBM (122g) was recovered from this deposit.

F1018 (1.60 x 0.40 x 0.15m+) was recorded within the southern section of the trench (DP 10). It had moderately sloping sides and uneven base. Its fill, L1019, was a mid to dark, compact, sandy silt. No finds were present. F1018 was likely a pit.

Ditch F1020 was linear (1.80+ x 1.55 x 0.43m; DP11), aligned north-west/south-east. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1021, was a light brown, friable, sandy silt. Two medieval pottery sherds (9g; 11th – 13th century) were recovered from the fill.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2, DP 12-13)

<i>Sample section 4 (DP 14): S end, SW facing</i> 0.00 = 93.42m AOD		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1005	CBM rubble. As above, Tr. 2.
0.26 – 0.50m	L1006	?Buried Topsoil. As above, Tr. 2.
0.50 – 0.79m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.79m +	L1004	Natural sand. As above, Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 3 contained an undated gully (F1009) and a modern pit (F1007)

Pit F1007 was rectangular (1.30 x 0.45+ x 0.48) extending beyond the eastern limit of the trench (DP 15-16). It had vertical sides and flattish base. Its fill, L1008, was a mid brownish grey, compact, sandy silt. It contained modern CBM and china fragments. F1007 cut Gully F1009.

Gully F1009 was linear (1.40+ x 0.45 x 0.15m), aligned north-east/south west (DP 15). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1010, was a mid brownish grey, compact, sandy silt. No finds were present. F1009 was cut by Pit F1007.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2, DP 17-18)

<i>Sample section 5 (DP 19): S end, SW facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 93.33m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.13m	L1005	CBM rubble. As above, Tr. 2.
0.13 – 1.06m	L1006	?Buried topsoil. As above, Tr. 2.
1.06m +	L1004	Natural sand. As above, Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 4 contained an undated gully (F1011) and an undated pit (F1013).

Gully F1011 was linear (3.80 x 0.37 x 0.08m) located in the southern part of the trench (DP 20). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1012, was a mid brown, friable, sandy silt. No finds were present.

Pit F1013 was likely oval (1.80 x 0.30 x 0.26m+) (DP 21). It had moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1014, was a mid to dark brown, compact, sandy silt. No finds were present.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2, DP 22-23)

<i>Sample section 6 (DP 24): S end, SW facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 93.10m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1005	CBM rubble. As above, Tr. 2.
0.18 – 0.60m	L1006	?Buried Topsoil. As above, Tr. 2.
0.60 – 1.15m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
1.15m +	L1004	Natural sand. As above, Tr. 1.

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.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The northern part of the site was commonly overlain by Concrete L1000 (0.14 – 0.20m thick), a modern yard surface. Modern deposits were present below the concrete, and at the depth of c. 0.40m Subsoil L1003 was present. The latter was recorded in Trenches 1-3 & 5. Within the southern part of the site the top deposit was a compacted layer of CBM rubble (L1005; 0.10 – 0.20m thick), created to provide a car parking area. Just below the rubble, and above the subsoil, a layer of probably buried topsoil was present. L1006 was a light to mid brown, compact, sandy silt and it was 0.40 – 0.90m thick.

8.2 The natural geology, L1004, was present at 0.60 – 1.15m below existing ground level and comprised a greenish yellow, loose, sand.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Features were recorded in Trenches 2, 3 and 4:

Trench	context	Description	Spot date
2	1015	Pit	Undated
	1018	Pit	Undated
	1020	Ditch	?11 th – 13 th C
3	1007	Pit	Modern
	1009	Gully	Undated
4	1011	Gully	Undated
	1013	Pit	Undated

9.2 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for medieval and post-medieval archaeology.

9.3 In the event seven archaeological features were revealed. F1020 contained two medieval pottery sherds (11th – 13th century), and it may have been a boundary ditch between former land plots. The remaining features contained modern finds or were sterile. The majority of recorded features may be associated with the former garden.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Luton Museum, under Accession No. LUTNM.2011.03. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Buckmaster Garages Ltd for their co-operation and funding of the evaluation. AS is also grateful to Bob Harrington Design Ltd for commissioning the project.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Martin Oake of Central Bedfordshire Council.

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AS 1371: 16 North Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire

Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Trench	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)
1007	1008	3	Pit Fill	Mid 18th - 19th C	(2) 29g	452
1015	1016	2	Pit Fill			122
1020	1021	2	Ditch Fill	11th - 13th C	(2) 9g	

The Pottery*by Peter Thompson*

The evaluation recovered four sherds weighing 36g from two features.

Pit F1007 contained a moderately abraded sherd of glazed post-medieval red earthenware, and an early modern sherd of porcelain in good condition containing painted polychrome flowers.

Ditch F1020 contained a small abraded sherd of St Neots ware and a moderately abraded sherd of probable Early Medieval Chalky ware with voids where the calcareous material has dissolved. This ware derives from the Leighton Buzzard area and indicates a Saxo-Norman date for the ditch.

KEY (including Bedford site codes)

B1: SNEOT – St Neots ware mid 9th-mid 12th

B13: EMCW – Early Medieval Chalky ware 11th-12th

ENPO – English Porcelain mid 18th- 19th

PMRE - Post-medieval red earthenware 17th-19th

Feature	Context	Quantity	Date	Comment
Pit 1007	1008	1x21g PMRE 1x7g ENPO	Mid 18 th -19 th C	PMRE: Bowl? Internal and external clear/brown glaze ENPO: Polychrome painted deco
Ditch 1020	1021	1x2g SNEOT 1x6g EMCW	11 th -12 th	EMCW: voids only



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Plate 1 Buckmaster Garage, c. 1913

Not to scale



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Plate 2 Land to the rear of No. 16 North St. c. 1975

Not to scale



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Plate 3 Land to the rear of No. 16 North St. *c.* 1975

Not to scale

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Site at 16 North Street, Leighton Buzzard. View SW.



DP 2. Trench 1. View NE.



DP 3. Trench 1. View W.



DP 4. Trench 1. Sample section. View NNE.



DP 5. Trench 2. View WSW.



DP 6. Trench 2. View SW.



DP 7. Trench 2, E end. Sample section. View NW.



DP 8. Trench 2, W end. Sample section. View SE.



DP 9. Trench 2. Pit F1015. View NE



DP 10. Trench 2. Pit F1018. View SW.



DP 11. Trench 2. Ditch F1020. View SW.



DP 12. Trench 3. View SSE.



DP 13. Trench 3. View NW.



DP 14. Trench 3. Sample section. View NE.



DP 15. Trench 3. Pit F1007 and Gully/Drain F1009.



DP 16. Trench 3. Pit F1007. View NE.



DP 17. Trench 4. View N.



DP 18. Trench 4. View NW.



DP 19. Trench 4. Sample section. View NE.



DP 20. Trench 4. Gully/Drain F1011. View NW.



DP 21. Trench 4. Pit F1013. View NE.



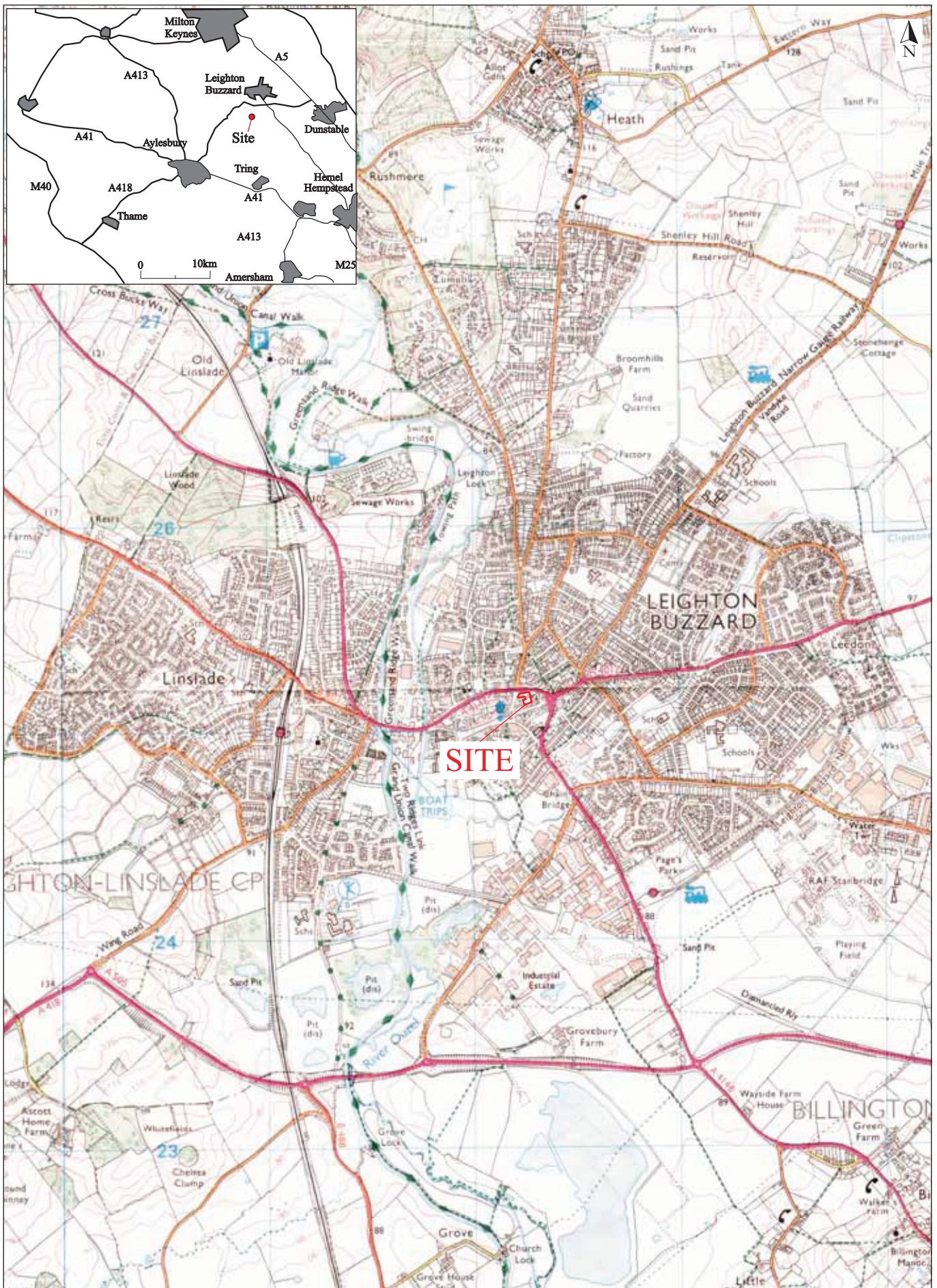
DP 22. Trench 5. View ESE.



DP 23. Trench 5. View NW.

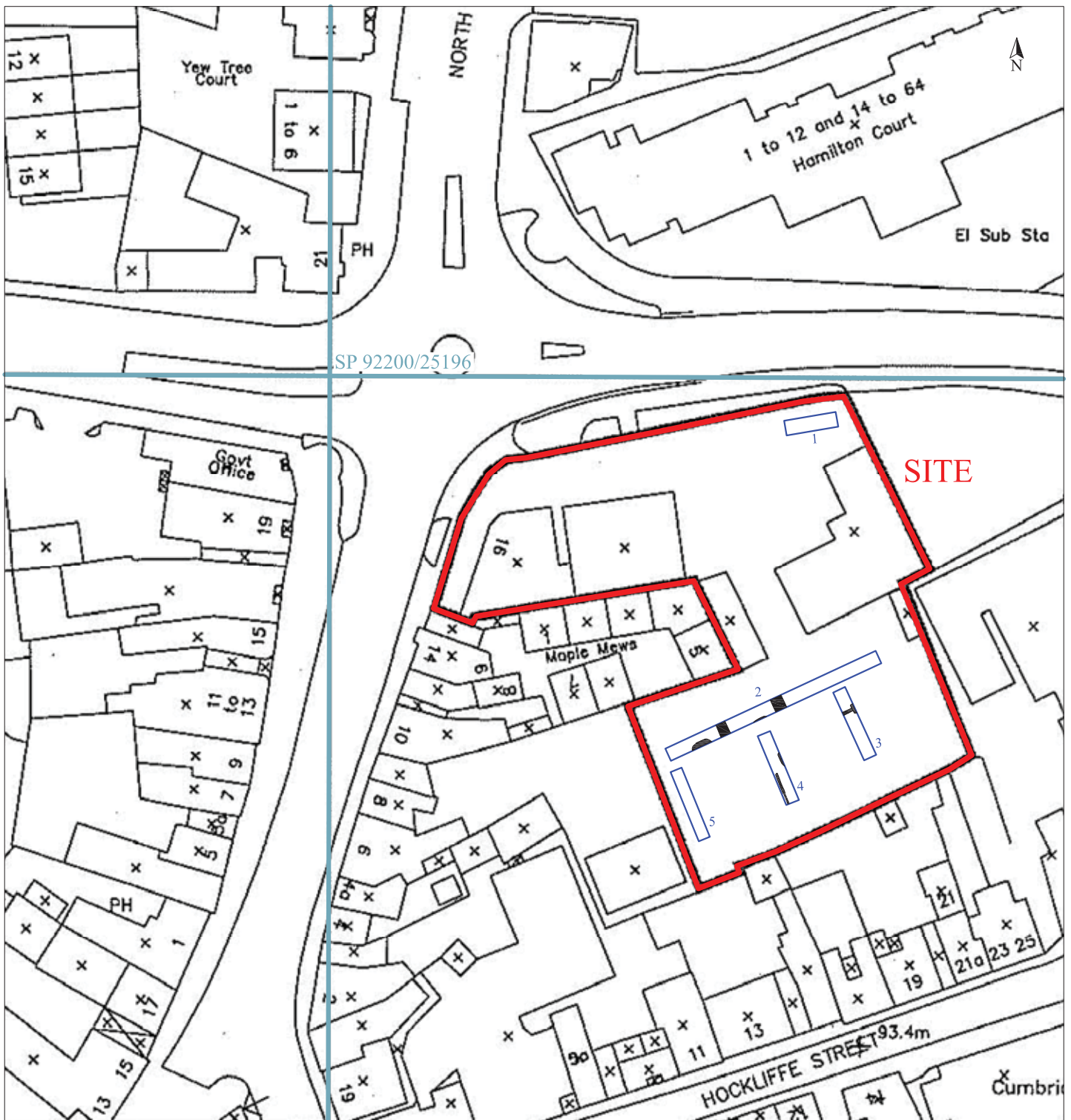


DP 24. Trench 5. Sample section. View NE.



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



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:750 at A4



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Fig. 3 Bevan's map, 1819
Not to scale



<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
Fig. 4 Tithe map, 1840
Not to scale

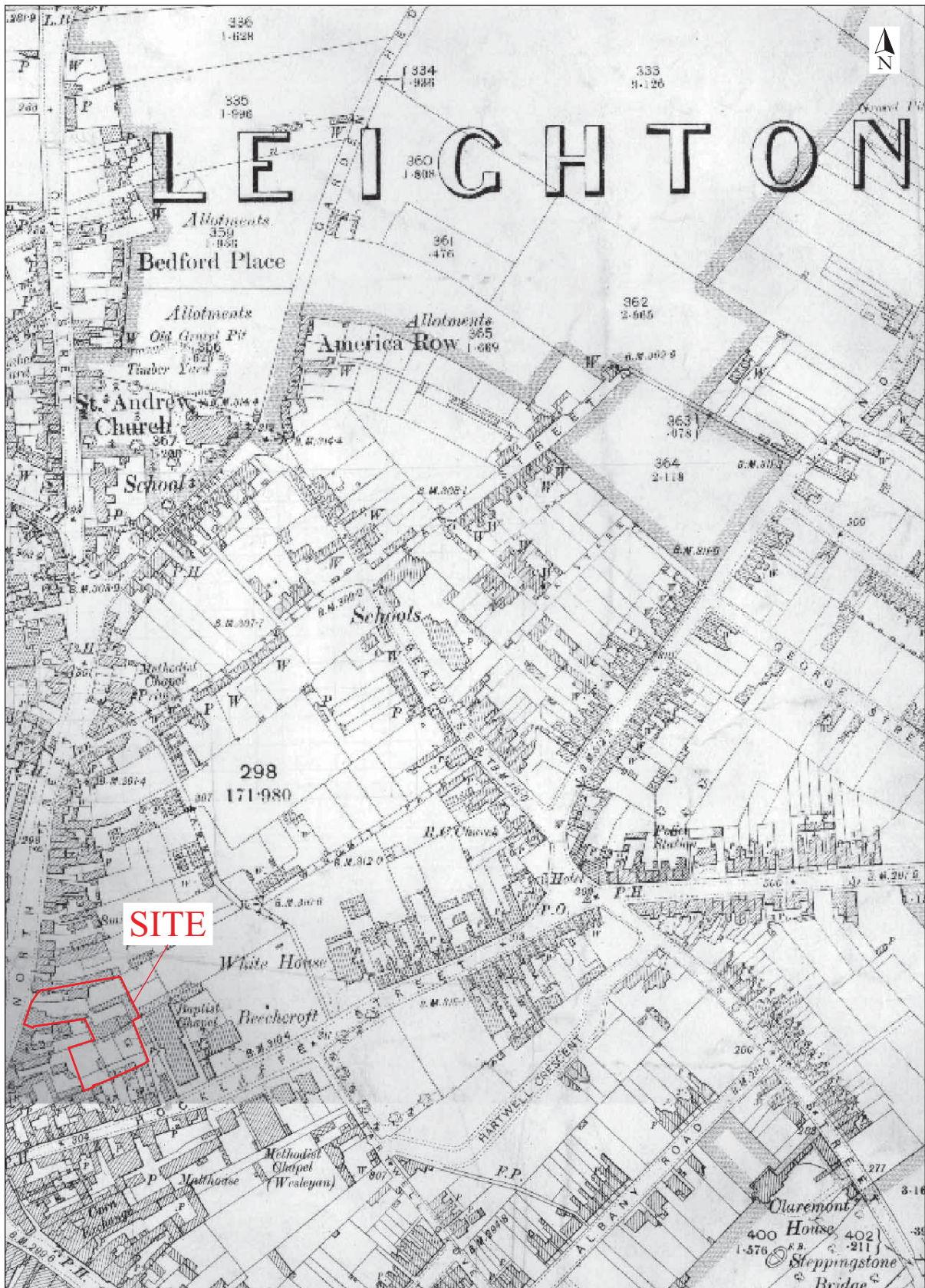


<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
Fig. 5 Enclosure map, 1848
Not to scale



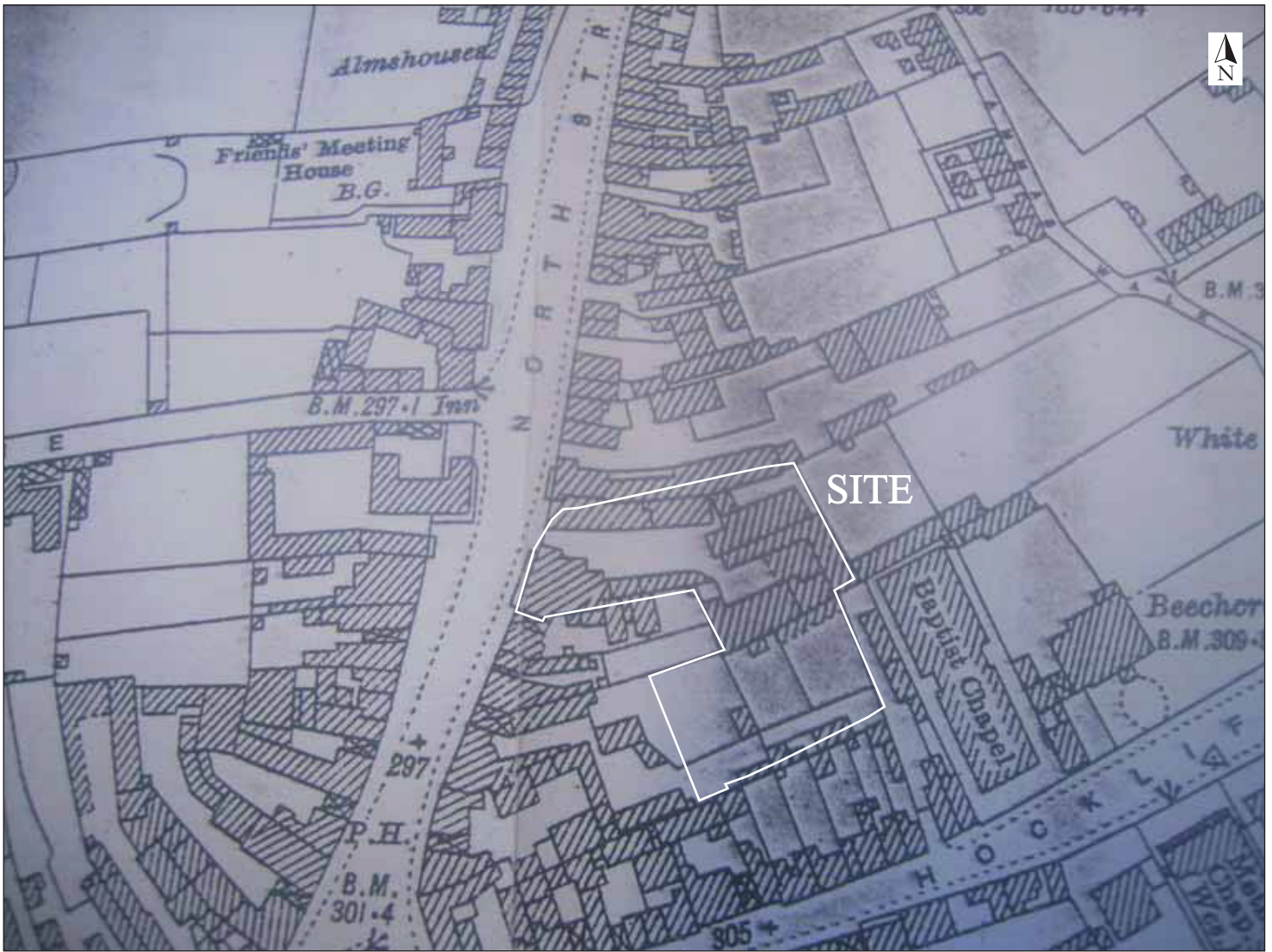
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Fig. 6 1st edition OS map, 1879
Not to scale



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Fig. 7 2nd edition OS map, 1901
 Not to scale



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Fig. 8 3rd edition OS map, 1926
Not to scale



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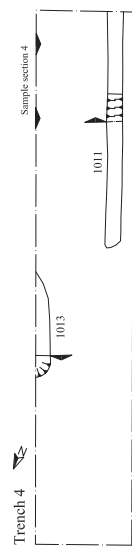
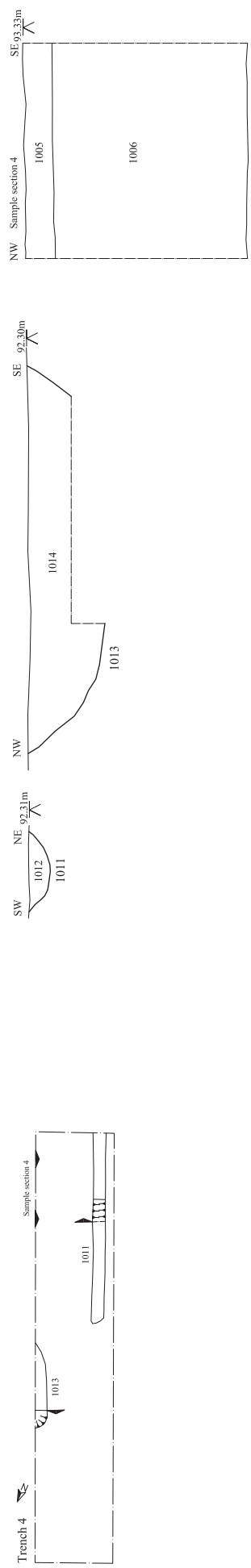
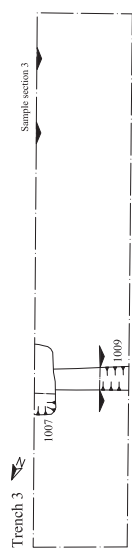
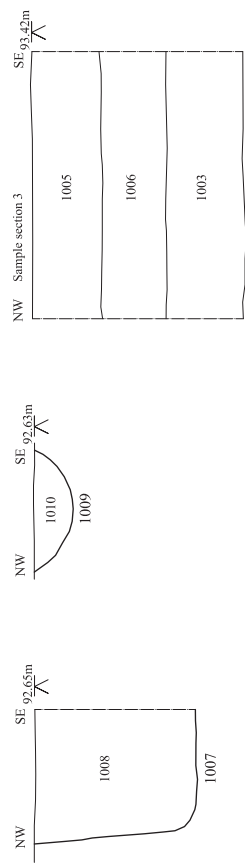
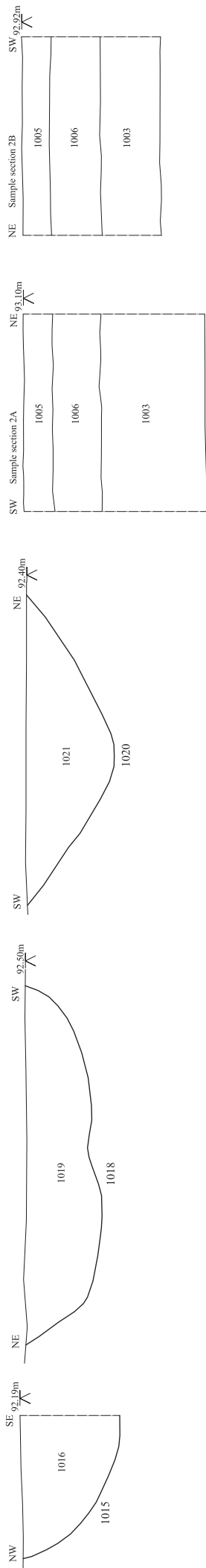
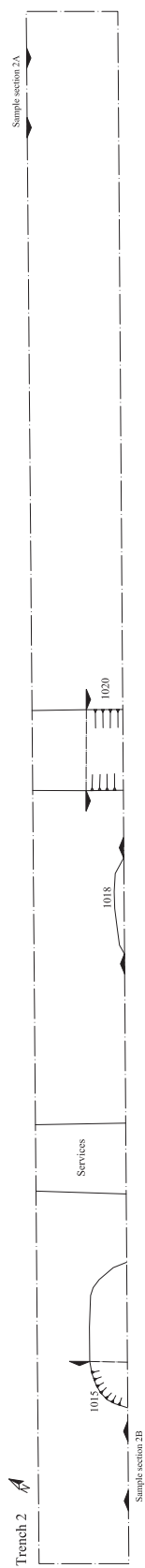
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Fig. 9 OS map, 1970
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Fig. 10 Aerial Photograph, 1973

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Fig. 11 Plans and sections
 Scale Plans 1:100, sections 1:20 at A3