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SCHOOL SITE, NEW HALL, HARLOW, ESSEX AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Authors: Gareth Barlow (Fieldwork and report)	
NGR: TL 4779 1076	Report No: 5337
District: Harlow	Site Code: HAHNS17
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 2169
	Date: 7 March 2017

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CONTENTS

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY

- 1 *INTRODUCTION***
- 2 *DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE***
- 3 *ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND***
- 4 *FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS***
- 5 *METHODOLOGY***
- 6 *DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS***
- 7 *CONFIDENCE RATING***
- 8 *DEPOSIT MODEL***
- 9 *DISCUSSION***
- 10 *DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

WEB SITES

OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	School Site, Newhall, Harlow, Essex		
<p>In March 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land proposed for a new primary school site at Newhall, Harlow (NGR TL 1616 0947). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition (Planning Approval Ref. HW/PL/04/00302). It is proposed to erect a primary school, and the requirement was based on the advice of Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA). The requirements are detailed in the ECC document Archaeological Requirements for a primary school within the New Hall development, Harlow, dated September 2015. The wider Newhall site has been subject to a programme of archaeological investigation, but this area was previously excluded.</p> <p>The evaluation revealed an undated pit (F1003) and an undated ditch (F1005).</p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	March 2017		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	TBC
P. number	2169	Site code	HAN HS17
Type of project	Archaeological Evaluation		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Rough grassland.		
Planned development	School		
Main features (+dates)	Undated pit and ditch.		
Significant finds (+dates)	-		
	Essex	Harlow	
HER/ SMR for area	Essex Historic Environment Record		
Post code (if known)	-		
Area of site	c.2.2ha		
NGR	TL 4779 1076		
Height AOD (min/max)	c. 71m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	Essex County Council		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Archaeological Solutions Ltd		
Funded by	New Hall Projects		
Full title	School Site, Newhall, Harlow, Essex. An Archaeological Evaluation		
Authors	Barlow, G.		
Report no.	5337		
Date (of report)	March 2017		

SCHOOL SITE, NEW HALL, HARLOW, ESSEX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

*In March 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land proposed for a new primary school site at Newhall, Harlow (NGR TL 4779 1076). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition (Planning Approval Ref. HW/PL/04/00302). It is proposed to erect a primary school, and the requirement was based on the advice of Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA). The requirements are detailed in the ECC document *Archaeological Requirements for a primary school within the Newhall development, Harlow, dated September 2015*. The wider Newhall site has been subject to a programme of archaeological investigation, but this area was previously excluded.*

The evaluation revealed an undated pit (F1003) and an undated ditch (F1005).

The trenches did not reveal evidence of quarrying. Indeed the recorded features were located at the southern extent of the trenches. The ground was intact in the area of Trenches 339 – 341 and archaeological features, albeit undated, were revealed.

Without dating evidence the features could not be directly associated with the archaeology recorded to the north (The Triangle site).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land proposed for a new primary school site at Newhall, Harlow (NGR TL 4779 1076; Figs. 1 – 2). The evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition (Planning Approval Ref. HW/PL/04/00302). It is proposed to erect a primary school, and the requirement was based on the advice of Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA). The requirements are detailed in the ECC document *Archaeological Requirements for a primary school within the New hall development, Harlow, dated September 2015*. The wider Newhall site has been subject to a programme of archaeological investigation, but this area was previously excluded.

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with advice prepared by the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA, dated 10th December 2015), and a written scheme of

investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 27th January 2016), and approved by ECC HEA. The project conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (2014), as well as 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 comprises an area of land within the Newhall development area, extending to some 2.2ha.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Previous phases of archaeological evaluation were undertaken by AS across the overall Newhall development area, excluding the proposed school site (Fig.2). In summary the evaluation revealed prehistoric and Roman remains.

3.2 Prehistoric activity on the site is represented by five areas of archaeological features:

a) On the east side of the site, to the north of Hubbard's Hall, ditches, gullies and a large pit were excavated. Finds from these features comprise burnt flint, struck flint and pottery.

b) Following the crest, westwards to Roundhouse and New Hall Farm, prehistoric activity is centred around crop marks, a possible ring ditch. The latter was revealed in Trench 182 where two parallel ditches some 15m apart were identified. Additional machining revealed a central pit, some 1.5m+ in diameter. Due to the possible importance of the remains, the trench was backfilled to protect the features. Close by in Trenches 174 and 183 additional ditches were excavated and they contained struck flint. A hearth was revealed to the south of the ring ditch in Trench 190.

c) Due north of the ring ditch, east of Newpond Spring, prehistoric features cut by Roman features were recorded. In Trench 134 two post holes and a pit were excavated. All three features contained struck flint.

d) West of Hubbard's Hall, Trench 298 contained two postholes, one of which contained prehistoric pottery.

e) On the south side of the site, Trench 328 revealed three postholes and two pits. These features contained mid to late Iron Age pottery and struck flint.

3.3 Romano-British (RB) activity on the site is represented by three concentrations of features:

a) In the far south of the site, Trench 329 contained two Roman ditches. Trench 327 contained several inter-cutting features, with associated Roman finds.

b) The remains of a possible RB field system was tentatively identified in Trenches 234, 313 and 314. Few finds were recovered but, one ditch in Trench 314, contained a well preserved coin (depicting Julia Domna, mother of joint Emperors Caracalla and Geta, dated to the first half of the 3rd century A.D.

c) On the north side of the site, east of Newpond springs, the most substantial concentration Roman features was recorded. Situated on some of the lowest lying ground on the site and naturally sheltered, the possible remains of two Roman structures were identified. Trenches 133 and 134 revealed spreads of demolition rubble with Roman finds. The demolition material overlay ditches, post holes and foundations. Trench 140 & 141 and Trenches A, B and C revealed a concentration of Roman features including wall footings, postholes, ditches and possible occupation floors. The finds include Roman pottery, a lead loom weight and copper alloy artefacts such as brooches, a dress pin, a possible ring fragment and coins.

4 FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

4.1 Further follow-on excavation works have been undertaken at the site (Fig.2). In 2012, a sewer line was monitored by AS, revealing Roman activity. In 2013, further excavation on the Triangle area close by to the north of the proposed school site was undertaken by AS, revealing one, possibly two Saxon sunken-featured buildings. A large scale excavation of the Bellway Homes portion of the site to the north of this revealed Mesolithic to Neolithic struck flints, the remains of a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age barrow with central Beaker grave, middle Bronze Age activity and post-built structures and pits of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date. This was followed by a rectilinear enclosure system of later Roman date with timber buildings, likely part of a farmstead which continues to the north. Two further early Saxon sunken-featured buildings were revealed, along with agricultural activity in the late medieval/post-medieval period.

4.2 In 2013 and 2015 AS carried out a phase of further strip, map & sample investigation to the north on the Gilden Way playing fields, where previous topsoil stockpiling had taken place. Multi-period activity was revealed, including a Bronze Age barrow, enclosed Roman settlement and Saxon occupation.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The ECC document required a 5% sample of the proposed new primary school development site to be investigated by trial trenching. Part of the proposed school site has been subject to previous ground disturbance (quarrying), as indicated by the former name of Newhall Farm as Gravel Pit Farm (Fig.3). Aerial photographs supplied by the client show the area of former extraction and it was agreed with ECC HEA that the northern edge of the site, which appeared more intact, would be subject to trial trenching to confirm the extent of the truncation and evaluation the site.

5.2 Three trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator (Fig.3). The trenches were divided because of the presence of an electricity cable. The trenches were labelled 339 – 341, continuing the number sequence of the larger evaluation.

5.3 The topsoil and 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 339 (Fig. 3)

<i>Sample section 339A</i>		
<i>0.00 = 71.03m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.48m	L1000	Topsoil. Friable, dark grey brown sandy clay with occasional small sub-rounded and rounded flints.
0.48 - 0.70m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, mid grey brown sandy clay with occasional small sub-angular and angular flints.
0.70m+	L1002	Natural deposits. Compact, mid reddish brown sandy clay with frequent medium and large sub-angular and sub-rounded flints.

<i>Sample section 339B</i>		
<i>0.00 = 70.58m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.48m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.48 - 0.68m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.68m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As above

Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds. An electricity cable traversed the trench.

Trench 340 (Figs. 3 - 4)

<i>Sample section 340A</i>		
<i>0.00 = 71.06m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.56m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.56 - 0.77m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.77m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As above

<i>Sample section 340B</i>		
<i>0.00 = 71.75m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.48m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.48 – 0.70m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.70m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As above

<i>Sample section 340C</i>		
<i>0.00 = 70.89m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.18m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As above

Description: Trench 340 contained undated Ditch F1005. An electricity cable traversed the trench.

Ditch F1005 was linear (10.00+ x 0.68 x 0.18m), orientated east/west. It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill (L1006) was a firm, mid grey brown sandy clay with frequent medium and large sub-angular flints and other stones. It contained no finds.

Trench 341 (Figs. 3 - 4)

<i>Sample section 341A</i>		
<i>0.00 = 71.76m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.34m	L1000	Topsoil. As Sample Section 339A.
0.34 – 0.58m	L1001	Subsoil. As Sample Section 339A.
0.58m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 339A.

<i>Sample section 341B</i>		
<i>0.00 = 71.77m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1003	Topsoil. As Sample Section 339A.
0.28m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 339A.

<i>Sample section 341C</i>		
<i>0.00 = 72.22m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.48m	L1003	Topsoil. As Sample Section 339A.
0.48m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 339A.

Description: Trench 3 contained undated Pit F1003. An electricity cable traversed the trench.

Pit F1003 was sub-circular pit (2.50 x 1.60+ x 0.60m). It had moderately sloping sides and concave base. Its fill (L1004) was a firm, mid brown grey sandy clay with moderate medium and large sub-angular and angular flints and other stones. It contained no 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 a friable, dark grey brown, sandy clay with occasional small sub-round and rounded flints (0.18 – 0.56m thick). L1000 overlay Subsoil L1001 comprising a firm, grey brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular and angular flints (0.00 -0.24m thick). The natural deposits (L1002) of compact, mid reddish brown sandy clay with frequent medium and large sub-angular and sub-round flints was encountered between 0.18m and 0.77m below the current ground surface.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 AS has undertaken a number of phases of archaeological evaluation and excavation across the Newhall development area. The site had the potential to reveal prehistoric, Roman, and Saxon archaeology.

9.2 The evaluation revealed an undated pit (F1003) and an undated ditch (F1005).

9.3 The trenches did not reveal evidence of quarrying. Indeed the recorded features were located at the southern extent of the trenches. The ground was intact in the area of Trenches 339 – 341 and archaeological features, albeit undated, were revealed.

9.4 Without dating evidence the features could not be directly associated with the archaeology recorded to the north (The Triangle site, Fig. 2).

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with inventory, will be deposited at Harlow 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 Newhall Projects for funding the evaluation and for their assistance, in particular Mr Steve Atkins

AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Maria Medlycott of Essex County Council

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WEB SITES

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
Trench 339 looking north



2
Trench 339 looking south



3
Trench 340 looking north



4
Trench 340 looking west



5
Trench 341 looking north



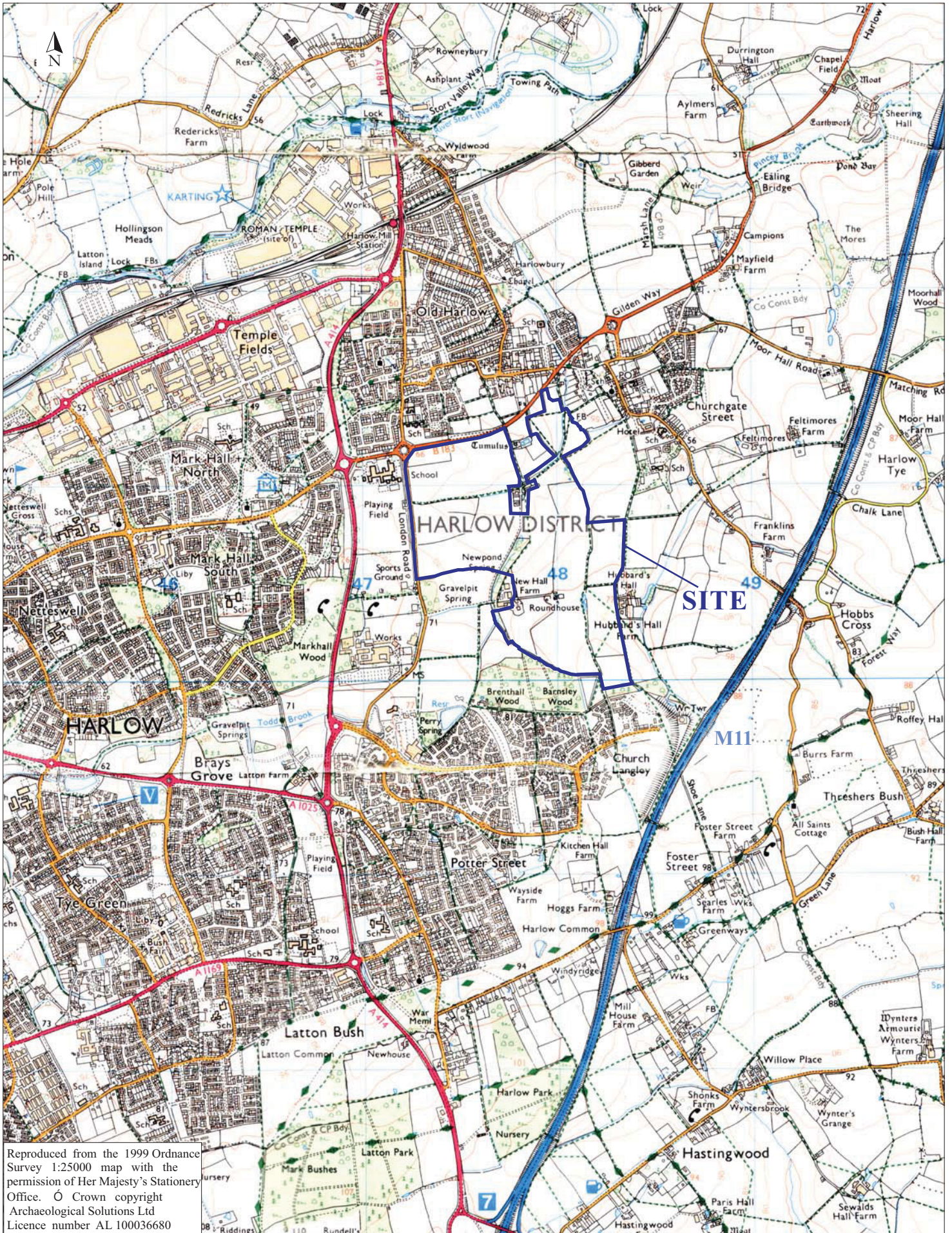
6
Trench 341 looking west



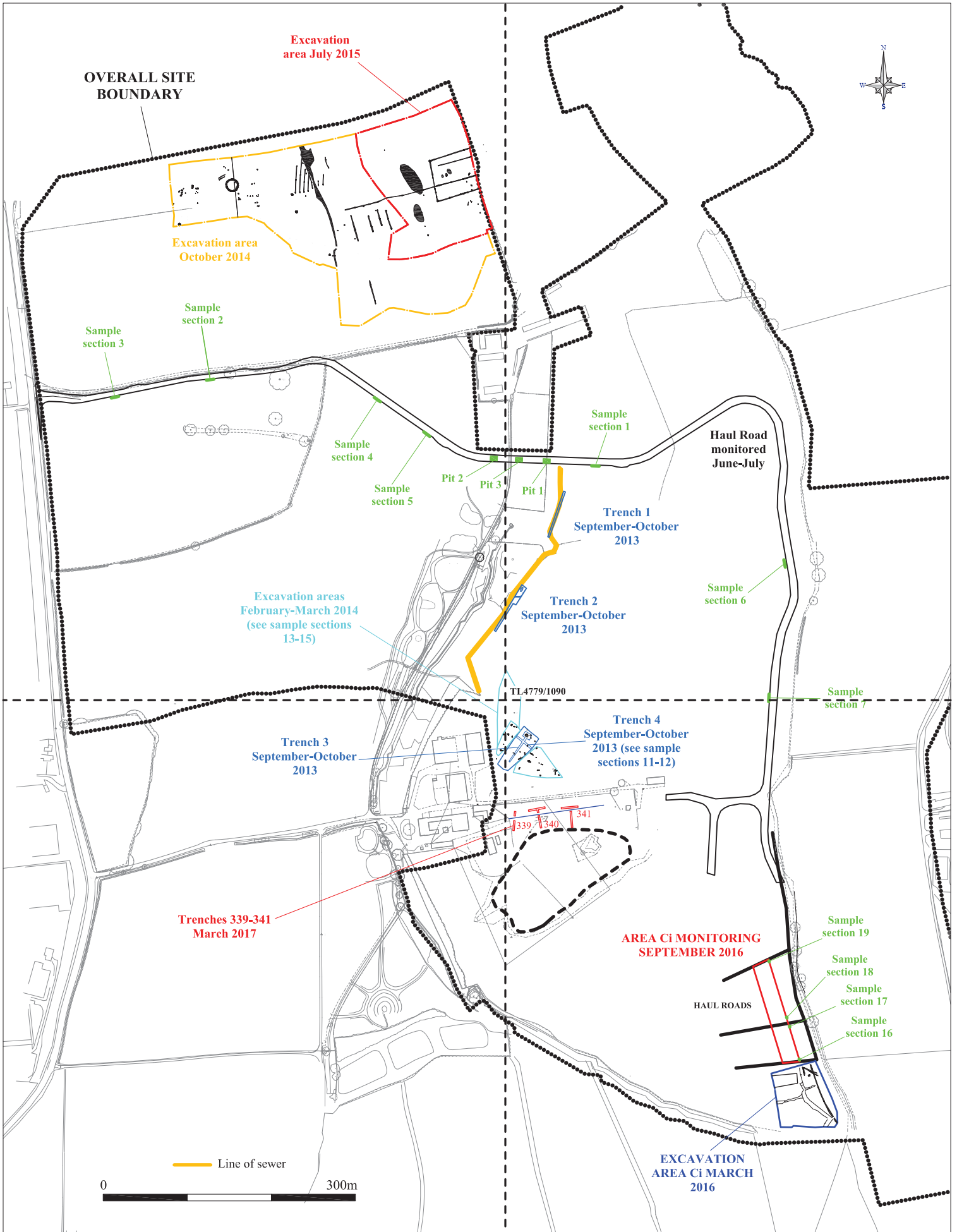
7
Gully 1005 in Trench 340 looking east



8
Pit 1003 in Trench 341 looking west



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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000
 New Hall School Site, Harlow, Essex (P2169)

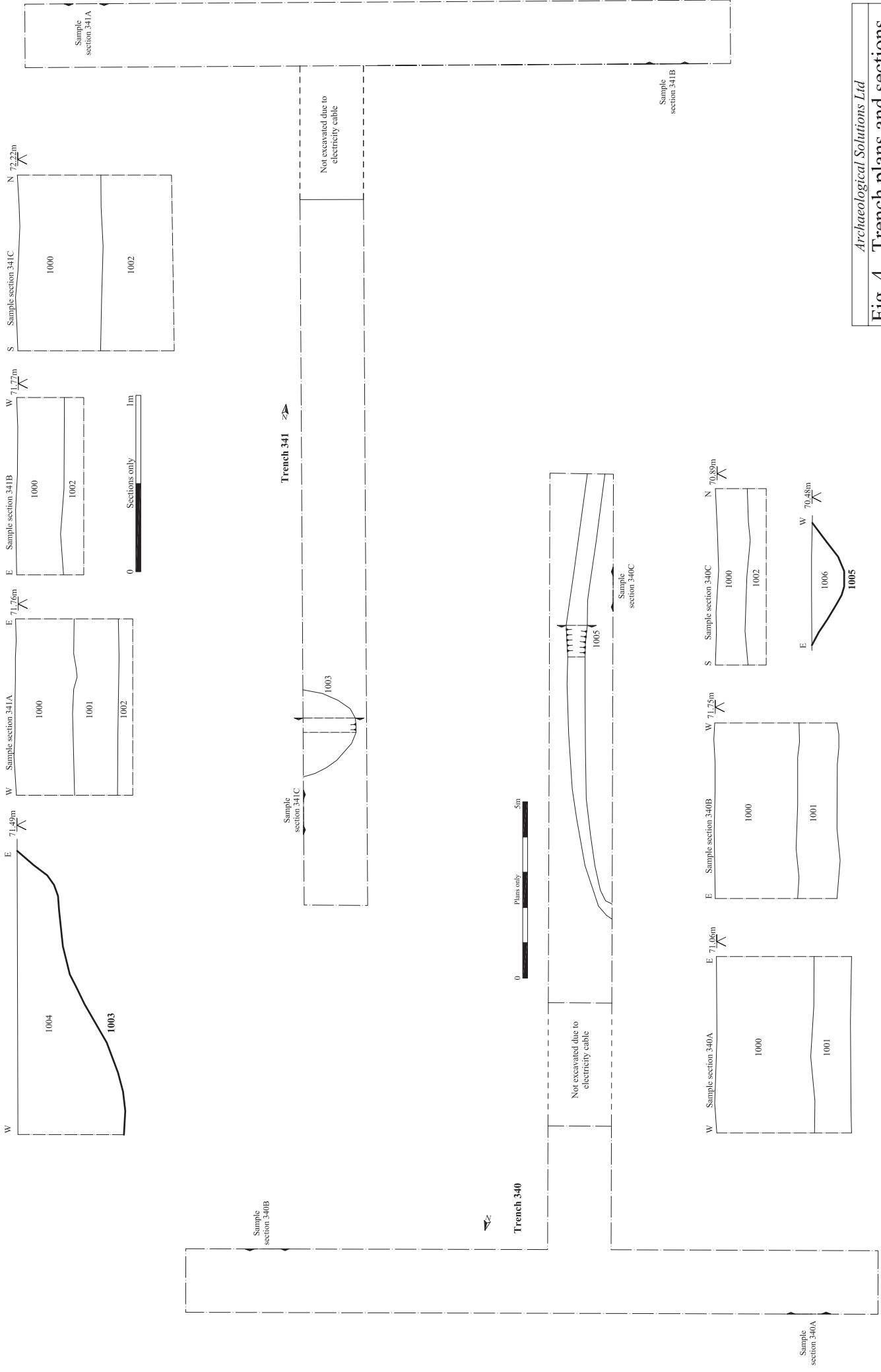


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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:4000 at A3
 New Hall School Site, Harlow, Essex (P2169)



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Fig. 3 Trench location plan
 Scale 1:1500 at A4
 Newhall School Site, Harlow, Essex (P2169)

Previously excavated trenches
 New trenches 03.03.17



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Fig. 4 Trench plans and sections
 Scale Plans 1:100, sections 1:20 at A3
 Newhall School Site, Harlow, Essex (P2169)