

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**NEW ROAD (REAR OF 7 STATION ROAD)**

**ST IVES, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

CHER NO. ECB 3791

Authors: Lisa Smith (Fieldwork and report) Andrew Peachey (Research) Antony Mustchin (Editor)	
NGR: TL 3158 7109	Report No: 4093
District: Huntingdonshire	Site Code: AS1506
Approved: C Halpin MlfA	Project No: 4871
Signed:	Date: June 2012 Revised: July 2012

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<b>OASIS SUMMARY SHEET</b>			
Project name	<i>New Road (Rear of 7 Station Road), St. Ives, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Evaluation.</i>		
<p><i>In June 2012 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at New Road (Rear of 7 Station Road), St Ives, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 3158 7109). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the redevelopment of the site comprising the construction of two new flats with associated services/parking (Hunts DC Approval Ref. 1200196FUL).</i></p> <p><i>No archaeological features were revealed. The area of excavation was very small; two test pits within a 5.5m long trench. Three sherds of middle Iron Age pottery were found in Subsoil L1002, and the sherds are derived from separate vessels. The layer also contained animal bone. Roman CBM (388g) was found in Subsoil L1003.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>June 2012</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>4871</i>	Site code	<i>AS1506</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>St Ives Conservation Area</i>		
Current land use	<i>Vacant</i>		
Planned development	<i>Two new residential flats</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>Middle Iron Age sherds, animal bone, Roman CBM</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>Huntingdonshire</i>	<i>St Ives</i>
HER for area	<i>Cambridge Historic Environment Record (CHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 130m<sup>2</sup></i>		
NGR	<i>TL 3158 7109</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c.6m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>Howard (Project Management) Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>New Road (Rear of 7 Station Road), St Ives, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Lisa Smith &amp; Andrew Peachey</i>		
Report no.	<i>4093</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>June 2012 (Revised July 2012)</i>		

**NEW ROAD (REAR OF 7 STATION ROAD),  
ST IVES, CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

*In June 2012 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at New Road (rear of 7 Station Road), St Ives, Cambridgeshire ((NGR TL 3158 7109). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the redevelopment of the site comprising the construction of two new flats with associated services/parking (Hunts DC Approval Ref. 1200196FUL).*

*The site lies in an area of archaeological potential in the eastern part of the core of St Ives, on the eastern bank of the Great Ouse, at c.5m AOD. The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record records the presence of Roman settlement at the confluence of the Old River and Great Ouse, beneath the later Benedictine Priory which succeeded a 10<sup>th</sup> century cell (HER MCB15820). Multi-period activity, including Palaeolithic flint tools are also known from the area (HER MCB2169, 2452, 2461, 2593 & 4414). The Priory Barn, Scheduled as an Ancient Monument, lies some 150m west of the site (HER DCB454).*

*No archaeological features were revealed. That said the area of excavation was very small; two test pits within a 5.5m long trench. Three sherds of middle Iron Age pottery were found in Subsoil L1002, and the sherds are derived from separate vessels. The layer also contained animal bone. Roman CBM (388g) was found in Subsoil L1003.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In June 2012 Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at New Road (Rear of 7 Station Road), St Ives, Cambridgeshire (TL 3158 7109; Figs. 1-2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the redevelopment of the site comprising the construction of two new flats with associated services/parking (Hunts DC Approval Ref. 1200196FUL).

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief prepared by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (CCC HET) (dated 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012), and a specification prepared by AS (dated 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012), and approved by CCC HET. 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 aim of the archaeological evaluation was to determine, as far as was possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. In addition it was hoped to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of survival of buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.

1.4 The main research issues are therefore to identify any evidence of medieval or post-medieval activity associated with the historic core of St Ives, any evidence of earlier activity (prehistoric or Roman), and to characterise the degree of any previous truncation on the site. In particular, the evaluation should determine whether this site lies within an area of early ground reclamation, or if it lies on historically higher ground away from the lower-lying areas adjacent to the river, and the nature of any activity present on the site.

#### *Planning policy context*

1.5 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.

1.6 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, 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**

2.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential in the eastern part of the core of St Ives, on the eastern bank of the Great Ouse, at c.5m AOD.

## **3 THE EVIDENCE**

### **3.1 Topography, Geology and Soils**

3.1.1 The site is situated on the flood plain of the River Great Ouse at c.5m AOD. The flood plain extends to a width of c.750m encompassing the historic core of St. Ives. The meandering course of the River Great Ouse passes c.150m to the west of the site on an approximately north to south course, before looping eastwards and passing c.600 to the south of the site. The 'Old River', now a bypass channel in the loop of the River Great Ouse passes c.25m from the south-western corner of the site on a north-west to south-east course. Artificial lakes (formerly gravel pits) in the loop of the River Great Ouse are situated c.250m to the south-east. The land to the north of the site, encompassing all of St. Ives rises gradually to c.10m up the shallow river valley. The flood plain, at c.5m AOD and only marginally above the level of the River Great Ouse, extends in all other directions.

3.1.2 The solid geology of the site comprises Kimmeridge Clay, overlain on the floodplain of the River Great Ouse by areas of river terrace gravels and extensive silt deposits.

3.1.3 Geotechnical investigation carried out by the client on the Cromwell Works site to the south has revealed significant depths of made ground/fill on that site, to some 2m+ below existing in particular in the southern part of the site, with a high water table. Geotechnical Test Pit 3 on the central western edge of that site revealed a thin layer of black organic sand above the lower sand and gravel deposits, potentially indicative of a possible palaeochannel. No investigation has taken place on the current site to confirm ground conditions, but, given the presence of the site on rising ground further from the river on the northern side of New Street, it was thought possible that less significant depths of made ground may be expected.

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

An archaeological desk-based assessment has been undertaken for the Cromwell Works site immediately adjacent to the south. In summary:

3.2.1 The site has a potential for archaeological remains relating to occupation in the Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods. Excavations in the close vicinity of the site have indicated that a Roman villa and nucleated

early Anglo-Saxon settlement may be located in the area. The site is located a short distance to the east of the location believed to be central to the medieval priory that formed a focal point in the development of St. Ives. The priory was first established in the late Anglo-Saxon period and was a prosperous monastic establishment until the Dissolution in 1539. Due to the value of its masonry and building materials, the priory was extensively robbed following the Dissolution. As a result the extent and plan of the monastic precinct remains a matter of conjecture, although archaeological features and masonry have been recorded a short distance to the west-north-west and north of the site.

3.2.2 Excavations at the Priory site, a short distance to the west-north-west (McDonald and Trevarthen 1998; Murray 1997), recorded evidence of a multi-period landscape dominated by a substantial medieval boundary ditch running NNW-SSE across trenches 4 and 5. This was thought to represent the western boundary of the medieval priory precinct (McDonald and Trevarthen 1998, 17, fig. 3). Also evident was a roman enclosure aligned N-S/ E-W (*ibid.* 6ff, fig. 3) and various Anglo Saxon features.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 One trench was excavated (Fig. 2).

4.2 Undifferentiated overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a 180° back acting mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.60m 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.

## 5 RESULTS

Individual test pits descriptions are presented below:

### Trench 1 (Figs. 2 & 3)

<i>Sample section: south end, east facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 5.56m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.38m	L1000	Concrete surface.
0.38 – 0.62m	L1001	Buried topsoil. Dark brownish grey, compact, sandy silt.
0.62 – 1.74m	L1002	Subsoil. Mid greyish brown, firm, sandy silt with moderate angular gravel. It contained middle Iron Age pottery (63g), animal bone (957g) and an Fe fragment (6g).
1.74 – 2.00m	L1003	Subsoil. Mid brownish grey, compact, silty sand with frequent gravel. It contained Roman CBM (388g)
2.00m+	L1004	Natural. Mid reddish yellow, loose, sand and gravel.

*Description: Test Pit 1 contained no features.*

Three sherds of middle Iron Age pottery were found in Subsoil L1002. The sherds are derived from separate vessels (Pottery report below). Roman CBM (388g) was found in Subsoil L1003.

## **6 CONFIDENCE RATING**

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

## **7 DEPOSIT MODEL**

7.1 Concrete L1000 was uppermost. It overlay Buried Topsoil L1001, a dark brownish grey, compact, sandy silt (0.24m thick). L1001 overlay Subsoil L1002, a mid greyish brown, firm, sandy silt with moderate angular gravel (1.12m thick). It contained middle Iron Age pottery (63g), animal bone (957g) and an Fe fragment (6g). L1002 overlay Subsoil L1003, a mid brownish grey, compact, silty sand with frequent gravel (0.26m thick). It contained Roman CBM (388g). Subsoil L1004 overlay the natural, L1004, a mid reddish yellow, loose, sand and gravel (2.00m+ below the current ground surface).

## **8 DISCUSSION**

8.1 No archaeological features were revealed. However, the area of excavation was very small: two test pits within a 5.5m long trench.

8.2 Three sherds of middle Iron Age pottery, derived from separate vessels, were found in Subsoil L1002 (see below, *The Pottery*). This layer also contained animal bone (see below, *The Animal Bone*). Roman CBM (388g) was found in Subsoil L1003.

8.3 An archaeological evaluation of the nearby Oldman Court site, a short distance to the south (Smith and Peachey 2012), was undertaken concurrently. The basal fill recorded in three of the five test pits/ trenches at this site comprised a friable mid-yellowish brown, sandy silt subsoil with occasional gravel (1.04 - 1.50m below current surface level). This material yielded no finds but was not compositionally dissimilar to L1002 and L1003, described above. Based on the finds from these contexts, we might tentatively propose a similar date range (middle Iron Age to Roman) for basal deposits at the neighbouring site; this premise cannot be substantiated however. The basal fill of test pit 1 at the Oldman Court site yielded frequent CBM of 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century date.



8.4 Excavations at the nearby Priory site, subject to archaeological evaluation by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (now AS) between 1997 and 1998 (McDonald and Trevarthen 1998; Murray 1997), revealed features largely dating between the Roman and late medieval periods; residual prehistoric pottery was also recovered. It is likely, in light of this evidence, that the absence of archaeological features at the New Road site was largely due to the small size of the area investigated (see section 8.1).

## **9 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

9.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the finds from the site, at Cambridgeshire County Store. 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.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

AS is grateful to Howard (Project Management) Ltd and Amber Developments (St Ives) Ltd for their co-operation, funding of the evaluation and for their assistance (in particular Mr David Barford and Mr Neil Roe).

AS gratefully acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team

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## APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

AS1506, St. Ives

Feature	Context	Trench	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
1002		1	Soil				329	
		1		Mid Iron Age	(3) 63g		628	Fe. Frag (1) - 6g
1003		1	Soil			388		

## APPENDIX 2      SPECIALIST REPORTS

### **The Pottery**

*Andrew Peachey*

Three body sherds (63g) of middle Iron Age pottery were recovered from L1002 in a slightly abraded condition. The three body sherds are each derived from separate hand-made, bonfire-fired vessels with inclusions that vary between common to abundant coarse quartz, often polycrystalline (0.5-1.5mm), with one sherd also including sparse calcined flint (1-2.5mm). One of the sherds has a crudely burnished exterior surface, while the remainder are un-decorated. This type of pottery was typically produced from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC, remaining in use in some areas in to the late Iron Age (1<sup>st</sup> century BC/AD).

### **The Ceramic Building Materials**

*Andrew Peachey*

A single fragment (388g) of Roman CBM was recovered from Layer L1003, comprising a 37mm thick fragment of brick in an oxidised orange fabric tempered with medium sand and occasional coarse flint. This fragment probably formed part of a *bessalis* brick used to construct *pilae*, bonding courses and ovens, but without further extant dimensions other larger types cannot be discounted.

### **The Animal Bone**

Dr Julia E. M. Cussans

A total of 57 animal bones were recovered during the trial trenching. All the bone came from L1002 and were excavated from two test pits (1 & 2) from within Trench 1. The preservation was described as good with low levels of abrasion, some fresh breaks and a small number of gnawed bones. The majority of the bone assemblage could only be identified as large (cattle or horse sized) or medium (sheep or pig sized) mammal; many of these were rib and long bone shaft fragments, several incidences of butchery were noted. Identified taxa in order of abundance were cattle, sheep/ goat and pig. A small number of butchery marks were noted on cattle bones but not on sheep/ goat or pig. Some ageable (unfused) epiphyses were available for all three identified taxa. A single pathological cattle bone was noted, this was a cattle scapula with slight lipping around the articulation. There was little else of note about this small assemblage.

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



*DPI*

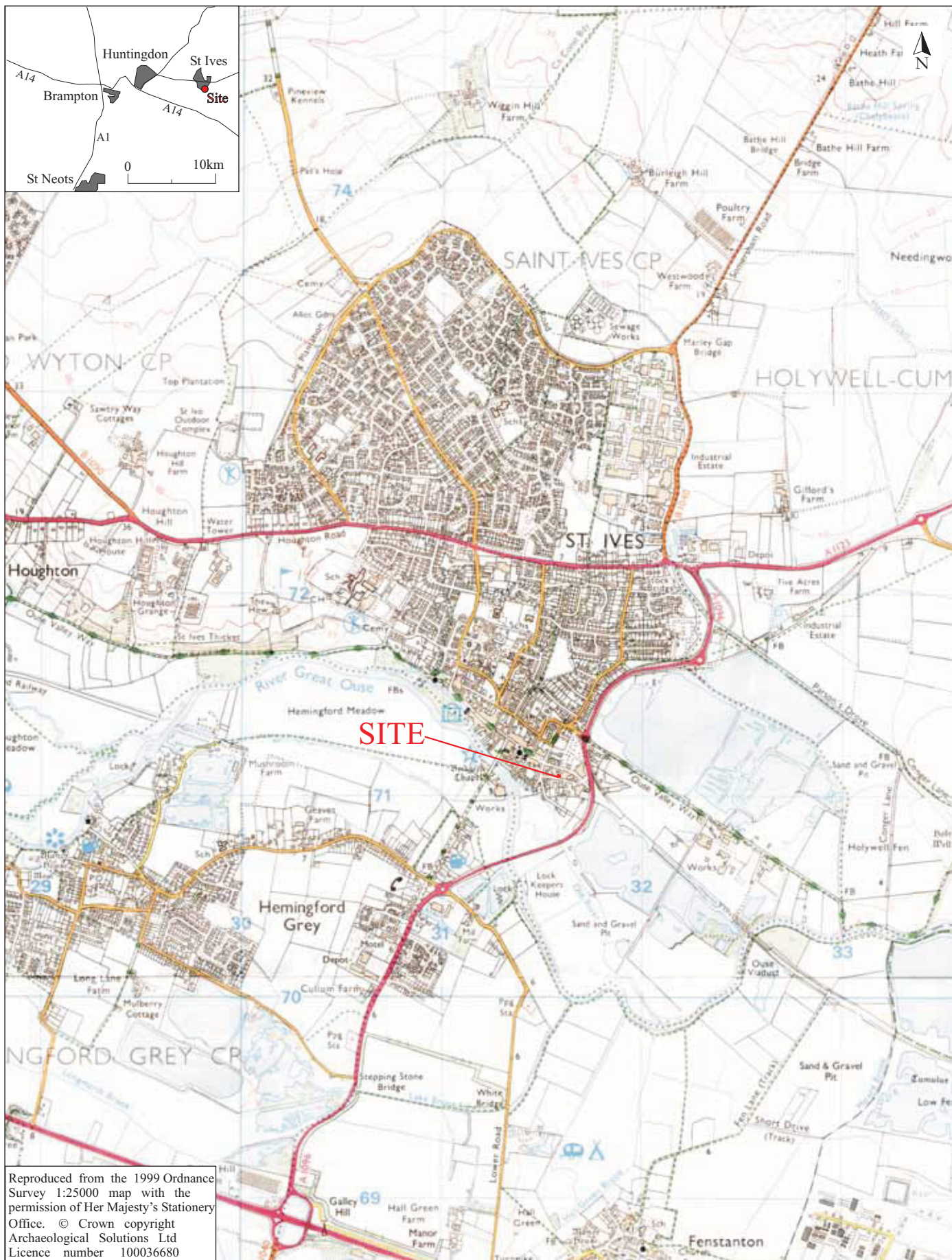
*Trench 1, facing south*



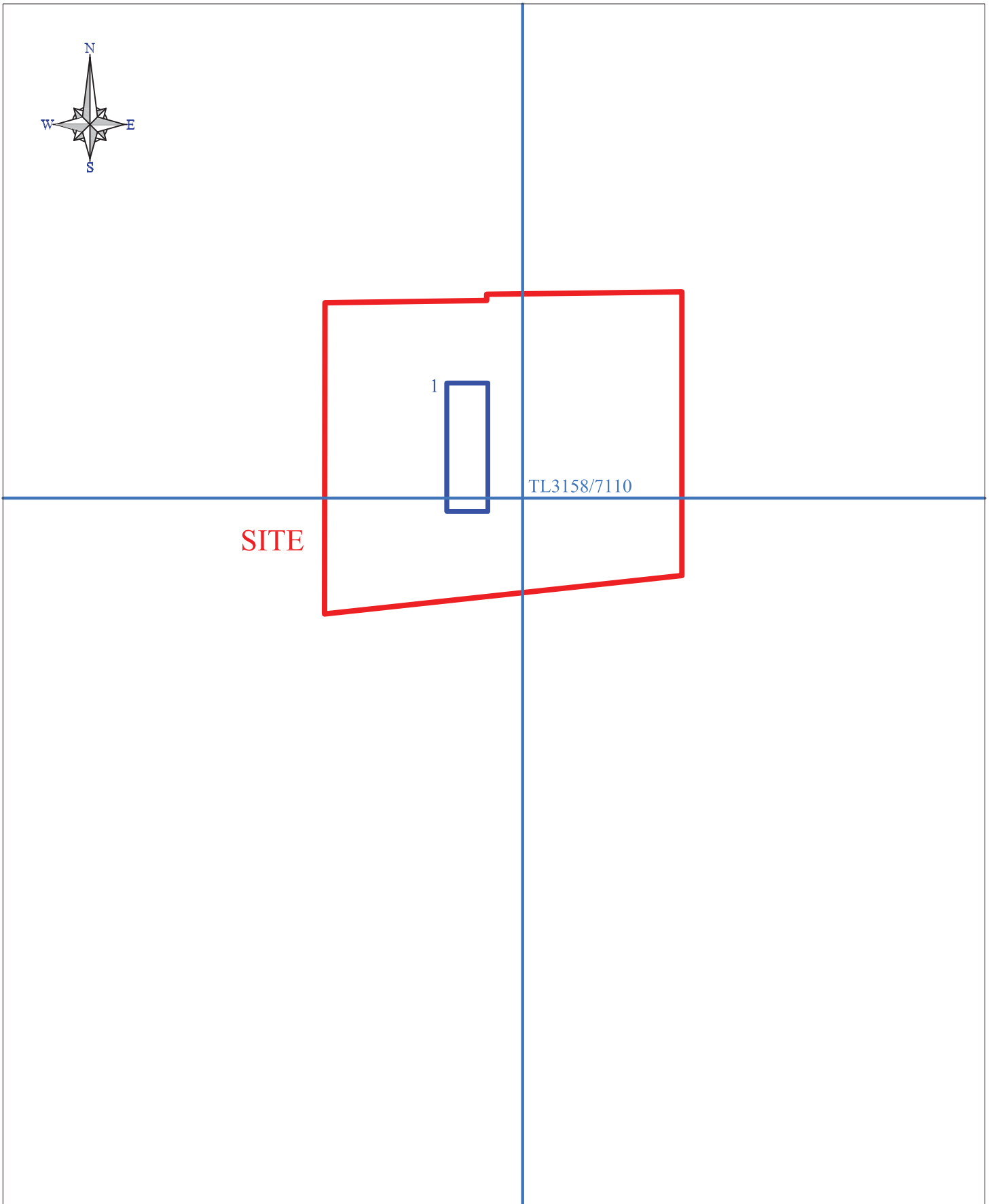
*DP2*

*Trench 1 test pit 2, facing west*



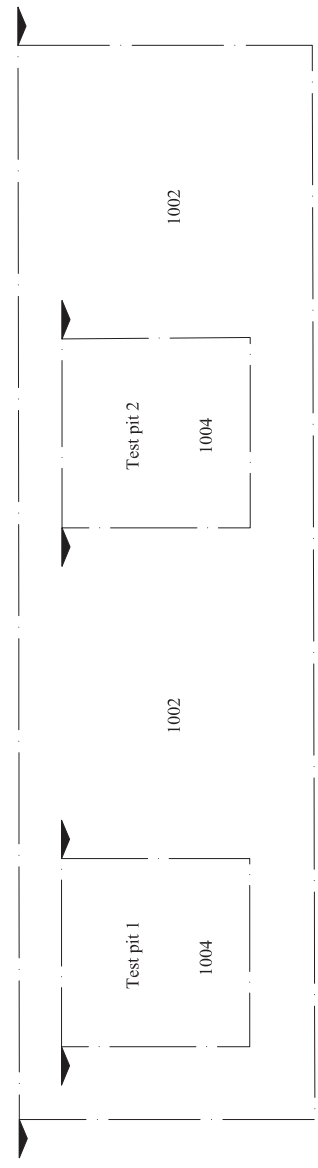


*Archaeological Solutions Ltd*  
**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000



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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
Scale 1:200 at A4

**Trench 1**



N 5.56m

