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**THE LAURELS, DUNMOW ROAD, TAKELEY, ESSEX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

Authors: Gareth Barlow (Fieldwork & Report) Peter Thompson (Archaeological Background)	
NGR: TL 5687 2119	Report No: 4502
District: Uttlesford	Site Code:
Approved: Claire Halpin MfA	Project No: P5602
Signed:	Date: 4 February 2014

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

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

**PI House, r/o 23 Clifton Road, Shefford SG17 5AF
Tel 01462 850483**

**e-mail info@ascontracts.co.uk
www.archaeologicalsolutions.co.uk**



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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>The Laurels, Dunmow Road, Takeley, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In February 2014 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at the Laurels, Dunmow Road, Takeley, Essex (TL 5687 2119; Figs.1 - 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Jack Hynes 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 planning approval for the proposed construction of four residential dwellings following demolition of the existing property (Planning Ref. UTT/13/2905).</i></p> <p><i>The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, where there has been widespread archaeological investigation in advance of recent housing development, revealing multi-period remains from the Neolithic through to the post-medieval period</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation revealed three small modern pits (F1003, F10005 and F1007) and modern service trenches. An abraded sherd of residual medieval (11th – mid 13th century) pottery and a residual struck flint were found in one of the pits (F1007).</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>February 2014</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P5602</i>	Site code	
Type of project	<i>An archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>Residential</i>		
Current land use	<i>Private garden</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern pits and service trenches.</i>		
Significant finds(+dates)	<i>Abraded sherd of residual medieval (11th – mid 13th century) pottery and a residual struck flint</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Takeley</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>0.12ha</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 5687 2119</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>Approximately 103m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Essex County Council HEA</i>		
Project Supervisor	<i>Gareth Barlow</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr Jack Hynes</i>		
Full title	<i>The Laurels, Dunmow Road, Takeley, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Barlow, G.</i>		
Report no.	<i>4502</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>February 2014</i>		

THE LAURELS, DUNMOW ROAD, TAKELEY, ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In February 2014 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at the Laurels, Dunmow Road, Takeley, Essex (TL 5687 2119; Figs.1 - 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Jack Hynes 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 planning approval for the proposed construction of four residential dwellings following demolition of the existing property (Planning Ref. UTT/13/2905).

The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, where there has been widespread archaeological investigation in advance of recent housing development, revealing multi-period remains from the Neolithic through to the post-medieval period (Essex Historic Environment Record Ref. HER 46298). At nearby Priors Green, prehistoric occupation and a large medieval field system and settlement have been investigated prior to development. Dunmow Road which borders the site to the south is the old road from Braughing to Colchester with origins in the Roman period as Stane Street (HER 4697). Roman and medieval settlement evidence has been recorded along the line of the road. A listed building of 17th century date lies to the west (HER 37453), possibly the George PH as shown on first edition OS maps.

The evaluation revealed three small modern pits (F1003, F10005 and F1007) and modern service trenches. An abraded sherd of residual medieval (11th – mid 13th century) pottery and a residual struck flint were found in one of the pits (F1007).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In February 2014 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at the Laurels, Dunmow Road, Takeley, Essex (TL 5687 2119; Figs.1 - 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Jack Hynes 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 planning approval for the proposed construction of four residential dwellings following demolition of the existing property (Planning Ref. UTT/13/2905).

1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by the ECC HEA (dated 06/01/2014), and a written scheme of investigation prepared by Archaeological Solutions (dated 14/01/2014). 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 or medieval settlement associated with the road
- To identify any evidence of occupation of medieval date related to the adjacent contemporary activity at Priors Green

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 on the northern side of Dunmow Road at Takeley. It comprises the existing residential plot and dwelling of The Laurels, which extends to some 0.12ha.

3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.1 Takeley is located on a hill with The Laurels situated at approximately 103m AOD. The local soils are of the Hanslope series comprising slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils which overly chalky till. The underlying geology is of the London Clay Formation.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Great Dunmow Road is built over the course of the important Roman Road of Stane Street running from Colchester towards St Albans via Braughing (EHER 1226). Excavation has indicated that Stane Street itself lies over sections of an Iron Age trackway (EHER 4697, 4698). An archaeological evaluation beside Dunmow Road, 320m east of The Laurels, identified Roman and medieval ditches which appeared to be cutting undated ditches which are thought to be prehistoric (EHER 48242). Another archaeological evaluation centred on 430m west of The Laurels undertaken in advance of redevelopment, revealed evidence of late Iron Age activity and Romano-British land-use. The evaluation indicated that past human activity was concentrated in the west of the site, with little archaeological strata revealed in the eastern field (EHER 19572).

4.2 A third large archaeological evaluation in Prior's Green centred on 650m to the north-east of The Laurels revealed early Iron Age agricultural activity in the western part of the site, prehistoric features including a possible ring ditch and cremation burial at the eastern end of the site, and a handful of medieval pits and ditches. Post medieval parallel ditches probably represent the remains of a strip field system. A large possibly boundary ditch was undated and possibly geological in origin (EHER 46298). Another archaeological phase of trial trenching to the north of this site revealed occupation evidence from the Neolithic through to Roman periods (EHER 46765).

4.3 The earliest record of Takeley is in the Domesday Book of 1086 entered as *Tacheleia* meaning either 'woodland clearing of a man called Taecca, or else where young sheep are kept'. A medieval moat is located at Cheerups Cottage 235m north of The Laurels (EHER 19463). A second irregular moated site is located at Smiths Green Moat Cottage 290m north-west of The Laurels (EHER 19463). Smiths Green is first mentioned during the reign of Edward II. The area of Prior's Green containing The Laurels was evaluated as part of an ongoing programme of residential development works. A total of thirty six archaeological trial trenches were excavated across the area. Three north – south aligned ditches and a single modern gully were uncovered. Although only one of the ditches was positively dated, it is likely that they were all post-medieval and represent further field divisions. All the ditches uncovered during the trenching were parallel to the extant north – south boundaries, as well as to each other. This suggests that they may originally have been contemporary with the extant field boundaries, which are known to pre-date the 1875 1st edition Ordnance Survey map but unlikely, based upon their morphology, to originate much before the post-medieval period (EHER 47605).

4.4 A smaller evaluation carried out 100m to the east of The Laurels on land at 1 and 2 Broadfield Villas, Dunmow Road, revealed no archaeological features or finds (EHER 47912). A second evaluation 260m to the east also proved negative (EHER 47396). However, another phase of archaeological trial trenching at the northern end of Priors Green, centred on 750m north-east of The Laurels, identified medieval activity indicating a system of paddocks laid out between the 10th and 13th centuries (EHER 46766).

4.5 A Grade II listed 17th century timber framed house fronts Dunmow Road approximately 60m south-east of The Laurels, which is potentially the site of the George Public House shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey maps (EHER 37453). A possible post-medieval moated site is located at Goodwyns, Jack's Green some 485m to the north-east of The Laurels (EHER 8164). Just to the south of Great Dunmow Road is the line of the former Bishop's Stortford, Dunmow and Braintree Branch Railway opened in 1869 and closed exactly one century later (EHER 19629).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Three trial trenches of 10m x 1.60m were excavated using a small tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Trenches 1 and 3 were within the footprints of the proposed buildings, and Trench 2 was located within the proposed driveway.

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 (Figs. 2-3)

<i>Sample section 1A:</i> <i>North end, east facing</i> <i>0.00m = 103.24m AOD</i>		
0.00m–0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark grey brown sandy silt with moderate small coal and cinders, and occasional small and medium rounded and sub-angular flints.
0.32 – 0.58m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, mid grey brown clayey silt with moderate small coal and cinders, and occasional small and medium rounded and sub-angular flints.
0.58m +	L1002	Natural. Firm, mid brown orange clay silt with occasional small and medium rounded and sub-angular flints.

<i>Sample section 1B:</i> <i>South end, west facing</i> <i>0.00m = 103.26m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.37m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.37m +	L1002	Natural. As above.

Description: Trench 1 contained three small modern pits (F1003, F1005 and F1007) and three modern service trenches.

F1003 was a small pit (0.43m x 0.43 x 0.08m) located towards the north end of Trench 1. It had moderately steep sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1004, was a firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional small and medium rounded and sub-angular flints, and coal and cinder flecks. It contained modern CBM (18g), animal bone (13g) and coal (3g).

F1005 was a small pit (0.45m x 0.45 x 0.10m) located towards the north end of Trench 1. It had steep sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1006, was a firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional small and medium rounded and sub-angular flints, and coal and cinder flecks. It

contained an abraded post-medieval (17th – 18th century) pottery sherd (6g), animal bone (4g), slate (3g) and coal (1g).

F1007 was a small pit (0.45m x 0.45 x 0.14m) located towards the centre of Trench 1. It had irregular sides and had a flattish base. Its fill, L1008, was a firm, mid grey brown clay silt with occasional small and medium rounded and sub-angular flints, and coal and cinder flecks. It contained an abraded residual sherd of medieval (11th – mid 13th century pottery (2g), coal (1g), slag (5g) and a residual struck flint (29g).

Trench 2 (Figs. 2-3)

<i>Sample section 2A:</i> <i>North end, west facing</i> <i>0.00m = 103.37m AOD</i>		
0.00m–0.38m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr 1.
0.38m +	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

<i>Sample section 2B:</i> <i>South end, west facing</i> <i>0.00m = 103.33m AOD</i>		
0.00m–0.36m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr 1.
0.36m +	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

Description: Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or finds. A modern service trench was present.

Trench 3 (Figs. 2-3)

<i>Sample section 3A:</i> <i>East end, south facing</i> <i>0.00m = 103.42m AOD</i>		
0.00m–0.36m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr 1.
0.36m +	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

<i>Sample section 3B:</i> <i>West end, south facing</i> <i>0.00m = 103.41m AOD</i>		
0.00m–0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As Tr 1.
0.32m +	L1002	Natural. As above Tr.1.

Description: Trench 3 contained no archaeological features or finds. A modern service trench was present.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

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

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 Uppermost was Topsoil L1000, a firm, dark grey brown sandy silt with moderate small coal and cinders, and occasional small and medium rounded and sub-angular flints. (0.32 – 0.38m thick). Subsoil L1001 (0.26m thick) was present in the northern two thirds of Trench 1 only. It comprised a firm, mid grey brown clayey silt with moderate small coal and cinders, and occasional small and medium rounded and sub-angular flints. Otherwise, the topsoil (L1000) directly overlies the natural deposits (L1002) of firm, mid brown orange clay silt with occasional small and medium rounded and sub-angular flints at a depth below the current ground surface of between 0.32m and 0.58m.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site comprises the existing dwelling, garden and outbuildings of The Laurels on the northern side of Dunmow Road. Two plots to the north alongside this road is a 17th century building. The large new housing development of Priors Green stands to the north and north east. Trial trenching prior to this development revealed prehistoric features including a possible ring ditch and cremation burial, evidence of early Iron Age agricultural activity, medieval pits and ditches, and parallel ditches probably representing the remains of a post-medieval strip field system. The trial trenches at The Laurels revealed only modern pits and service trenches, suggesting that this plot, at least was not settled until modern times. An abraded sherd of medieval (11th – mid 13th century) pottery and a residual struck flint were found in one of the pits (F1007).

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 Limited would like to thank Mr Jack Hynes for commissioning this evaluation and for his assistance.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Mr Richard Havis the Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor, and to Ms Maria Medlycott for providing the HER information.

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APPENDIX 1

TATL14, Takeley, Essex Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Trench	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	A. Bone (g)	Other
1000		2	Topsoil			100		
1003	1004	1	Fill of Pit			18	13	Coal - 3g
1005	1006	1	Fill of Pit	17th-18th	(1) 6g		4	Coal - 1g Slate - 3g
1007	1008	1	Fill of Pit	11th-mid13th	(1) 2g			Coal - 1g Slag - 5g Str. Flint (1) - 29g

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Flint

Andrew Peachey MifA

Pit F1007 (L1008) contained a single fragment (29g) of struck flint in an un-patinated condition. It comprises a debitage flake with cortex covering the entirety of its dorsal face. The butt end exhibits facets from the manufacturing of a striking platform, with the pronounced bulb (and hinged termination) indicating the flake was removed by direct-percussion, suggesting this is a core trimming/preparation flake of indeterminate prehistoric date

The Pottery

Peter Thompson

The evaluation recovered 2 sherds weighing 8g recovered from two features. Pit F1007 (L1008) contained an abraded sherd of early medieval sandy ware containing rounded quartz grit. Pit F1005 (L1006) contained a sherd of glazed post-medieval red earthenware.

KEY:

F13: early medieval sandy ware c.11th-mid 13th

PMRE: Post-medieval red earthenware late 16th-19th

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1005	1006	Pit	1x6g	17 th -18 th	Clear, glossy glaze both surfaces. Moderately abraded
1007	1008	Pit	1x2g	11 th -mid13th	Heavily abraded

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1

Entrance to The Laurels from Dunmow Road.



2

General shot of Trench 1, looking north.



3

Trench 1 post excavation, looking south.



4

Sample section 1A, Trench 1, looking west.



5

F1005, Trench 1, looking south.



6

F1007, Trench 1, looking south.



7

General shot of Trench 2. Looking north.



8

Trench 2. Looking north.



9

Sample section 2B, Trench 2, looking east.



10

General shot of Trench 3, looking east. Low building beyond car is 17th century.



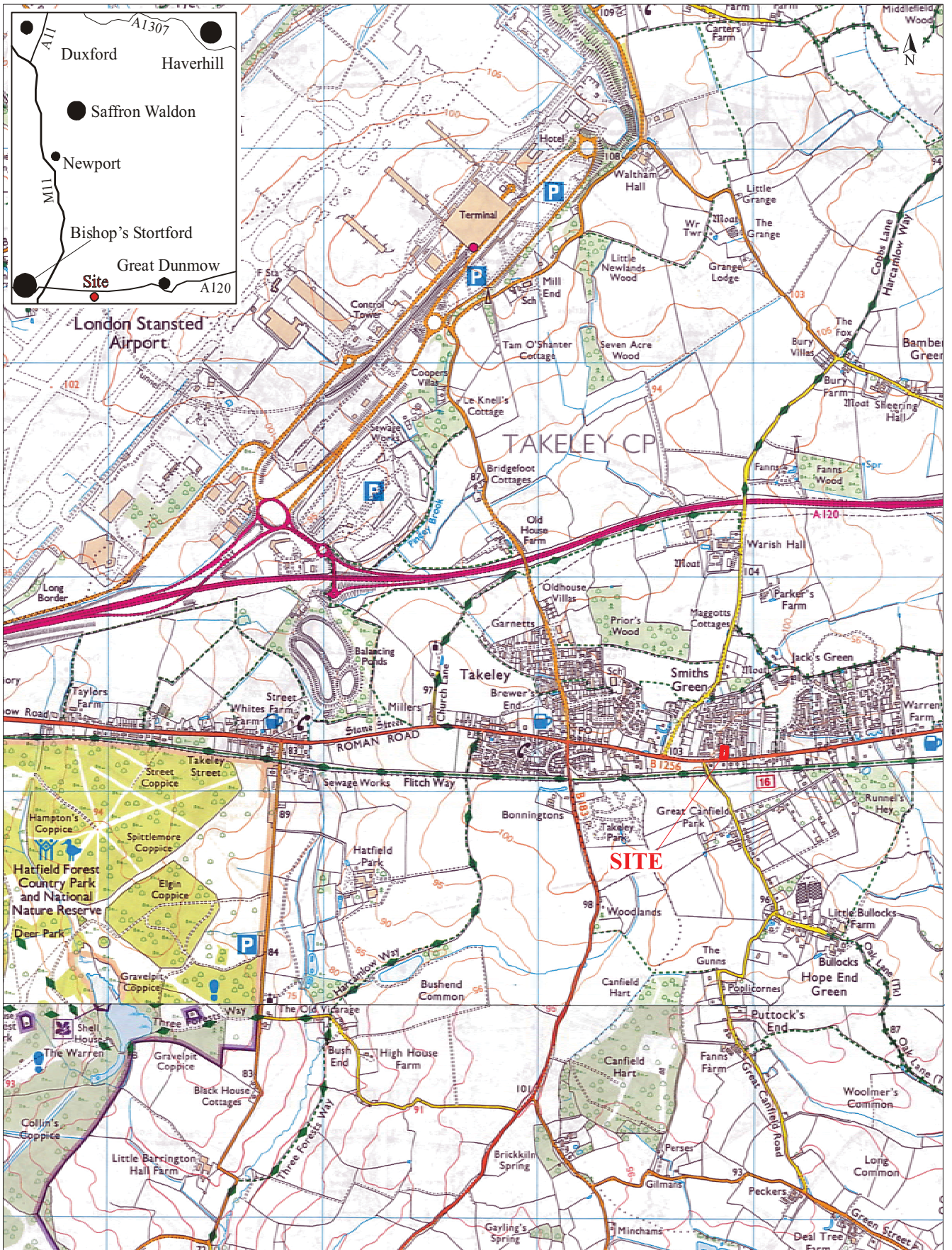
11

Trench 3, looking west.



12

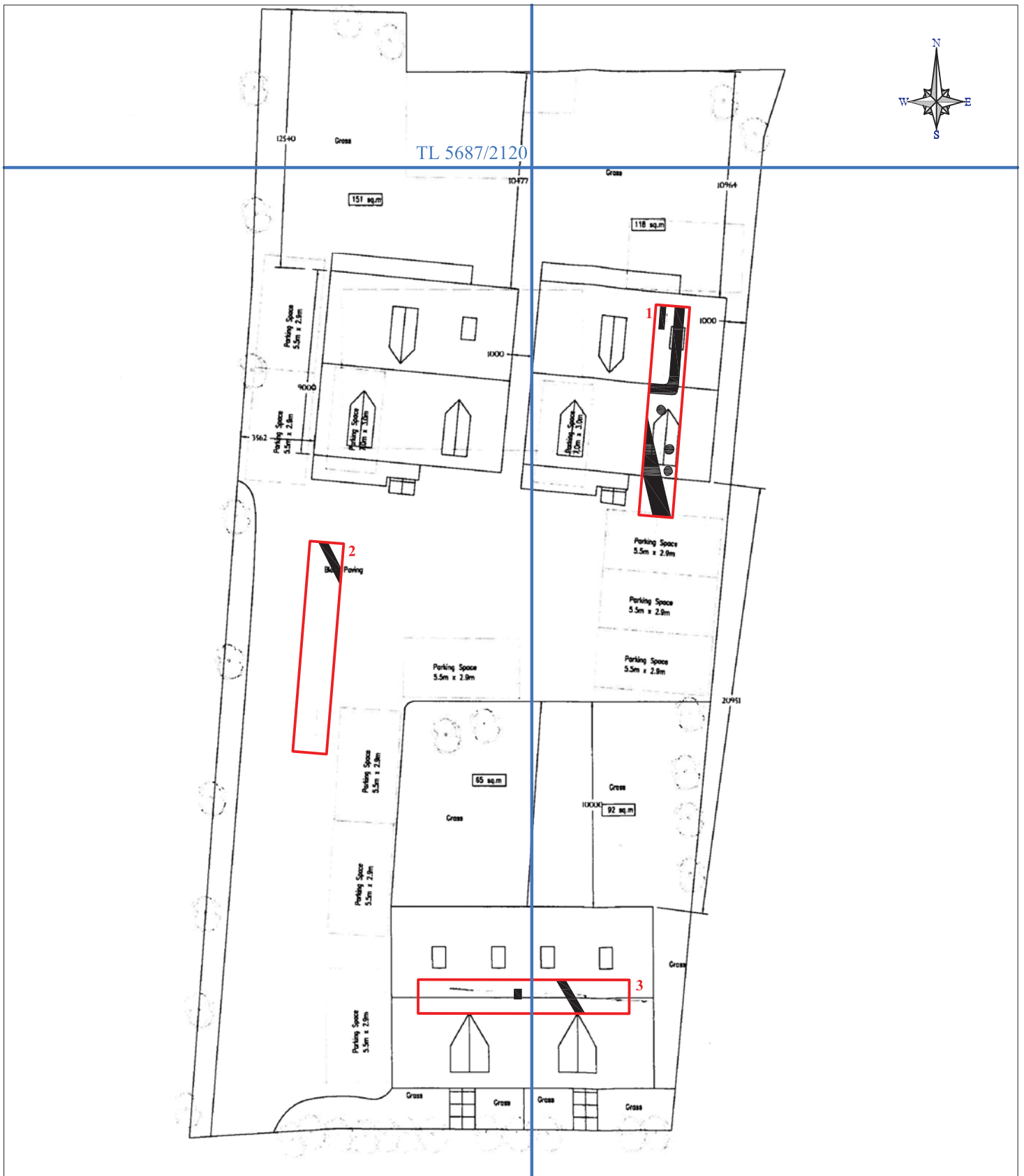
Sample section 3A, Trench 3, looking north.



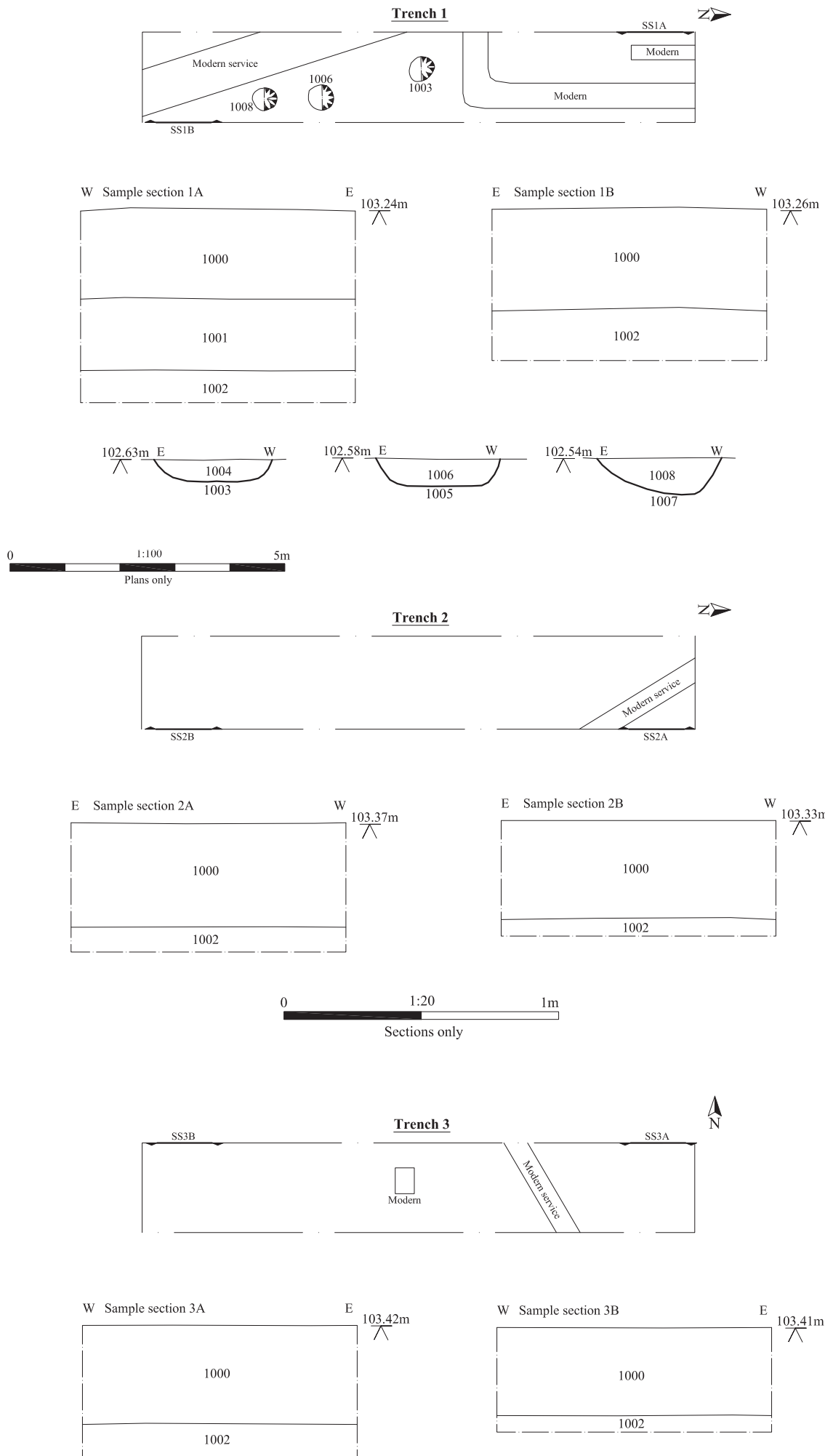
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:250 at A4



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Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections
 Scale 1:100 and 1:20 at A4