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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**THE WHITE HART INN, MILL STREET,  
ST OSYTH, ESSEX CO16 8EN**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: TM 11641550	Report No: 4679
District: Tendring	Site Code: STWOH14
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 5776
Signed:	Date: 18 Sept 2014

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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
<b>Project name</b>	<i>The White Hart Inn, Mill Street, St Osyth, Essex CO16 8EN</i>		
<p><i>In September 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at The White Hart Inn, Mill Street, St Osyth, Essex CO16 8EN (NGR TM 1164 1550). The evaluation was commissioned by City &amp; Country Residential Ltd. and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the conversion and extension of the White Hart Inn, and construction of new self-catering units to the rear.</i></p> <p><i>The site is situated within the historic settlement core of St Osyth. Mill Street is one of the principal streets of the settlement, and the site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval structures and occupation evidence fronting the street. It also had potential for contemporary 'backyard' deposits. Numerous archaeological features were recorded adjacent to the site to the north, covering an occupation range of the 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. The features represented medieval backyard refuse pits and post holes, and post-medieval evidence for a tile kiln and potential clay extraction pits.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed possible medieval/post-medieval (late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 17<sup>th</sup> century) occupation layer and a modern brick well.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	08, 10/09/2014		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	5776	Site code	STOWH14
Type of project	<i>An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>Grade II Listed building</i>		
Current land use	<i>Car park and rear garden.</i>		
Planned development	<i>Conversion and extension of the public house, and construction of new self-catering units to the rear.</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 17<sup>th</sup> C layer, modern brick well</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Tendring</i>	<i>St Osyth</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>CO16 8EN</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 1800m<sup>2</sup></i>		
NGR	<i>TM 1164 1550</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>7.50/9.60m</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>ECC HEA</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>City &amp; Country Residential Ltd.</i>		
Full title	<i>The White Hart Inn, Mill Street, St Osyth, Essex CO16 8EN: An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	4679		
Date (of report)	<i>September 2014</i>		

# THE WHITE HART INN, MILL STREET, ST OSYTH, ESSEX CO16 8EN

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

### SUMMARY

*In September 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at The White Hart Inn, Mill Street, St Osyth, Essex CO16 8EN (NGR TM 1164 1550). The evaluation was commissioned by City & Country Residential Ltd. and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the conversion and extension of the White Hart Inn, and construction of new self-catering units to the rear.*

*The site is situated within the historic settlement core of St Osyth. Mill Street is one of the principal streets of the settlement, and the site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval structures and occupation evidence fronting the street. It also had potential for contemporary 'backyard' deposits. Numerous archaeological features were recorded adjacent to the site to the north, covering an occupation range of the 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. The features represented medieval backyard refuse pits and post holes, and post-medieval evidence for a tile kiln and potential clay extraction pits.*

*In the event the evaluation revealed possible medieval/post-medieval (late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 17<sup>th</sup> century) occupation layer and a modern brick well.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September 2014 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at The White Hart Inn, Mill Street, St Osyth, Essex CO16 8EN (NGR TM 1164 1550; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by City & Country Residential Ltd. and was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the conversion and extension of the White Hart Inn, and construction of new self-catering units to the rear (Tendring District Council Planning Ref. 11/01128/LBC & 111/01132/FUL).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA; *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation Trenching and Excavation at the White Hart Inn, Mill Street, St Osyth*, dated 06/05/2014) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 07/05/2014) and approved by ECC HEA. The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008), and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition significance and quality of any archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. If significant remains were present, ECC HEA would require further mitigation by open area excavation of all or part of the proposed development area.

#### *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 located on the northern side of Mill Street within the historic settlement core of St Osyth (Fig. 1). The public house fronts Mill Street. The site of the proposed new build self-catering units is the former car park to the rear of the public house. The entire site extends to some 1800m<sup>2</sup>. The existing public house is Grade II listed, with a 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century rear range and 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century front range.

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

3.1 The site lies at an elevation of approximately 9m AOD with the land decreasing in level towards the south west. The solid geology of St Osyth consists of London Clay (Thames Group) overlain by Glaciofluvial drift geology (British Geological Survey 1978). The soils of the area are of the Wix association, described as deep permeable coarse loamy soils often associated with drained sandy and coarse loamy soils with a slight risk of water erosion (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). These soils traditionally support cereal, sugar beat and other arable crops as well as some grassland.

### **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

#### *Prehistoric*

4.1 Prehistoric evidence is poorly represented in St Osyth. Only occasional finds have been discovered in the general area of St Osyth. Bronze Age and Iron Age activity was revealed during investigations at Lodge Farm, c.1.75km east of the site. During an archaeological investigation by Time Team and Wessex Archaeology in the town, a single heavily abraded piece of prehistoric pottery was discovered (Wessex Archaeology 2005). Within the Priory Park (c.700m north of the site) the EHER records the presence of a 'possible tumulus' (EHER 2837). This earthwork is first depicted on the map of 1968 with a further tumulus also noted closer to the priory, c.650m north-east of the site (EHER 2828). The definition of a tumulus from the National Monument Record is an 'artificial mound of earth, turf and/or stone, normally constructed to contain or conceal burials' and are often prehistoric in date. Further prehistoric material has been uncovered during aggregate extraction within the park area including Iron Age material (EHER 2904).

#### *Romano-British*

4.2 As is the case with the prehistoric period, there is a dearth of Roman evidence in St Osyth. During aggregate extraction in 1962, the remains of a small Roman building were discovered in St Osyth Priory Park, c.800m north of the site (EHER 2890). It is thought that the building was of wattle and timber superstructure with a thatched roof and has been tentatively dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> century. During excavations by Time Team and Wessex Archaeology in 2005, Roman material was revealed above a kiln found 500m south-west of The Bury (Wessex Archaeology 2005). Although this material was thought to be residual and did not date the kiln, it indicates that Roman activity occurred close to the site. A Roman pit with a fluted brown ware vase was also discovered in the priory precinct (EHER 2822). The main piers of the undercroft at St Osyth's Priory were built almost entirely of Roman tile with some inclusions of brick (EHER 2820). Whilst re-used in the medieval period, some type of building or brick works must have been close by for the quantity of material to be discovered in the area.

## Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

4.3 Documentary sources indicate that the settlement of St Osyth originated in the Anglo-Saxon period, from at least the 7<sup>th</sup> century when a nunnery was founded in the village (then named *Cicc* referring to the Creek) during the reign of *Sighere*, King of Essex (Wessex Archaeology 2005). It is thought that Osyth was granted a nunnery by *Sighere*, her presumed husband, and decided to retire as an abbess of the nunnery. However, legend says Osyth was murdered in her chapel during an attack by the Danes in 653 AD and was subsequently canonised. Whilst there is no mention of a religious house in the Domesday Book, it is thought that the chapel was situated in Nun's Wood where a 14<sup>th</sup> century ruin has been noted. Archaeological investigations in the town have not produced much more evidence to enhance our knowledge of this period. One piece of Saxon pottery was found during an excavation by Colchester Archaeological Trust in 1999 to the south of the church and two small pieces during the excavation by Time Team (Wessex Archaeology 2005). 10<sup>th</sup> century Middle Saxon pottery sherds were also discovered during investigations at St Osyth primary school (EHER 2902) with several (possibly Saxon) burials also located in a similar area (EHER 3298).

4.4 The Domesday Book entry for St Osyth indicates that a substantial town existed prior to the foundation of the Augustinian Priory. No church was recorded but extensive land holdings with pasture land, woodland for livestock and a mill were recorded (Morris 1986). The Augustinian Priory dedicated to St Peter and Paul (EHER 4; SAM 24) was founded in 1121 by the Bishop of London and became an Abbey in c.1150. Its most significant remains are the sub-vault of the Dorter range dating from the foundation and a fine example of a 15<sup>th</sup> century gatehouse. Adjacent to the large gatehouse, built in 1495, a further 12<sup>th</sup> century gate (with the gateway blocked) is located to the east, which features original architectural mouldings. It is likely that this gatehouse was constructed at a similar time to the priory and was subsequently replaced by the larger gatehouse in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. St Osyth's became the wealthiest monastic house and *Cicc* the largest parish in the county. The town became established along the eastern and southern boundaries of the abbey precinct and relied on the wealth of the abbey to extend further. In addition the abbey held land in 36 towns and villages throughout Essex and Suffolk. St Osyth is an area of high archaeological potential due to the medieval priory/abbey and its associated structures. Finds of medieval pottery have been discovered in the priory precinct (EHER 2825; c.300m north-east of the site). Although the site is situated outside the main abbey precinct, it would have seen transitory activity from travellers and cart traffic passing through both gatehouses of the priory. A fair is also thought to have taken place on the Bury grassland, it is said to have competed with Colchester in significance (website 2). Evidence of either of these activities may be encountered during the evaluation.

4.5 Medieval and post-medieval remains have been found close to the north of the site during a trial trench evaluation of the Priory Park West Field by AS (McCall & Unger 2008). Here, one hundred archaeological features were recorded, covering an occupation range of the 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Medieval occupation was present in the form of backyard refuse/rubbish pits, pits and postholes. The nature of this medieval activity is not entirely apparent but may be considered peripheral activity associated with medieval settlement at St Osyth.

#### *Post-medieval & modern*

4.6 The abbey was dissolved in 1539 and granted to Thomas Cromwell, and later Thomas Darcy in 1553. Many medieval structures were demolished and new buildings constructed after the dissolution and Thomas Darcy established the priory as a residential home. By 1721, the priory and its land were passed to Betty Savage and her husband Fredric Zuylestein de Nassau, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Rochford, relation to William of Orange. The priory was largely rebuilt in this period and subsequent owners demolished the Georgian wings, built the Victorian Banqueting Hall and restored the 15<sup>th</sup> century gatehouse. In later years, the priory was opened to the public to display the wealth of paintings which Somerset De Chair's wife had purchased.

4.7 The archaeological investigation to the north of the site (McCall & Unger 2008) revealed post-medieval remains represented by evidence for tile production in the form of a small up-draft kiln with two firing tunnels and presumably a stoking pit in the unexcavated area to the south of the trench, with further evidence for potential clay extraction pits. The gathered evidence suggested that brick and tile may have been produced at this site and transported elsewhere.

4.8 The existing public house on the site is Grade II listed, with a 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century rear range and 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century front range. The 1777 Chapman & Andre map shows properties here on the Mill Street frontage at that time.

## **5 METHODOLOGY**

5.1 Two trenches were excavated using a mechanical 180° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). Trench 1 measured 20 x 1.60m and was located within footprint of the proposed self-catering units in the back garden of the property. Trench 2 measured 8 x 1.60m and was situated within proposed extension to the kitchen of the public house building.

5.2 Topsoil and undifferentiated overburden were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed as appropriate. Excavated spoil was searched for finds and the trenches were scanned by a metal detector.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

### Trench 1 (Figs. 2 - 3, DP 2-3)

<i>Sample section 1A (DP 4): north end, south-west facing</i> 0.00 = 8.99m AOD		
0.00 – 0.10m	L1000	Car park surface. Light grey, loose, gravel.
0.10 – 0.31m	L1001	Levelling layer. Dark orangey yellow, loose, sand with gravel and CBM fragments.
0.31 – 0.64m	L1002	Made ground. Dark grey, compact, clayey silt with occasional CBM fragments.
0.64 – 0.79m	L1003	Made ground. Dark yellowish grey, compact, silty clay.
0.79 – 1.02m	L1004	Made ground. Dark grey, friable, clayey silt with occasional CBM fragments.
1.02 – 1.26m	L1005	Dark yellow and grey, compact, clayey silt with moderate CBM fragments.
1.26 – 1.69m	L1006	Mid to dark grey, compact, clayey silt with occasional CBM fragments.
1.69 – 1.90m	L1007	Mid grey with some yellowish patches, compact, silty clay with occasional charcoal and CBM fragments.
1.90m +	L1008	Natural mid yellow, compact, clay with pockets of gravel.

<i>Sample section 1B (DP 5): south end, south-west facing</i> 0.00 = 8.66m AOD		
0.00 – 0.09m	L1000	Gravel. As above.
0.09 – 0.17m	L1001	Levelling layer. As above.
0.17 – 0.30m	L1012	Modern made ground. Dark grey, loose, gravel with crushed tarmac.
0.30 – 1.04m	L1013	Made ground. Dark grey, compact, clayey silt with frequent CBM fragments and occasional debris.
1.04m +	L1008	Natural clay. As above.

*Description: A possible occupation layer (L1007) was present within the trench. L1007 contained a late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherd and tile dated to the late medieval - post-medieval transitional period, probably 16<sup>th</sup> century. Two large areas of modern truncation were also present in the centre and south end of the trench.*

The northern end of the trench contained a potential occupation layer, L1007 (DP 7). It was present above natural clay and was 9m+ in plan and 0.10 – 0.30m thick. Initially thought to be a fill of a large feature, possibly a ditch, it proved to be a layer. L1007 contained a sherd of late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 17<sup>th</sup> pottery. Though just one sherd was found the CBM is also dated to the late medieval - post-medieval transitional period, probably 16<sup>th</sup> century (CBM Report below). L1007 also contained iron fragments including a buckle (188g), oyster shell (1g) and animal bone (65g).

**Trench 2** (Figs. 2 & 3, DP 8-9)

<i>Sample section 2A (DP 10): north end, south-west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 9.47m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.46m	L1014	Made ground. Dark grey, friable, sandy silt with occasional CBM fragments.
0.46m +	L1008	Natural clay. As above, Tr. 1.

<i>Sample section 2B (DP 11): south end, south-west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 9.57m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.03m	M1015	Modern pavement stones.
0.03 – 0.09m	M1016	Modern concrete.
0.09 – 0.43m	L1014	Made ground. As above.
0.43 – 0.59m	L1017	Mid grey, friable, sandy silt with gravel.
0.59m +	L1008	Natural clay. As above, Tr. 1.

*Description: A modern (19<sup>th</sup> century) brick well (M1009) was present within the trench.*

M1009 was located at the northern end of the trench (DP 6) and it was present c.0.60m below existing ground level and below L1002. It was circular structure (1.50+ x 0.55+ x 0.60m+) with a domed cap and was only partially exposed. It was constructed with red bricks (0.220 x 0.110 x 0.065m), mainly halves, bonded with a creamy mortar. Recent damage to the top of the structure indicated that the well has not been filled in and contains standing water. The well was modern (19<sup>th</sup> century).

**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 The northern part of the site, where Trench 1 was located, contained substantial build-up of layers of made ground (1.20 – 1.80m thick). Only one layer of different character was present and it was L1007 (0.10 – 0.30m thick). The deposit was probably an occupation layer and consisted of a mid grey with some yellowish patches, compact, silty clay with CBM fragments. It was recorded in the northern part of the trench and was present above natural clay.

8.2 Trench 2 contained only made ground above natural clay, mainly comprising L1014, a dark grey, compact, clayey silt with frequent CBM fragments and occasional debris (0.30 – 0.50m thick).

8.3 The natural clay, L1008, was present at 0.45 – 1.90m below existing ground level and comprised a mid yellow, compact, clay with pockets of gravel.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 The site is situated within the historic settlement core of St Osyth. Mill Street is one of the principal streets of the settlement, and the site had a potential for medieval and post-medieval structures and occupation evidence fronting the street, and for contemporary 'backyard' deposits. Numerous archaeological features were recorded adjacent to the site to the north, covering an occupation range of the 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. The features represented medieval backyard refuse pits and post holes, and the post-medieval evidence included a tile kiln and evidence for potential clay extraction pits.

9.2 In the event the evaluation revealed medieval/post-medieval layer overlying the natural ground (L1007 Trench 1) and a modern well (F1010 Trench 2). The northern part of the site has been subject previous groundworks, possibly levelling up to the rear of the public house, and the north-western part of the garden is visibly lower than the investigated area. The made ground was of modern origin and the well in Trench 2 was likely associated with the public house.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Colchester Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank City & Country Residential Ltd for funding the project (in particular Ms Orla Casey and Messrs David and Richard Sergeant for assistance).

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Adrian Gascoyne, the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council.

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**APPENDIX 1      CONCORDANCE OF FINDS**

**STOWH14, St Osyth, Essex**  
 Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Segment	Trench	Description	Spot Date	Pottery	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
1007			1	Layer	Late 15th-Early 17th C	(1) 32g	520	65	Fe. Frags (2) - 188 O. Shell - 1g
1010	1011			Backfill of Construction Cut					Building Stone Frags (4) - 8816g

## **APPENDIX 2      SPECIALIST REPORTS**

### **Post-medieval Pottery**

by Peter Thompson

The evaluation recovered one fragment of lightly abraded stoneware weighing 35g from Layer L1007. It is part of a rod handle and rim of a Raeren stoneware drinking jug, probably dating between the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **The Ceramic Building Materials**

*Andrew Peachey*

A total of eight fragments (520g) of peg tile were recovered from Layer L1007 in a moderately fragmented condition. The peg tile has dark red-orange to red-brown surfaces over a slightly redder or mid grey core. It was manufactured in a coarse sand-tempered fabric, with inclusions of common angular quartz (0.25-1mm) with occasional iron ore and flint (<2.5mm). The peg tile has slightly irregular edges, a sanded base, slightly creased faces and ranges in thickness between 8-12mm. Peg holes are sub-circular and slightly tapering.

Peg tile becomes the dominant type of ceramic roofing material in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century in south-east England (Drury 1981, 131), although it is likely these fragments were produced around the late medieval to post-medieval transitional period, probably in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although a chronology extending into the preceding or succeeding centuries cannot be discounted based on limited evidence.

#### *Bibliography*

Drury, P. 1981 'The Production of Brick and Tile in Medieval England,' in Crossley, D. (ed) *Medieval Industry*, CBA Res. Rep. 40, 126-142

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. The White Hart Inn, Mill Street, St Osyth, Essex. Looking north-west.



DP 2. Trench 1. Looking south-south-east.



DP 3. Trench 1. Looking north-west.



DP 4. Trench 1, north end. Sample section 1A. Looking north-east.



DP 5. Trench 1, south end. Sample section 1B. Looking north-east.



DP 6. Trench 1, Well M1009. Looking south-west.



DP 7. Trench 1, Layer L1008. Looking west-north-west.



DP 8. Trench 2. Looking south-south-east.



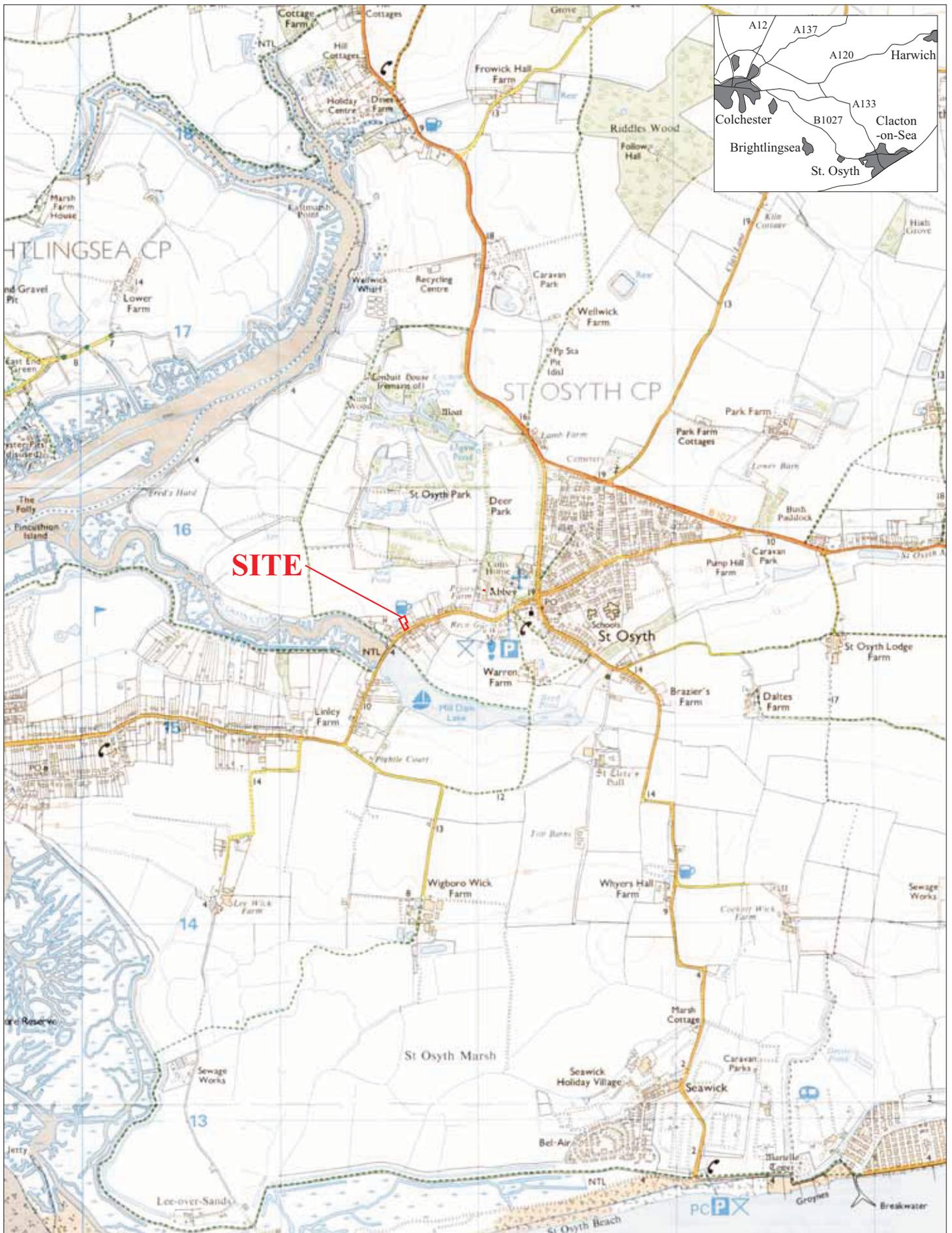
DP 9. Trench 2. Looking north-west.



DP 10. Trench 2, north end. Sample section 2A. Looking north-east.

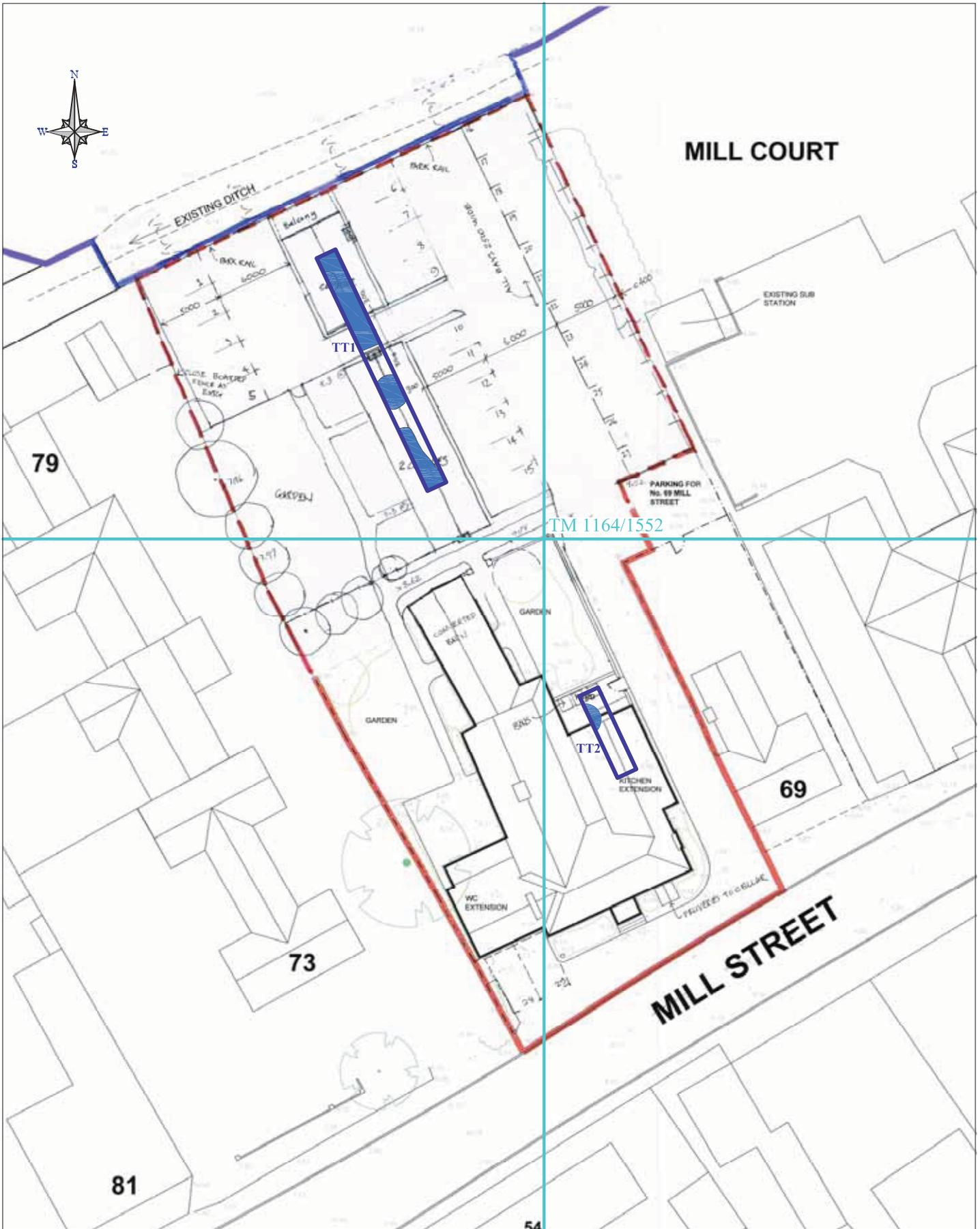


DP 11. Trench 2, south end. Sample section 2B. Looking north-east.



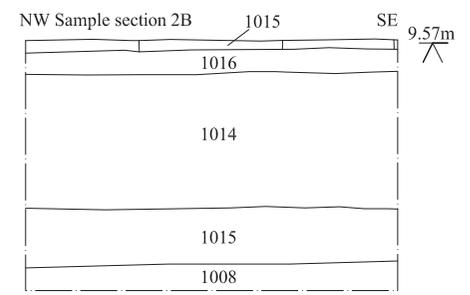
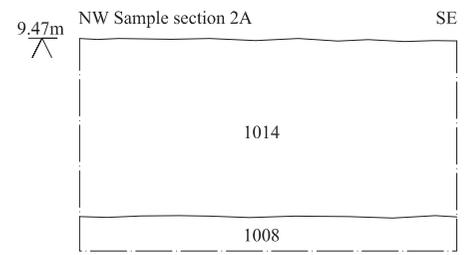
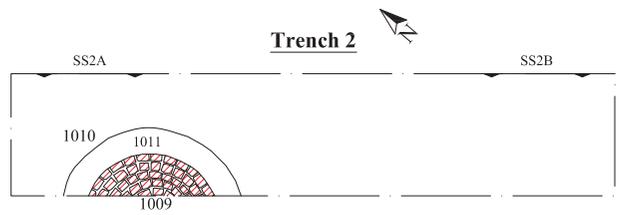
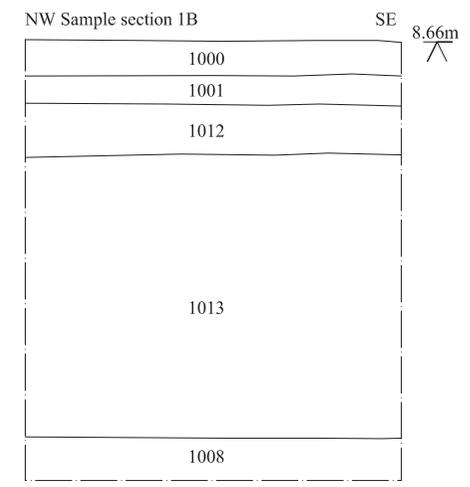
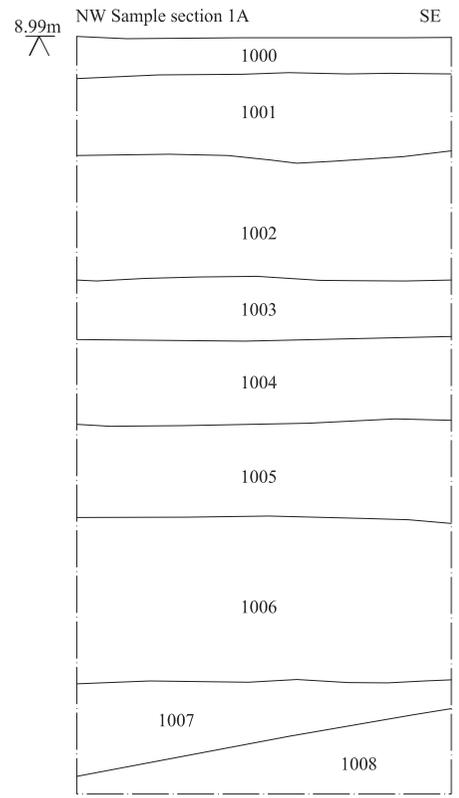
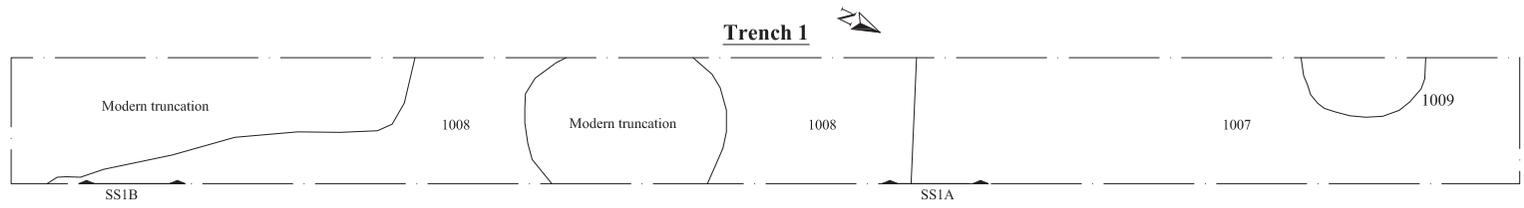
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



0 25m

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



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**Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections**

Scale 1:100 and 1:20 at A4