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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**CHURCH VIEW, CHURCH LANE, WIDDINGTON,  
ESSEX**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Authors: Christopher Leonard (Fieldwork & report) Peter Thompson MA (Desk-based assessment) Antony Mustchin MSc (Editor)	
NGR: TL 5391 3168	Report No: 4032
District: Uttlesford	Site Code: WDCV12
Approved:	Project No: P4691
Signed:	Date: March 2012 Revised: May 2012

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**98-100 Fore, Street, Hertford SG14 1AB  
01992 558170**

**Unit 6, Brunel Business Court, Eastern Way,  
Bury St Edmunds IP32 7AJ  
01284 765210**

**e-mail [info@ascontracts.co.uk](mailto:info@ascontracts.co.uk)  
[www.archaeologicalsolutions.co.uk](http://www.archaeologicalsolutions.co.uk)**



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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Church View, Church Lane, Widdington, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In March 2012, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Church View, Church Lane, Widdington (NGR TL 5391 3168). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of four residential dwellings with access and garages (planning ref. UTT/1727/11).</i></p> <p><i>The medieval moated site of Priors Hall is a scheduled monument located approximately 200-250m west-north-west of the site (SAM 20715, EHER 199). A second scheduled monument site, Widdington Hall, is located 200-250m to the east-north-east and comprises a 15<sup>th</sup> century moated hall house, chapel site and possible deserted medieval village (SAM 20707, EHER 205). The church of St Mary the Virgin which is of medieval origin but heavily reconstructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is located 100-150m to the north (EHER 36900).</i></p> <p><i>Five undated ditches were revealed during the evaluation. None contained finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>04 - 08.03.2012</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>4691</i>	Site code	<i>WDCV12</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Evaluation.</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>House and garden.</i>		
Planned development	<i>Construction of four residential dwellings with access and garages.</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Five undated ditches.</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>None.</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Widdington</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER (EHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>CB11 3SE</i>		
Area of site	<i>0.3 ha</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 5391 3168</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>101-104m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>ECC HEM (Richard Havis)</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Christopher Leonard</i>		
Funded by	<i>Grange Builders</i>		
Full title	<i>Church View, Church Lane, Widdington, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Leonard C., &amp; Thompson P.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4032</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>March 2012 (Revised May 2012)</i>		

# CHURCH VIEW, CHURCH LANE, WIDDINGTON, ESSEX

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### SUMMARY

*In March 2012 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Church View, Church Lane, Widdington (NGR TL 5391 3168). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of four residential dwellings with access and garages (planning ref. UTT/1727/11).*

*The medieval moated site of Priors Hall is a scheduled monument located approximately 200-250m west-north-west of the site (SAM 20715, EHER 199). A second scheduled monument site, Widdington Hall, is located 200-250m to the east-north-east and comprises a 15<sup>th</sup> century moated hall house, chapel site and possible deserted medieval village (SAM 20707, EHER 205). The church of St Mary the Virgin which is of medieval origin but heavily reconstructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is located 100-150m to the north (EHER 36900).*

*Five undated ditches were revealed during the evaluation. None contained finds.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2012, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological trial trench evaluation at Church View, Church Lane, Widdington (NGR TL 5391 3168; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of four residential dwellings with access and garages (planning ref. UTT/1727/11).

1.2 The archaeological evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (ECC HEM Richard Havis) (dated Dec 2011), and a written scheme of investigation compiled by AS (dated 22/12/2011). It adhered to *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) and the Institute for Archaeologists' (IFA) *Code of Conduct* (revised 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008).

1.3 The trial trench evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, 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 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs. 1 - 2)**

2.1 Widdington is situated approximately 6 km south of Saffron Walden in Essex and is 1.5 km east of the M11. The site is off Church Lane within the historic core of the village and is approximately 100-150m south-west of the church of St Mary the Virgin. It is located between two medieval moated hall sites which are scheduled monuments (SAM 20707 & 20715 and EHER 100 & 205). The site was until recently occupied by the residential dwelling of Church View, set in a mature garden plot.

## **3 THE EVIDENCE**

### **3.1 Topography, geology and soils**

3.1.1 Widdington is on a hill and the site located at c.100-105m AOD. The local soils are of the Hanslope association classed as typical calcareous pelosols which are slowly permeable clayey soils which crack deeply in dry weather. The underlying geology is Upper Cretaceous Chalk.

### **3.2 Archaeological and Historical Background**

3.2.1 The name Widdington appears in Domesday Book of 1086 as *Widintuna* meaning farmstead or village where willow trees grow (Mills 1991).

3.2.2 The site of Priors Hall is located approximately 200-250m west-north-west of the site and is a scheduled monument (SAM 20715, EHER 199). At one time it was called Stone Hall because its walls are said to be of 13<sup>th</sup> century stone, but there is no visible detail of that date. The manor was owned by the Prior of St. Valery in Picardy until the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Fragmentary remains of a homestead moat surround the house. Only the northern arm is waterfilled and measures 38m by 10m wide. The eastern arm is 50m long and is dry, and partly destroyed by tipping at its south-east angle.

Elsewhere the moat has been destroyed. A well-preserved typical late 14<sup>th</sup> century Essex-type barn has its original timbers surviving largely intact, and an outbuilding is probably of similar date but the house is later. A watching brief south of the farm produced a single fragment of medieval tile. In the barn a narrow trench across the floor revealed a possible pit that produced some early medieval pottery. Test pitting around the outside of the house revealed medieval features containing evidence of domestic cooking activity dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> century perhaps originating from a nearby kitchen structure. Monitoring of extensive building works within the yard and garden as well as within the house, revealed part of the flint foundations of a late Saxon building. A post hole of possible 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century date was also found in the house while in the yard a 13<sup>th</sup>-century pit and probable linear medieval feature was excavated. Later medieval pottery sherds and tile were recovered from mixed soil layers in the garden.

3.2.3 The current farmhouse within the fragmentary moat belongs predominantly to the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries but retains 13<sup>th</sup> century stonework (EHER 200). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the upper storey and chimneystack were inserted and a wing was added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Outbuildings to the south of the hall comprise a long building of 15<sup>th</sup> century date with a 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century wing extending to the north which was used at one point as a brewhouse. The wing was demolished, but archaeological monitoring of extensive building works within the yard and garden has revealed remains of it to the south of the house.

3.2.4 A second medieval scheduled monument site (SAM 20707) is Widdington Hall located 200-250m to the east-north-east comprising a 15<sup>th</sup> century moated hall house, chapel site and a possible deserted medieval village (EHER 205). The much altered house is now a farmhouse but originally consisted of a Great Hall, with Buttery and Solar Wings. Now only the Buttery, the doorway from it to the hall, the west end of the hall, and some roof construction survive. The moat is rectangular but no trace of the southern arm survives. The east and west arms are water filled while traces of another ditch, probably the original outlet, are visible in a field on the west side. The moat dimensions are 74m east-west by c.80m north-south with arms averaging 10m wide.

3.2.5 The church of St Mary the Virgin is a flint and stone rubble structure of 12<sup>th</sup> century origin but has been comprehensively restored in 1871-72 when the west tower was rebuilt. In the north wall of the chancel there is an early 12<sup>th</sup> century window and in the south wall there is the surround of a 13<sup>th</sup> century window with elaborate ornamentation. The south door is 15<sup>th</sup> century and the chancel has a late 13<sup>th</sup> century piscina. The church is Grade II\* listed for its historical value and internal features (EHER 36900).

3.2.6 There are approximately 23 Grade II listed buildings within 250m of the site. These include the Fleur de Lys Inn (EHER 36912), Rectory Cottage (EHER 36909) and the stable block east of The Old Rectory (EHER 36895).

### 3.3 The site

3.3.1 The 1777 Chapman & Andre map of Essex shows Priors Hall, the Parsonage and The Hall with a third hall, Mole Hall to the east (Fig. 3). The site is in the northern part of the rectangle demarcated by roads and field boundaries just to the south of the Parsonage. On the Widdington tithe map of c.1840 the site is in Field Plot 408 which was in Little Field Common and owned and occupied by one John Hayden (Fig. 4). The 1881 First Edition OS map shows a sinuous footpath crossing the site's access point, while the plot bordering the southern edge comprises woodland or scrub (Fig. 5). The 1907 Second Edition OS map and the 1946 OS map show no significant changes to the site (Fig. 6 & 7).

## 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Five linear trial trenches were excavated with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig.2). Trenches 1-3 measured 30 x 1.9m. Trenches 4 and 5 were divided into two 15 x 1.9m trenches each, in order to avoid vegetation.

4.2 Undifferentiated overburden was removed under full-time archaeological supervision using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.90m wide toothless ditching bucket. Thereafter, all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the trenches were scanned by metal detector.

## 5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

### Trench 1 Figs.2 & 8

Sample sections:

Sample Section 1A (DP 2)		
West end, north facing.		
0.00= 103.20m		
0.00- 0.34m	L1002	Topsoil. Firm, dark greyish brown, silty clay.
0.34- 0.58m	L1003	Subsoil. Firm, mid yellowish brown, silty clay.
0.58m +	L1006	Natural. Compact, mid brownish yellow clay and chalk.
Sample Section 1B (DP 3)		
East end, north facing.		
0.00= 104.12m		
0.00- 0.24m	L1002	Topsoil. As above.
0.24- 0.48m	L1003	Subsoil. As above.
0.48m +	L1006	Natural. As above.



*Description: Trench 1 contained undated Ditch F1007.*

Ditch F1007 was linear (1.3+ x 0.35 x 0.09m), orientated north/south. It had shallow, gently sloping sides and a concave base. F1007 had its northern terminus within the trench and extended beyond the trench to the south. Its fill, L1008, was a firm, mid brownish orange silty clay with occasional small, rounded flint and occasional chalk flecks. No finds were present within the fill.

## **Trench 2 Fig.2**

Sample section:

Sample Section 2 (DP 4) Southwest end, northwest facing. 0.00= 101.89m		
0.00- 0.20m	L1002	Topsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.20- 0.47m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.47m +	L1006	Natural. As above, Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 2 contained a modern drain and soakaway pit and two trenches relating to the demolition of Church View house.*

## **Trench 3 Fig.2**

Sample section:

Sample Section 3 (DP 5) North end, west facing. 0.00= 101.58m		
0.00- 0.20m	L1000	Layer of demolition material.
0.20- 0.45m	L1002	Topsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.45- 0.60m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.60m+	L1006	Natural. As above, Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 3 contained two foundation trenches relating to the demolition of Church View house.*

## **Trench 4A Fig.2**

Sample section:

Sample Section 4A (DP 6) South end, west facing. 0.00= 102.01m		
0.00- 0.21m	L1002	Topsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.21- 0.44m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.44m +	L1006	Natural. As above, Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 4A contained no archaeological finds or features.*



**Trench 4B Figs.2 & 8**

## Sample Section:

Sample Section 4B (DP 7) South end, west facing. 0.00= 104.03m		
0.00- 0.27m	L1002	Topsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.27- 0.49m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.49m +	L1006	Natural. As above, Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 4B contained two undated ditches, F1015 and F1019, and a curvilinear gully, F1017, which cut both ditches. F1017 may have been modern.*

Ditch F1015 was linear (1.90+ x 1.80 x 0.20m), orientated east/west. It had shallow, gently sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1016, was a moderately compact, mid brownish yellow silty clay with occasional small, sub-angular flint and occasional chalk flecks. No finds were present within the fill. F1015 cut Ditch F1019 and was cut by Gully F1017.

Gully F1017 was curvilinear (2.20+ x 0.68 x 0.45m). It had moderately steep sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1018, was a moderately compact, mid orange-brown silty clay with moderately frequent chalk flecks and small, sub-rounded flint. L1018 also contained occasional large, rounded flint nodules. No finds were present within the fill. F1017 cut Ditches F1015 and F1019. Gully F1017 appeared to be modern based on its profile of very steep sides. Its backfill included a large number of large flint nodules, distinct from the smaller flint inclusions contained within the backfills of the other features. It was located near to a modern pond within the garden of Church View house and may have been a drainage feature associated with the pond.

Ditch F1019 was linear (2.65+ x 0.95 x 0.16m), orientated northeast/southwest. It had shallow, gently sloping sides and a gradual break of slope to a broad, flat base. Its fill, L1020, was a moderately compact, mid brownish grey silty clay with moderately frequent chalk flecks and occasional small, sub-rounded flint nodules. No finds were present within the fill. F1019 was cut by Ditch F1015 and Gully F1017.

**Trench 5A Figs.2 & 8**

## Sample section:

Sample Section 5A (DP 8) West end, south facing. 0.00= 101.21m		
0.00- 0.16m	L1001	Gravel and tarmac drive way.
0.16- 0.34m	L1002	Topsoil. As above, Tr.1.
0.34- 0.76m	L1004	Made ground. Compact, mid orange-brown, silty clay.
0.76m +	L1006	Natural. As above, Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 5A contained undated Ditch F1009.*

Ditch F1009 was linear (4.22+ x 1.35 x 0.49m), orientated northwest / southeast. It had steep sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1010, was a firm, mid orange-brown clay-silt with moderately frequent small, medium and large sub-rounded flint. Animal bone (98g) was recovered from the fill. Ditch F1009 was also excavated in Trench 5B (F1011).

## Trench 5B Figs. 2 & 8

Sample section:

Sample Section 5B (DP 9)		
West end, north facing.		
0.00= 101.98m		
0.00- 0.15m	L1001	Gravel and tarmac drive way.
0.15- 0.66m	L1004	Made ground. As above, Tr.5A.
0.66- 1.18m	L1005	Made ground. Compact, light brownish yellow, silty clay.
1.18m +	L1006	Natural. As above, Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 5B contained undated Ditch F1011, a continuation of F1009 (Trench 5A).*

Ditch F1011 was linear (4.64+ x 1.22+ x 0.35m), orientated northwest/southeast. It had steep sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1012, was a compact, mid orange-brown silty clay with moderately frequent small, medium and large sub-rounded flint. No finds were present. F1011 was a continuation of F1009 (Tr. 5A)

## 6 CONFIDENCE RATING

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

## 7 DEPOSIT MODEL

7.1 The most recent deposit was L1000, a layer of demolition rubble (c.20m thick) caused by the demolition of Church View house. It occurred in the area immediately surrounding the footprint of the demolished house. Within the footprint of the demolished house it directly overlay L1013, a layer of re-deposited light brownish yellow clay and chalk (c.0.10m thick), the foundation layer for the floor of the house. L1013 overlay L1014, a firm, dark reddish brown clay silt (max. 0.54m thick) that sealed the natural.

7.2 Beyond the building footprint the uppermost layer was Topsoil L1002, a firm, dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional small, angular flint (0.18-0.34m thick). L1002 sealed Subsoil L1003, a firm, mid yellowish brown silty clay with moderately frequent large, rounded flints and occasional small sub-angular flints (0.22- 0.29m thick). L1003 directly overlay the natural.

7.3 On the north side of the site the uppermost layer was L1001, a tarmac and gravel drive leading to Church View. In Trench 5A L1001 overlay L1002. The latter sealed Made Ground L1004, a compact, mid orange-brown silty clay (0.42m thick). In Trench 5B L1002 was absent and L1004 sealed Made Ground L1005, a compact, light brownish yellow clay silt (0.52m thick).

7.4 The natural, L1006 was a compact, mid brownish yellow clay and chalk (0.44m below current ground level (Tr.4A) - 1.18m (Tr.5B).

## 8 DISCUSSION

8.1 The excavated features are tabulated:

Trench	Feature	Description	Spot Date
1	F1007	Ditch	Undated
4B	F1015	Ditch	Undated
	F1017	Gully	?Modern
	F1019	Ditch	Undated
5A	F1009 = F1011 (Tr.5B)	Ditch	Undated
5B	F1011 = F1009 (Tr.5A)	Ditch	Undated

8.2 Five ditches and gullies were recorded during the evaluation and none contained any dating evidence. Gully F1017 (Tr.4B) may have been a modern feature. The ditches were variously orientated.

8.3 The larger number of features were present Trench 4B where two ditches (F1015 & F1019) and a gully (F1007) inter cut. The features occurred in the south-eastern (Trs. 1 & 4B) and northern (Trs. 5A & 5B) sectors of the site. Modern features related to Church View house were recorded in Trenches 2 and 3. It is not felt that these features wholly removed archaeological remains had they been present.

8.4 The desk-based assessment indicated a potential for Saxon and medieval remains. The site is located between two moated medieval manors and close to the church of St. Mary the Virgin within the core of the medieval village of Widdington. The cartographic evidence records then site as open land until the construction of Church View house in modern times. The archaeological features recorded during the trial trenching suggests that the site lay outside the settlement area of Widdington. No evidence of buildings or associated features were revealed.

## 9 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

9.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the finds from the site at Saffron Walden Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

## 10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank Grange Builders for their co-operation and funding of the evaluation, in particular Stuart Brown for his on-site assistance.

AS would like to thank Laura Belton of Essex HER, and staff at the Chelmsford Record Office, for assistance in compiling the DBA.

AS is also grateful to Richard Havis and Adam Garwood of Essex County Council Historic Environment Management for their input and advice.

## 11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 12 WEB SITES

Heritage Gateway

## APPENDIX 1      CARTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Figure Number	Map Description	Date	Scale
Fig 1	Site Location: OS Explorer	Modern	1:25,000
Fig 2	Detailed Site Location	Modern	1:200
Fig 3	Chapman & Andre map of Essex (Plate VII)	1777	
Fig 4	Widdington tithe map (D/T 398)	c.1840	
Fig 5	OS 1 <sup>st</sup> edition (XIV)	1881	1:10,560
Fig 6	OS 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition (XIV.5)	1907	1:25,000
Fig 7	OS (XII.SE)	1946	1:10,560

## APPENDIX 2      CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

### WDCV12

Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Description	A.Bone (g)
1009	1010	Ditch	98

## APPENDIX 3      SPECIALIST REPORT

### The Animal Bone

*Dr Julia Cussans*

A single animal bone was recovered from L1010, Ditch F1009. The bone had fresh breaks and had broken into three pieces. Overall it was well preserved although a little abraded at the distal end. The bone was identified as a right cattle metatarsal and displayed a series of fine cut marks below the proximal articulation on the lateral side, possibly the result of skinning or disarticulation. The bone was fully fused and came from a relatively slender individual. No other bones were present.



PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1  
*Pre-excavation, with St. Mary's Church in background. Looking northeast.*



2  
*Sample section 1A. Looking south.*



3  
*Sample section 1B. Looking south.*



4  
*Sample section 2. Looking northwest.*



5  
*Sample section 3. Looking east.*



6  
*Sample section 4A. Looking east.*





7  
Sample section 4B. Looking east.



8  
Sample section 5A. Looking north.



9  
Sample section 5B. Looking south.



10  
Trial trench 1. Looking west.



11  
Trial trench 2. Looking Northwest.



12  
Trial trench 3. Looking north.



13  
*Trial trench 4A. Looking north.*



14  
*Trial trench 4B. Looking north.*



15  
*Trial trench 5A. Looking west.*



16  
*Trial trench 5B. Looking east.*





17  
F1007. Looking north.



18  
F1009. Looking southeast.

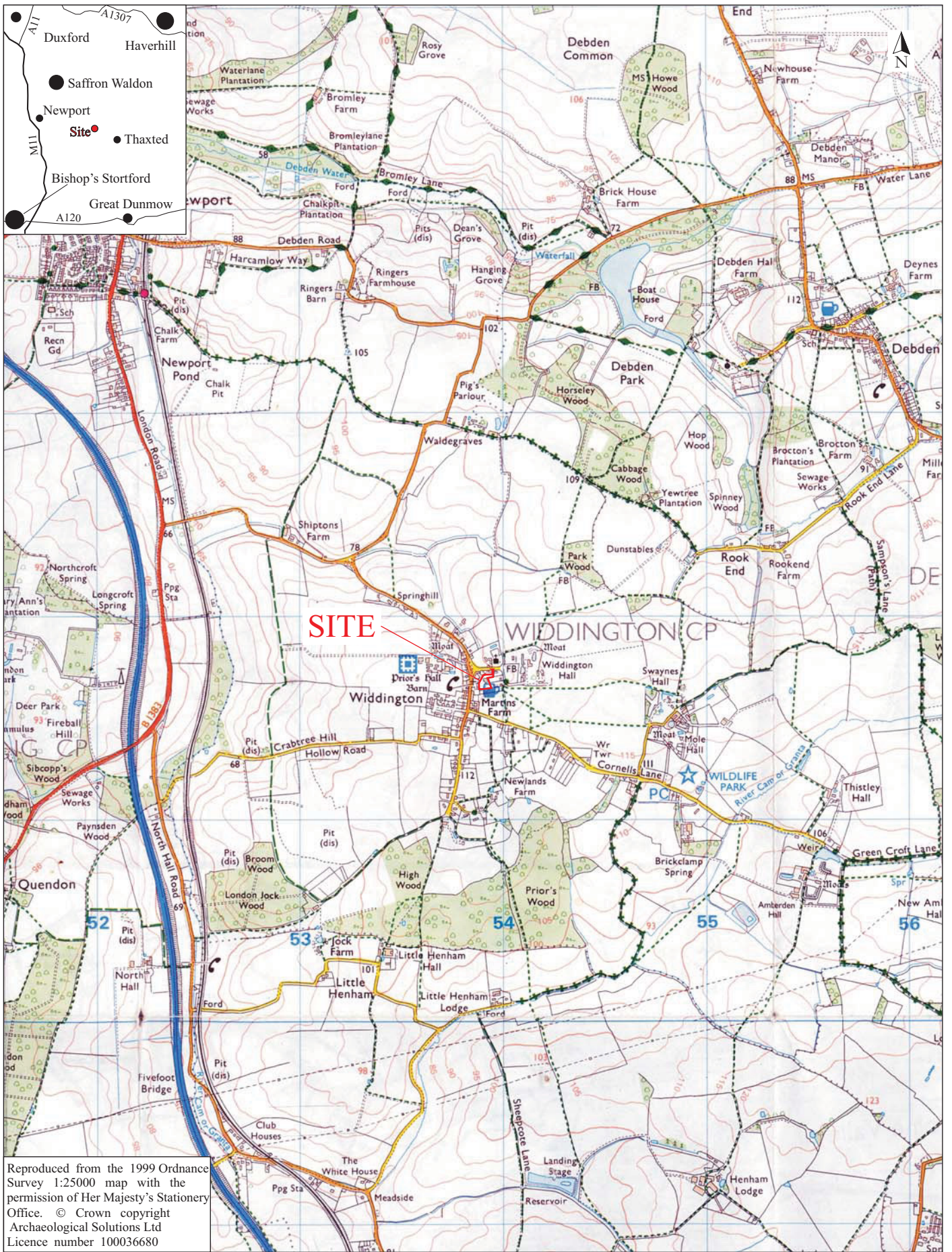


19  
F1011. Looking west.



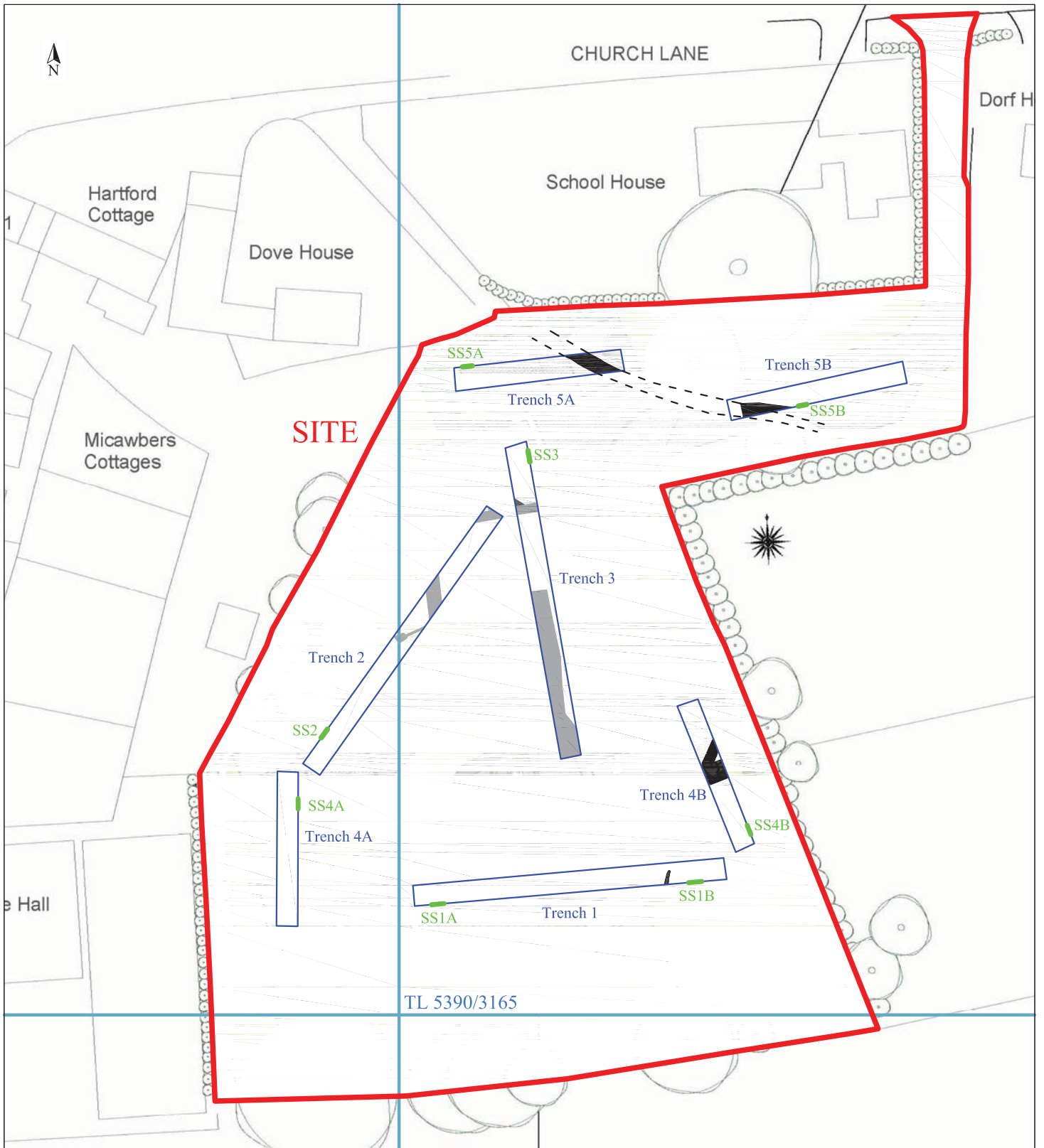
20  
F1015, F1017 & F1019. Looking west.







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

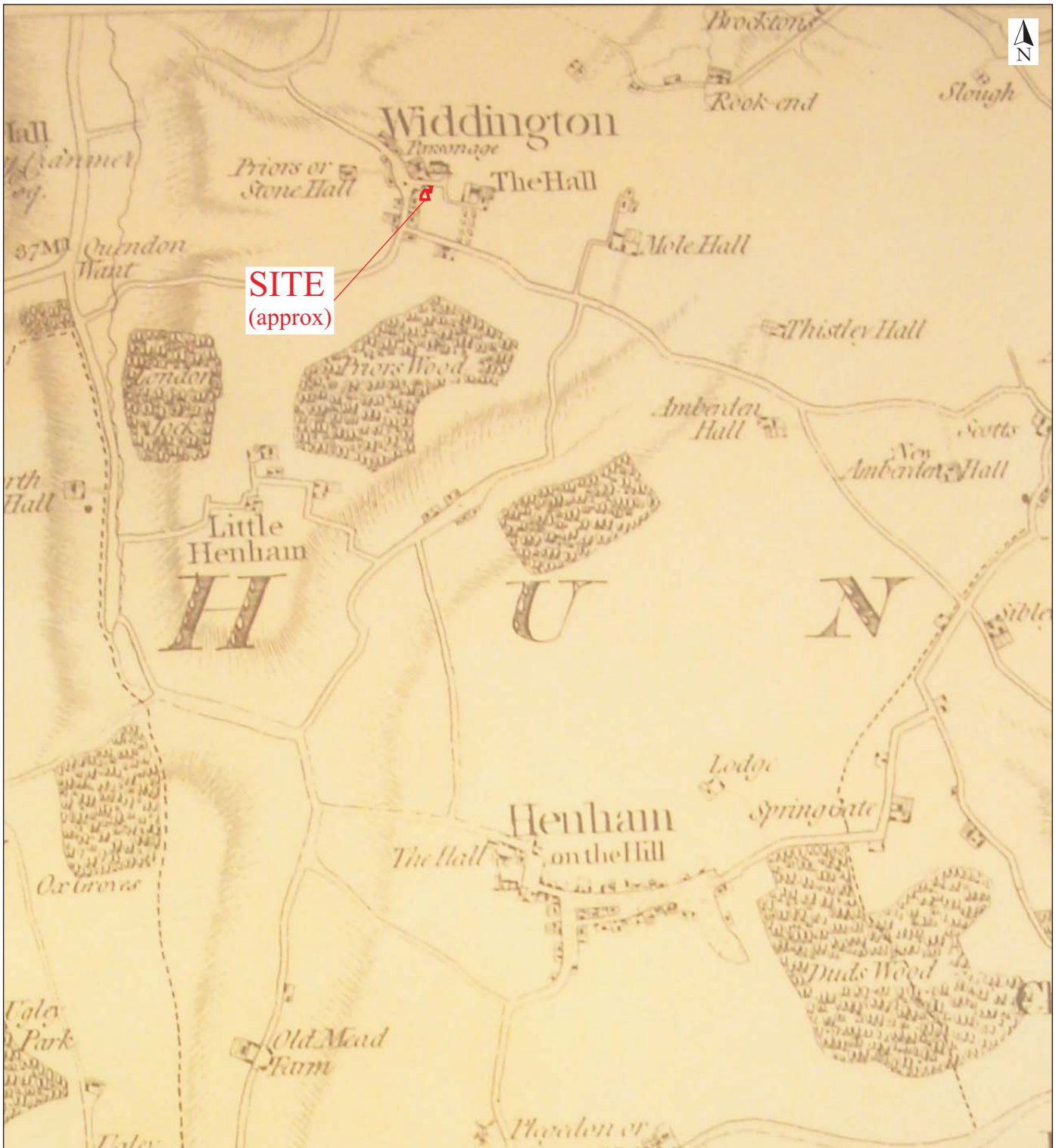




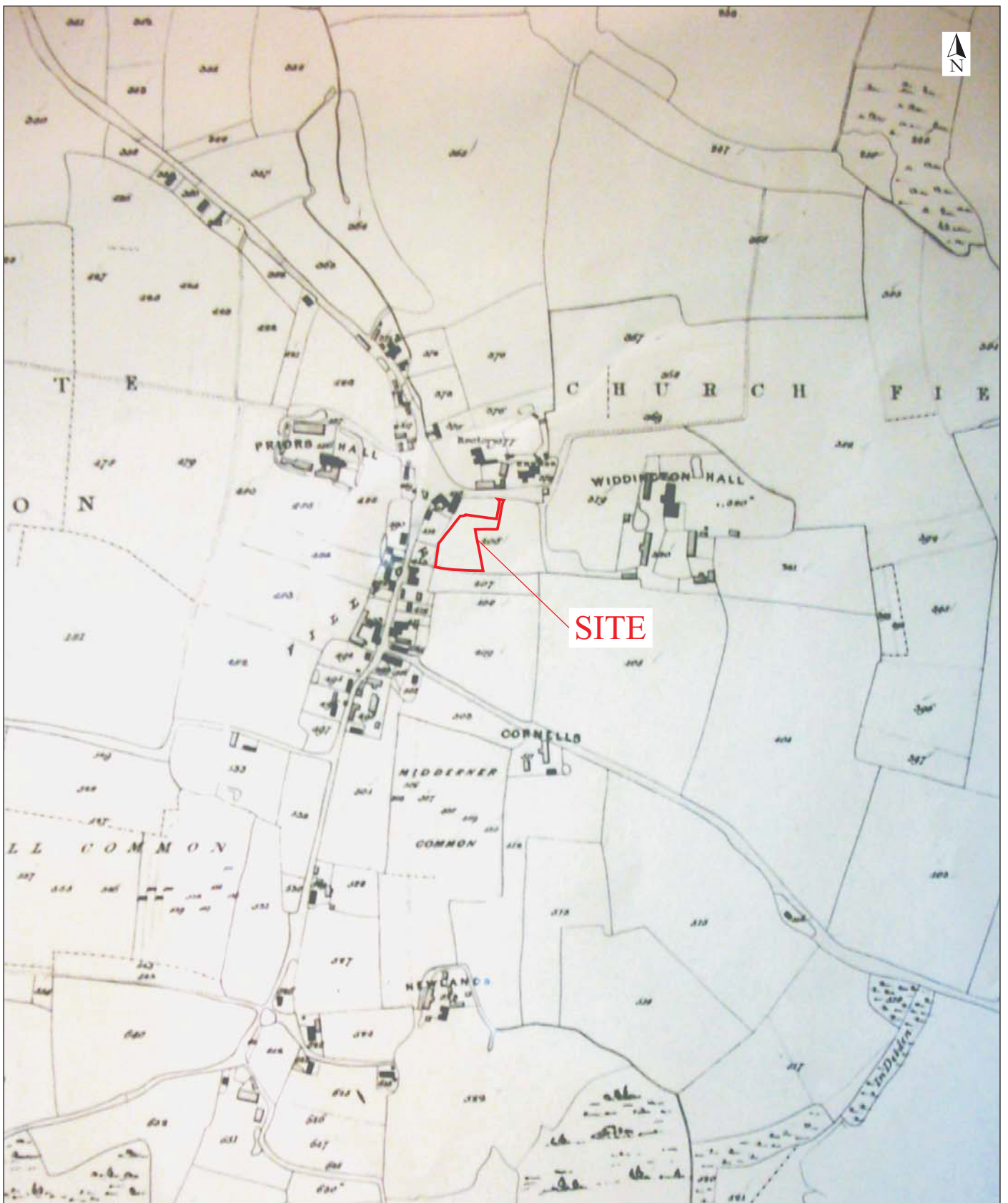
-  Archaeological features
-  Modern features

0  25m

*Archaeological Solutions Ltd*  
**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
 Scale 1:500 at A4



Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
Fig. 3 Chapman & Andre map of Essex, 1777  
Not to scale



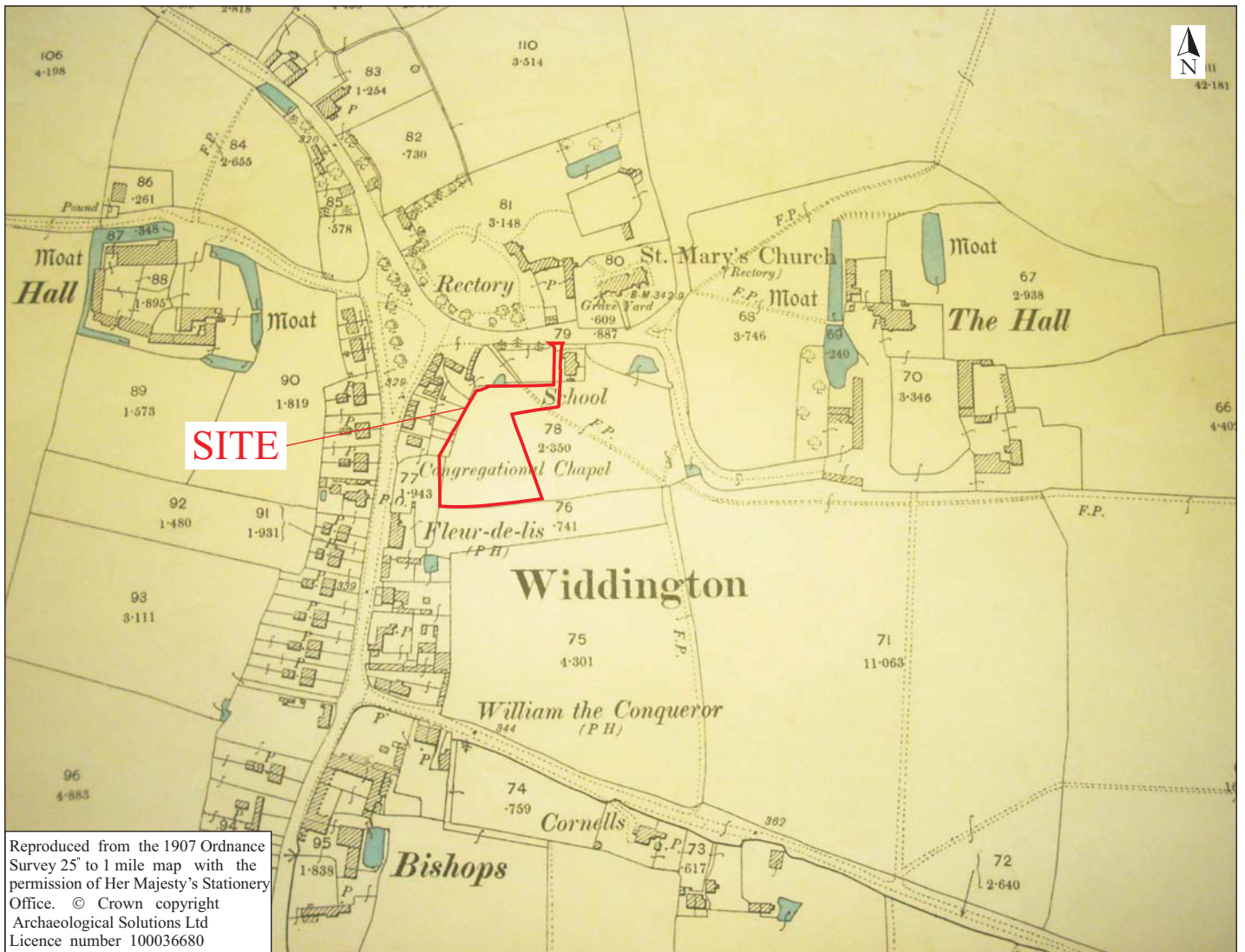
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Fig. 4 Widdington tithe map, c.1840  
Not to scale





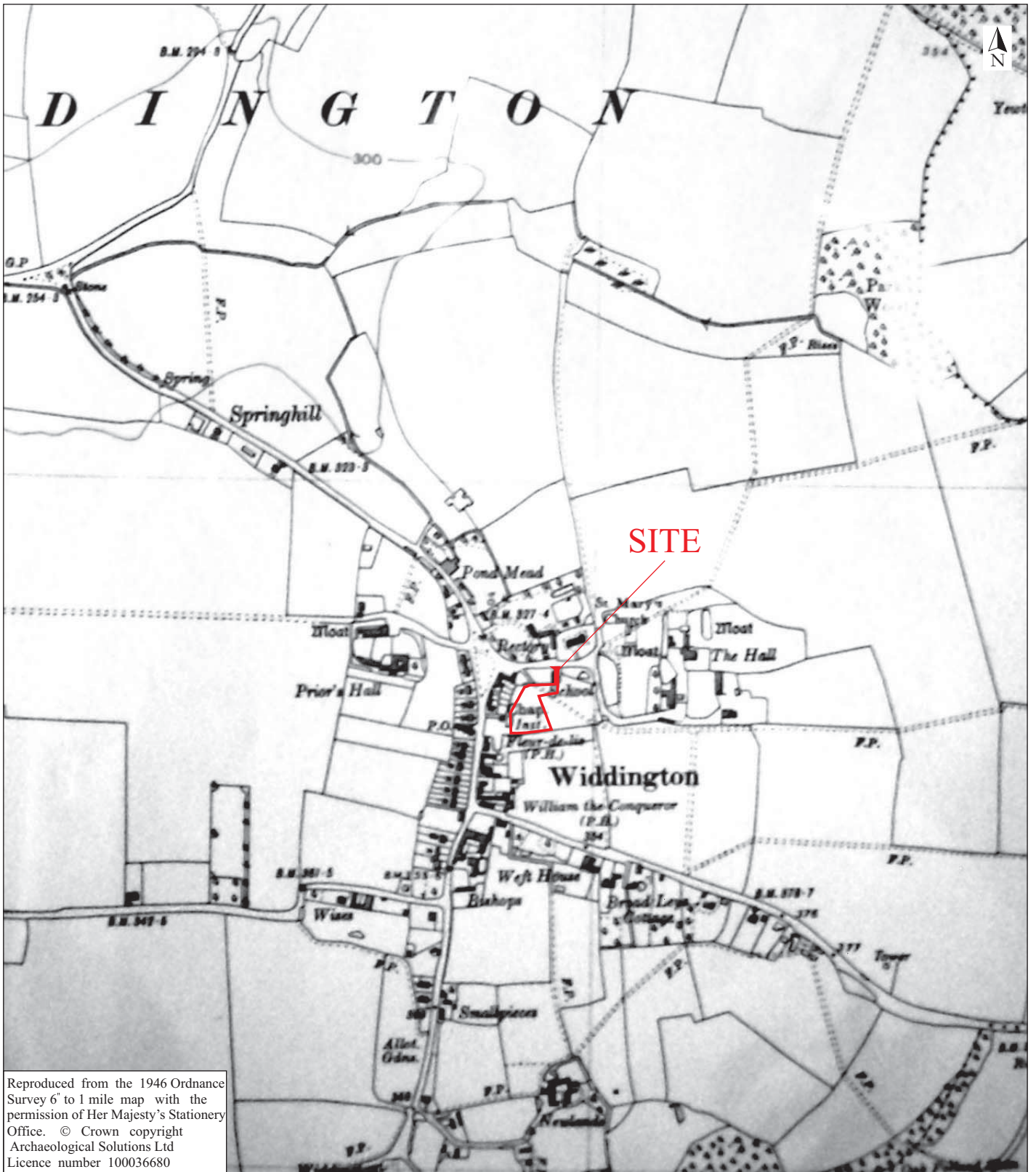
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**Fig. 5 1st Edition OS map, 1881**  
 Not to scale



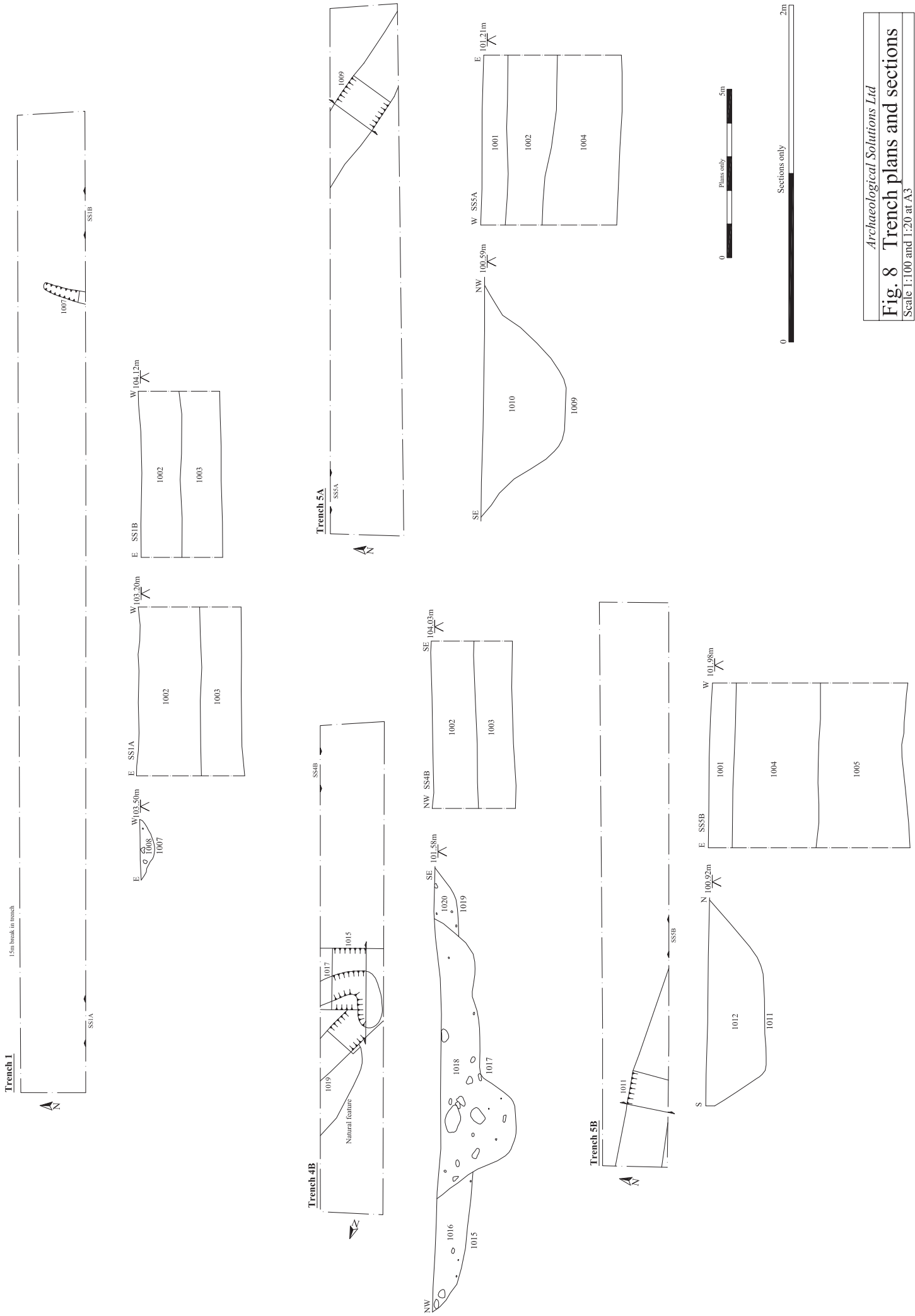
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<b>Fig. 6 2nd Edition OS map, 1907</b>
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 Fig. 7 OS map, 1946  
 Not to scale



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**Fig. 8 Trench plans and sections**  
 Scale 1:100 and 1:20 at A3



0 25m

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**Fig. 9 Proposed development plan**  
 Scale 1:500 at A4