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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**WESTFIELD ORCHARD, ASHWELL STREET,  
KNEESWORTH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

CHER ECB 5473

Authors: John Haygreen (Fieldwork and report)	
NGR: TL 3609 4339	Report No: 5645
District: South Cambs	Site Code: ECB 5473
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: P7673
	Date: 6 September 2018

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## **CONTENTS**

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

#### **SUMMARY**

- 1 INTRODUCTION**
- 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**
- 3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS**
- 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**
- 5 METHODOLOGY**
- 6 RESULTS**
- 7 CONFIDENCE RATING**
- 8 DEPOSIT MODEL**
- 9 DISCUSSION**
- 10 CONCLUSION**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**  
**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	Westfield Orchard, Ashwell Street, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire		
<p><i>In September 2018 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Westfield Orchard, Ashwell Street, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 3609 4339; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed removal of existing stables/storage and mobile home and erection of a dwelling and detached garaging with associated drive hardstanding and security gate (South Cambs Council Approval Ref. S/2972/16/FL),</i></p> <p><i>The site is located within an area of archaeological potential, with remains recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). Small assemblages of early Neolithic flint work have been found c.850m to the north-east of the site. A causewayed enclosure is located 1km to the southeast. Aerial photographs show cropmarks of ring ditches surrounding the site; a group of six lie within 150m to the northeast. There are also extensive rectilinear enclosures and trackways, interpreted as Iron Age or Roman, with one field system extending into the western part of the site.</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	September 2018		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	N	Future work	TBC
P. number	P7591	Site code	ECB 5645
Type of project	Archaeological evaluation		
Site status	-		
Current land use	Stables / storage		
Planned development	Residential		
Main features (+dates)	None		
Significant finds (+dates)	None		
	Cambridgeshire	South Cambs	Kneesworth
HER/ SMR for area	Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER)		
Post code (if known)	-		
Area of site	Overall site area including paddock c.1.2ha.		
NGR	TL 3609 4339		
Height AOD (min/max)	c.41m AOD		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	Cambridgeshire County Council		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	Archaeological Solutions Ltd		
Funded by	Mr Bode and Ms Gingell		
Full title	Westfield Orchard, Ashwell Street, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation		
Authors	Haygreen, J.		
Report no.	5645		
Date (of report)	September 2018		

# WESTFIELD ORCHARD, ASHWELL STREET, KNEESWORTH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### SUMMARY

*In September 2018 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Westfield Orchard, Ashwell Street, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 3609 4339; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed removal of existing stables/storage and mobile home and erection of a dwelling and detached garaging with associated drive hardstanding and security gate (South Cambs Council Approval Ref. S/2972/16/FL),*

*The site is located within an area of archaeological potential, with remains recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). Small assemblages of early Neolithic flint work have been found c.850m to the north-east of the site. A causewayed enclosure is located 1km to the southeast. Aerial photographs show cropmarks of ring ditches surrounding the site; a group of six lie within 150m to the northeast. There are also extensive rectilinear enclosures and trackways, interpreted as Iron Age or Roman, with one field system extending into the western part of the site.*

*The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September 2018 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Westfield Orchard, Ashwell Street, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 3609 4339; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed removal of existing stables/storage and mobile home and erection of a dwelling and detached garaging with associated drive hardstanding and security gate (South Cambs Council Approval Ref. S/2972/16/FL), based on the advice of Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (HET, Gemma Stewart; dated 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018), and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AS (dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018) and approved by CCC HET. It followed the procedures outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological*

*Evaluation* (2014). It also adhered to the relevant sections of *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 to the north of Royston between the village of Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth and Melbourn, on the southern side of the track of Ashwell Street. It comprises a sub-rectangular plot with a single dwelling and out buildings situated along the northern edge,

fronting on to the road, and a garden to the rear. It is enclosed by agricultural fields under arable cultivation on all sides.

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

3.1 The site lies at c.40m AOD in a gently undulating landscape, with the natural topography sloping down at a very gentle gradient to the north, towards the River Cam (or Rhee), whose course passes c.4km to the north. The landscape rises slightly more steeply to the south, initially at a moderate gradient approaching Royson, which is situated on the northern edge of the Hertfordshire Chalk Downs.

3.2 The bedrock of the site is the Zig Zag Chalk Formation, overlain by freely-draining lime-rich loamy soils.

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

4.1 The site is located within an area of archaeological potential, with remains recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). The earliest evidence for human activity comprises small assemblages of early Neolithic flint work contained in tree throws c.850m to the north-east (CHER MCB22488); but by the middle Neolithic the local landscape appears to have developed into something more prominent. The New Farm causewayed enclosure (CHER 03191) is located 1km to the south-east, and is a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument (DCB152). The circular causewayed enclosure has a maximum diameter of 120m, and components of the site suggest it may have developed into a henge-type monument, possible subsequently also incorporating Bronze Age ring ditches. The site is located within a local landscape that demonstrates a relatively high density of cropmarks indicative of Bronze Age ring ditches. A series of at least six ring ditches, interpreted as a barrow cemetery extends to within 150m to the north-east of the site (CHER 08550); while several other individual examples encircle the site at a distance of c.700-800m (i.e. CHER 08553-4; MCB22155-6). Iron Age settlement may be represented by a square enclosure recorded on aerial images c.950m to the south-west (CHER MCB22154), and possibly by a hollow way containing limited middle Iron Age pottery sherds c.600m to the south (CHER MCB25043). The local landscape also exhibits extensive cropmarks of rectilinear enclosures, boundary ditches and trackways that have been interpreted as of Iron Age or Roman date, with one field system extending into the western part of the site (CHER 08551). Further cropmarks of this type are located c.500m-1km to the north and east (CHER 08555, 08901, MCB23570 & 24723). The Avenell Way (MCB19147 & MCB19140), a trackway that passes c.700m to the north-west of the site is also suspected of being Roman in origin before falling out of use in the medieval period.

4.2 The medieval landscape of the site appears to have remained primarily agricultural; as represented by furlong boundaries observed on aerial photos c.400m to the north-east and 1km to the east (CHER 09540-1). Kneesworth Hall (CHER 12276), c.1km to the north-west, is recorded as being remodelled in c.1600 and is suspected of having pre-17<sup>th</sup> century origins. In 1851 the local landscape was bisected by the Great Eastern railway (CHER MCB24042), whose route passes c.350m to the east; while by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century a courtyard plan building, probably a model farm had been established c.600m to the west but is no longer extant (CHER MCB19141).

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The evaluation provided for a sample of the area to be subject to development to be trial trenched. The brief required a sample of the development area to be investigated by trenching. One trench of 20m x 1.8m across the proposed new house plot, and one trench of 15m x 1.8m across where the new garage / access and hardstanding is proposed were excavated (Fig. 2).

5.2 The archaeological investigation comprised the inspection of the subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features, the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Encountered features and deposits were cleaned by hand and recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as appropriate. The excavated spoil was checked for finds.

5.3 A one-metre square of topsoil and subsoil were bucket sampled and sorted by hand at each end of the trenches to characterise their artefact content. Soil from this sampling procedure was kept separate from the main spoil heaps. Site records were completed to reflect this exercise and an on-site record was made of the finds recovered. A metal detector was used to enhance finds recovery. The metal detector survey was conducted when the trenches were opened, and the detector was not set to discriminate against iron. The spoil tips were also surveyed. The finds observed during the sampling of the topsoil and subsoil, and the metal detecting survey were all of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date.



## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

### Trench 1 Figs. 2 - 3

Sample Section 1A 0.00 = 40.55m AOD		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. Friable, pale brown grey sandy silt with occasional chalk flecks.
0.18 – 0.32m	L1001	Subsoil. Friable, pale grey silty sand with occasional chalk flecks.
0.32m +	L1002	Natural deposits. Firm, white chalk.

Sample Section 1B 0.00 = 41.07m AOD		
0.00 – 0.10m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.10 – 0.29m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.29m +	L1002	Natural deposits. As above.

*Description: Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or finds. A service (water pipe) traversed the trench.*

### Trench 2 Figs. 2 - 3

Sample Section 2A 0.00 = 41.73m AOD		
0.00 – 0.03m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.03 – 0.12m	L1003	Made ground. Friable mix of medium stones, shingle, and asbestos fragments.
0.12 – 0.26m	L1004	Buried topsoil. Friable, pale brown grey sandy silt with occasional chalk flecks.
0.26 – 0.44m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.44m +	L1002	Natural. As above

Sample Section 2B 0.00 = 41.21m AOD		
0.00 – 0.02m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.02 – 0.30m	L1003	Made ground. As above.
0.30 – 0.41m	L1004	Buried topsoil. As above.
0.41 – 0.50m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.50m +	L1002	Natural. As above

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

## **7 CONFIDENCE RATING**

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

## **8 DEPOSIT MODEL**

8.1 Uppermost was Topsoil L1000 a friable, pale brown grey sandy silt with occasional chalk flecks. (0.02 – 0.18m thick). L1000 overlay Subsoil L1001, a friable, pale grey silty sand with occasional chalk flecks. (0.09 – 0.14m thick).

8.3 At the base of the sequence were the natural deposits (L1002), a firm, white chalk. L1002 was present 0.22 – 0.50m below the present day ground surface.

8.4 In the western area, adjacent to the old stable block, a 0.03m thick layer of topsoil (L1000) overlay a 0.09m thick made ground layer (L1003) comprising a friable mix of medium stones, shingle, and asbestos fragments. Below L1003 was a 0.14m thick buried topsoil (L1004) comprising friable, pale brown grey sandy silt with occasional chalk flecks. Below L1004 was a 0.09 – 0.18m thick subsoil layer (L1001), and at the base of the sequence the natural deposits (L1002) were encountered at a depth of 0.44 – 0.50m below the current ground surface.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 The site is located within an area of archaeological potential, with remains recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). Small assemblages of early Neolithic flint work have been found c.850m to the north-east of the site. A causewayed enclosure is located 1km to the southeast. The site is located within a local landscape that demonstrates a relatively high density of cropmarks indicative of Bronze Age ring ditches. A series of at least six ring ditches, interpreted as a barrow cemetery extends to within 150m to the north-east of the site; while several other individual examples encircle the site at a distance of c.700-800m. The local landscape also exhibits extensive cropmarks of rectilinear enclosures, boundary ditches and trackways that have been interpreted as of Iron Age or Roman date, with one field system extending into the western part of the site.

9.2 The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.

## **10 CONCLUSION**

10.1 The site stratigraphy appeared to be relatively intact with a subsoil (L1001) overlying the natural (L1002), and therefore had archaeological features been present it is likely that they would have been preserved.

## **DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Cambridge County Archaeological Store. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. The archive will be deposited following the gaining of the transfer of title.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Stephen Bode and Ms Karen Gingell for funding the works and for all their assistance.

AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Gemma Stewart, Archaeological Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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SSEW 1983 *Soil Survey of England and Wales: Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales* Harpenden, Rothamsted Experimental Station/Lawes Agricultural Trust

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**OASIS ID: archaeol7-331793**

### Project details

Project name	WESTFIELD ORCHARD, ASHWELL STREET, KNEESWORTH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Short description of the project	In September 2018 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Westfield Orchard, Ashwell Street, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 3609 4339; Figs. 1 - 2). The evaluation was undertaken to provide for the initial requirements of a planning condition attached to planning approval for the proposed removal of existing stables/storage and mobile home and erection of a dwelling and detached garaging with associated drive hardstanding and security gate (South Cambs Council Approval Ref. S/2972/16/FL). The site is located within an area of archaeological potential, with remains recorded on the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). Small assemblages of early Neolithic flint work have been found c.850m to the north-east of the site. A causewayed enclosure is located 1km to the southeast. Aerial photographs show cropmarks of ring ditches surrounding the site; a group of six lie within 150m to the northeast. There are also extensive rectilinear enclosures and trackways, interpreted as Iron Age or Roman, with one field system extending into the western part of the site. The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or finds.
Project dates	Start: 01-09-2018 End: 30-09-2018
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	P7673 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 5645 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE Neolithic
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

### Project location

Country England

Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE BASSINGBOURN CUM  
KNEESWORTH Westfield Orchard, Ashwell Street, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire

Postcode SG8 6DH

Study area 1.2 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 3609 4339 52.071696207288 -0.014178663789 52 04 18 N 000 00 51 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 41m Max: 41m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeological Solutions Ltd

Project brief originator Cambridgeshire County Council County Archaeology Office

Project design originator Jon Murray

Project director/manager Jon Murray

Project supervisor Archaeological Solutions

Type of sponsor/funding body Mr Bode and Ms Gingell

Name of sponsor/funding body Mr Bode and Ms Gingell

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Cambridge County Archaeological Store

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Spreadsheets","Text","Database"

Paper Archive recipient Cambridge County Archaeological Store

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Westfield Orchard, Ashwell Street, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Author(s)/Editor(s) Haygreen, J

Other bibliographic details 5645

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# PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX (P7673)



1  
Trench 1 looking south-west



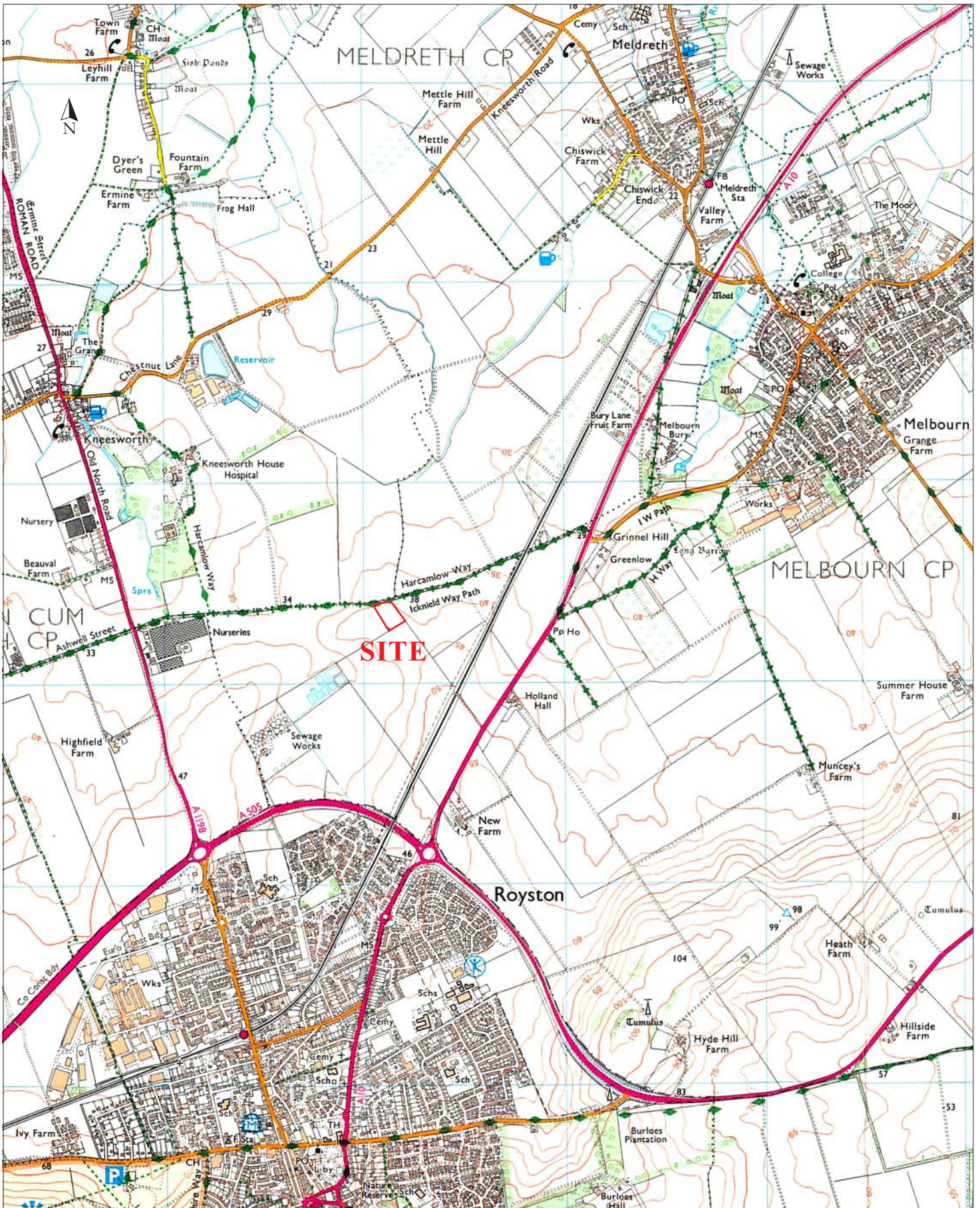
2  
Trench 2 looking west



3  
Sample section 1A



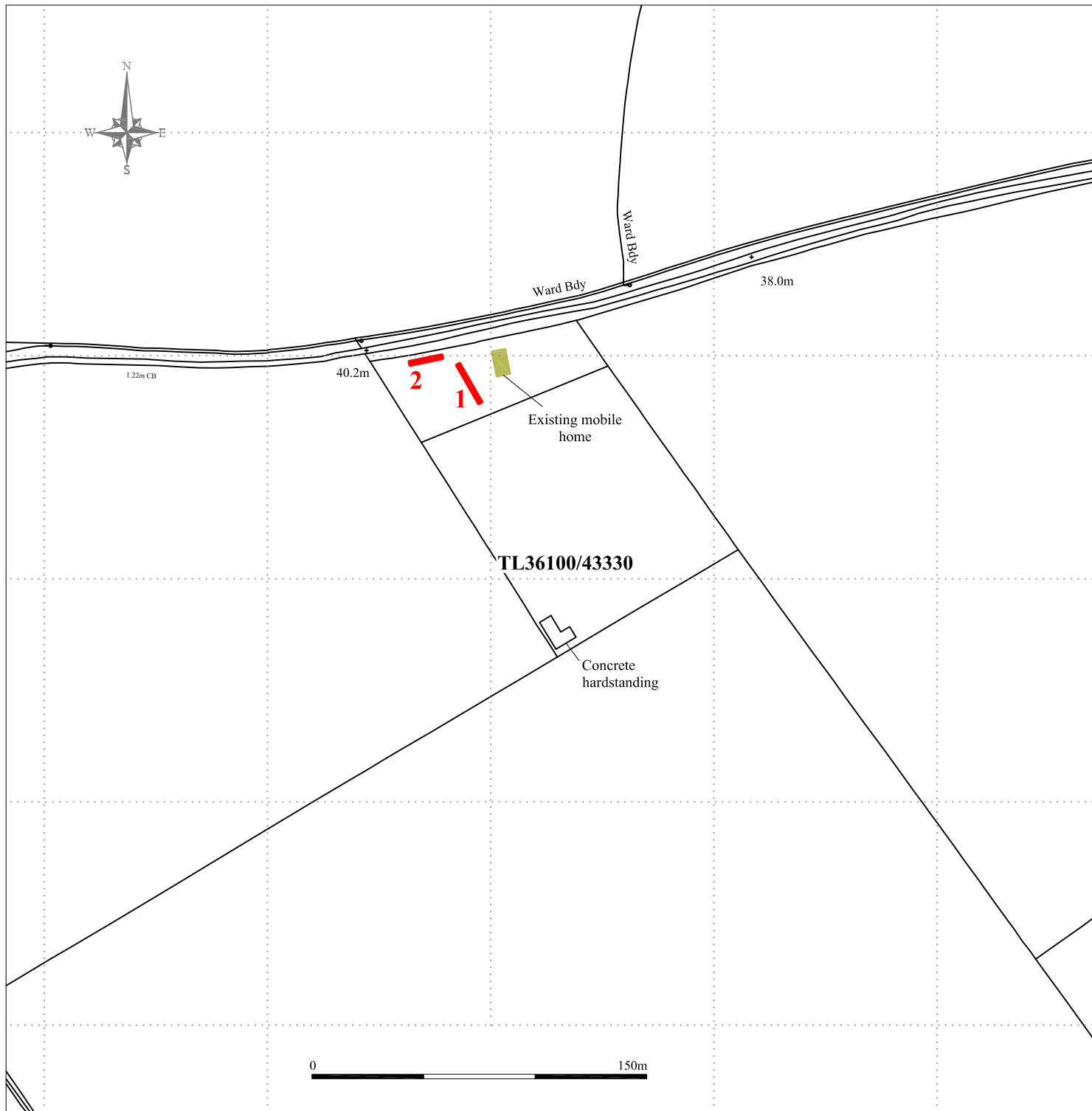
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Sample section 2A



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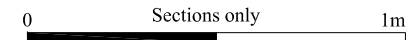
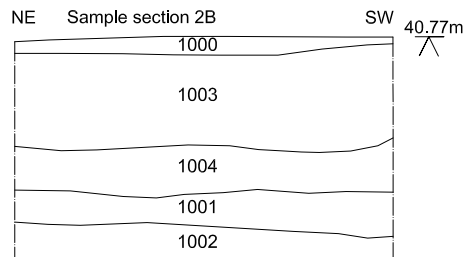
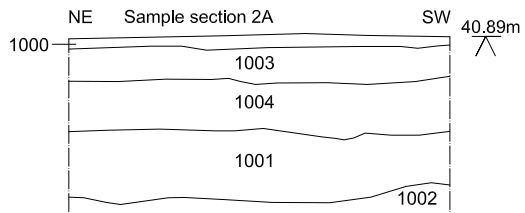
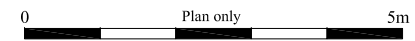
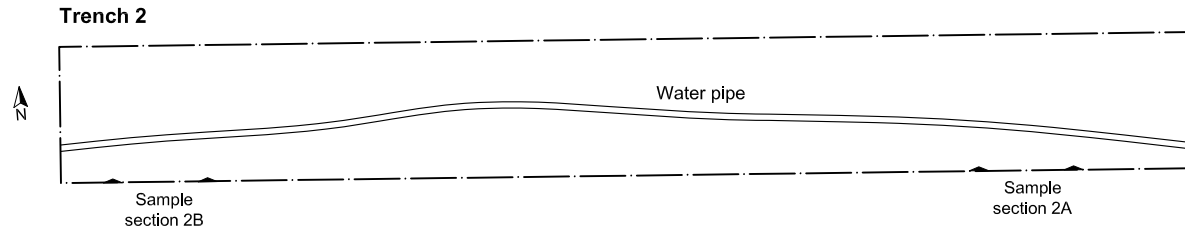
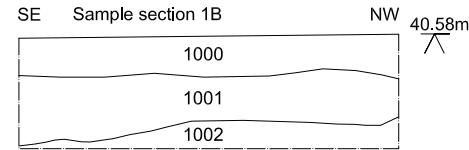
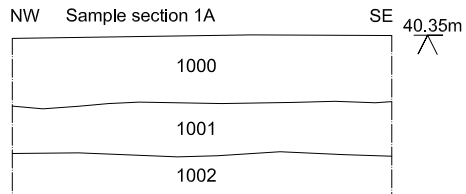
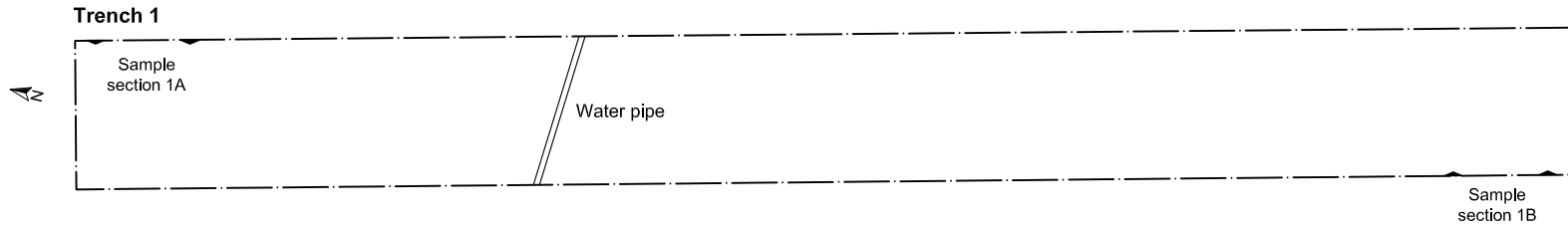
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4  
 Westfield Orchard, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire (P7673)





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<b>Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan</b>
Scale 1:2500 at A4
Westfield Orchard, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire (P7673)



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**Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections**

Scale Plans 1:100, sections 1:20 at A4

Westfield Orchard, Kneesworth, Cambridgeshire (P7673)