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**SITE OFF ROSE LANE AND LAND TO THE REAR OF GELDARDS, GREAT  
CHESTERFORD, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

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NGR: TL 5115 4280	Report No: 4632
District: Uttlesford	Site Code: CG57
Approved: Claire Halpin MIfA	Project No: P5744
Signed:	Date: 22 July 2014 Revised: 06/08/2014

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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Site off Rose Lane and Land to the Rear of Geldards, Great Chesterford, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In July 2014, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of a site off Rose Lane and land to the rear of Geldards, Great Chesterford, Essex (TL 5115 4280). The evaluation was commissioned by the Enterprise Property Group Ltd and conducted in compliance with a planning condition of Uttlesford District Council, as advised by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor (ECC HEA), attached to two separate planning approvals for two new dwellings on each of the two sites (UTT/12/0742 &amp; UTT/12/6006).</i></p> <p><i>The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, within the suburban area of the Romano-British town of Great Chesterford. It lies south east of the Scheduled Ancient Monument area of the 4th century Roman walled town (SM 24871).</i></p> <p><i>In the event, the evaluation revealed a modern gully which contained a residual sherd of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD pottery.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>July 2014</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>Unlikely</i>
P. number	<i>P5602</i>	Site code	<i>CG57</i>
Type of project	<i>An archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status			
Current land use			
Planned development	<i>Residential</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern gully</i>		
Significant finds(+dates)	<i>Residual sherd 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD pottery</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Great Chesterford</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>0.8ha</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 5115 4280</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>Approximately 45m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Essex County Council HEA</i>		
Project Supervisor (PO)	<i>Sam Egan</i>		
Funded by	<i>Enterprise Property Group Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>Site off Rose Lane and Land to the Rear of Geldards, Great Chesterford, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Quinn, S.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4632</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>July 2014 (Revised: 06/08/14)</i>		

## **SITE OFF ROSE LANE AND LAND TO THE REAR OF GELDARDS, GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

#### **SUMMARY**

*In July 2014, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of a site off Rose Lane and land to the rear of Geldards, Great Chesterford, Essex (TL 5115 4280). The evaluation was commissioned by the Enterprise Property Group Ltd and conducted in compliance with a planning condition of Uttlesford District Council, as advised by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor (ECC HEA), attached to two separate planning approvals for two new dwellings on each of the two sites (UTT/12/0742 & UTT/12/6006).*

*The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, within the suburban area of the Romano-British town of Great Chesterford. It lies south east of the Scheduled Ancient Monument area of the 4th century Roman walled town (SM 24871).*

*In the event, the evaluation revealed a modern gully which contained a residual sherd 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD pottery*

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In July 2014, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation of a site off Rose Lane and land to the rear of Geldards, Great Chesterford, Essex (TL 5115 4280; Figs. 1-2). The evaluation was commissioned by the Enterprise Property Group Ltd and conducted in compliance with a planning condition of Uttlesford District Council, as advised by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor (ECC HEA), attached to two separate planning approvals for two new dwellings on each of the two sites (UTT/12/0742 & UTT/12/6006).

1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA; *Brief for Archaeological Trial Trenching and Excavation two plots of land, one off Rose Lane, Great Chesterford and the second on Land to the rear of Geldards, High Street, Great Chesterford*, dated 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014). It was also carried out according to a written scheme of investigation prepared by Archaeological Solutions (dated 08/04/2014). 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. The specific research aims were to characterise any further evidence of prehistoric, Roman, medieval or other activity as recorded elsewhere in the area, and in particular:

- to identify any evidence of Roman suburban settlement activity, other Roman occupation or possible military activity;

- to identify any evidence of occupation of later date.

### *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**

2.1 Great Chesterford is a village on the north-western boundary between Essex and Cambridgeshire, situated 10km south of Cambridge, and c.500m west of the junction between the M11 and the A11. The site to be developed comprises two adjoining areas of land, located immediately off Rose Lane, south of the High Street. The site currently comprises an area of garden and former allotments.

## **3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

3.1 The site is located c. 45m AOD, on a terrace above the River Cam, approximately 200m east of the river. The site is on well drained soils over chalk or chalk rubble, and the river terraces are composed of sands, gravels and clay, with chalk hills rising to 90m AOD either side of the river.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 Great Chesterford is a town of significant archaeological importance. Its location on the well drained terraces above the River Cam made it an ideal place for settlement with archaeological

evidence indicating a nucleated settlement in the area as early as the Iron Age; and find spots yielding Mesolithic flints and blades (EHER 4831) suggesting earlier exploitation of the area by hunter-gatherers. The late Iron Age settlement in the town, as identified by substantial pottery finds and coins, seems to have covered an area of c.10ha. The presence of nearby Iron Age settlements such as those at Wendens Ambo, Howe Wood and Great Shelford, as well as hill-forts at Wandlebury and Littlebury places Great Chesterford within an extensive Iron Age landscape (Medlycott 1999:13).

4.2 The origins of an urban settlement at Great Chesterford come with the construction of a Roman fort in the 1st century AD, in addition to a nearby civilian settlement. The deconstruction of the fort at the end of the 1st century AD saw the expansion of the settlement, and the gradual development of an urban centre; culminating in the 4th century AD with the construction of the town walls (Medlycott 1999: 13, 14). The site is situated to the south east of the scheduled area of the walled Roman town and substantial evidence relating to this period is known within the immediate vicinity of the site. This evidence includes: a find spot yielding horse harnesses and pendants; a Roman occupation layer encountered on land immediately west of the site, with pottery relating to the 4th century AD Roman settlement (EHER 13894); as well as an assumed Roman activity area also on land west of the site, dating to the 3rd century AD, with features and finds indicating a possible structure (EHER 46618).

4.3 Evidence suggests a sizeable Anglo-Saxon population was present within the area of Great Chesterford, with over 190 individuals discovered in a cemetery spanning the late-Roman to Anglo-Saxon periods; although the location and form of the settlement at Great Chesterford is unknown. The village becomes the site of a royal manor following the Norman Conquest, with the Domesday Book listing King William as the village's lord in 1086 and a total population of 53 households. The cloth trade, as in many villages in the surrounding area ensured the prosperity of the village throughout the medieval period until the trade's collapse. The village is atypical when compared with others in the surrounding landscape, in that its form is of the Midlands settlement tradition, exhibiting houses set back from the road by 4m, and retaining a strip-field agriculture system until 1804 (Medlycott 1999: 22). Archaeology has so far contributed little to an understanding of Great Chesterford during this period however, perhaps due to a focus on the village's Roman heritage and as such the role of the settlement during this period has been highlighted as a research priority (Medlycott 1999: 24, 25).

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The brief required trial trenching based on a 5% sample of the 0.8ha site, including all four proposed house plots. Seven trenches of 30m x 1.8m were therefore excavated, plus an eighth trench of 15m x 1.8m. The trial trenches were excavated using a small tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

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

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below.

**Trench 1**

<i>Sample section 1: North-east end, north-west facing 0.00m = 45.81m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark orange brown, firm, silty clay with rare chalk flecks.
0.30 – 0.55m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid orange brown, firm, silty clay with occasional small chalk fragments.
0.55m +	L1003	Natural. Pale greyish white chalk with occasional small and large sub-angular flint

*Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

**Trench 2**

<i>Sample section 2: North-west end, north-east facing 0.00m = 45.80m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr.1.
0.32 – 0.43m	L1002	Modern made ground. Mid brownish white, firm, silt, chalk, clay mix.
0.43 – 0.51m	L1001	Subsoil. As Tr.1.
0.51m +	L1003	Natural. As Tr.1.

*Description: Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

**Trench 3**

<i>Sample section 3: North-east end, north-west facing 0.00m = 45.30m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.41m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr. 1.
0.41 – 0.54m	L1001	Subsoil. As Tr. 1.
0.54m +	L1003	Natural. As Tr. 1.

*Description: Trench 3 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

**Trench 4**

<i>Sample section 4: North-west end, north-east facing 0.00m = 45.26m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr 1.
0.32 – 0.47m	L1001	Subsoil. As Tr 1.
0.47m +	L1003	Natural. As Tr 1.



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

### **Trench 5**

<i>Sample section 5: North-west end, north-east facing 0.00m = 44.83m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.21m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr 1.
0.21 – 0.43m	L1001	Subsoil. As Tr 1.
0.43m +	L1003	Natural. As Tr 1.

*Description: Trench 5 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

### **Trench 6 (Fig. 3)**

<i>Sample section 6: South-west end, north-west facing 0.00m = 44.34m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr 1.
0.30 – 0.54m	L1001	Subsoil. As Tr 1.
0.54m +	L1003	Natural. As Tr 1.

*Description: Trench 6 contained a modern gully, F1004.*

Gully F1004 was linear in plan (10m+ x 0.52m x 0.38m). It had steep, near vertical, sides and a slightly concave base. Its fill, L1005, was a mid orange brown, friable, silty clay with occasional small rounded stones and chalk flecks. It contained modern CBM and glass, and a residual 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD pottery sherd.

### **Trench 7**

<i>Sample section 7: North-west end, north-east facing 0.00m = 44.34m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.41m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr 1.
0.41 – 0.70m	L1001	Subsoil. As Tr 1.
0.70m +	L1003	Natural. As Tr 1.

*Description: Trench 7 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

### **Trench 8**

<i>Sample section 8: North-east end, south-east facing 0.00m = 44.17m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.25m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr 1.
0.25 – 0.41m	L1001	Subsoil. As Tr 1.
0.41m +	L1003	Natural. As Tr 1.

*Description: Trench 8 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

## **7 CONFIDENCE RATING**

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

## **8 DEPOSIT MODEL**

8.1 Uppermost was Topsoil L1000, a firm, dark orange brown silty clay with rare chalk flecks (between 0.21 - 0.41m thick). Modern made ground, L1002, was present below the topsoil and overlaying the Subsoil, L1001, in Trench 2. It was a mid brownish white, firm, silt, chalk and clay mix (0.11m thick). Subsoil L1001 (between 0.08 - 0.29m thick) was present below the topsoil in every other trench. It comprised a firm, mid orange brown silty clay with occasional small chalk fragments.

8.2 L1001 directly overlay the natural geology, L1003, a compact, pale greyish white chalk with occasional small and medium sub-angular flints at a depth below the current ground surface of between 0.41m and 0.70m.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, within the suburban area of the Romano-British town of Great Chesterford. It is located to the south-east of the Scheduled Ancient Monument area of the 4<sup>th</sup> century walled town. As such, it had a high potential for Romano-British archaeology.

9.2 In the event, the evaluation revealed a modern gully which contained a residual sherd of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD pottery.

9.3 No other archaeological finds or features were encountered during the evaluation, and the ground was undisturbed.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE**

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

## **11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) would like to thank Enterprise Property Group Ltd for commissioning the evaluation, in particular Messrs Neil Yates, Peter Stocking and Chris Jackson for their assistance.

AS is also pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Richard Havis and Adrian Gascoyne of Essex County Council.

Thanks also go to Ms Maria Medlycott for the provision of HER data.

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## APPENDIX 1      CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

Feature	Context	Segment	Trench	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
1004	1005		6	Fill of Gully	2nd C AD	(1) 3g	26		Glass (1) - 6g

## **APPENDIX 2      SPECIALIST REPORTS**

### **The Roman Pottery**

*Andrew Peachey    MifA*

A single fragment (3g) of Lezoux samian ware, manufactured in central Gaul, was contained in L1005. The sherd formed part of the rim of a Dr.33 conical cup, one of the most common samian ware form types in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

### **The Ceramic Building Materials**

*Andrew Peachey    MifA*

A single fragment (26g) of post-medieval peg tile with a sanded base was contained in L1005, and was probably manufactured in the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1  
Trial trench 1, facing northeast



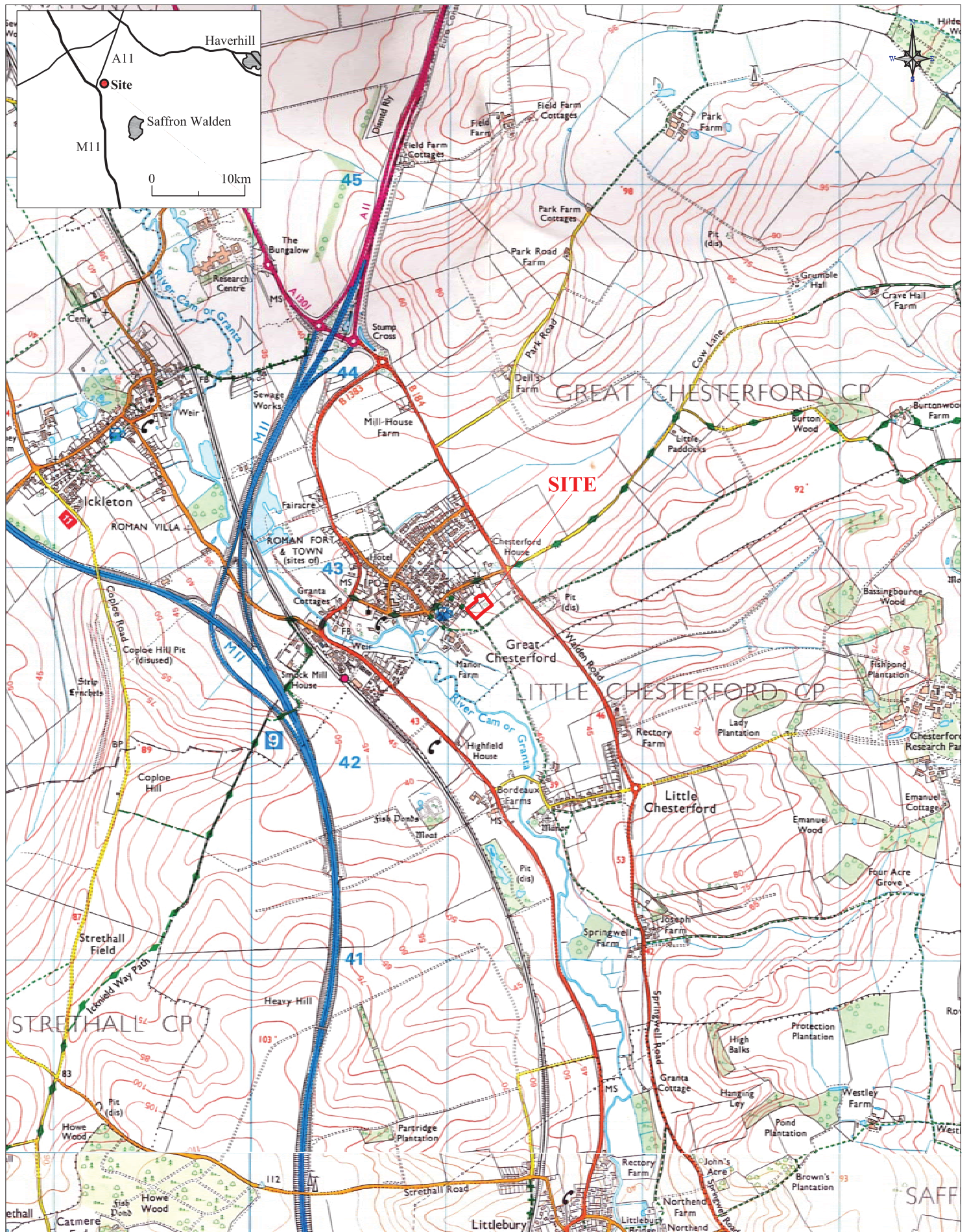
2  
Trial trench 4, facing southeast



3  
Trial trench 6, pre-excitation, facing northeast

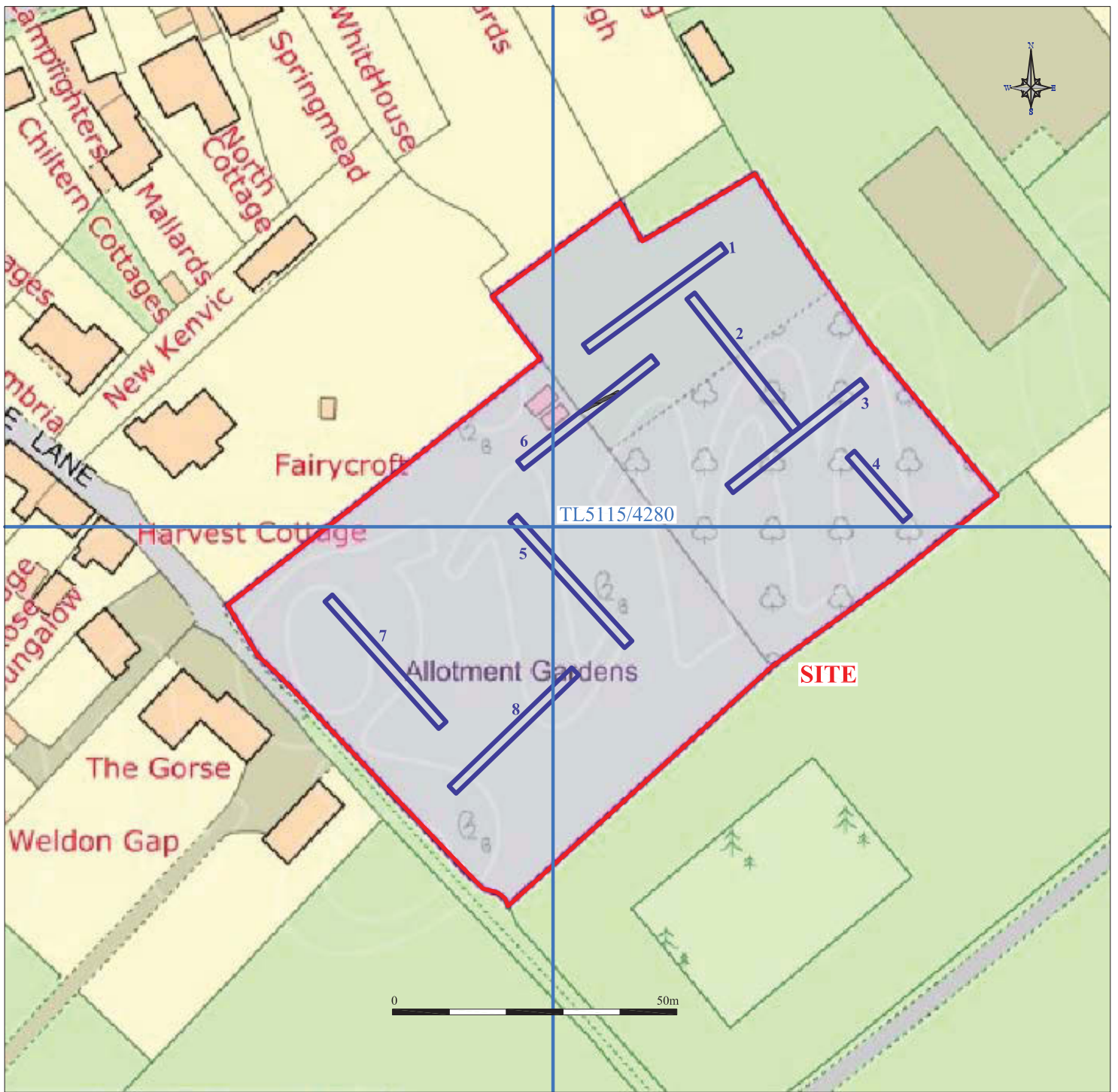


4  
F1004, trial trench 6, facing west



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



<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
<b>Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan</b>
Scale 1:1000 at A4



**Trench 6**

