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**REAR OF 23-25 CHURCH STREET, GREAT BADDOW,
CHELMSFORD, ESSEX.**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Stuart Rathbone (Fieldwork & Report) Antony Mustchin (Editor)	
NGR: TL 7306 0478	Report No: 4047
District: Chelmsford	Site Code: GBCH12
Approved: C Halpin	Project No: P4755
Signed:	Date: March 2012 Revised: June 2012

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>. Rear of 23-25 Church Street, Great Baddow Chelmsford</i>		
<i>In March 2012, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at the rear of 23-25 Church Street, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex (TL 7306 0478). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of five new dwellings (Planning Ref. CHL/01032/10).</i>			
<i>The site lies within an area of archaeological interest within the historic core and conservation area of Great Baddow. It lies just east of the 13th century Church of St Mary and backs on to the extended area of the graveyard to the north. Church Street is of at least a 14th century date and therefore the development site had a high archaeological potential.</i>			
<i>Four trial trenches were excavated, each measuring 10m by 2m. The only feature was a brick-lined well, probably constructed in the late 19th or early 20th century. The site had been heavily disturbed by two periods of building in the 20th century which had lowered the ground surface and which would have removed all shallow archaeological features (if present) and truncated deeper ones. Apart from the well all other features recorded were clearly of a modern date with large quantities of 20th century material in their fills.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>14th – 22nd March 2012</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P4755</i>	Site code	<i>GBCH12</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>Within Conservation Area</i>		
Current land use	<i>Recently demolished light industrial buildings</i>		
Planned development	<i>Five dwellings</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern brick-lined well</i>		
Significant finds(+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Chelmsford</i>	<i>Great Baddow</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.1000m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 7306 0478</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c.37m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Essex County Council HEM Team</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Stuart Rathbone and Gareth Barlow</i>		
Funded by	<i>St Giles Developments Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>Rear of 23-25 Church Street, Great Baddow, Chelmsford</i>		
Authors	<i>Stuart Rathbone</i>		
Report no.	<i>4047</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>March 2012 (Revised June 2012)</i>		

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ESSEX
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

SUMMARY

In March 2012, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at the rear of 23-25 Church Street, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex (TL 7306 0478). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of five new dwellings (Planning Ref. CHL/01032/10).

The site lies within an area of archaeological interest within the historic core and conservation area of Great Baddow. It lies just east of the 13th century Church of St Mary and backs on to the extended area of the graveyard to the north. Church Street is of at least a 14th century date and therefore the development site had a high archaeological potential.

Four trial trenches were excavated, each measuring 10m by 2m. The only feature was a brick-lined well, probably constructed in the late 19th or early 20th century. The site had been heavily disturbed by two periods of building in the 20th century which had lowered the ground surface and which would have removed all shallow archaeological features (if present) and truncated deeper ones. Apart from the well all other features recorded were clearly of a modern date with large quantities of 20th century material in their fills.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2012, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at the rear of 23-25 Church Street, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex (TL 7306 0478; Figs.1 - 2). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of five new dwellings (Planning Ref. CHL/01032/10).

1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Management Team of the Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch (ECC HEM; *Archaeological Investigation Rear of 23-25 Church Street, Great Baddow, Chelmsford*, dated February 2012), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by Archaeological Solutions (dated 8th March 2012) and approved by ECC HEM. The project adhered to appropriate sections of Gurney (2003) 'Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England', *East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14*, and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008).

1.3 The aims of the evaluation were to investigate the location, extent, date and character of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened

by the proposed development. Trial trenches covering 8% of the proposed development area were required.

Planning policy context

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF 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. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings and scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE Figs.1 & 2

2.1 The site is located close to the centre of Great Baddow. The 13th century church of St Mary is located a little to the west of the site, and it backs on to the church's graveyard to the north, although this area is clearly a relatively recent extension to the original graveyard located further to the east. Church Street itself dates from at least the medieval period and there are buildings of historic importance located along it, the oldest examples of which date from the 14th century.

2.2 The development site is a roughly rectangular plot of land behind three buildings that front on to Church Street (Fig. 2). The plot has direct access on to Church Street via a wide alleyway running between two of the properties. A large modern warehouse, several smaller workshops or sheds and large areas of hard standing were located on the site until recently, when they were demolished to accommodate the redevelopment of the site for housing.

3 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The site lies at approximately 30 - 40m AOD on a ridge of higher ground overlooking the Chelmer flood plain to the north. The local soils to the south-east of Chelmsford consist of the Hornbeam 3 association and the Windsor Series. Great Baddow is located at the approximate limit of the Anglian glaciation, and beneath the covering soils lie mainly Head deposits of rich gravels overlying Brickearth, Boulder Clay, and Glacial Sand and Gravel. The underlying solid geology is mainly London Clay.

3.2 The gravels and alluvium surrounding the Chelmer Valley were an ideal area for human activity since the earliest times, and Palaeolithic flints have been recovered, for example, from Sandon to the east of the development site (EHER 5526). A Mesolithic macehead was found to the south of St Mary's Church (EHER 17627), and Mesolithic tools including a tranchet axe mixed with Neolithic stone implements, have been recovered from the area of Carter's Camp Field approximately 250-350m to the north (HHER 5673 & 5674). A Middle Bronze Age cemetery and hearth is believed to be located 500m to the north-east of the development site (EHER 5572). Iron Age remains have been found in the area between Maldon Road and Church Street (Great Baddow, Chelmsford.gov.uk). The Roman small town of Chelmsford (*Caesaromagus*) was an important staging post on the road between London and Colchester (Prosser 1998), and Roman brick and tile is incorporated within the fabric of St Mary's Church (EHER 5638).

3.3 The medieval village developed in two parts centred respectively on the junction of Maldon Road and High Street, and on St Mary's Church. This may either be due to the arrangement of the pre-Conquest holdings, or caused by the old course of the Baddow Brook (which is now piped beneath the village). The Grade I listed Church of St Mary (EHER 5639-40, 30398) has a chancel and nave dating from the 13th century, and it is likely that it stands on the site of an earlier church. The development site is within the historic core of the village and is consequently in an area of archaeological potential highlighted on the Essex Historic Environment Record as 'Historical Environment Character Area Chelmsford 3'. It is also within the Great Baddow Conservation Area. St Mary's Church graveyard is large and extends eastwards to border the northern boundary of the development site. In the 14th century Jack Straw is reputed to have led a group of Essex men from St Mary's churchyard to join the Peasants Revolt. In the 15th century the village became the property of the Crown, and in the early 16th century was granted to Catherine of Aragon. Church Street was one of the early roads serving the settlement and this is reflected in the presence of several well-appointed listed buildings of 14th to 16th century date standing along its course. At this time the village population was around 400 (Great Baddow, Chelmsford.gov.uk). Buildings are depicted in and around the site on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of the later 19th century.

3.4 An excavation at 16 High Street, Great Baddow, some 250m to the north-west, found five shallow pits and two gullies of probable post-medieval

to modern origin. Two fragments of Roman brick and tile were recovered attesting a Roman presence in the area, but no Saxon or medieval finds were made (Ennis 2006). Great Baddow began to grow from the 17th century and particularly in the 19th and 20th with the latter seeing major housing estates attached. By 2001 Great Baddow was one of the largest villages in England with a population of 13,000.

4 METHOD OF WORK

4.1 Four trenches measuring 10m x 2m were excavated on the site during March 2012 (Trenches 1 - 3 & 5; Fig. 2 comprises a detailed, grid referenced trench location plan). A fifth trench (Trench 4) was not excavated due to the presence of the developer's site office having been placed in the chosen location. The trenches were excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket in locations approved by the Historic Environment Management Team of Essex County Council. All trenches were excavated under close archaeological supervision.

4.2 Prior to the excavation of the four trenches a large concrete raft was removed. The latter revealed the presence of an earlier concrete raft in the central area of the site which was also removed.

4.3 Modern demolition layers and topsoil were mechanically excavated down to the depth of the natural soil. The upper surface of the natural soil was cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. All features that were identified were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and a metal detector was used to check both the spoil heaps and the base of the trenches for archaeological finds.

5 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Trench 1 (DP 1 & 2; Figs. 2-3)

<i>Sample section: North end, East facing section.</i>		
<i>0.00 = 37.10m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.37m	L1000	Topsoil. Mid greyish brown, compact, sandy silt with occasional small rounded pebbles.
0.37m +	L1001	Natural sand and gravel. Mid yellowish orange, compact, sand with sporadic patches of coarser more orange coloured sand. Across the whole site bands of grey gravel were visible within the sand.

<i>Sample section: South end, West facing section.</i>		
<i>0.00 = 37.08m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1002	Made Ground. Dark to mid greyish brown, compact, sandy silt with frequent red brick fragments.
0.28 – 0.58m	L1000	Buried topsoil. As above.
0.58m +	L1001	Natural sand and gravel. As above.

Description: The remains of a modern cellar (F1009) were found towards the southern end of the trench that had been filled in with builders' rubbish, probably during the previous phase of demolition. Towards the middle of the trench a small modern pit (F1008) was located.

Trench 2 (DP 3 & 4; Figs. 2-3)

<i>Sample section: East end, North facing section.</i> <i>0.00 = 37.15m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1002	Made Ground. Mid blackish grey silty sand with frequent small rounded stones and brick fragments and a distinct lens of greyish yellow clayey sand near the top of the section.
0.30m +	L1001	Natural sand and gravel. As Tr.1.

<i>Sample section: West end, North facing section.</i> <i>0.00 = 37.20m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.21m	L1000	Topsoil. Mid greyish brown, compact, sandy silt with occasional small rounded pebbles and a concentration of brick fragments at the base of the deposit.
0.21m +	L1001	Natural sand and gravel. As Tr. 1.

Description: A large pit (F1006) filled with modern builders' rubbish protruded from the northern side of the trench, about half way along its length. A modern drainage channel (F1004) ran from north to south across the eastern end of the trench.

Trench 3 (DP 5, 6 & 7; Figs. 2-3)

<i>Sample section: South end, East facing section.</i> <i>0.00 = 37.22m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.29m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr. 1.
0.29m +	L1001	Natural sand and gravel. As Tr. 1.

<i>Sample section: North end, East facing section.</i> <i>0.00 = 37.20m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1002	Made ground. Dark greyish black silty sand with occasional small rounded stones and brick fragments
0.28m +	L1001	Natural sand and gravel. As Tr. 1.

Description: Trench 3 contained no archaeological features or finds.

Trench 4

Not excavated

Trench 5 (DP 8, 9, 10 & 11; Figs. 2-3)

<i>Sample section: West end, South facing section.</i> <i>0.00 = 37.05m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.64m	L1002	Made Ground. Mid greyish black silty sand with occasional small rounded stones and brick fragments
0.64m +	L1001	Natural sand and gravel. As Tr.1.

<i>Sample section: East end, South facing section.</i> <i>0.00 = 37.10m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.25m	L1000	Topsoil. Light greyish brown, compact, sandy silt with occasional small rounded pebbles.
0.25m +	L1001	Natural sand and gravel. As Tr. 1.

Description: A 19th or early 20th century brick-lined well (F1013) protruded from the southern side of the trench, about half way along its length.

Judging that the portion of the well that lay beyond the trench was symmetrical with the portion that was observed then the Well Shaft F1013 was c.1.6m in diameter. It had a red brick lining, L1011, which curved inwards at ground level to form a domed top to the well, although this had largely collapsed or been demolished, and only three courses were still intact. The gap between the inwardly curving well lining and the sides of the shaft had been backfilled with L1012, a deposit of mid brownish orange, compact, coarse sand with frequent small stones. The interior of the well was infilled with L1010, a mid blackish grey silty sand with frequent brick fragments and small pieces of slate. In the section face immediately east of the well three courses of a brick wall, F1017, were observed. The wall survived to a height of 0.2m and was 0.28m wide. Inside the Trench 5, immediately north of the fragment of wall, there was a small rectangular patch of bricks or tile set flush into the natural, L1014. This measured 0.33m from north to south and 0.28m from east to west. It may have been a small area of flooring, or perhaps more likely, a continuation of the wall F1017 of which only the foundation layer survived.

A small post hole, F1016, was present 0.05m north of the cut of the well. It was oval in plan (0.2m x 0.18m). Its fill, L1015, was a dark blackish grey, compact, silty clay with occasional small stones and brick fragments and a piece of un-decayed timber.

6 CONFIDENCE RATING

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

7 DEPOSIT MODEL

7.1 Topsoil L1000 and Made Ground L1002 were uppermost. Whilst the make up of these layers varied from trench to trench, and in some instances

from one part of the trench to another, they simply reflect the successive periods of demolition and rebuilding that had taken place on the site during the 20th century.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 The location of this site indicated there was a high potential for archaeological remains and material relating to the medieval and post-medieval occupation of Great Baddow to be present. The evaluation revealed that the site had been subject to several phases of destructive groundworks and demolition during the 20th century, which would have removed all but the deepest of archaeological features had they been present. The cumulative effect of building on the site has been to dramatically lower the height of the ground, which would have led to the truncation or destruction of any features cut into the top of the natural and entirely removed any deposits which had overlain it.

8.2 The effects of the groundworks that had taken place on the site were clearly reflected in the differences in height at which the upper surface of the natural soil was recorded. Whilst at surface level the site appeared to be level, the top of the natural soil was located variously between 0.21m and 0.68m below the surface. The process of lowering the ground level is demonstrated by the difference in height between the development site and the adjacent gardens to the immediate east, where ground level is almost a metre higher. The height of Church Street to the south of the site is also considerably raised above the ground level within the site. The absence of medieval or post-medieval finds from any of the trenches or their associated spoil heaps is consistent with this level of alteration.

8.3 Little can be said about the use of this site based on the archaeological evaluation. The location suggests that the site would have been in an area used as gardens for buildings fronting onto Church Street. An expected range of features relating to this would have included boundary ditches, rubbish pits, floor surfaces and the foundations of out buildings. However if such features had existed on the site they had clearly not survived the damages of the various phases of building that occurred on the site during the 20th century. The well obviously relates to the use of the site during the late 19th or early 20th century.

9 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited at Chelmsford Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank St Giles Developments Ltd for their co-operation and funding of this evaluation, in particular Mr Frank Ladkin

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Mr Richard Havis of the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team.

11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1

Sample Section 1A, Trench 1, looking west.



2

Sample Section 1B, Trench 1, looking east.



3

Sample Section 2A, Trench 2, Looking south.



4

Sample Section 2B, Trench 2, Looking south.



5

Sample Section 3A, Trench 3, Looking west.



6

Sample Section 3BA, Trench 3, Looking west.



7

Trench 3 looking west with Ditch F1004 in the foreground and Pit F1006 in the background.



8

Sample Section 5A, Trench 5. Looking north.



9

Sample Section 5B, Trench 5. Looking north.



10

Trench 5, looking west.



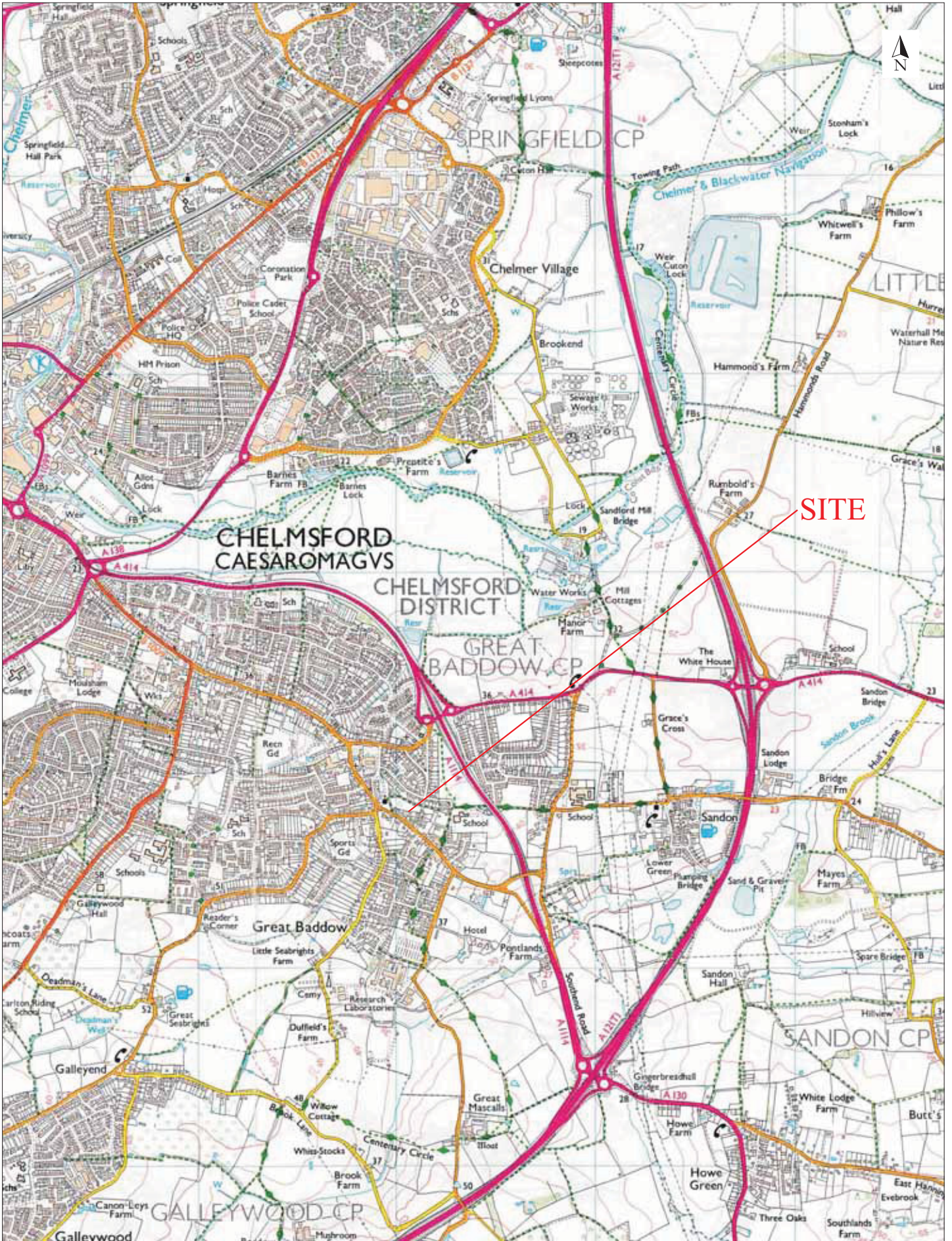
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The well in Trench 5, looking south.



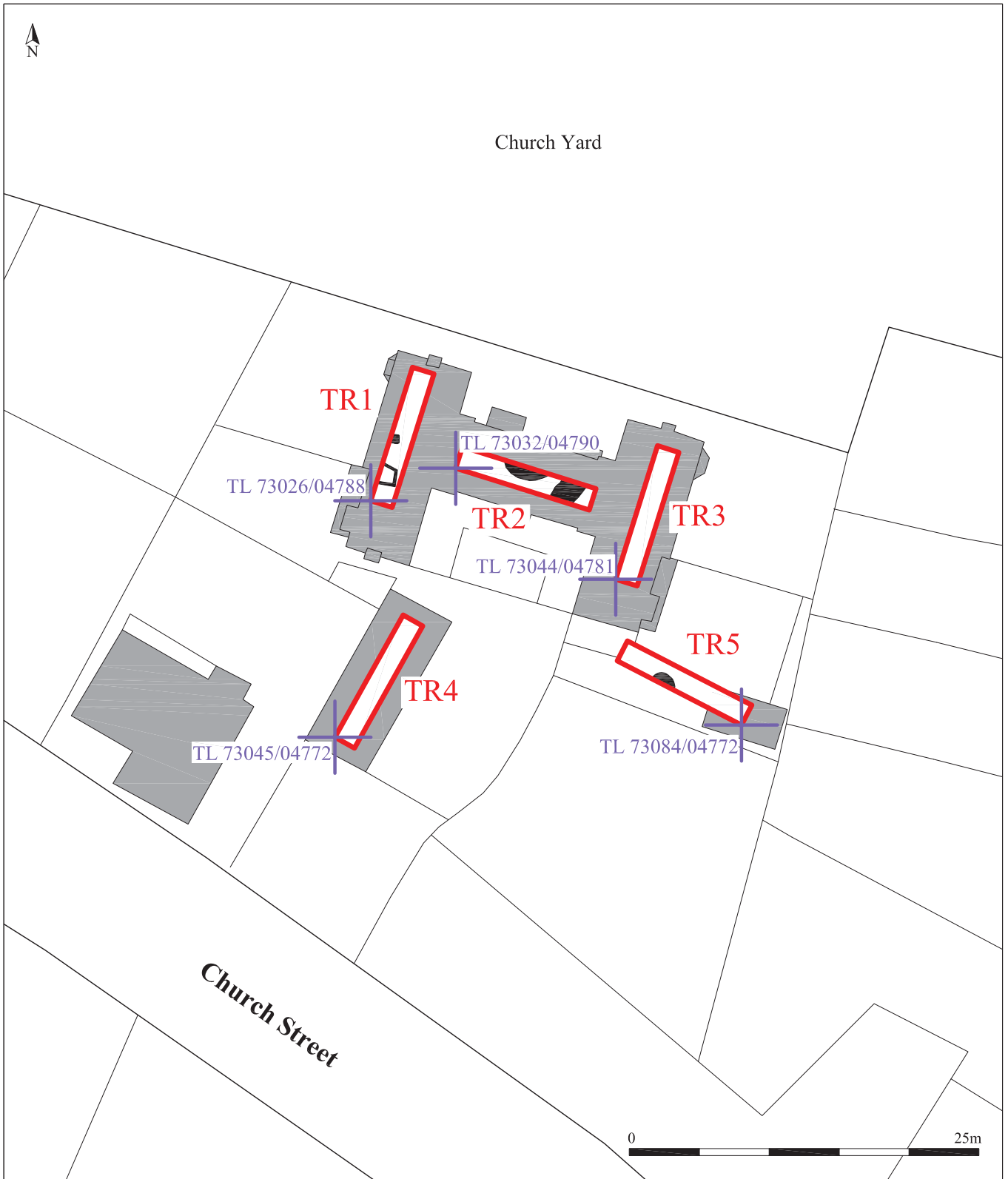
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Looking east across the site. Note the height of the roofs of the sheds behind the wall where the ground level has not been lowered.

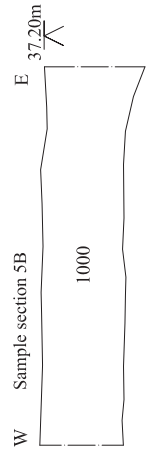
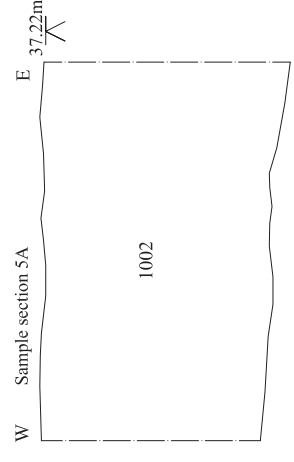
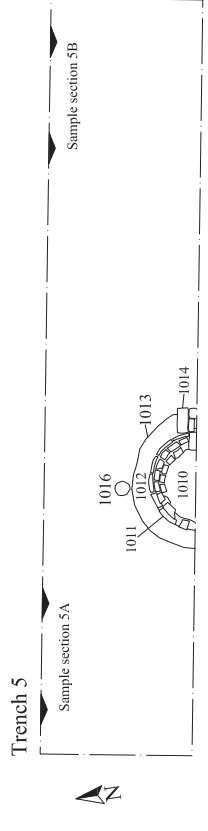
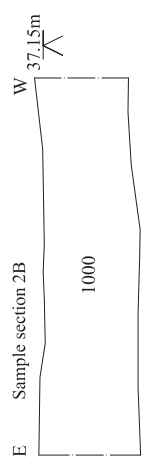
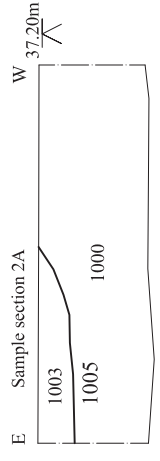
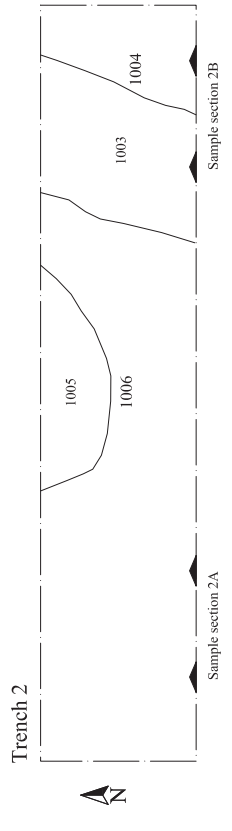
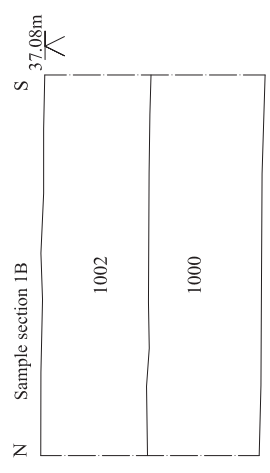
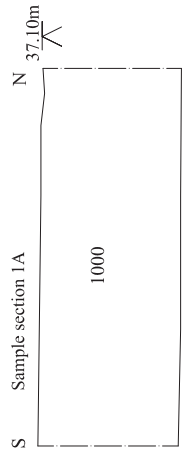
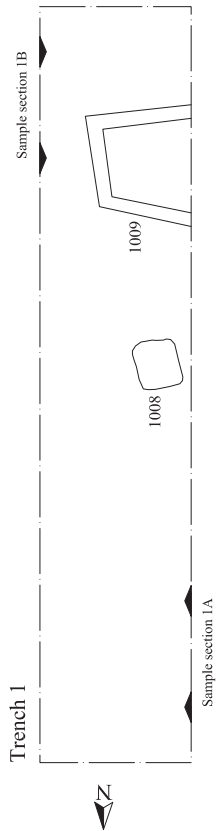


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:400 at A4



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Fig. 3 Plans & sections

Scale Plans 1:100, sections 1:20 at A4