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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**PARTRIDGES, FARNHAM ROAD,  
BISHOP'S STORTFORD,  
HERTFORDSHIRE, CM23 1JJ**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

HER Enquiry No. 152/17

Author:	Gareth Barlow (Fieldwork and report) Antony RR Mustchin (Editor) Kate Higgs MA (Oxon.) (Background research)		
Illustrations:	Thomas Light		
NGR: TL 48380 14856	Report No: 5464		
District: East Herts	Site Code: AS1911		
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 7293		
	Date: 16 October 2017		
	Revised: 23/10/2017		

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#### **DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	Partridges, Farnham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23 1JJ		
<p>In October 2017, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Partridges, Farnham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 1JJ (NGR TL 48908 23261; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of five detached dwellings (EHDC Planning Ref. 3/17/1339/REM). It was carried out according to the requirements of the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Team (HCC HEAT).</p> <p>The evaluation revealed undated features: two pits (F1003 (Trench 1) and F1006 (Trench 3) and a possible pit or natural feature (F1008 (Trench 2)). No residual finds were present. The site stratigraphy appeared intact and a subsoil (L1001) was preserved so archaeological features, had they been present, would likely have been preserved.</p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	11 – 12 October 2017		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work	TBC
P. number	7293	Site code	AS1911
Type of project	Archaeological trial trench evaluation		
Site status	Area of Archaeological Significance No. 245		
Current land use	Residential and garden		
Planned development	Residential		
Main features (+dates)	Sparse undated pits		
1 Significant finds (+dates)	None		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	Hertfordshire	East Herts	Bishop's Stortford
HER for area	Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER; enquiry No. 152/17)		
Post code (if known)	CM23 1JJ		
Area of site	c. 0.4 ha.		
NGR	TL 48908 23261		
Height AOD (max/ min)	c. 72AOD		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Team		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Archaeological Solutions Ltd		
Funded by	Go Homes		
Full title	Partridges, Farnham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23 1JJ. Archaeological Trial Trench evaluation		
Authors	Barlow, G., & Higgs, K.		
Report no.	5464		
Date (of report)	16 October 2017 (Revised 23/10/2017)		

**PARTRIDGES, FARNHAM ROAD, BISHOP'S STORTFORD,  
HERTFORDSHIRE, CM23 1JJ**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

**SUMMARY**

*In October 2017, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Partridges, Farnham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 1JJ (NGR TL 48908 23261; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of five detached dwellings (EHDC Planning Ref. 3/17/1339/REM). It was carried out according to the requirements of the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Team (HCC HEAT).*

*The site lies on the south western side of Farnham Road on the northern edge of Bishop's Stortford, to the south of the A120 bypass. It comprises a plot of c.0.4ha, currently occupied by the residential property of Partridges and outbuildings (to be demolished prior to the development). The site lies within an area designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance (245) on the EHDC Local Plan. This covers a large area north and west of Bishop's Stortford where extensive prehistoric settlement remains have been investigated in recent years.*

*Extensive investigations during recent housing development to the immediate east of Farnham Road have revealed widespread, multi-period prehistoric archaeological remains. This has been found to extend over some 18ha, and archaeological remains extended as far west as Farnham Road, suggesting such may continue into the current site. These remains included a series of ring ditches (likely the vestiges of former burial mounds) and a number of cremation burials of early Bronze Age date. A large number of pits were also recorded in this area, likely also dating to the Bronze Age, and a number of large ditches containing pottery of Iron Age date.*

*The site had a potential for further similar archaeological remains to be present.*

*The evaluation revealed undated features: two pits (F1003 (Trench 1) and F1006 (Trench 3) and a possible pit or natural feature (F1008 (Trench 2)). No residual finds were present. The site stratigraphy appeared intact and a subsoil (L1001) was preserved so archaeological features, had they been present, would likely have been preserved.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 2017, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Partridges, Farnham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 1JJ (NGR TL 48908 23261; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for the construction of five detached dwellings (EHDC Planning Ref. 3/17/1339/REM). It was carried out according to the requirements of the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Team (HCC HEAT).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with advice from HCC HEAT and a specification compiled by AS (dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 2017), approved by HCC HEAT. The project conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (2014), and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The principal objectives for the evaluation included:

- To determine the location, date, extent, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. In particular, it will be important to establish the presence or absence of any further evidence of prehistoric settlement as has been found on the adjacent development area to the immediate east. It will also be important to understand the level of any previous truncation on the site and also to ascertain whether it will be possible to mitigate the development proposals to accommodate any surviving archaeological remains within the area of proposed redevelopment.
- To provide an adequately detailed project report to place the findings of the project in their local and regional context, with reference to the East Anglian Regional Research Frameworks and through relevant background research.

### 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 just beyond the northern extent of the town and parish of Bishop's Stortford, which lies in the district of East Hertfordshire and on the eastern edge of Hertfordshire. The county boundary between Hertfordshire and Essex lies 300m to the north of the site. The site lies on the south-western frontage of Farnham Road, which runs between the northern extent of Bishop's Stortford and Farnham itself.

2.2 The site lies within an area designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance No. 245 on the EHDC Local Plan. This covers a large area north and west of Bishop's Stortford where extensive prehistoric settlement remains have been investigated in recent years.

2.3 The site comprises a rectangular plot of land, which covers an approximate area of 0.4 hectares. It is bound to the immediate north-east by Farnham Road, and to the north-west by the residential dwelling and associated grounds of Bournebrook. To the immediate south of the site lies agricultural land. The site currently occupied by the residential property of Partridges and associated outbuildings, which are to be demolished prior to the development.

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

3.1 The topography of Bishop's Stortford is undulating and slopes away towards the River Stort. A smaller watercourse, known as the Bourne Brook, lies only 150m to the west of the site. Situated beyond the western side of the river valley and c. 750m from the River Stort, the site has a generally flat relief at c. 77m AOD, with the surrounding relief sloping down to the south-west. The settlement of Bishop's Stortford is situated on a cusp of two different solid geologies consisting of both Lower Eocene Reading Beds, and Eocene London Clay to the south (BGS 2015).

3.2 The site lies upon a solid geology of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (BGS 2015). Bishop's Stortford also lies across the junction of a number of different soil types. However, the majority of the East Hertfordshire district and the site itself lie upon soils of the Hanslope association. They are described as slowly permeable, calcareous clayey soils with some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils, all of which are at slight risk of water erosion (SSEW 1983).

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Prehistoric**

4.1 The site is located within an area of multi-period activity dating from the early prehistoric to the Roman periods. The earliest prehistoric evidence comprises an Acheulian flint handaxe found in brickearth by the side of a ditch a short distance from the River Stort and north of Bishop's Stortford (HER 1091). A pit containing flint-gritted Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery was recorded to the east of Hoggate's Wood and further westwards (HER 30302; Bush 2013). An enclosure ditch containing late Bronze Age pottery was recorded to the north-west of Foxdells Farm and south of the site (HER 30300), whilst a large possibly ritual enclosure associated with late Iron Age material is also recorded to the east of Hoggate's Wood (HER 30299).

4.2 Archaeological investigations undertaken in association with the development of 'Bishop's Stortford North', and in the future the 'Eastern Neighbourhood' to the immediate east of the site include an evaluation (Fletcher 2013). It revealed extensive late Iron Age and Roman activity. An assemblage of early Neolithic worked flints was also found and included flakes, blades, and a retouched arrowhead (HER 18776). A circular ditch with possible bank and central post, radiocarbon dated to the early to mid 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC and early Bronze Age period, was also found (HER 18775). Bronze Age – early Iron Age ditches, pits, two large storage pits, a fenceline, and possibly contemporary trackway were recorded (HER 18777; Fletcher 2012) and a pit containing pottery of probable middle Iron Age date (HER 31374).

4.3 Extensive Iron Age to Roman evidence is also known from Whitehall College, which is almost 1km to the south-west of the site. Investigations in 2009 during the redevelopment of Whitehall also revealed 33 sherds of late Iron Age pottery, from at least five vessels; some fragments of Roman ceramic building material, most of them from a tegula roof tile; and animal bone from domestic mammals (cattle, sheep/goat, horse) (HER 17995; Pozorski *et al.* 2009 (2012)). It was presumably part of a larger late Iron Age to Roman ditch complex on the north side of Dane O'Coys Road, which had previously been identified in association with a Roman pit to the north of Whitehall (HER 30301).



## **Romano-British**

4.4 The earliest major settlement at Bishop's Stortford dates from the Romano-British period, and was located at the point where Stane Street, the Roman road from Braughing to Colchester, crossed the River Stort (HER 4681). Sections of Stane Street were excavated ahead of development in 1997, which revealed a probable early date c. 50 AD for the first phase of the road and a second constructional phase during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century when the settlement probably developed. Romano British remains have been recovered from the area surrounding the site, mainly comprising Roman pottery found during dredging of the river, just north-west of the known Roman settlement (HER 2141). A coin of Antoninus Pius was also found in 1959 to the south-west of The Grange, which stands to the south (HER 2143).

## **Anglo-Saxon**

4.5 The present town was probably established adjacent to the fording point along the River Stort, in the area of North Street, High Street and Market Street (Orton 1976). Relatively little is known of the Saxon town. The Domesday Book of 1086 refers to the town as Storteford, likely to have derived from a reference to the River Stort (Gover et al 1938). On the eastern bank of the river opposite the town stood Waytemore Castle, which is variously attributed to Edward the Elder in the 10<sup>th</sup> century or William I following the Conquest in the later 11<sup>th</sup> century (Page 1912). The Anglo-Saxon period in the vicinity of the site is a shallow feature containing 42 sherds of Saxon pottery found to the east of the site on the bank of the river (HER 18779).

## **Medieval**

4.6 Following the Conquest, the manor of Stortford was sold by William I to William, Bishop of London, and remained in the possession of successive Bishops of London until 1868 (Page 1912). The town's present name Bishop's Stortford resulted from this ecclesiastical association, with the Bishops owning land and a palace at Much Hadham. From the medieval period onwards, Bishop's Stortford developed into a thriving commercial centre, attested by the large numbers of inns in the town and the presence of a fair three times a year (BSDLHS 1973). From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, a successful tanning and leather industry developed rapidly in Bishop's Stortford, centred on Water Lane. However, the medieval period in the vicinity of the site is not represented by any finds or features.

# **5 METHODOLOGY**

5.1 HCC advice required the excavation of trial trenches to evaluate the presence of any archaeological remains within the area of proposed development. A 5% sample of the c.0.4ha site was proposed to be trenched, avoiding existing structures. Four trenches were excavated (Fig. 2).

5.2 The topsoil 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

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

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

Sample section 1A 0.00 = 73.31m AOD		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark grey brown silty sand with moderate small and medium flint.
0.32 – 0.48m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, mid orange brown, sandy silt with moderate angular flint.
0.48m+	L1002	Natural. Firm, pale yellow brown chalky sandy silt.

Sample section 1B 0.00 = 74.22m AOD		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.27 – 0.32m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.32m+	L1002	Natural. As above

*Description: Trench 1 contained undated Pit F1003*

Pit F1003 was sub-circular in plan (2.40 x 1.01 x 0.38m). It had steep sides and a narrow concave base. Its upper fill, L1005, comprised a firm, mid orange brown clayey silt. It was devoid of any finds. Its basal fill, L1004, comprised a firm, dark brown silty clay. It was devoid of any finds.

### Trench 2 (Figs. 2 - 3)

Sample section 2A 0.00 = 72.63m AOD		
0.00 – 0.23m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.23 – 0.30m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.30m+	L1002	Natural. As above

Sample section 2B 0.00 = 73.28m AOD		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.32 – 0.44m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.44m+	L1002	Natural. As above

*Description: Trench 2 contained a large shallow undated pit F1008. It was possibly a natural feature.*

Pit F1008 was irregular in plan (10.00+ x 2.00+ x 0.15m). It had steep sides and its base was unseen. Its fill, L1009, comprised a firm, mid yellow brown silty clay. It was devoid of any finds and the feature may have been natural.

### **Trench 3** (Figs. 2 - 3)

Sample section 3A 0.00 = 74.32m AOD		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.28m+	L1002	Natural. As above, Trench 1

Sample section 3B 0.00 = 76.54m AOD		
0.00 – 0.24m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.24 – 0.35m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.35m+	L1002	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

*Description: Trench 3 contained undated Pit F1006*

Pit F1006 was irregular in plan (0.27 x 0.30 x 0.12m). It had moderately sloping sides and a shallow concave base. Its fill, L1007, comprised a friable, mid orange brown clayey silt. It was devoid of any finds.

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

Sample section 4A 0.00 = 76.66m AOD		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.32 – 0.41m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.41m+	L1002	Natural. As above, Trench 1

Sample section 4B 0.00 = 76.92m AOD		
0.00 – 0.25m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.25 – 0.42m	L1001	Subsoil. As above, Trench 1
0.42m+	L1002	Natural. As above, Trench 1.

*Description: Trench 4 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.

7.2 The trenches were at an angle to a natural slope and this caused some over cutting of the natural chalk but the machine was constantly observed and no archaeological features were truncated.

## **8 DEPOSIT MODEL**

8.1 Topsoil L1000, comprising a firm, dark grey brown silty sand with moderate small and medium flint, was present across the whole site (0.23 – 0.32m thick).

8.2 L1000 overlay Subsoil, L1001, a firm, mid orange brown, sandy silt with moderate angular flint. Subsoil L1001 was present in all of the trenches.

8.3 Subsoil L1001 overlay the natural chalky sandy silt, L1002, which was present 0.30 – 0.48m below the present day ground surface.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 Extensive investigations during recent housing development to the immediate east of Farnham Road have revealed widespread, multi-period prehistoric archaeological remains. This has been found to extend over some 18ha, and archaeological remains extended as far west as Farnham Road, suggesting such may continue into the current site. These remains included a series of ring ditches (likely the vestiges of former burial mounds) and a number of cremation burials of early Bronze Age date. A large number of pits were also recorded in this area, likely also dating to the Bronze Age, and a number of large ditches containing pottery of Iron Age date.

9.2 The site had a potential for further similar archaeological remains to be present.

9.3 The evaluation revealed undated features: two pits (F1003 (Trench 1) and F1006 (Trench 3) and a possible pit or natural feature (F1008 (Trench 2)). No residual finds were present. The site stratigraphy appeared intact and a subsoil (L1001) was preserved so archaeological features, had they been present, would likely have been preserved.

## **DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with Bishop's Stortford Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) would like to thank Go Homes for funding the archaeological trial trench evaluation, in particular Mr Nigel Tedder and Mr Craig Kelly for assistance.

AS is also pleased to acknowledge the staff of the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record, in particular Dr Isobel Thompson. AS would also like to

thank the staff of the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), based in County Hall, Hertford.

AS is also pleased to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Alison Tinniswood, HCC Historic Environment Advisor.

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Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW) 1983 *Soil Survey of England and Wales: Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales.* SSEW, Harpenden

## APPENDIX 1      CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

Records	Number
Brief	N
Specification	Y
Registers	Context, Photo, Digital Photo, Drawing
Context Sheets	9
Site drawings A1	-
Site drawings A3	2
Site drawings A4	-
Site photographs b/w	-
Site photographs colour slides	-
Digital Photographs	27

## APPENDIX 2 HER SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Partridges, Farmham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 1JJ
<b>County:</b> Hertfordshire	<b>District:</b> East Herts
<b>Village/Town:</b> Bishop Stortford	<b>Parish:</b>
<b>Planning application reference:</b>	3/17/1339/REM
<b>Client name/address/tel:</b>	Go Homes
<b>Nature of application:</b>	Residential
<b>Present land use:</b>	Residential
<b>Size of application area:</b> 0.4ha	Size of area investigated 0.4ha
<b>NGR (8 figures):</b>	TL 48908 23261
<b>Site Code:</b>	AS 1911
<b>Site director/Organisation:</b>	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
<b>Type of work:</b>	Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation
<b>Date of work:</b>	11 – 12 October 2017
<b>Location of finds/Curating museum:</b>	Bishop's Stortford
<b>Related SMR Nos:</b>	Periods represented:
<b>Relevant previous summaries/reports: -</b>	None
<b>Summary of fieldwork results:</b>	<p>In October 2017, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Partridges, Farmham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 1JJ (NGR TL 48908 23261; Figs. 1 - 2).</p> <p>The evaluation revealed undated features: two pits (F1003 (Trench 1) and F1006 (Trench 3) and a possible pit or natural feature (F1008 (Trench 2)). No residual finds were present. The site stratigraphy appeared intact and a subsoil (L1001) was preserved so archaeological features, had they been present, would likely have been preserved.</p>
<b>Author of summary:</b> Gareth Barlow	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 16 October 2017 (Revised 23/10/2017)



## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1: View of Trench 1 looking north-west



2: F1003 in Trench 1 looking north-west



3: View of Trench 2 looking south-east



4: View of Trench 3 looking north-east



5: F1006 in Trench 3 looking north-west



6: View of Trench 4A looking south-east





7: View of Trench 4B looking south-east





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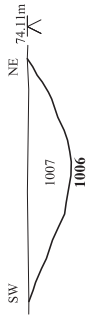
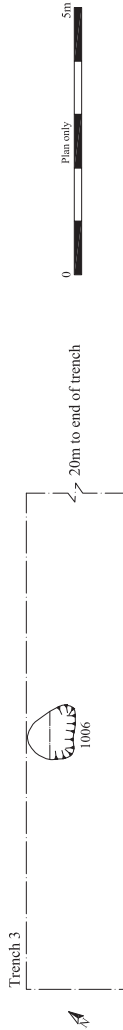
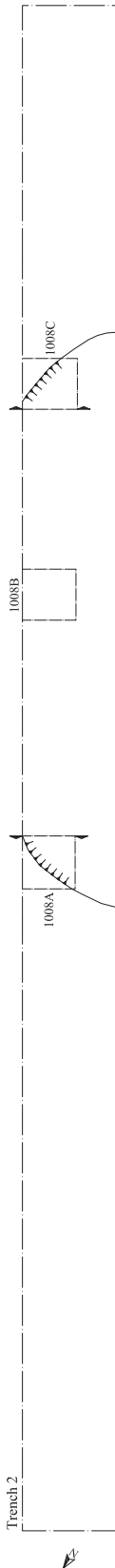
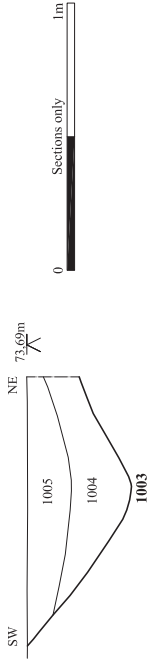
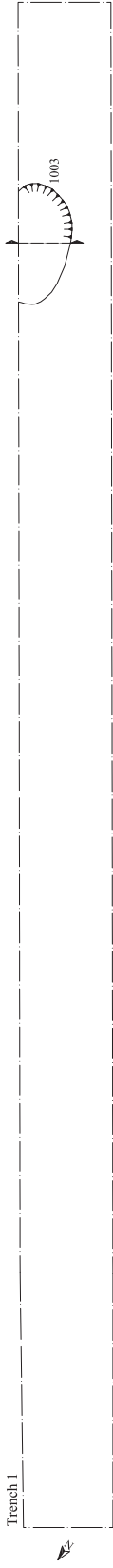
Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4  
 Partridges, Farnham Road, Bishops Cleeve (P7293)





0 25m

<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
<b>Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan</b>
Scale 1:500 at A4
Partridges, Farnham Road, Bishops Stortford (P7293)



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**Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections**

Scale 1:100 and 1:20 at A3

Partridges, Farnham Road, Bishops Stortford (P7293)



0 25m

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**Fig. 4 Trenches on proposed plan**  
Scale 1:500 at A4  
Partridges, Farnham Road, Bishops Stortford (P7293)