

**LAND NORTH OF CUTON HALL LANE,  
CHELMER VILLAGE WAY, SPRINGFIELD,  
CHELMSFORD, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Authors: Gareth Barlow (Fieldwork and report)	
NGR: TL 7330 0814	Report No: 4975
District: Chelmsford	Site Code:
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 6078
Signed:	Date: 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2015

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## OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Project details</b>			
<b>Project name</b>	<i>Cuton Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex</i>		
<p><i>In October 2015 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land north of Cuton Hall Lane, Chelmer Village Way, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex (NGR TL 7330 0814). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval to construct a Montessori day nursery with associated parking and landscaping (Chelmsford City Council Planning Approval Ref 14/01471/FUL), based on the advice of an Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation revealed Ditch F1005. It contained three sherds of abraded and moderately abraded pottery of mixed date: mid 9<sup>th</sup>-mid 12<sup>th</sup> century and 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> century.</i></p>			
<b>Project dates (fieldwork)</b>	<i>October 2015</i>		
<b>Previous work (Y/N/?)</b>	<i>N</i>	<b>Future work (Y/N/?)</b>	<i>TBC</i>
<b>P. number</b>	<i>5888</i>	<b>Site code</b>	
<b>Type of project</b>	<i>Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
<b>Site status</b>	<i>None</i>		
<b>Current land use</b>			
<b>Planned development</b>	<i>Day nursery</i>		
<b>Main features (+dates)</b>	<i>Ditch</i>		
<b>Significant finds (+dates)</b>	<i>Pottery of mid 9<sup>th</sup>-mid 12<sup>th</sup> century and 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> century date</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
<b>County/ District/ Parish</b>	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Chelmsford</i>	<i>Springfield</i>
<b>HER/ SMR for area</b>	<i>Essex Historic Environment Record</i>		
<b>Post code (if known)</b>	<i>-</i>		
<b>Area of site</b>	<i>c. 5000m<sup>2</sup></i>		
<b>NGR</b>	<i>TL 7330 0814</i>		
<b>Height AOD (min/max)</b>	<i>c.35m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
<b>Brief issued by</b>	<i>Essex County Council</i>		
<b>Project supervisor/s (PO)</b>	<i>Gareth Barlow</i>		
<b>Funded by</b>	<i>Buttercup Montessori Nursery</i>		
<b>Full title</b>	<i>Cuton Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
<b>Authors</b>	<i>Barlow, G.</i>		
<b>Report no.</b>	<i>4975</i>		
<b>Date (of report)</b>	<i>October 2015</i>		

**LAND NORTH OF CUTON HALL LANE,  
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**SUMMARY**

*In October 2015 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land north of Cuton Hall Lane, Chelmer Village Way, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex (NGR TL 7330 0814). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval to construct a Montessori day nursery with associated parking and landscaping (Chelmsford City Council Planning Approval Ref 14/01471/FUL), based on the advice of an Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).*

*Archaeological investigations associated with the development of Springfield have shown that the site lies within an area of known multi-period archaeological remains of regional importance, and the nationally-important Bronze Age Springfield enclosure lies to the immediate north east. Excavations in the 1980s and early 1990s recorded part of the western side of a Neolithic causewayed enclosure, a causewayed enclosure containing a late Bronze Age settlement and an early Saxon cremation/inhumation cemetery, and a late Saxon manorial settlement site. More recent excavations have been carried out at Springfield Business Park, further defining the western extent of the Saxon cemetery and recording further evidence of Bronze Age and Iron Age activity. A low density scatter of finds of Roman date and earlier residual finds has been recorded immediately adjacent to the current site at Plot N of the business park. The Roman material reflects the fact that the site also lies in the hinterland of the Roman settlement in Chelmsford, close to the contemporary London-Colchester road.*

*The evaluation revealed Ditch F1005. It contained three sherds of abraded and moderately abraded pottery of mixed date: mid 9<sup>th</sup>-mid 12<sup>th</sup> century and 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> century.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In October 2015 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land north of Cuton Hall Lane, Chelmer Village Way, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex (NGR TL 7330 0814; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval to construct a Montessori day nursery with associated parking and landscaping (Chelmsford City Council Planning Approval Ref 14/01471/FUL),

based on the advice of an Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance to a brief prepared by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA; *Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation at the Proposed Montessori day nursery, Land North of Cuton Hall Lane, Chelmer Village Way, Springfield, Chelmsford*, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014), and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015), and approved by ECC HEA. The project conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (2014), and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition significance and quality of any archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

#### *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 lies on the north side of Cuton Hall Lane, off Chelmer Village Way at Springfield. The land itself is previously undeveloped (suggesting little in the way of previous ground disturbance), but lies within an area that has been extensively developed in the last 30 years.

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

3.1 The site is situated at c.35m AOD on a valley slope overlooking the River Chelmer, whose meandering course passes c.1km to the east. The land slopes down gently to the east towards the river, and rises gradually to the west towards Springfield.

3.2 The site is situated on a solid geology of London Clay (clay, silt and sand), overlain by superficial Quaternary Head deposits (clay, silt, sand and gravel), capped with slightly acid loamy and clayey soils.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 The Springfield and Chelmer Village area to the north-east of the centre of Chelmsford is a focal area for prehistoric activity, with the earliest evidence comprising Mesolithic flintwork recorded c.350m to the north-east, close to a minor tributary of the River Chelmer (HER 46064). Excavations spanning the 1980s and 1990s revealed successive phases of intensive Neolithic and Bronze Age activity close to the north-east at Springfield Lyons. The earliest phase was represented by pits containing early Neolithic pottery, part of a causewayed enclosure located between two streams (HER 5789). Subsequently the enclosure became the focus for the deposition of late Neolithic Grooved ware and Early Bronze Age Beaker pottery, with Early Bronze Age pits also recorded immediately to the east of the site (HER 48526). However, the most intense activity occurred in the Late Bronze Age when a circular enclosure c.60m in diameter with six causeways was established, containing a settlement with evidence of metalworking (HER 5788). The full extent of this settlement and related activity clearly extends beyond the circular enclosure, with ditches extending c.500m to the east of the site at Chelmer Village East (HER 16864), and close to the north-east corner of the site on Springfield Business Park (HER 48525 & 46063). It is noted that features are often obscured by significant colluvial layers; however cropmarks to the south of Cuton Hall may indicate further rectilinear enclosures, possibly prehistoric or Roman (HER 5753).

4.2 The site is located in the hinterland to the north-east of the major Roman town of *Caesaromagus* (Chelmsford), which was founded in c.AD60-70 following the Boudican revolt, and included a mansio, baths and temple. The Roman road leading north-east from Chelmsford towards Witham and Colchester passes c.250m to the north-west of the site, and it is possible sparse roadside or rural settlement was present in the hinterland of the town. Investigations c.250-500m to the east of the site (HER 5790 & 16865) have recorded pits and ditches containing Roman pottery, tile and animal bone that appears indicative of activity in the late 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD, probably agricultural, but possibly associated with limited settlement.

4.3 During the Early Saxon period, the silted up enclosure of the former late Bronze Age circular ditch to the north-east was re-used as a cremation-inhumation cemetery and settlement. The cemetery included at least 190 confirmed or possible cremations and 28 inhumations, with some with grave goods, some in shallow ring ditches, and a number with pyre goods, which collectively date the burials to the late 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD (HER 5791, 48526 & 48527). The settlement included numerous structures, probably comprising a farmstead, although one building had two storeys or a tower and has been postulated as a church. The settlement has been interpreted as a Late Saxon manorial settlement, probably the precursor to the manor of Cuton (Hall), which appears in the Domesday Book with 8 households recorded.

4.4 Despite documentary evidence for Cuton Hall, relatively little archaeological evidence has been recorded for its medieval origin. An evaluation c.100m to the east, between the site and the hall recorded a ditch of probable medieval origin (HER 47506). The paucity of medieval evidence has been attributed to the shift in location of the manor to its present location shortly after the Norman Conquest, with the surrounding land reverting to agricultural cultivation (HER 48077). The current building of Cuton Hall to the east comprises a 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed house (HER 30839), while several cottages around Dairy Farm close to the south of the site also have origins in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries (HER 30976, 30977 & 30997).

4.5 Due to its geography overlooking the River Chelmer, the convergence of several roads from the east, and the presence of electrical technology industry (Marconi), Chelmsford was considered as strategically important for Second World War defence mechanisms. Thus, it is not surprising that a large tank trap ditch runs to the north-east, cutting through the late Bronze Age settlement at Springfield Lyons (HER 5792), nor that numerous pill boxes are/were located in the vicinity, the closest of which is c.50m to the east (HER 10153), with the remainder predominantly to the south and east (HER 10148, 10150, 10152, 10154, 10155 & 10156). In addition to the pill boxes, anti-tank blocks were situated on the Colchester Road (A12) and



railway line to the west (HER 10149 & 10151), while an experimental floodlight was situated to the south (HER 20961).

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The brief required a sample of the proposed development site to be investigated by trial trenching, to include trial trenching across the length and width of the proposed new nursery building. Three trenches, laid out within an H-pattern within the building footprint were proposed. Practicalities on site caused the trial trench plan to be revised: the north-easternmost trench was moved south-westwards. Instead of a single long trench between the south-western and north-eastern trenches, forming the 'H' plan, two shorter trenches of the same total length were cut.

5.2 The subsoil was 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

6.1 The individual trench descriptions are presented below:

### Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

<i>Sample section 1A</i> <i>Northwest end, southwest facing</i> <i>0.00 = 35.13m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.35m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark grey brown clay silt, with occasional medium angular and rounded flint.
0.35 – 0.53m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, mid orange brown clay silt, with occasional medium angular and rounded flint.
0.53m+	L1002	Natural. Firm, pale brown orange silty clay, with occasional small and medium angular, sub-rounded, and rounded flint.

<i>Sample section 1B</i> <i>Southeast end, southwest facing</i> <i>0.00 = 13.24m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.37m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.37m+	L1003	Natural. Firm, mid grey brown silty sand, with frequent small and medium sub-round and rounded flint.

*Description: Trench 1 contained Ditch F1005. It contained three sherds of abraded and moderately abraded pottery of mixed date: mid 9<sup>th</sup> - mid 12<sup>th</sup> century and 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> century.*

Ditch F1005 was linear (3.10+ x 0.90 x 0.26m), orientated north/south. It had moderately sloping sides and a shallow concave base. Its fill (L1006) was a firm, mottled pale blue grey (c.60%) and pale orange brown (c.40%) clay silt with moderate small and medium angular, sub-angular, and rounded flint. It contained three sherds of abraded and moderately abraded pottery of mixed date: mid 9<sup>th</sup> - mid 12<sup>th</sup> century and 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Trench 2** (Fig. 2)

<i>Sample section 2</i>		
<i>Centre, north facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 35.21m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.28 – 0.37m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.37m+	L1002	Natural. As above, Trench 1

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

### **Trench 3** (Fig. 2)

<i>Sample section 3</i>		
<i>Centre, north facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 35.26m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.32m+	L1003	Natural. As above, Trench 1, Sample Section 1B

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

### **Trench 4** (Fig. 2)

<i>Sample section 4A</i>		
<i>Southeast end northeast facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 35.29m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.38m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.38m+	L1004	Natural. Firm, pale blue grey silty clay, with variable between moderate and frequent small and medium sub-rounded, and rounded flint.

<i>Sample section 4B</i>		
<i>Northwest end, northeast facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 35.23m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.35m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1.
0.35m+	L1004	Natural. As above

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

## **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 Topsoil L1000 was uppermost and comprised a firm, dark grey brown clay silt with occasional medium angular and rounded flint (0.28 – 0.38m thick). In the western part of the site, L1000 overlay Subsoil L1001, a firm, mid orange brown clay silt, with occasional medium angular and rounded flint (0.09 – 0.18m thick). To the south and east it directly overlay the natural deposits.

8.2 The natural geology was encountered at a depth of between 0.53m in the west and 0.35m in the east and varied across the site. To the west it comprised a firm, pale brown orange silty clay, with occasional small and medium angular, sub-rounded, and rounded flint (L1002). To the south it comprised a firm, mid grey brown silty sand, with frequent small and medium sub-round and rounded flint (L1003). To the east it comprised a firm, mid grey brown silty sand, with frequent small and medium sub-round and rounded flint (L1004).

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential recorded on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). A fragment of a probable Neolithic causewayed enclosure, a Bronze Age settlement, and a Saxon cemetery, and a Saxon manorial site lie to the east. A scatter of Roman finds has been recorded immediately adjacent to the site at Plot N.

9.2 However the only feature revealed in this evaluation was Ditch F1005. It contained three sherds of abraded and moderately abraded pottery of mixed date: mid 9<sup>th</sup>-mid 12<sup>th</sup> century and 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> century.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

10.1 Archive records, with inventory, will be deposited at Chelmsford Museum in accordance with their requirements. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be

necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Buttercup Montessori Nursery for funding the works and Ms Sarah Threllfall of TMA Chartered for Surveyors for her assistance.

AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Alison Bennett, Essex County Council Historic Environment Advisor.

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## **APPENDIX 1      SPECIALIST REPORT**

### **The Pottery**

*by Peter Thompson*

#### **Introduction**

The archaeological trial trench evaluation recovered three body sherds of late Saxon/early medieval pottery (13g) from L1006.

#### **Methodology**

The sherds were examined under x35 binocular microscope to establish fabric type and characterization. The recording was carried out in keeping with the Medieval Pottery Research Group Guidelines (Slowikowski et al 2001 & MPRG 1998). The pottery fabric codes in brackets, and date ranges are those used for Essex (Cotter 2000).

#### **Description**

One abraded fine sandy sherd (2g) with a grey-brown core and pale grey surfaces is a Thetford type ware (mid 9<sup>th</sup>-mid 12<sup>th</sup> C.). The remaining sherds are moderately abraded early medieval sandy coarse wares (11<sup>th</sup>- early 13<sup>th</sup> C.), containing medium to coarse rounded quartz. One sherd (2g), has an orange core and pale brown surfaces, the second (9g) has a grey core with oxidised outer surface and grey-brown inner surface.

The only other find from the evaluation was a fragment of post-medieval peg tile (36g) from Subsoil L1001.

#### **Bibliography**

Cotter, J. P., 2000 Colchester Archaeological Report 7: Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85 *English Heritage*

MPRG 1998 A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms Medieval Pottery *Research Group Occasional Paper No. 1*

Slowikowski, A., Nenck, B. and Pearce, J. 2001 Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics, *Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 2*.



PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1

*View of site from Cuton Hall Lane. Looking east.*



2

*View of site, pre exc, looking west.*



3

*View of site post exc, looking east.*



4

*Trench 1 post exc, looking southeast. Ditch F1005 in foreground.*



5

*Ditch F1005. Trench 1, looking south.*



6

*Sample section 1A. Trench 1, looking northeast.*



7

*Trench 2 post exc, looking northeast.*



8

*Sample Section 2. Trench 2, looking southeast.*



9

*Trench 3 post exc, looking northeast.*



10

*sample Section 3. trench 3, looking southeast.*



11

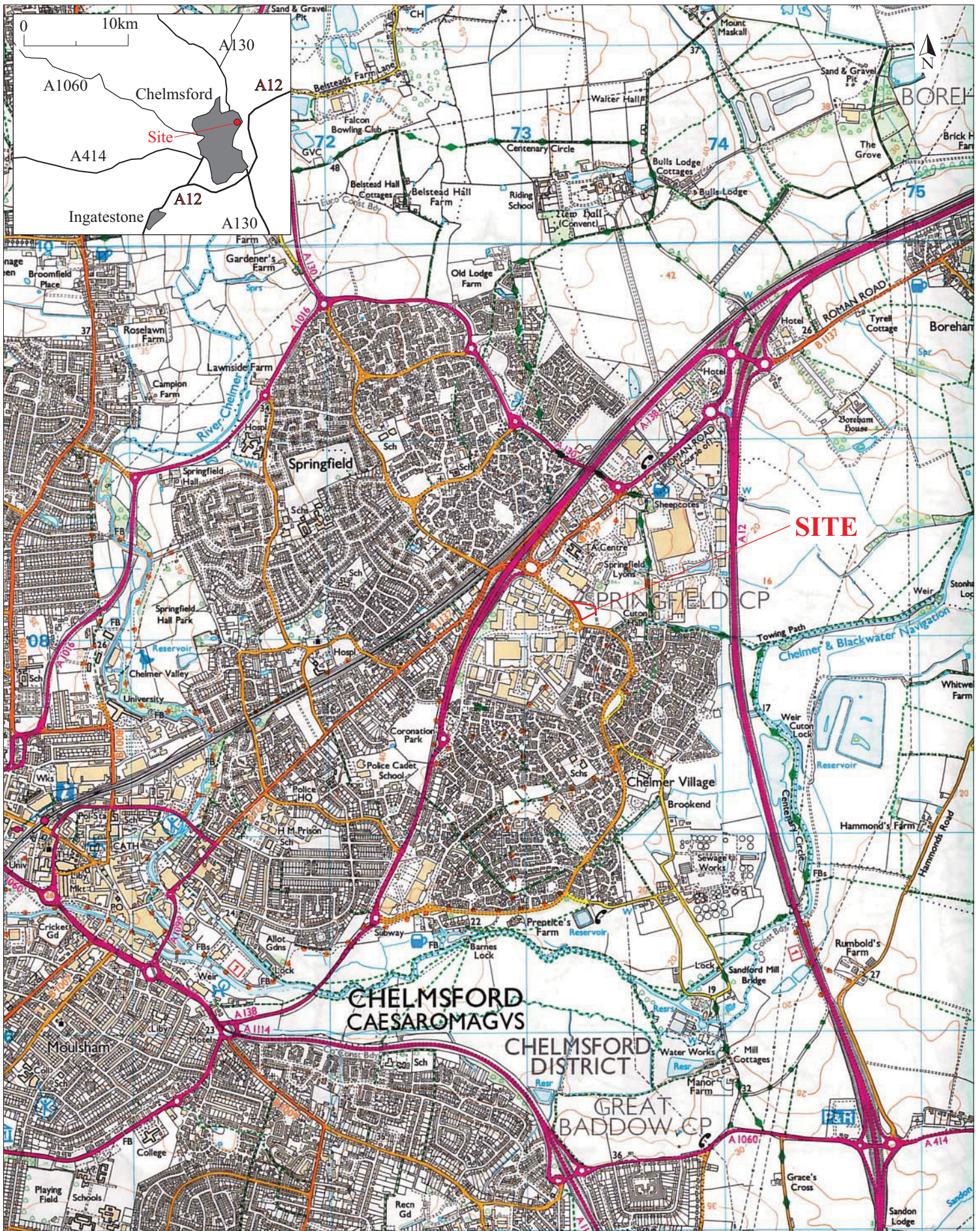
*Trench 4 post exc, looking northwest.*



12

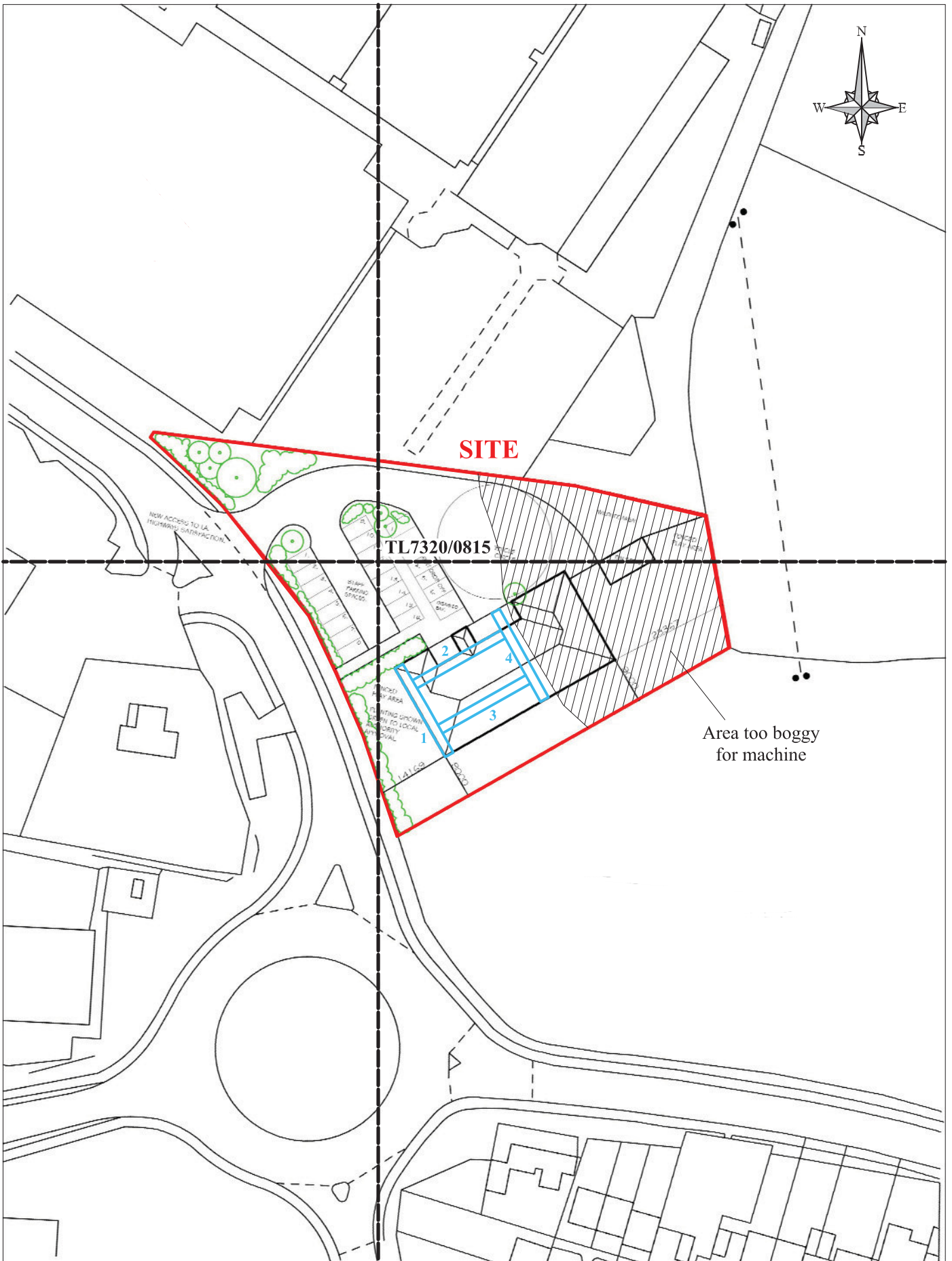
*sample Section 4B. Trench 4, looking southwest.*



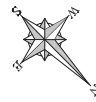
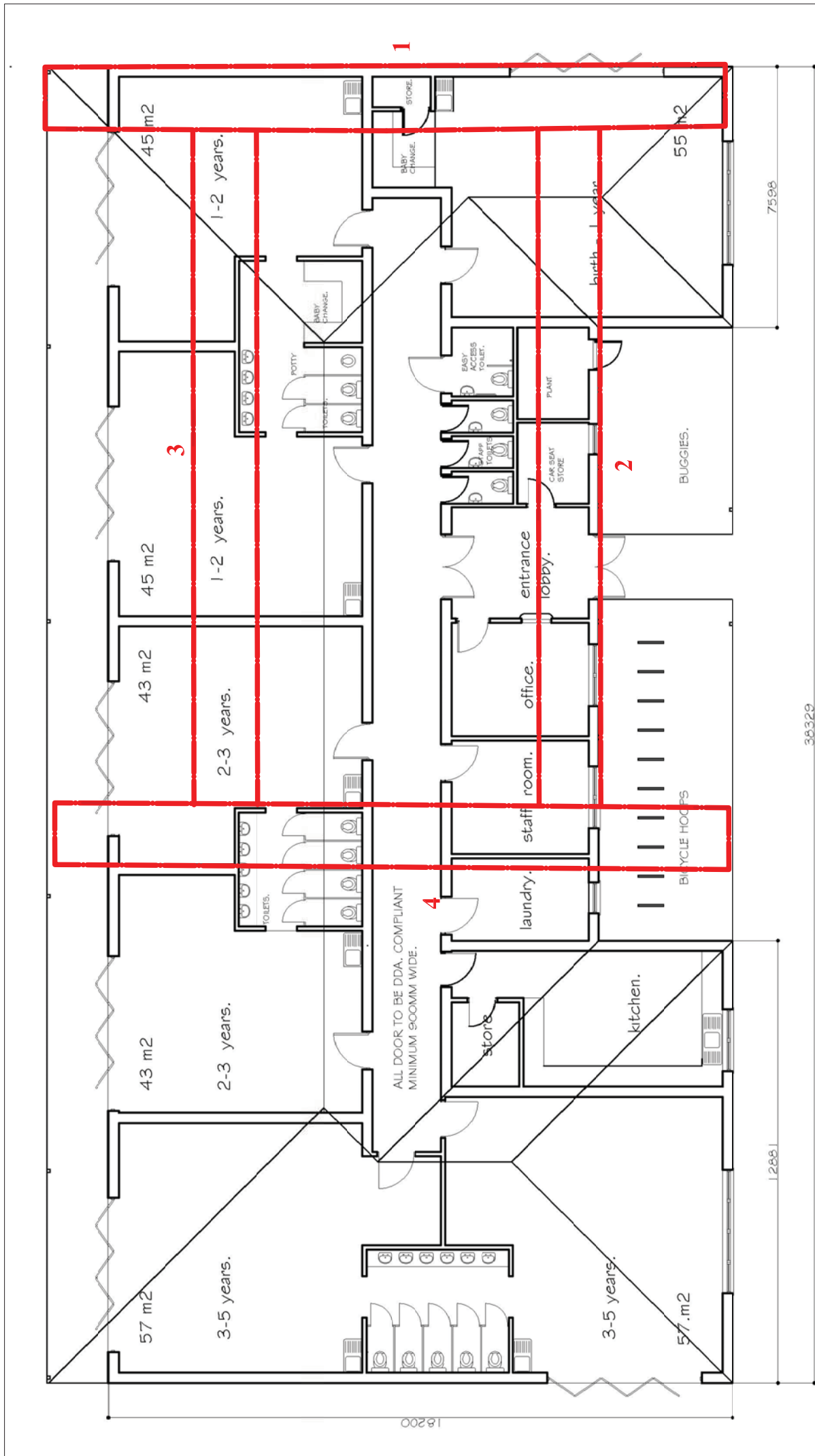


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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4  
 Cuton Hall Lane, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex (P6078)



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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
 Scale 1:1000 at A4  
 Cuton Hall Lane, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex (P6078)

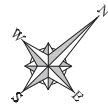
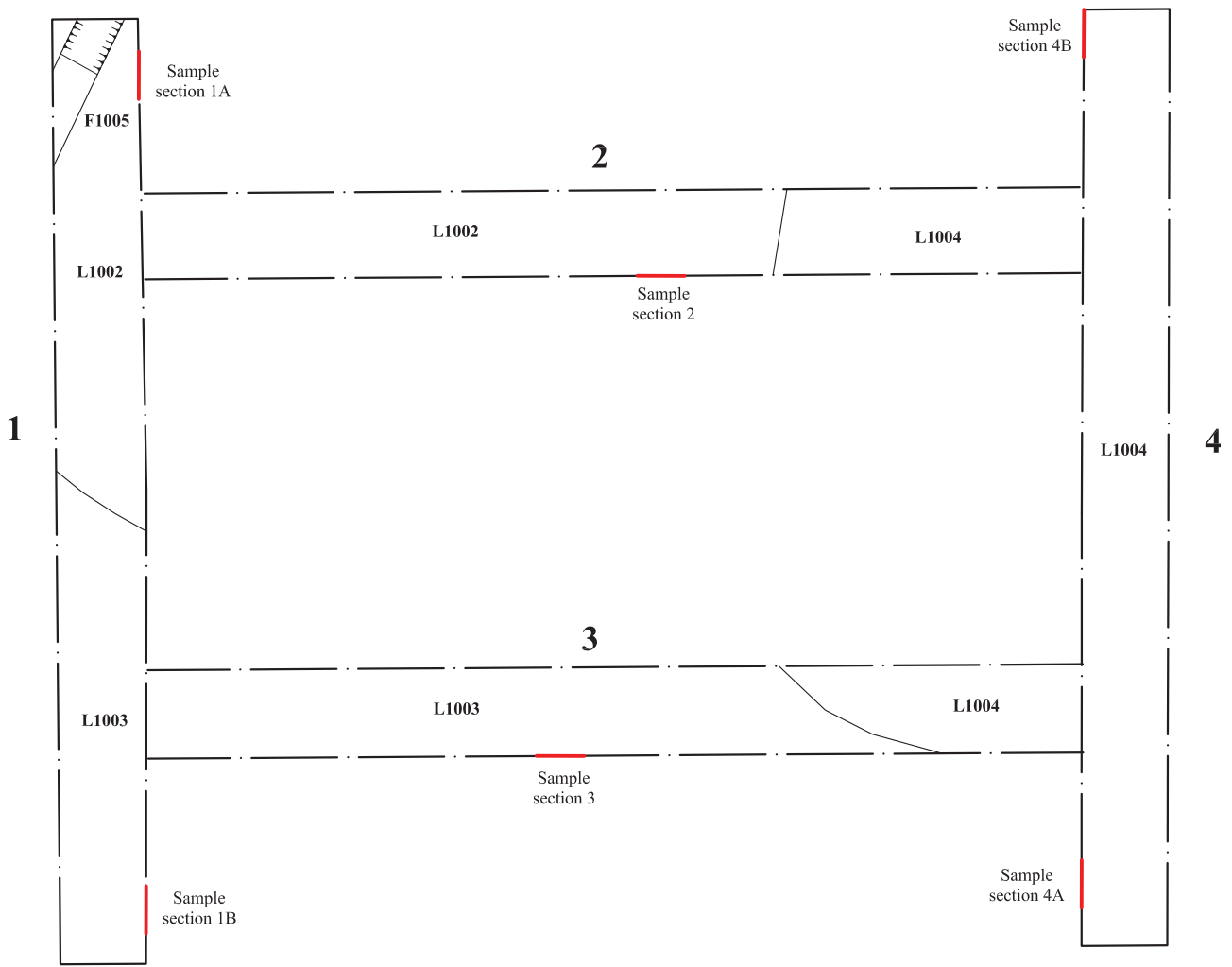


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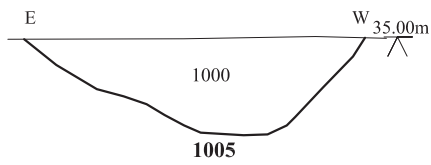
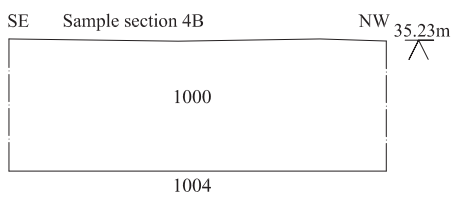
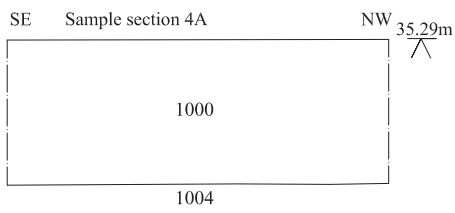
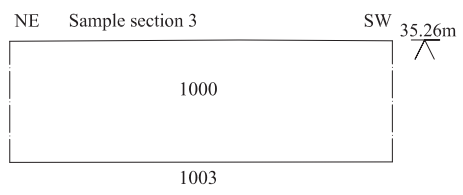
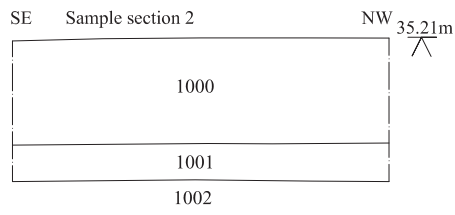
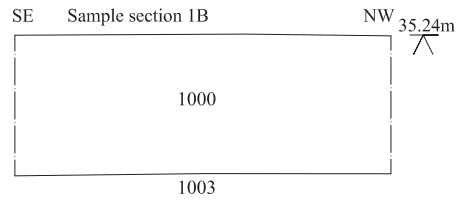
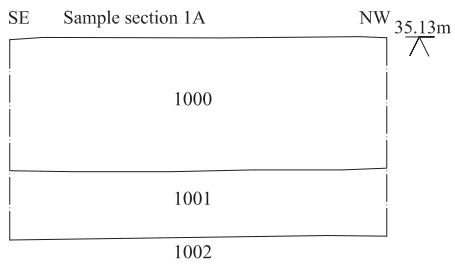
**Fig. 3 Trenches on proposed plan**

Scale 1:150 at A4

Cuton Hall Lane, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex (P6078)



<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
<b>Fig. 4 Trench plans</b>
Scale 1:150 at A4
Cuton Hall Lane, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex (P6078)



<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
<b>Fig. 5 Section drawings</b>
Scale 1:20 at A4
Cuton Hall Lane, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex (P6078)