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CHEQUERS COURT, HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CHER NO. ECB 3955

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NGR: TL 2400 7184	Report No: 4527
District: Huntingdon	Site Code: AS1585
Approved: Claire Halpin MlfA	Project No: 4412
Signed:	Date: 21 March 2014

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Chequers Court, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>In February and March 2014 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at Chequers Court Shopping Centre, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 3LJ (NGR TL 2400 7184). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed construction of a new retail development (new supermarket, 7 retail units, restaurant/café and 2 kiosks) following the demolition of existing buildings (Hunts District Council Ref. 1100979FUL), based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.</i></p> <p><i>The site is situated to the immediate north-east of the town's historic core and within 60m of the High Street. It lies on the terrace gravels of the Ouse, within an area that has revealed archaeological remains of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval date. Recent investigations in advance of the construction of a new multi-storey car park close by to the north east have revealed evidence of mid to late Saxon activity, evidence of medieval drainage and cultivation and structures of 17th century date (Historic Environment Record HER ECB3550 & 3912).</i></p> <p><i>Despite extensive modern intervention the evaluation revealed medieval (12th – 14th century) and post-medieval pits, specifically within Test Pits 1, 2 and 6.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>19th February – 14th March 2014</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P4412</i>	Site code	<i>AS1585</i>
Type of project	<i>An archaeological evaluation.</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Shopping centre</i>		
Planned development	<i>New retail development</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Pits</i>		
Significant finds(+dates)	<i>Medieval (12th – 14th C) and post-medieval</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>Huntingdon</i>	
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Cambridge Historic Environment Record (CHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>PE29 3LJ</i>		
Area of site	<i>-</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 2400 7184</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c.10m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team</i>		
Project supervisor(PO)	<i>Gareth Barlow</i>		
Funded by	<i>Manormaker GP Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>Chequers Court, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. An archaeological evaluation.</i>		
Authors	<i>Barlow, G. Smith L.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4527</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>March 2014</i>		

CHEQUERS COURT, HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In February and March 2014 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at Chequers Court Shopping Centre, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 3LJ (NGR TL 2400 7184). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed construction of a new retail development (new supermarket, 7 retail units, restaurant/café and 2 kiosks) following the demolition of existing buildings (Hunts District Council Ref. 1100979FUL), based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

The site is situated to the immediate north-east of the town's historic core and within 60m of the High Street. It lies on the terrace gravels of the Ouse, within an area that has revealed archaeological remains of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval date. Recent investigations in advance of the construction of a new multi-storey car park close by to the north east have revealed evidence of mid to late Saxon activity, evidence of medieval drainage and cultivation and structures of 17th century date (Historic Environment Record HER ECB3550 & 3912).

Despite extensive modern intervention the evaluation revealed medieval (12th – 14th century) and post-medieval pits, specifically within Test Pits 1, 2 and 6.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In February and March 2014 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at Chequers Court Shopping Centre, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 3LJ (NGR TL 2400 7184; Figs. 1 - 3). The evaluation was conducted in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed construction of a new retail development (new supermarket, 7 retail units, restaurant/café and 2 kiosks) following the demolition of existing buildings (Hunts District Council Ref. 1100979FUL), based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (HET) (Andy Thomas) and dated 21/02/2013, and a specification compiled by AS (dated 11th June 2013), and approved by HET. The project followed the procedures outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct, Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (revised 2008) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field*

Evaluation (revised 2008). It also adhered to the relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The principal objectives of the evaluation was to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened was studied, and attention was given to sites and remains of all periods. The evaluation also sought to clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.

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, 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 is situated to the immediate north-east of the town's historic core and within 60m of the High Street. It is bound partially to the south-east by Trinity Place, which is a small cul-de-sac leading north-eastwards towards Nursery Road and the northern extent of the whole Chequers Court complex. The south-eastern corner of the site also incorporates a short section of a second cul-de-sac known as Brewery Yard. The existing shopping centre buildings were demolished shortly before the evaluation commenced.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site lies on the terrace gravels of the Ouse, within an area that has revealed archaeological remains of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval date.

3.2 Huntingdon is situated along the meandering course of the River Great Ouse, which is present to the south of the town as a number of brooks and channels and some 400m to the south-east of the site. The site has a predominantly flat relief at c.10m AOD along its northern boundary, but has been subject to extensive groundworks associated with the pedestrianised square of Chequers Court. Within the western section of the site were two sets of steps which raised the block paving within Chequers Court to 12.5m AOD at the frontage of the existing retail buildings. Geologically, the margins of the River Ouse valley, within which Huntingdon lies, are associated with alluvium, overlying terraces of river gravels and Jurassic clays, and the site is underlain by Oxford Clay and River Terrace Gravels.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 The site has been subject to a previous archaeological desk-based assessment (Higgs 2011). In summary:

Prehistoric activity is well-attested from the middle Ouse valley and Huntingdon's proximity to the river would suggest a high potential for prehistoric activity. The site, however, has a moderate potential for prehistoric remains given the approximately location of the single long Neolithic flint flake worked to a point sited only 90m to the west-north-west of the site (CHER 01690A). Neolithic remains have also been found at four nearby findspots, one of which has suggested that the river was crossed at Watersmeet in the late Iron Age and before the construction of Ermine Street. The site also lay to the immediate south and west of the area subject to the archaeological trial trench evaluation undertaken prior to the Sainsbury's development in 1999. Trench 4 of the evaluation lay just beyond the site's northern boundary. The evaluation revealed two

Mesolithic or Neolithic worked flints amongst a predominantly High medieval assemblage.

The main focus of Roman-British activity in the area lay to the south of the river, where the important small town of Durovigutum existed on the site of modern Godmanchester. The nature of Roman-British settlement and habitation of present-day Huntingdon remains poorly understood. Huntingdon was thought to have been a smaller Roman suburb to the north of the river. Numerous archaeological investigations undertaken in the area of Huntingdon have produced Romano-British remains and a large quantity of Roman findspots. The site has a low to moderate potential for Romano-British remains given that the aforementioned trial trench evaluation revealed residual Roman tile and pottery sherds.

The town of Huntingdon emerges into the historical record during the later Anglo-Saxon period as a port or trading centre and was first documented in AD 973. By the 10th century, Huntingdon boasted a burh, and although the site lay close to the Saxon settlement area centred upon the High Street, it is not known whether the site lay within the possible Danish and Saxon burh of the town. The archaeological record indicates that the occupation of Huntingdon did not occur until the mid to late Anglo-Saxon period and is dominated by pottery sherds dating from the 9th century onwards. The site has a low to moderate potential for archaeological finds and features dating to the Anglo-Saxon period on the basis of the tentative evidence for late Saxon and Saxo-Norman activity found in the form of ditches and pits close to the site during the course of the previous trial trench evaluation.

Huntingdon was given a lengthy entry in the 11th century Domesday Book, and boasted a castle, 16 parish churches and six religious houses by the time of its tremendous level of prosperity in the 13th century. It is therefore unsurprising that extensive medieval evidence has been recorded in the town. The 14th century represented a period of decline in the town's fortunes. It is possible that the site lay within the medieval town defences given the discovery of a large ditch representing the medieval town ditch during the aforementioned trial trench evaluation. The archaeological fieldwork also revealed medieval and later activity consisting of wells, rubbish pits, gravel extraction pits, ditches and gullies delineating plot boundaries. High medieval features and artifacts dominated the assemblage, with evidence for domestic activity and cultivation, and possibly industrial activity associated with cereal processing. The site thus has a high potential for further medieval remains, particularly given that Trench 4, which lay just beyond the site's northern boundary, revealed medieval features.

The post-medieval period in Huntingdon was dominated by a downturn in the prosperity of the town. A revival in its fortunes took place in the early modern period and is attested by the large quantity of listed buildings within the town. The site appears to have remained undeveloped until the construction of the Huntingdon Brewery, later known as Marshall

Brothers (Huntingdon) Limited, in the later 19th century. Although thought to have been established by 1792, in 1865 the brewery 'occupied a large area on the east side of Huntingdon High Street' off which the site runs. Subsequent early modern and modern cartographic sources reveal that the site was occupied by a large number of brewery buildings accessed via the original course of St Germain Street and what is now the south-western extension of the site. Many of the structures were extended or remodelled in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, but the brewery had ultimately fallen into voluntary liquidation by 1963. The site thus has a low to moderate potential for post-medieval remains, but a high potential for early modern and modern remains associated with the brewery and the subsequent development of Chequers Court.

Previous ground disturbance

Cartographic sources suggest that the site appears to have remained undeveloped until the creation of the Huntingdon Brewery, later known as Marshall Brothers (Huntingdon) Limited, in the later 19th century. The tithe maps and apportionments revealed that the site consisted of undeveloped agricultural land, orchards and gardens in the mid 19th century. The western section of the site is known to have included the original course of St Germain Street, which was realigned in the late 20th century and contemporary with the Sainsbury's development.

Ground disturbance dating from the late 19th and 20th centuries will be extensive and it is likely that the brewery and Chequers Court developments will have significantly truncated the underlying stratigraphy. The site has been basemented, with the basementing extending across the whole area of the currently pedestrianised square of Chequers Court and to the immediate south of the extant four-storey structure. While the numerous areas of hardstanding in use either as car parking, public roads or pedestrianised block paving noted during the site will have disturbed the upper stratigraphy of the site, it is possible that the hardstanding will have preserved underlying archaeological remains, if present. The footprints of the two extant structures known to lie within the site, as well as a third, now demolished retail unit in its western corner, and the electricity sub station, will have caused by extensive truncation in localised areas.

The proposed development has the potential to truncate any archaeological remains, if present, particularly in the south-eastern corner of the site which has been subject to more limited previous development.

5 RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 Higgs (2011, 19) has noted a moderate potential for prehistoric remains to exist at the site based on the recovery of Mesolithic and Neolithic artefacts in the surrounding area. Mesolithic, Neolithic and

Bronze Age features have also been recorded in the vicinity. The potential for further remains of this type have the potential to contribute to artefact studies and to add to the existing corpus of information regarding these periods locally. With all three of these periods represented in a fairly small geographical area there is also some potential for further work to contribute towards a greater understanding of the Mesolithic/Neolithic and the Neolithic/Bronze Age transitional periods (Medlycott 2011, 13; Brown and Murphy 2000, 12).

5.2 Only residual Roman artefacts, comprising brick and tile, have been identified in the vicinity of the site. This may relate to peripheral activity associated with the Roman town of *Durovigutum* which occupied the area of modern Godmanchester on the opposite side of the river. This suggests that any Roman archaeology identified during further work at this site may provide information relating to the development and hinterland of the nearby Roman town. Medlycott (2011, 48) identifies the relationship between a town and its hinterland, changes in the internal layout of towns, and housing densities, amongst others, as specific research subjects for the eastern counties.

5.3 Higgs (2011, 20) notes a low to moderate potential for archaeology of Anglo-Saxon date in the area. However, it is in this period that Huntingdon emerges into the historical record as a port or trading centre located at an important intersection of road and river communications. Wade (2000, 23-26) identifies characterisation of settlement form and function, specialisation and surplus agricultural production, and assessment of craft production as important research subjects for this period in the East Anglia. Ayers (2000, 32-33) identifies subjects specific to urban environments in the period, such as ranking and status in settlements, spatial analysis, wealth distribution, specialism, acquisition of raw materials, building form and function, markets and commercial/corporate activity. Medlycott (2011, 57) identifies economic practices, trading practices, infrastructure, including river management and ports and harbours, links with the continent, cultural influences, population modelling, and demographics as further important research subjects. All of these are likely to be relevant should archaeology of Anglo-Saxon date be present within the current site.

5.4 The medieval period is identified as the period of greatest archaeological potential at and within the immediate vicinity of the current site due to the identification of occupation and small-scale industrial activity during a previous trial trench evaluation. This indicates that the site has the potential to reveal information regarding the medieval town morphology and the division of space within the town and the types of craft and industry that were practised locally. Medlycott (2011, 70) identifies towns as a specific and important research area for the medieval period in eastern England. Town development, changes in their internal layouts, housing densities, and the role of towns as centres of supply and demand are identified as areas that require further study. The proximity of the current site to Huntingdon's High Street indicate that a focus of research should be

the mixture of industrial and commercial buildings and structures (Medlycott 2011, 70). The site clearly has the potential to provide information on medieval industrial practices, and important area of research for this region, with specific subjects including the interchange between rural food supplies and urban industrial and craft products (Medlycott 2011, 71). As an urban site close to the historic core of the town it may also be considered that the site has the potential to provide information relating to medieval infrastructure and possibly to demographic studies; the medieval St Germain's Church stood nearby and although there is no pre-Reformation evidence for the church's existence, human bones and other traces of the graveyard have been found in the immediate area (Taylor 1984, 33).

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 Following demolition of the existing structures in site areas A, B and D (Fig. 2 & 3; DP 1), the removal of floor slabs was carried out under archaeological supervision/monitoring. The trial trench evaluation then took place, avoiding known service runs.

6.2 The trial trench evaluation provided for a c.5% sample of the area to be subject to development. Nine test pits, each c.5m x 5m were excavated across the footprint of the proposed new development, focussing on the area of the proposed demolition contract, where safe, secure access was possible, and where new development is proposed.

6.3 Undifferentiated overburden was mechanically excavated under the close supervision of an archaeologist; thereafter all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as necessary.

7 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS (Figs. 4 – 7)

The individual trench descriptions are presented below

Trench 1 (Figs. 2 - 5; DP 2)

<i>Sample Section 1; north-east side, south-west facing. 0.00m = 9.86m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Made-ground. Pale to mid brown grey silty sand and gravel with large brick fragments
0.18 – 0.49	L1001	Made-ground. Dark brown grey sandy silt with moderate small and medium angular and rounded flints
0.49m+	L1002	Silty sand natural. Small and medium angular and rounded flint in a pale brown yellow silty sand with occasional patches of firm pale orange yellow silty clay

Description: Four medieval and post-medieval pits (F1017, F1021, F1023 & F1025) were present in Trench 1.

Pit F1017 (1.10m x 1.10m x 0.65m+) was circular in plan with vertical sides (DP 11). The base was not identified due to heavy and continuous water ingress. Its fill (L1018) was a mid bluish grey silty sand with moderate angular flints containing 14 sherds of late 16th to 19th century pottery (199g), CBM (47g), oyster shell (5g) and animal bone (312g).

Pit F1021 (1.05m x 1.01m x 0.20m) was sub-circular in plan with moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill (L1022) comprised a mid bluish grey silty sand with moderate angular flints and contained some animal bone (80g) and mussel shell (2g).

Pit F1023 (1.90 x 1.90m x 0.38m) was sub rectangular in plan with steep sides and a flattish base (DP 12). Its fill (L1024) was a dark bluish brown grey sandy silt with frequent small and medium angular flints and moderate flecks and fragments of charcoal. It contained nine sherds of 12th – 13th century pottery (99g). Its relationship with F1025 could not be determined.

Pit F1025 (0.75m diam. x 0.04m) was circular in plan with very shallow sides and a concave base. Its fill (L1026) was a dark brown grey sandy silt with moderate small and medium angular flints and occasional charcoal flecks. A single sherd of 17th – 18th century pottery (6g) was recovered. Its relationship with F1023 could not be determined.

Trench 2 (Figs.2 – 5; DP 3)

<i>Sample Section 2; south-west side, north-east facing. 0.00m = 9.77m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.36m	L1000	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.36 – 0.40m	L1001	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.40m+	L1002	Silty sand natural. As above Tr.1

Description: Two medieval pits (F1027 & F1029) were present in Trench 2.

Pit F1027 (2.00m+ x 0.55m x 0.16m) was sub-circular in plan with vertical sides and a concave base. Its fill (L1028) was a dark brown grey, sandy silt with moderate small and medium angular and rounded flints and occasional charcoal flecks. Two sherds of mid 12th – 14th century pottery (28g) and animal bone (92g) were present.

Pit F1029 (1.90m+ x 0.50m+ x 0.55m+) was sub rectangular in plan with moderately sloping sides. The base was not identified due to heavy and continuous flooding. Its fill (L1030) was a mid bluish grey silty coarse sand with moderate medium and angular flint and occasional charcoal flecks. Two sherds of 12th -14th century pottery (27g) and animal bone (101g) were present.

Trench 3 (Figs. 2 - 3 & 6; DP 4)

<i>Sample Section 3; south-west side, north-east facing.</i> <i>0.00m = 9.88m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1000	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.30 – 0.35m	L1001	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.35m+	L1002	Silty sand natural. As above Tr.1

Description: A modern footing trench (F1031) was excavated in Trench 3.

Modern footing trench F1031 (3.50m x 2.0m+ x 0.82m+) was square in plan with vertical sides containing concrete pad (L1034). It had two fills; upper fill (L1032) was a mid bluish grey sandy clay with occasional small angular flints. One sherd of mid 13th – 15th century pottery (68g), animal bone (22g), CBM (20g), mussel shell (2g) and oyster shell (8g) were present. Secondary fill L1033 was a light brown yellow friable coarse sand and gravel and contained no finds.

Trench 4 (Figs. 2 – 3 & 6; DP 5)

<i>Sample Section 4; north-west end, south-east facing.</i> <i>0.00m = 9.80m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1000	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.30 – 0.50m	L1001	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.50m+	L1002	Silty sand natural. As above Tr.1

Description: No archaeological features or finds were encountered in Trench 4.

Trench 5 (Figs. 2 – 3 & 7; DP 6)

<i>Sample Section 5; south-west end, north-east facing.</i> <i>0.00m = 9.91m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Made-ground. As above Tr.1

0.22 – 0.27m	L1001	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.27 – 0.33m+	L1002	Silty sand natural. As above Tr.1

Description: A single undated pit (F1035) was present in Trench 5.

Pit F1035 (0.60m x 0.56m x 0.10m) was sub-circular in plan with gentle sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill (L1036) was a dark bluish grey sandy clay with moderate angular and rounded flints. No finds were present.

Trench 6 (Figs. 2 – 3 & 7; DP 7)

<i>Sample Section 6; north-west end, south-east facing.</i> <i>0.00m = 9.71m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1000	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.20m+	L1002	Silty sand natural. As above Tr.1

Description: Trench 6 revealed modern features (F1008, F1010, F1012 and F1020), a single medieval pit (F1003), an undated pit (F1014) and a possible well (F1005).

Pit F1003 (0.90m x 0.80m x 0.12m) was oval in plan with moderate sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L1004, was a dark grey brown silty sand with occasional small and medium angular and round flints. 11 sherds of 13th - 14th century pottery (414g) and animal bone (9g) were present. Its relationship with F1005 could not be determined.

Pit / well F1005 (1.43m x 1.38m x 0.55) was circular in plan with vertical sides and a flat base. This feature had been partially truncated by modern activity. It contained two fills; upper fill L1007 was a dark to mid grey brown silty sand with occasional small and medium flint containing animal bone (12g). Basal fill L1006 was a dark brown grey sandy silt with occasional small and medium angular flint and contained animal bone (168g). Its relationship with F1003 could not be determined.

Modern footing trench F1008 (0.10m+ x 0.30m+ x 0.32m+) was linear in plan extending NE/SW across Trench 6. It contained single fill, L1009, consisting of a dark red brown coarse sand and gravel with lenses of firm dark brown grey silty clay.

Modern pit L1010 (1.60m+ x 1.40m+ x 0.25m+) was square in plan with vertical sides. Its fill (L1011) was a mid yellow brown silty sand with frequent small and medium rounded flints. It contained fragments of CBM (2431g)

Modern footing trench F1012 (1.70m+ x 0.80 x 0.55m+) was a linear in plan extending NE/SW across Trench 6. Part of the concrete footing remained *in situ* backfilled with L1013, a pale yellow brown coarse sand and gravel. It contained slate, glass and concrete.

Pit F1014 (2.60m x 1.20m+ x 0.60m+) was oval in plan with steep sides and had been severely truncated by modern activity. It contained two fills; upper fill (L1015) was a dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional small and medium angular flint and charcoal flecks. It contained cremated bone (1g) and mussel shell (1g). The secondary fill (L1019) comprised mixed lenses of dark grey brown sandy silt and pale orange brown clay silt. This feature was not fully excavated due to the presence of hydrocarbon contamination.

Modern construction cut F1020 (3.0m+ x 1.0m+ x 0.38m) partially visible in Trench 6 had a vertical NE side and a flat base. Its fill (L1016) was a mid red brown silty sand with frequent medium and large rounded flints. Fragments of CBM were present.

Trench 7 (Figs. 2 - 3 & 8; DP 8)

<i>Sample Section 7; north-east side, south-west facing. 0.00m = 9.76m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.06m	L1037	Made-ground. Tarmac patches within a mid grey brown silty sand with frequent gravel
0.06 – 0.15m	L1038	Made-ground. Mid grey brown silty sand with occasional CBM fragments and occasional angular flint
0.15 – 0.22m	L1039	Made-ground. Dark grey brown silty sand with occasional small angular and rounded flints
0.22 – 0.28m	L1040	Made-ground. Mid brown orange silty coarse sand with frequent angular and rounded flints
0.28 – 0.41m	L1041	Made-ground. Dark brown grey sandy silt with small and medium angular and rounded flints
0.41m+	L1002	Silty sand natural. As above Tr.1

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present in Trench 7.

Trench 8 (Figs. 2 – 3 & 8; DP 9)

<i>Sample Section 8; south-east side, north-west facing. 0.00m = 9.72m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1000	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.20 – 0.28m	L1001	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.28m+	L1002	Silty sand natural. As above Tr.1

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present in Trench 8.

Trench 9 (Figs. 2 – 3 & 8; DP 10)

<i>Sample Section 9; north-east side, south-west facing. 0.00m = 9.99m AOD</i>		
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0.00 – 0.15m	L1000	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.15 – 0.25m	L1001	Made-ground. As above Tr.1
0.25m+	L1002	Silty sand natural. As above Tr.1

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present in Trench 9.

8 CONFIDENCE RATING

8.1 Several factors impeded the excavation of trenches at Chequers Court including modern truncation and services, water ingress and ground contamination. The concrete pad foundations for the previous building impacted on all nine trenches while associated services placed limitations on their location.

8.2 Water ingress was an issue across the entire site, the trenches filling with water almost immediately upon excavation. This was due, in part, to a high table and it limited the depth to which some features could be excavated.

9 DEPOSIT MODEL

9.1 A series of modern made-ground layers were encountered across the site, particularly L1000 and L1001 which varied in depth between 0.25m – 0.50m overlying the silty sand natural (L1002).

9.2 Trench 7 differed in having a more varied build-up of made-ground layers (F1037 – F1041) though as elsewhere overlying the natural at a depth of 0.41m.

9.3 All modern overburden here appears to be associated with the construction of the shopping complex at Chequers Square and resulting in varying degrees of truncation across the site (Fig. 4).

10 DISCUSSION

10.1 A summary of the recorded archaeology is tabulated:

Trench	Context	Description	Spot Date
1	F1017	Pit	Late 16 th to 19 th century
	F1021	Pit	Undated
	F1023	Pit	12 th – 13 th century
	F1025	Pit	17 th – 18 th century
2	F1027	Pit	Mid 12 th – 14 th century
	F1029	Pit	12 th – 14 th century
3	F1031	Wall footing	Modern
5	F1035	Pit	Undated
6	F1003	Pit	13 th - 14 th century

	F1005	Pit / well	Undated
	F1008	Footing trench	Modern
	F1010	Pit	Modern
	F1012	Footing trench	Modern
	F1014	Pit	Undated
	F1020	Construction Cut	Modern

10.2 The evaluation revealed a number of features particularly pits (ten in total) and various modern footing trenches. A possible well was also recorded (F1005 (Tr.6)).

10.3 Archaeological features were encountered mainly in Trenches 1, 2, and 6 located along the north-eastern edge of the site while the remaining trenches were blank displaying only the remains of undated or modern activity. The existence of a large building spanning the whole site, demolished prior to the evaluation severely impacted upon the below ground deposits evident in all trenches. However, preservation was good between the concrete pads and foundations.

10.4 Four of the pits were medieval containing sherds of pottery dating from the mid 12th – 14th century (F1023 (Tr.1), F1027, F1029 (Tr.2) and F1033 (Tr.6)). Two of the pits date to the post-medieval period (F1017 and F1025 (Tr.1)). Three were undated (F1021 (Tr.1), F1035 (Tr.5), F1014 (Tr.6)), and one was modern (F1010 (Tr.6)). A well, undated, was also recorded (F1005 (Tr.6)). The finds assemblages comprise pottery, CBM, animal bone and shell.

10.5 Although survival was limited, it is evident that the site was within the medieval boundary of Huntingdon and may have been associated with nearby domestic settlement. The site is situated to the immediate north-east of the town's historic core and within 60m of the High Street. It lies on the terrace gravels of the Ouse, within an area that has revealed archaeological remains of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval date. Recent investigations in advance of the construction of a new multi-storey car park close by to the north east have revealed evidence of mid to late Saxon activity, evidence of medieval drainage and cultivation and structures of 17th century date (Historic Environment Record HER ECB3550 & 3912).

11 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

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

12 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

12.1 Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank the client Manormaker GP Ltd for funding the archaeological evaluation, Mr Graham Taylor of Barber Casanovas Ruffles for his assistance, and the demolition contractor, Anglian Demolition & Asbestos Ltd, for assistance.

12.2 AS is also grateful for the input and advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team, in particular Mr Andy Thomas

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APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

AS1585, Chequers Court, Huntingdon

Concordance of finds by
feature

Feature	Context	Segment	Trench	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
1001			1 2 4 8	Made Ground			6227 3217 149 761		Glass (1) - 24g
1003	1004		6	Fill of Pit	13th-14th	(11) 414g		9	
1005	1006 1007		6	Lower Fill of Pit Upper Fill of Pit				168 12	
1010	1011			Fill of Pit			2431		
1014	1015		6	Fill of Footing Trench					Crem. Bone - 1g Mussel Shell - 1g
1017	1018		1	Fill of Pit	Late 16th-17th	(14) 199g	47	312	O. Shell - 5g
1021	1022		1	Fill of Pit				80	Mussel Shell - 2g
1023	1024		1	Fill of Pit	12th-13th	(9) 99g			
1025	1026		1	Fill of Pit	17th-18th	(1) 6g			
1027	1028		2	Fill of Pit	Mid 12th-14th	(2) 28g		92	
1029	1030		2	Fill of Pit	12th-14th	(2) 27g		101	
1031	1032		3	Fill of Footing	Mid 13th-15th	(1) 68g	20	22	Mussel Shell - 2g Oyster Shell - 8g
1039			7	Made Ground			130		Slate - 26g

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Pottery

by Peter Thompson MA

The evaluation recovered 38 sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery weighing 835g from seven features. The pottery overall was in quite good condition being moderately to lightly abraded with angular edges. The pottery is quantified by feature in Table 1.

Medieval sherds

Pit F1203 (L1024) contained 9 unglazed medieval sherds. Five sherds comprise St Neots ware and include a large 24 cm diameter cooking pot rim with pie crust decoration. The size of the vessel and the general coarseness of the shell inclusions in the fabrics suggest a late date of 12th or even 13th centuries date. The presence of two Ely-type body sherds, and two sherds of early medieval sandy ware with sparse calcareous inclusions also suggests a similar date. Pit F1029 (L1030) contained two sherds of Ely-type coarse ware sherds also indicating a probable 12th-13th centuries date. PIT F1027 contained a sherd each of unglazed Ely-type ware and Lyveden A ware which would fit a range of mid 12th to 14th centuries date. Pit F1003 (L1004) contained 10 conjoining sherds from the upper profile of a glazed Lyveden jug with lines of white slip decoration. The jug has a rod handle and the rim diameter is 12cm. A squared medieval sand and calcareous cooking pot rim was also present, the feature is of probable 13th century date, but could be a little later.

Late medieval and early post-medieval

Footing F1031 (L1032) contained a rim and shoulder sherd of late medieval sandy orange ware which also contained sparse calcareous and red rounded ferruginous inclusions. Pit F1017 (L1018) yielded a residual sherd each of St Neots ware and a sherd of early medieval sandy grey ware with sparse calcareous conclusions. However, also present were 8 sherds of glazed early post-medieval red earthenware including the rim of a bowl or cup, along with a mug upper profile in yellow glazed Border Ware. Pit F1025 (L1026) contained a single sherd of black glazed post-medieval red earthenware

Key:

STNE: St Neots ware 10th-12th

EMSW: early medieval sandy ware 11th-14th

MCW: Medieval calcareous ware 11th-14th

MEL: medieval Ely-type ware 12th-15th

LYV A: Lyveden A ware mid 12th-14th

LYV B: Lyveden B ware early 13th-14th

MSOW: Medieval sandy orange ware 13th-15th

BORDY: yellow glazed Border ware mid 16th-17th

PMRE: Post-medieval red earthenware late 15th-19th

PMBL: Post-medieval black glazed earthenware 17th-18th

Feature	Context	Quantity	Date	Comment
Pit 1003	1004	10x389g LYV 1x23g MCW	13 th -14 th	LYV: Lyveden ware conjoining sherds of a glazed jug with white slip decoration; 12cm rim diameter, 0.22 REVE MCW: flat topped, flanged jar rim 24-26cm diameter 0.06 REVE
Pit 1017	1018	1x7g EMSW 1x9g STNE 8x143g PMRE 2x37g BORDY	Late 16 th – 17 th	PMRE: x4 vessels represented including a bowl with internal clear glaze, rim diameter 24cm 0.08 REVE BORDY: mug with band of decoration
Pit 1023	1024	5x77g STNE 2x9g QLSTW 2x9g EMSW	12 th -13 th	STNE: x1 cooking pot rim with pie crust decoration, 24cm diam, 0.1 REVE; x1 flat base EMS: sparse calcareous inclusions
Pit 1025	1026	1x5g PMBL	17 th -18 th	
Pit 1027	1028	1x11g MEL 1x17g LYVE A	Mid 12 th -14 th	
Pit 1029	1030	2x27g MEL	12 th -14 th	MEL: look handmade
Footing 1031	1031	1x72g MSOW	Mid 13 th -15 th	MSOW: includes sparse calcareous and red iron inclusions. Jar upper profile 24cm rim diameter, 0.06 REVE

Table 1: Quantification of pottery by feature

The Animal Bone Report

Dr Julia E. M. Cussans

A total of 47 animal bone fragments were recovered from nine contexts excavated from eight features. Bone preservation was rated from poor through to good on an overall scale of very poor to excellent. Fresh breakages were rare as was canid gnawing. The two bones recovered from L1015 were both calcined, indicating a high burning temperature. Over half of the bone fragments could only be identified as large (cattle or horse sized) or medium (sheep or pig sized) mammal. One context was spot dated to the post medieval period and a further four could not currently be dated. The remainder were dated to the medieval period.

Species identified from the medieval remains, in order of abundance, were sheep/goat, pig, cattle, cat and hare. From the undated contexts fallow deer

and goose were also represented by a single bone each. Very little butchery was present and this only came from the post medieval and undated contexts but did include the fallow deer bone, an ulna with horizontal cuts up the posterior of the shaft. A small number of ageable elements were present in the medieval contexts, no bone pathologies were noted. This is a small bone assemblage representing the exploitation of both wild and domestic species.

The Shell Report

Dr Julia E. M. Cussans

A small assemblage of marine shell was recovered during trial trench excavations at Chequers Court. Both mussel and oyster valves were present (2 oyster valves, 2 mussel valves plus one fragment of mussel); preservation was rated as ok. These came from four contexts, only one of which was dated to the medieval period (L1032, Footing F1031); others were either undated or post medieval. L1032 contained one lower oyster valve and one right hand mussel valve; no signs of human modification or parasite infestation were noted and neither of the shells were measurable.

The Environmental Samples

Dr John Summers

Introduction

Four bulk soil samples for environmental archaeological assessment were collected and processed from trial excavations at Chequer's Court. The sampled deposits were of medieval date. This report presents the results from the assessment of the bulk sample light fractions and discusses the significance and potential of any material recovered.

Methods

Samples were processed at the Archaeological Solutions Ltd facilities in Bury St. Edmunds using a Siraf style flotation tank. The light fractions were washed onto a mesh of 500µm (microns), while the heavy fractions were sieved to 1mm. The dried light fractions were scanned under a low power stereomicroscope (x10-x30 magnification). Botanical and molluscan remains were identified and recorded using a semi-quantitative scale (X = present; XX = common; XXX = abundant). Reference literature (Cappers *et al.* 2006; Jacomet 2006; Kerney and Cameron 1979; Kerney 1999) and a reference collection of modern seeds was consulted where necessary. Potential contaminants, such as modern roots, seeds and invertebrate fauna were also recorded in order to gain an insight into possible disturbance of the deposits.

Samples were selected for processing based on the presence of dateable artefactual remains. In the first instance, samples were 50% processed, with further flotation conditional on the recovery of significant quantities of carbonised plant remains.

Results

The assessment data from the bulk sample light fractions are presented in Table 2.

Plant macrofossils

The remains of cereals were present in three of the four processed samples, although appreciable amounts of material were only recorded in L1024. This sample contained a number of free-threshing type wheat grains (*Triticum aestivum* sl.), along with a small number of barley (*Hordeum* sp.) and oat (*Avena* sp.) grains.

Charcoal

No charcoal was recorded in the samples.

Terrestrial molluscs

A small number of snail shells were present in L1024 and may represent grassland habitats. However, the assemblage is too small for detailed comment.

Contaminants

A small number of modern rootlets, seeds, molluscs and insects were noted in the samples. However, such remains were not present in sufficient quantity to suggest extensive biological disturbance of deposits.

Discussion and conclusions

A range of cultivated cereal taxa were present in the samples, with free-threshing wheat apparently dominant over barley and oats. The range of taxa is comparable to other sites in the region (e.g. Ballantyne 2005; Carruthers 2008; Murphy 2009; Fryer and Summers forthcoming), although the limited extent of the assemblage means that the true complexity and diversity of the medieval arable economy at Chequers Court is unlikely to be represented by these four samples.

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Site code	Sample number	Context	Feature	Feature type	Trench	Spot date	Volume (litres)	% processed	Cereals			Non-cereal taxa		Charcoal		Molluscs		Contaminants				
									Cereal grains	Cereal chaff	Notes	Seeds	Notes	Charcoal>2mm	Notes	Molluscs	Notes	Roots	Molluscs	Modern seeds	Insects	Earthworm capsules
AS1585	3	1004	1003	Pit	1	13th-14th	10	100%	X	-	Trit (1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	-
AS1585	5	1024	1023	Pit	1	12th-13th	20	50%	X	-	Hord (1), FTW (5), Trit (1), Oat (1), NFI (3)	-	-	-	-	X	Helicidae, Oxychilus sp.	XX	X	X	X	-
AS1585	6	1028	1027	Pit	2	Mid 12th-14th	10	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	-
AS1585	7	1030	1029	Pit	2	12th-14th	10	33%	X	-	NFI (1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	-	-

Table 2: Results from the assessment of bulk sample light fractions from Chequer's Court, Huntingdon. Abbreviations: Hord = barley (*Hordeum* sp.); FTW = free-threshing type wheat (*Triticum aestivum* sl.); Trit = wheat (*Triticum* sp.); Oat (*Avena* sp.); NFI = not formerly identified (indeterminate cereal grain).

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
General site shot



2
Post excavation shot of Trench 1



3
Post excavation shot of Trench 2



4
Post excavation shot of Trench 3



5
Post excavation shot of Trench 4



6
Post excavation shot of Trench 5



7
Post excavation shot of Trench 6



8
Post excavation shot of Trench 7



9
Post excavation shot of Trench 8



10
Post excavation shot of Trench 9



11
F1017 in Trench 1

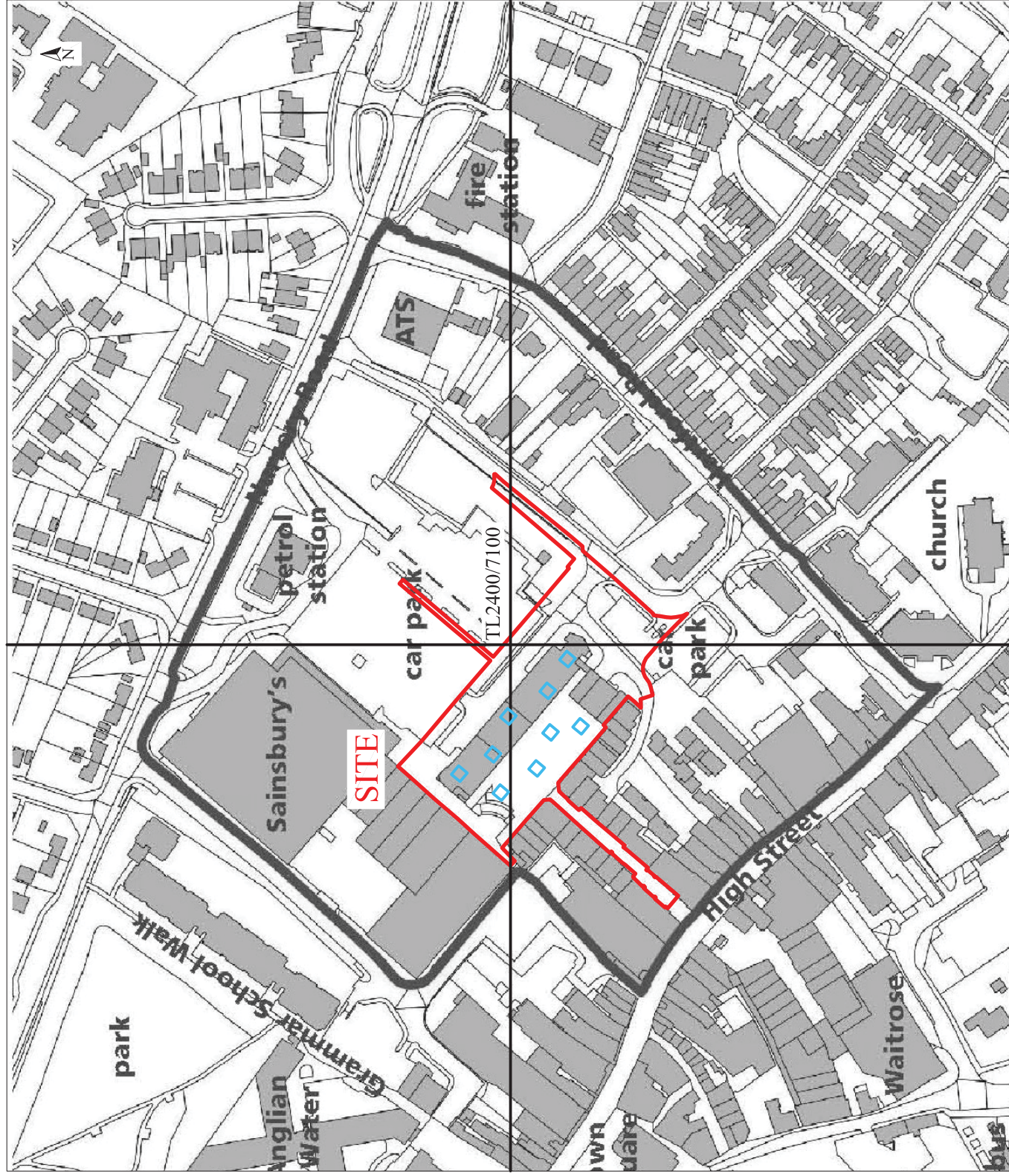


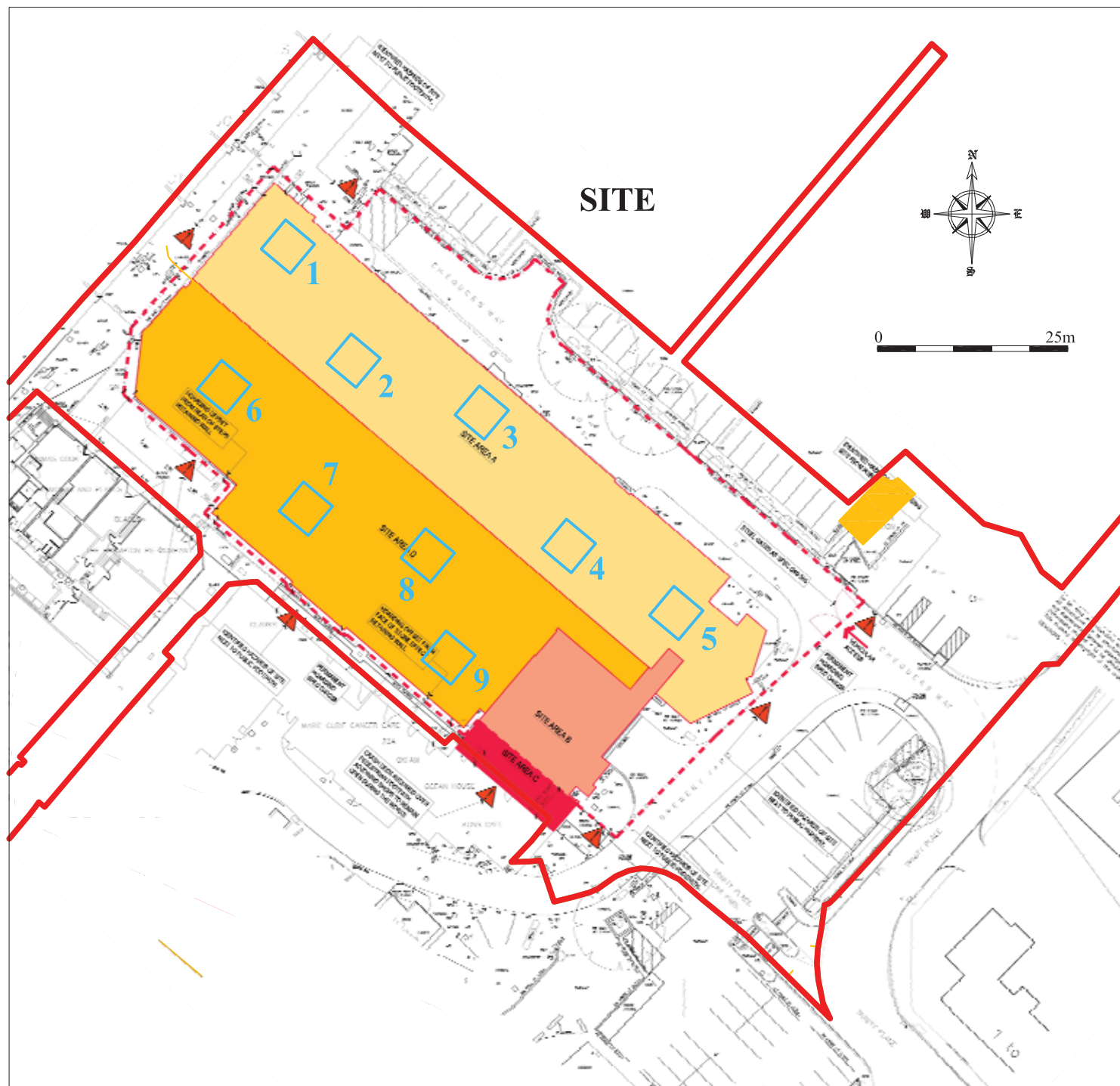
12
F1023 in Trench 1



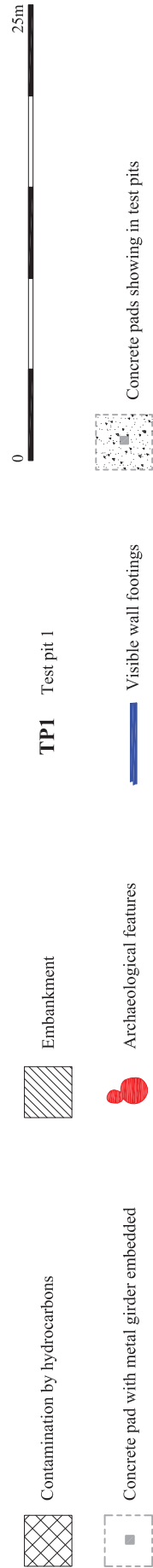
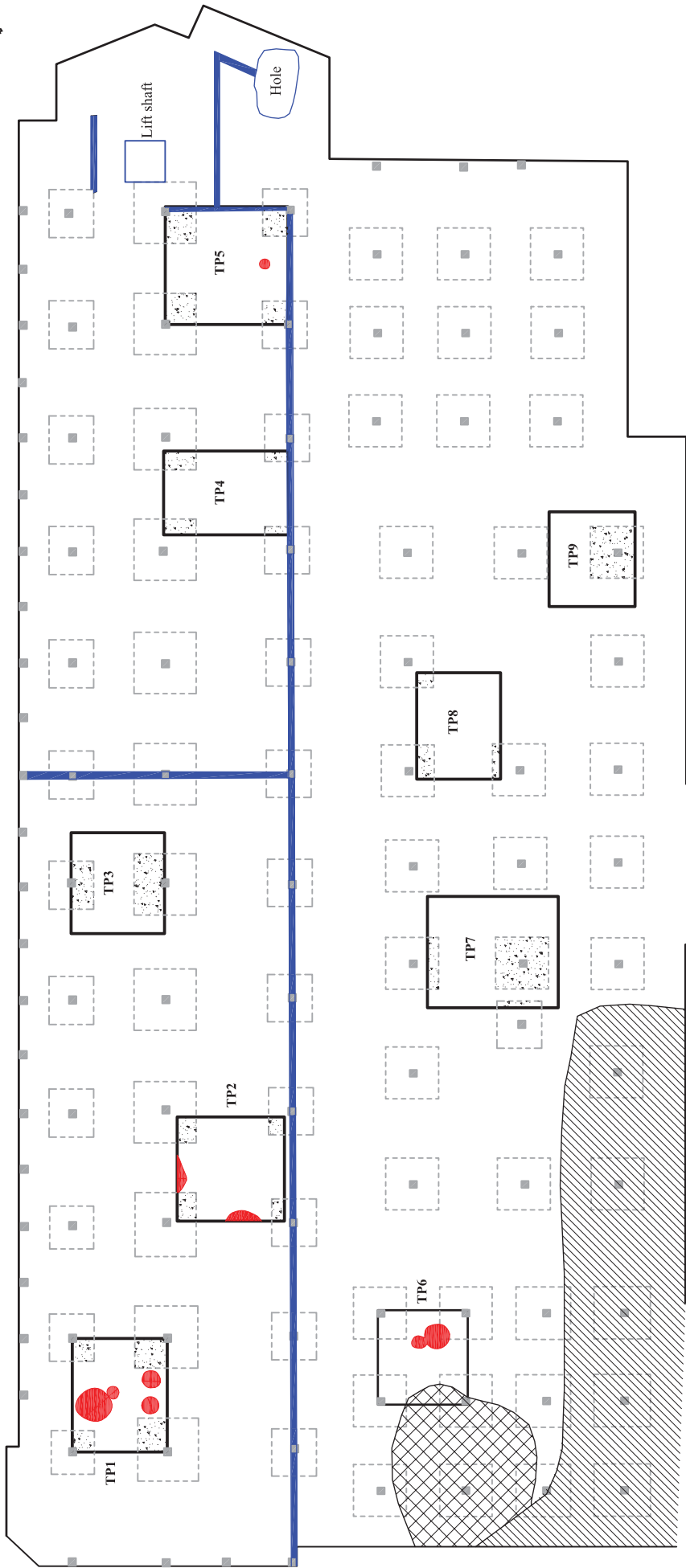
Reproduced from the 1999 Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright Archaeological Solutions Ltd Licence number 100036680

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

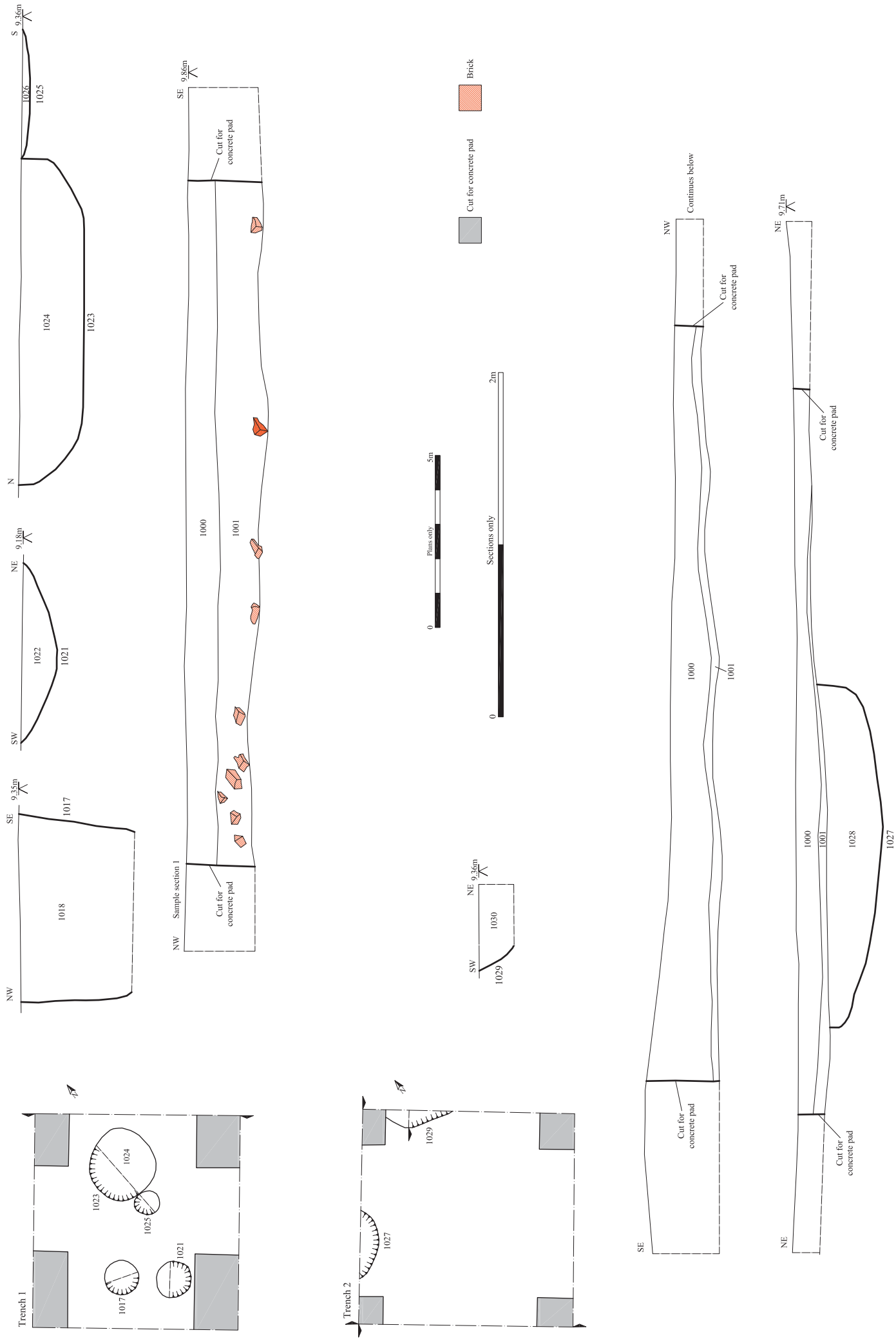




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Fig. 3 Test pit location plan
Scale 1:750 at A4



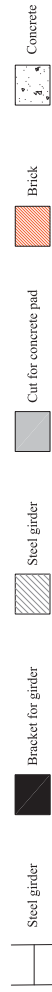
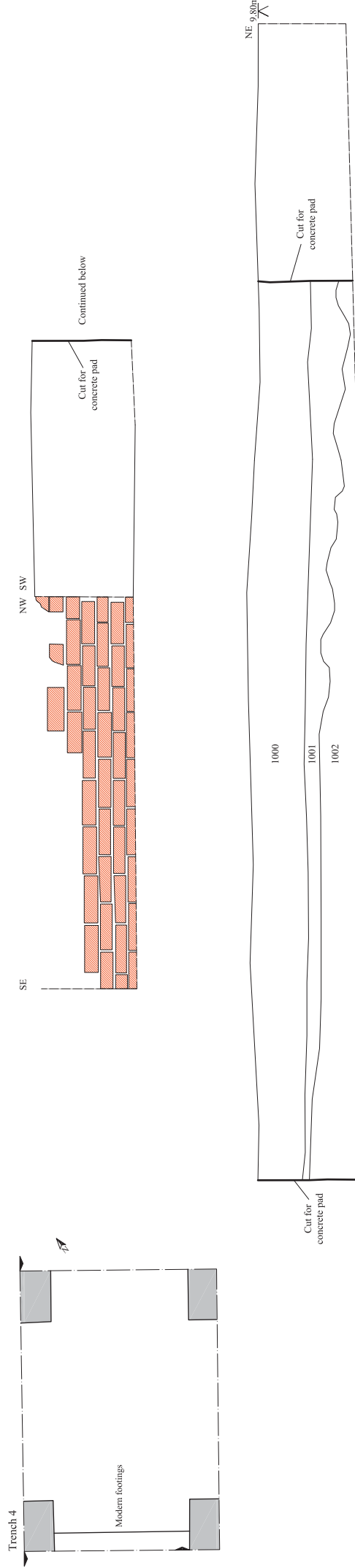
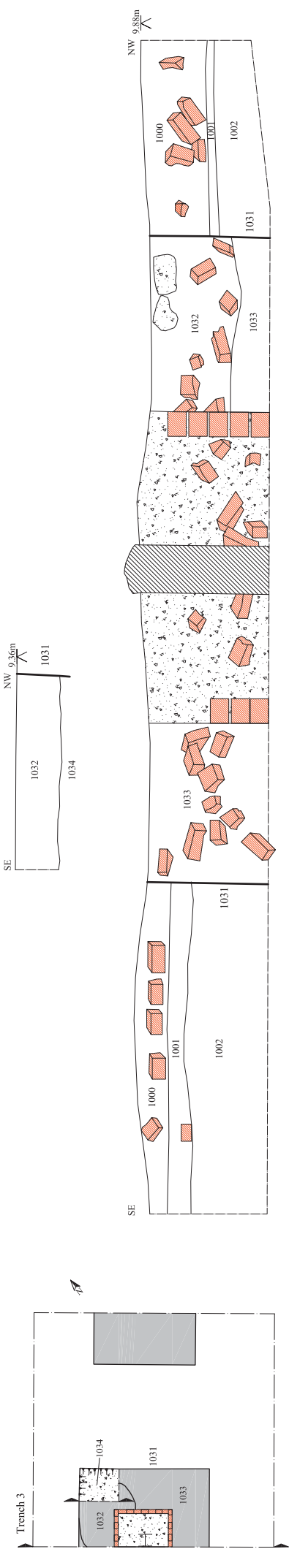
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Fig. 4 Areas of truncation
Scale 1:250 at A3



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Fig. 5 Trench plans and sections

Scale 1:100 and 1:20 at A3



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Fig. 6 Trench plans and sections

Scale 1:100 and 1:20 at A3

