
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**LAND BOUNDED BY BRAGBURY LANE,
PEMBRIDGE GARDENS AND BLENHEIM WAY,
STEVENAGE, HERTFORDSHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski	
NGR: TL 2678 2093	Report No: 5329
District: Stevenage	Site Code: AS 1873
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: 5555
Signed:	Date: 27 February 2017

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Land bounded by Bragbury Lane, Pembridge Gardens and Blenheim Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire</i>		
<p><i>In February 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land bounded by Bragbury Lane, Pembridge Gardens and Blenheim Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2678 2093). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Bob Capsey and was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new residential development of 5no 5 bed detached dwellings.</i></p> <p><i>The eastern section of site lies within Archaeological Area No. 15, identified on the Local Plan. The Area encompasses the medieval and later settlement of Bragbury End. Prehistoric finds are also known from the area to the west. Therefore the site had a potential for prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	22/02/2017		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work (Y/N/?)	N
P. number	5555	Site code	AS 1873
Type of project	<i>An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>Within Archaeological Area No. 15</i>		
Current land use	<i>Agricultural land</i>		
Planned development	<i>Construction of 5no 5 bed detached dwellings</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>Stevenage</i>	<i>Stevenage</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Hertfordshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	-		
Area of site	<i>c.0.38ha</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 2678 2093</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>72.50/77.00m</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Requirements of HCC HEAT</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr Bob Capsey</i>		
Full title	<i>Land bounded by Bragbury Lane, Pembridge Gardens and Blenheim Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire: An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	5329		
Date (of report)	<i>February 2017</i>		

LAND BOUNDED BY BRAGBURY LANE, PEMBRIDGE GARDENS AND BLENHEIM WAY, STEVENAGE, HERTFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In February 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land bounded by Bragbury Lane, Pembridge Gardens and Blenheim Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2678 2093). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Bob Capsey and was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new residential development of 5no 5 bed detached dwellings.

The eastern section of site lies within Archaeological Area No. 15, identified on the Local Plan. The Area encompasses the medieval and later settlement of Bragbury End. Prehistoric finds are also known from the area to the west. Therefore the site had a potential for prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains.

In the event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In February 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land bounded by Bragbury Lane, Pembridge Gardens and Blenheim Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2678 2093; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Bob Capsey and was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new residential development of 5no 5 bed detached dwellings (Stevenage Borough Council Planning Ref. 13/00595/REG3).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance to requirements of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Advisory Team (HCC HEAT) and a written scheme of investigation (specification) prepared by AS (dated 30/06/2016) and approved by HCC HEAT. The project conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014), and the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving 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 is located at the south-eastern extent of the town of Stevenage, which lies within the borough of the same name and the county of Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). The historic core of Stevenage lies 5.5km to the north-west, while the smaller settlement of Knebworth is situated 1.8km to the south-west. The village of Aston lies 2km to the site's north, and the site lies to the immediate south of the hamlet of Bragbury End. The eastern section of site lies within Archaeological Area No. 15, which encompasses the medieval and later settlement of Bragbury End. The site also lies along the western frontage of Bragbury Lane, which lies on a roughly north to south alignment between Bragbury End and the village of Datchworth.

2.2 The site comprises a roughly rectangular plot of land covering an area of 0.38 hectares (Fig. 2). It is bound to the east by Bragbury Lane, which runs on a north to south alignment and is known to follow the course of an ancient lane/hedgerow. To the north and west of the site are residential dwellings, many of which lie along Pembridge Gardens. To the immediate south of the site is a raised embankment leading to a west-north-west to east-south-east

aligned railway line running between Stevenage and Watton-at-Stone. The site comprises an agricultural field, which is currently laid to grass and used as an informal open space.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The hamlet of Bragbury End is situated in a shallow south-east to north-west aligned valley containing the Stevenage Brook, which is a tributary of the River Beane. The Stevenage Brook flows 350m to the north-east of the site, whilst the River Beane flows southwards 2.1km to the east of the site. A small reservoir is also located 180m to the site's east. The site is situated between 72.50 and 78m AOD¹, and slopes upwards from its north-eastern corner to the south-west. The surrounding relief slopes significantly to the north towards the valley of the Stevenage Brook.

3.2 The solid geology of the site comprises Upper Chalk (British Geological Survey 1978), overlain by glaciofluvial drift deposits of tertiary sands and gravels. The hillsides surrounding the valley comprise gravel terraces, giving way to heavier clays further away from the Stevenage Brook. Soils of the area comprise those of the Hanslope Association, which are described as slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils with some non-calcareous soils over chalky till (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1. An archaeological desk-based assessment of the site was prepared to accompany the planning application (Higgs 2013). In summary:

The site lies to the south of the hamlet of Bragbury End, which has medieval origins, likely located within the vicinity of the present Bragbury End House and 270m to the north of the site. Cartographic sources dating from the early modern and modern periods consistently record that the site consisted of agricultural land located along the western frontage of Bragbury Lane, which is known to follow the course of an ancient lane/hedgerow. The 1839 tithe map reveals that the site formed part of Bragbury End Farm, which lies to the north. At some point between 1905 and 1918, the southern boundary of the site was defined by a raised embankment associated with the 'Enfield and Stevenage Loop Line'.

Extensive previous archaeological investigations have taken place in Bragbury End, particularly centred upon Bragbury House, which stands 270m to the north, although such work has produced only negative results (Williams 2007; HERs EHT1331 & EHT5312). Extensive archaeological work has also been undertaken at Harwood Park Crematorium, which lies 600m to the west-south-west of the site (HERs EHT4512, EHT4513, EHT4516 & EHT7045). A

¹ Above Ordnance Datum

1994 evaluation at the crematorium revealed a concentration of features containing pottery and struck flint dating from the late Neolithic to the late Bronze Age (Murray 1994). Of particular interest was a large, sunken feature that appeared to be associated with pits and contained an almost complete Beaker pottery, possibly a votive offering (Grassam & Williamson 2004). Subsequent monitoring and recording in 2011 revealed only that the topsoil overlay terrace gravel, as well as a small area of compacted sandy silt subsoil with gravel.

Although the eastern section of site lies within Archaeological Area No. 15, the site has only a generally low potential for remains dating from all archaeological periods.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Four trenches were excavated using a mechanical 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The trenches locations were approved by HCC HEAT and provided a sample of the area of proposed development.

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-east end, south-east facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 75.80m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.15m	L1000	Topsoil, partially removed. Dark grey, soft, sandy silt.
0.15 – 0.29m	L1001	Made ground. Light brown, friable, sandy silt with frequent small stones and occasional CBM fragments.
0.29 – 0.48m	L1002	Possible old topsoil. Mid brownish grey, friable, sandy silt with frequent small stones.
0.48 – 0.85m	L1003	Subsoil. Light to mid yellowish brown, friable, silty sand with frequent stones and flints.
0.85m +	L1004	Natural mid to dark yellow, loose, sandy and silty gravel with patches of clay.

<i>Sample section 1B (DP 5): south-west end, north-west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 76.99m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1001	Made ground. As above.
0.22 – 0.42m	L1002	Old topsoil. As above.
0.42 – 0.50m	L1003	Subsoil. As above.
0.50m +	L1004	Natural gravel As above.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 2 (Figs. 2 - 4, DP 6-7)

<i>Sample section 2A (DP 8): north end, east-south-east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 73.80m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.13m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.13 – 0.33m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.33m +	L1004	Natural gravel. As above, Tr. 1.

<i>Sample section 2B (DP 9): south end, west-north-west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 73.35m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.12m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.12 – 0.27m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.27m +	L1004	Natural gravel. As above, Tr. 1.

Description: The trench contained two small modern pits which were not been excavated as the finds within the fills were modern.

Trench 3 (Figs. 2 - 3, DP 10-11)

<i>Sample section 3A (DP 12): west end, south-south-west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 74.06m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.28 – 0.37m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.37m +	L1004	Natural gravel. As above, Tr. 1.

<i>Sample section 3B (DP 13): east end, north-north-east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 72.56m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.20 – 0.33m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.33m +	L1004	Natural gravel. As above, Tr. 1.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 4 (Figs. 2 - 3, DP 14-15)

<i>Sample section 4A (DP 16): north end, west-south-west facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 77.21m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1000	Topsoil, partially removed. As above, Tr. 1.
0.20 – 0.72m	L1005	Made ground: redeposited topsoil. Mid grey, friable, sandy silt with occasional small stones.
0.72 – 0.82m	L1003	Subsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.82m +	L1004	Natural gravel. As above, Tr. 1.

<i>Sample section 4B (DP 17): south end, east-north-east facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 75.06m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.15m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.15 – 0.28m	L1001	Made ground. As above, Tr. 1.
0.28 – 0.47m	L1005	Made ground. As above.
0.47m +	L1004	Natural gravel. As above, Tr. 1.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

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

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site was commonly overlain by Topsoil L1000, a dark grey, soft, sandy silt (0.15 – 0.30m thick). In part of the site L1000 overlay Subsoil L1003, a light to mid grey, clayey silt with gravel (0.10 – 0.35m thick) which in turn overlay the natural gravel. In the eastern part of the site deposits of made ground (0.30 – 0.65m thick in total) were present above the subsoil.

8.2 The natural gravel, L1004, was present at 0.25 – 0.85m below existing ground level and comprised a mid to dark yellow, loose, sandy and silty gravel with patches of clay.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval archaeology. The eastern section of site lies within Archaeological Area No. 15, identified on the Local Plan. The Area encompasses the medieval and later settlement of Bragbury End. Prehistoric finds are also known from the area to the west.

9.2 In the event no archaeological features or finds were revealed. No indication of any previous development of the site was evident excepting two

modern pits.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Bob Capsey for funding the project and for his assistance.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Andy Instone of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Advisory Team

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APPENDIX 1 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA (HER)

The following sites are those that lie within a 1km radius of the assessment site. The table has been compiled from data held by the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER).

HER	NGR TL	Description
Prehistoric		
419	265 208	Palaeolithic hand axe (damaged) found in 1915 close to the railway above a glacio-fluvial river terrace deposit
1898	2729 2006	Investigation of the enclosure ditch at Datchworth produced late Iron Age pottery and other 'lovely Belgic rubbish', but no Roman finds
4391	2609 2078	Possible Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Bragbury End succeeded by timber structure and ritual deposits of Beaker and other Bronze Age pottery
6478	2608 2079	Trenching and fieldwalking at Bragbury End identified widespread archaeology and recovered late Bronze/early Iron Age sherds from features and from the ploughsoil
28683	27 20	Puddingstone implement which is probably a grain rubber
Romano-British		
444	2630 2169	Roman roof tile and brick was recovered at Broadwater Crescent, suggesting a possible Roman villa in the vicinity, as well as a bronze coin of Constantine
Anglo-Saxon		
455	2630 2169	The remains of a possible Anglo-Saxon settlement, comprising at least one sunken-floored hut dating to the mid-late 5th century, has been recorded to the north-west of the present site at Broadwater Crescent
24180	26 21	Silver styca coin of Aethelred II, dated AD 840 - 44
Medieval		
11617	2690 2110	Settlement at Bragbury End probably dates back to the medieval period, as suggested by references to Brakeburue and Brageberewe in 13th century records.
15657	25 21	A small medieval silver-gilt annular brooch found in spoil left after the removal of a tree, in a rear garden in Holly Leys
17103	26373 20289	Cropmarks of possible cut features to the east of Pinker Wood
17105	26509 20447	Traces of medieval fields and ridge and furrow to the west of Bragbury Lane
24179	26 21	A copper-alloy open-frame brooch of 13th century date
Post-medieval & later		
5064	2766 2076	Milestone between Hooks Cross and Bragbury End, incised with 18th century mileage
7241	2684 2085	Brick railway bridge over Bragbury Lane presumably built at the same time or just after the railway line was constructed
11618	2693 2117	Bragbury End House (extant) largely built in the 17th century, though the hall and two cross wings were possibly already standing by 1600
11619	2693 2106	The Chequer public house has a painted date of 1727, and the first record of its holding a licence is from 1806
11620	2693 2110	Bragbury End Farmhouse (extant) dates from the 17th century, if not earlier, forming a group with its east, west and south barns
17104	26813 20117	Cropmarks of post-medieval chalk pit and field boundaries along Bragbury Lane

30230	26290 21346	Broom Barns is a post-medieval farmstead with medieval origins
Undated		
17102	26825 20549	Historic footpath across fields east of Bragbury Lane

APPENDIX 2 CONTENTS OF THE ARCHIVE

Records	Number
Brief	N
Specification	Y
Registers	3 (Context, Drawings, Digital Photo)
Context Sheets	5
Site drawings A1	0
Site drawings A3	1
Site drawings A4	1
Site photographs b/w	0
Site photographs colour slides	0
Digital Photographs	23

APPENDIX 3 HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	Land bounded by Bragbury Lane, Pembridge Gardens and Blenheim Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire
County: Herts	District: Stevenage
Village/Town:	Parish: Welwyn Garden City
Planning application reference:	Stevenage Borough Council Planning Ref. 13/00595/REG3
Client name/address/tel:	Mr Bob Capsey
Nature of application:	Construction of 5 No 5 bed dwellings
Present land use:	Agricultural
Size of application area: c.3800m ²	Size of area investigated 240m ²
NGR (8 figures):	TL 2678 2093
Site Code:	AS1873
Site director/Organization:	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Type of work:	Trial trench evaluation
Date of work:	22/02/2017
Location of finds/Curating museum:	Stevenage
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: None
Relevant previous summaries/reports: -	Higgs, K., 2013, <i>Land at Bragbury Lane (West), Stevenage, Hertfordshire. An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.</i> AS unpublished report No. 4477
Summary of fieldwork results:	<p><i>In February 2017 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land bounded by Bragbury Lane, Pembridge Gardens and Blenheim Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2678 2093). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Bob Capsey and was undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a new residential development of 5no 5 bed detached dwellings.</i></p> <p><i>The event the evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>
Author of summary: Z Pozorski	Date of Summary: February 2017

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. The site. Looking north-west.



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



DP 3. Trench 1. Looking north-east.



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



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



DP 6. Trench 2. Looking south-east.



DP 7. Trench 2. Looking north-north-east.



DP 8. Trench 2, north end. Sample section 2A. Looking west-north-west.



DP 9. Trench 2, south end. Sample section 2B. Looking east-south-east.



DP 10. Trench 3. Looking east.



DP 11. Trench 3. Looking west-north-west.



DP 12. Trench 3, west end. Sample section 3A. Looking north-north-east.



DP 13. Trench 3, east end. Sample section 3B. Looking south-south-west.



DP 14. Trench 4. Looking south.



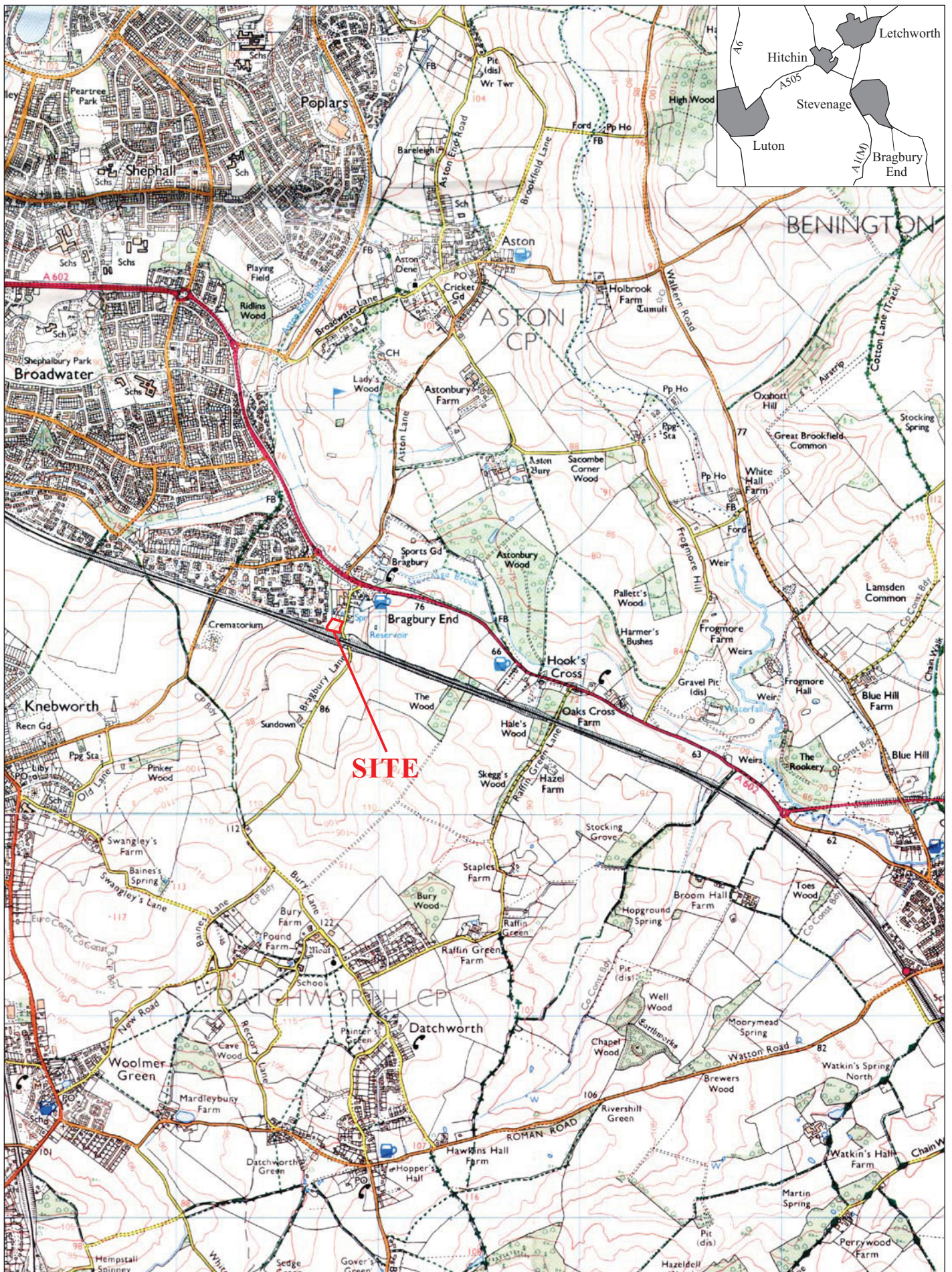
DP 15. Trench 4. Looking north-north-west.



DP 16. Trench 4, north end. Sample section 4A. Looking east-north-east.

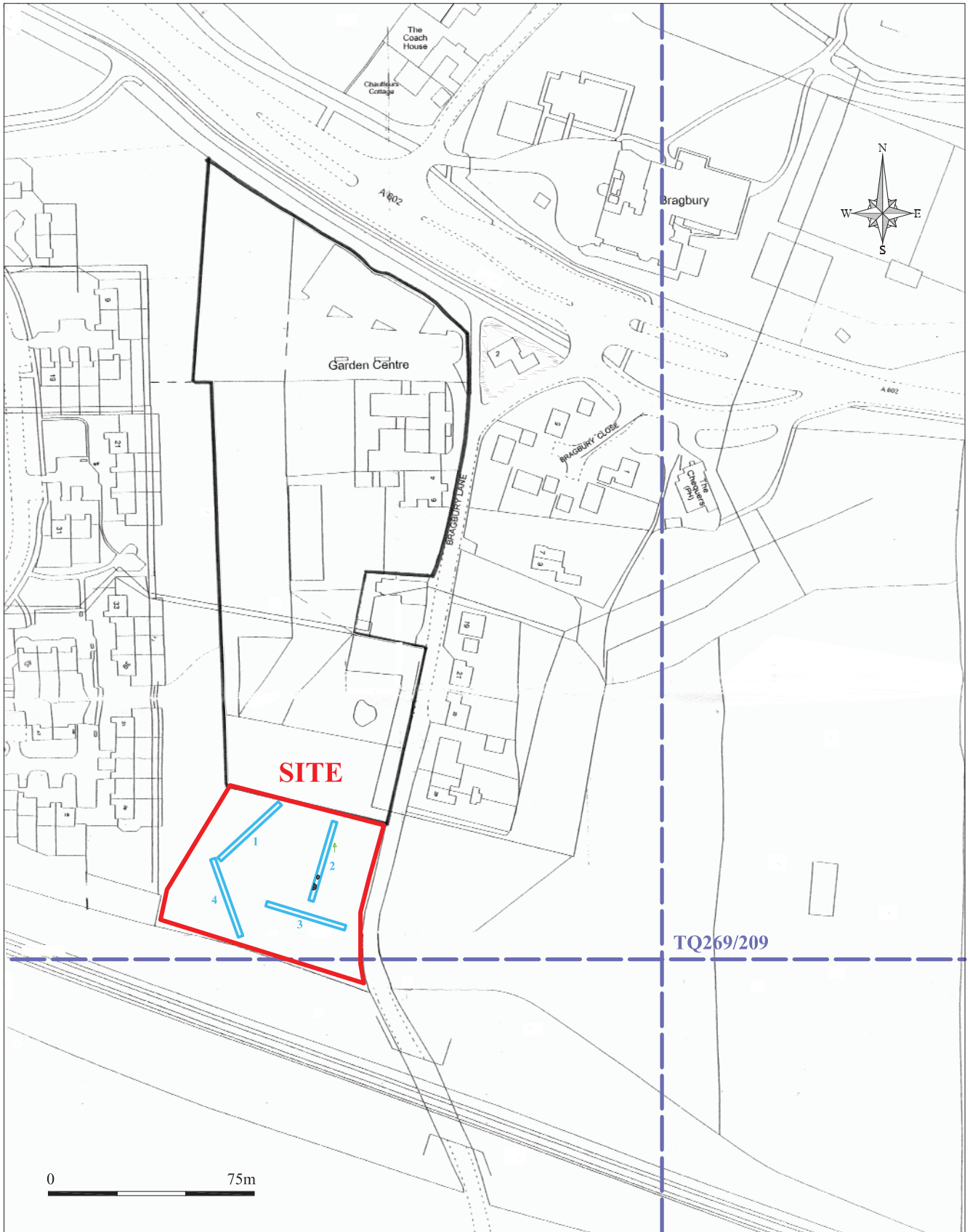


DP 17. Trench 4, south end. Sample section 4B. Looking west-south-west.



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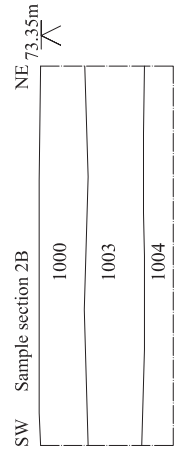
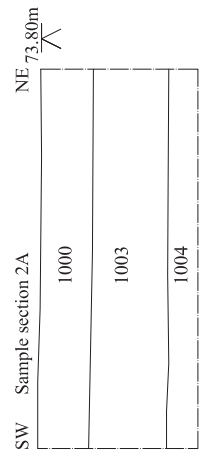
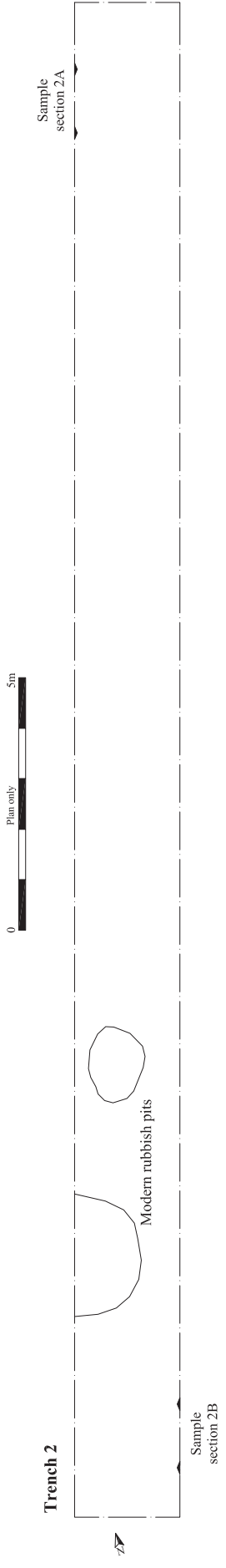
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000
 Bragbury Lane, Stevenage, Hertfordshire (P5555)



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Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:2000 at A4
 Bragbury Lane, Stevenage, Hertfordshire (P5555)



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Fig. 3 Proposed development
Scale 1:750 at A4
Bragbury Lane, Stevenage, Hertfordshire (P5555)



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Fig. 4 Trench plan and sections

Scale Plan 1:125, sections 1:20 at A4

Bragbury Lane, Stevenage, Hertfordshire (P5555)