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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**LAND BETWEEN 15 AND 35 ICKWELL ROAD, UPPER  
CALDECOTE, BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

*HER Search No. 201819/249*

Authors: Keeley Jade Diggons (Fieldwork and report) Liam Podbury (Report)	
NGR: TL 16433 45811	Report No: 5852
District: Central Beds	Site Code: AS2005
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 7863
	Date: 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2019; Revised 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2019

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<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Land Between 15 and 35 Ickwell Road, Upper Caldecote, Bedfordshire</i>		
<p><i>In June 2019 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological investigation of Land Between 15 and 35 Ickwell Road, Upper Caldecote, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 16433 45811); Figs. 1 - 2). The investigation was undertaken prior the determination of a planning application for a residential development of up to 25 dwellings (Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Pre-App Planning Reference CB/19/00603/PAPC)). It was based on the requirements of the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists (CBC).</i></p> <p><i>Historic cartographic sources record that the site remained as agricultural land throughout the early modern and modern periods. The archaeological evidence consistently indicates that the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Upper Caldecote was to the east of the Hitchin Road and Biggleswade Road crossroads.</i></p> <p><i>The archaeological investigation recorded Tree Throw F1003 and no finds were present.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>Y</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>7863</i>	Site code	<i>AS2005</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Agricultural land</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential development</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Bedfordshire</i>	<i>Central Beds</i>	<i>Northill</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Central Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER Search No. 201819/249)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>n/a</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 1 ha.</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 16433 45811</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c. 34m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>n/a</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>Parrott Holdings Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>Land Between 15 and 35 Ickwell Road, Upper Caldecote, Bedfordshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Diggons, K. &amp; Podbury, L.</i>		
Report no.	<i>5852</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>June 2019; revised August 2019</i>		

# LAND BETWEEN 15 AND 35 ICKWELL ROAD, UPPER CALDECOTE, BEDFORDSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

### SUMMARY

*In June 2019 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological investigation of Land Between 15 and 35 Ickwell Road, Upper Caldecote, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 16433 45811); Figs. 1 - 2). The investigation was undertaken prior the determination of a planning application for a residential development of up to 25 dwellings (Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Pre-App Planning Reference CB/19/00603/PAPC)). It was based on the requirements of the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists (CBC).*

*Historic cartographic sources record that the site remained as agricultural land throughout the early modern and modern periods. The archaeological evidence consistently indicates that the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Upper Caldecote was to the east of the Hitchin Road and Biggleswade Road crossroads.*

*The archaeological investigation recorded Tree Throw F1003 and no finds were present.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In June 2019 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological investigation of Land Between 15 and 35 Ickwell Road, Upper Caldecote, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 16433 45811); Figs. 1 - 2). The investigation was undertaken prior the determination of a planning application for a residential development of up to 25 dwellings (Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Pre-App Planning Reference CB/19/00603/PAPC)). It was based on the requirements of the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists (CBC).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief prepared by CBC, *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Field Evaluation, Land Between 15 and 35 Ickwell Road, Upper Caldecote, Bedfordshire* (dated 24 May 2019), and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AS (dated 6 June 2019) and approved by CBC. 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 general aims and objectives for the investigation included:

- to determine the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- to provide information on the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;
- To recover any palaeoenvironmental remains to determine local environmental conditions; and
- To relate any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes.

#### *Research potential*

1.4 The main research potential of the site related to the potential to shed further light on the character of later prehistoric and / or Roman settlement, land use and funerary use of this part of the Ivel valley, and evidence of the historic medieval settlement core (and potentially Saxon extent) of Upper Caldecote.

#### *Planning Policy Context*

1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) 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.

1.6 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 irregularly shaped plot of land covering an area of c.1 hectare. It lies along the southern frontage of Ickwell Road, and part of its northern boundary is also demarcated to the west by a field boundary, and to the east by residential dwellings. The site currently comprises two uncultivated fields, and the eastern section of the site consists of a former pony paddock.

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

3.1 The village of Upper Caldecote lies on low-lying ground on the western side of the Ivel valley and at the point where the Greensand Ridge begins to rise to the west. The River Ivel flows roughly north to southwards through the towns of Sandy and Biggleswade, and 2.2km to the east of the site. Small streams flow to the north and east of Upper Caldecote, whilst former gravel extraction pits lie to the south of the village and east of the A1 trunk road. The surrounding relief rises slightly to the west towards the Greensand Ridge, with the site occupying a relatively flat relief at 34m AOD.

3.2 The solid geology of the Upper Caldecote area comprises Stewartby Member and Weymouth Member mudstone of the Jurassic period. The mudstone is overlain by drift deposits of riverine deposits, deposited up to two million years ago, whilst to the east of Upper Caldecote lie river terrace deposits from the Ivel of sand, gravel, clay and silt.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 Prehistoric and Roman settlement has been increasingly identified throughout the catchment of the River Ivel, with the broad terraces above the valley showing relatively dense occupation from the Neolithic period onwards. Dispersed Neolithic activity has been recorded at Broom Quarry (HER 903; Cooper and Edmonds 2007) and Neolithic flints have been found east of Gypsy Lane (Tabor 2014). Pit groups of Neolithic date have also been found at Broom Quarry South (Tabor 2016). Ritual activity of the Neolithic and Bronze Age is shown by round barrows, ring ditches and a rare C-shaped monument at Broom Quarry (HER 3576 & 9093) with associated funerary remains such as a cremation cemetery (Cooper and Edmonds 2007). An area of cropmarks investigated south of Hill Lane at the Broom Quarry investigations has its northern limit some 700m south east of the proposed development site (HER 9093), with a rectilinear enclosure

and many linear features. The Broom Quarry sites have also found a number of settlements of middle to late Bronze Age date (HER 9093 & 18274), with evidence of associated field boundaries and field systems (Cooper and Edmonds 2007; Tabor 2014). Multi-phase Iron Age settlements have been revealed at Gypsy Lane, Hill Lane and Broom North Grange (HER 9093, 18273,9095; Cooper and Edmonds 2007; Tabor 2014). These sites lie similarly on the rising terrace above the River Ivel and tributary streams, in a similar topographic location to the proposed development area. Four further areas of cropmarks are also known to the north of the proposed development area, including square, rectangular and sub-rectangular enclosures (HER 624, 1499, 15378 & 16855). A small-scale investigation at Burnt Land, Vinegar Hill revealed a middle Iron Age date for this activity (Heritage Network 2005). The remainder of the cropmarks are undated but may be later prehistoric or Roman. An extensive area of Roman settlement is known along the low ridges above the River Ivel east of Broom (HER 631,1486 & 9095), with evidence from cropmarks and trial trench investigation (Tabor 2014), and a settlement of 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD is known 900m to the south west of the proposed development site (HER 16787). This was likely focused on a trapezoidal enclosure seen as cropmarks to the north (Wilson & Zeepvat 2001). Sunken featured buildings of Saxon date have been recorded east of Gypsy Lane at Broom (Tabor 2014), Broom Quarry South (Tabor 2016) and Ivel Farm (Albion 2003). A small cemetery with an associated building of early Saxon date was also found close to one of the earlier round barrows here (Cooper and Edmonds 2007). The proposed development site also lies close by to the west of the historic village core of Upper Caldecote. The village is believed to have been established as a hamlet in the east of Northill parish, and the first documentary references to Upper Caldecote date from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century (Wood 1988). The early settlement was probably focused in the area of a green (some 150m to the south east of the proposed development site) that may have been the location of a medieval manor. The oldest structures in the village were the site of manor Farm which was demolished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (HER 2987) and a row of 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings there (HER 10067).

## **5 PREVIOUS INVESTIGATION**

5.1 A desk-based assessment was prepared to accompany the planning application (Higgs 2019). In summary:

*Historic cartographic sources reveal that the site remained as agricultural land throughout the early modern and modern periods, while archaeological evidence also consistently indicates that the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Upper Caldecote was to the east of the Hitchin Road and Biggleswade Road crossroads. Similarly, very little is known about the history of the site and no relevant documents could be found in the Bedfordshire Archives and Record*



Service (BARS).

*Previous ground disturbance across the site is judged to be moderate and will be limited to agricultural use. The planning proposals will significantly impact archaeological remains if such are present.*

## 6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 CBC required a programme of archaeological trial trenching comprising an area of 660m<sup>2</sup>. Seven trenches of 40.00m x 2.00m (Trenches 3 – 9), one trench of 25.00m x 2.00m (Trench 1), and one trench of 18.50m (Trench 2) were excavated. The latter trench was shortened; its proposed length was 25.00m

6.2 The archaeological evaluation 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.

6.3 Open trenches and excavated spoil were manually / visually searched and scanned by metal detector to enhance the recovery of archaeological finds.

## 7 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Fig. 2

Trench descriptions are presented below:

### Trench 1 Fig. 2

Sample Section 1A 0.00 = 33.55m AOD		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1000	Topsoil. Friable, dark brown grey silty sand with occasional to moderate small sub-angular flint.
0.27 – 0.47m	L1001	Subsoil. Friable, mid yellow brown sandy silt with occasional to moderate sub-rounded and sub-angular flint.
0.47m+	L1002	Natural Deposit. Friable, mid yellow red sands and gravels with moderate to frequent angular and sub-angular flint.

Sample Section 1B 0.00 = 33.86m AOD		
0.00 – 0.29m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.29 - 0.52m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.52m+	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

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

## Trench 2 Fig. 2

Sample Section 2A 0.00 = 33.68m AOD		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.26 - 0.51m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.51m+	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

Sample Section 2B 0.00 = 33.69 AOD		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.28 - 0.50m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.50m+	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

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

## Trench 3 Fig. 2

Sample Section 3A 0.00 = 33.89m AOD		
0.00 – 0.36m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.36 - 0.63m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.63m+	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

Sample Section 3B 0.00 = 33.69m AOD		
0.00 – 0.23m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.23 - 0.56m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.56m+	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

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

## Trench 4 Fig. 2

Sample Section 4A 0.00 = 33.70m AOD		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.26 - 0.50m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.50m+	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

Sample Section 4B 0.00 = 33.64m AOD		
0.00 – 0.24m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.24 - 0.54m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.54m+	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

*Description: Trench 4 contained no archaeological finds or features.*

## Trench 5 Figs. 2 & 3

Sample Section 5A 0.00 = 33.74m AOD		
0.00 – 0.34m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.34 - 0.50m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.50m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

Sample Section 5B 0.00 = 34.02m AOD		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.26 - 0.42m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.42m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

*Description: Trench 5 contained Tree Throw F1003*

Tree Throw F1003 was irregular in plan (3.00m+ x 1.80m+ x 0.25m). Two segments were excavated (labelled A and B). F1003 had irregular sides and an undulating base. Its fill, L1004, was a friable, pale grey brown silty sand with occasional small sub-rounded flint. It contained no finds.

## Trench 6 Fig. 2

Sample Section 6A 0.00 = 33.85m AOD		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.30 - 0.50m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.50m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

Sample Section 6B 0.00 = 33.89m AOD		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.28 - 0.42m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.42m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

*Description: Trench 6 contained no archaeological finds or features.*

## Trench 7 Fig. 2

Sample Section 7A 0.00 = 34.01m AOD		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.28 - 0.50m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.50m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

Sample Section 7B 0.00 = 34.06m AOD		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.28 - 0.55m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.55m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

*Description: Trench 7 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

## **Trench 8    Fig. 2**

Sample Section 8A 0.00 = 33.90m AOD		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.30 - 0.55m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.55m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

Sample Section 8B 0.00 = 33.91 AOD		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.27 - 0.55m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.55m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

*Description: Trench 8 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

## **Trench 9    Fig. 2**

Sample Section 9A 0.00 = 33.70m AOD		
0.00 – 0.27m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.27 - 0.44m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.44m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

Sample Section 9B 0.00 = 33.76m AOD		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.26 - 0.43m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.43m +	L1002	Natural Deposit. As above.

*Description: Trench 9 contained no archaeological features or finds.*

## **8    CONFIDENCE RATING**

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

## **9 DEPOSIT MODEL**

9.1 Uppermost was Topsoil L1000 a friable, dark brown grey silty sand with occasional to moderate small sub-angular flint (0.23 – 0.36m thick). L1000 overlay Subsoil L1001, a firm, mid yellow brown sandy silt with occasional to moderate small sub-rounded and sub-angular flint (0.14 – 0.33m thick).

9.2 At the base of the sequence was the natural deposit (L1002), a friable mid yellow red sand and gravel with moderate to frequent angular and sub-angular flint. L1002 was present 0.42 – 0.63m below the present day ground surface. Variations in the natural deposits were investigated in Trenches 1, 3 - 4, 7 and 9.

## **10 DISCUSSION**

10.1 The main research potential of the site related to the potential to shed further light on the character of later prehistoric and / or Roman settlement, land use and funerary use of this part of the Ivel valley, and evidence of the historic medieval settlement core (and potentially Saxon extent) of Upper Caldecote.

10.2 Historic cartographic sources revealed that the site remained as agricultural land throughout the early modern and modern periods. The archaeological evidence consistently indicates that the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Upper Caldecote was to the east of the Hitchin Road and Biggleswade Road crossroads.

10.3 The archaeological investigation recorded only Tree Throw F1003 (Trench 5) and no finds were present.

## **DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at The Higgins Art Gallery and Museum, Bedford. Accession No. BEDFM: 2019.61. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Parrott Holdings Ltd for funding the works and Mr Shaun Greaves of GCPP Town Planning Consultants for his assistance.

AS would like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Slawek Utrata, Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologist.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX (P7863)



1  
Trench 1 looking north



2  
Trench 2 looking west



3  
Trench 3 looking north



4  
Trench 4 looking east





5  
Trench 5 looking north



6  
Sample section 5a looking west



7  
Sample section 5b looking east



8  
Tree Throw F1003 in Test pit A looking east



9  
Tree Throw F1003 in Test pit B looking west



10  
Trench 6 looking east



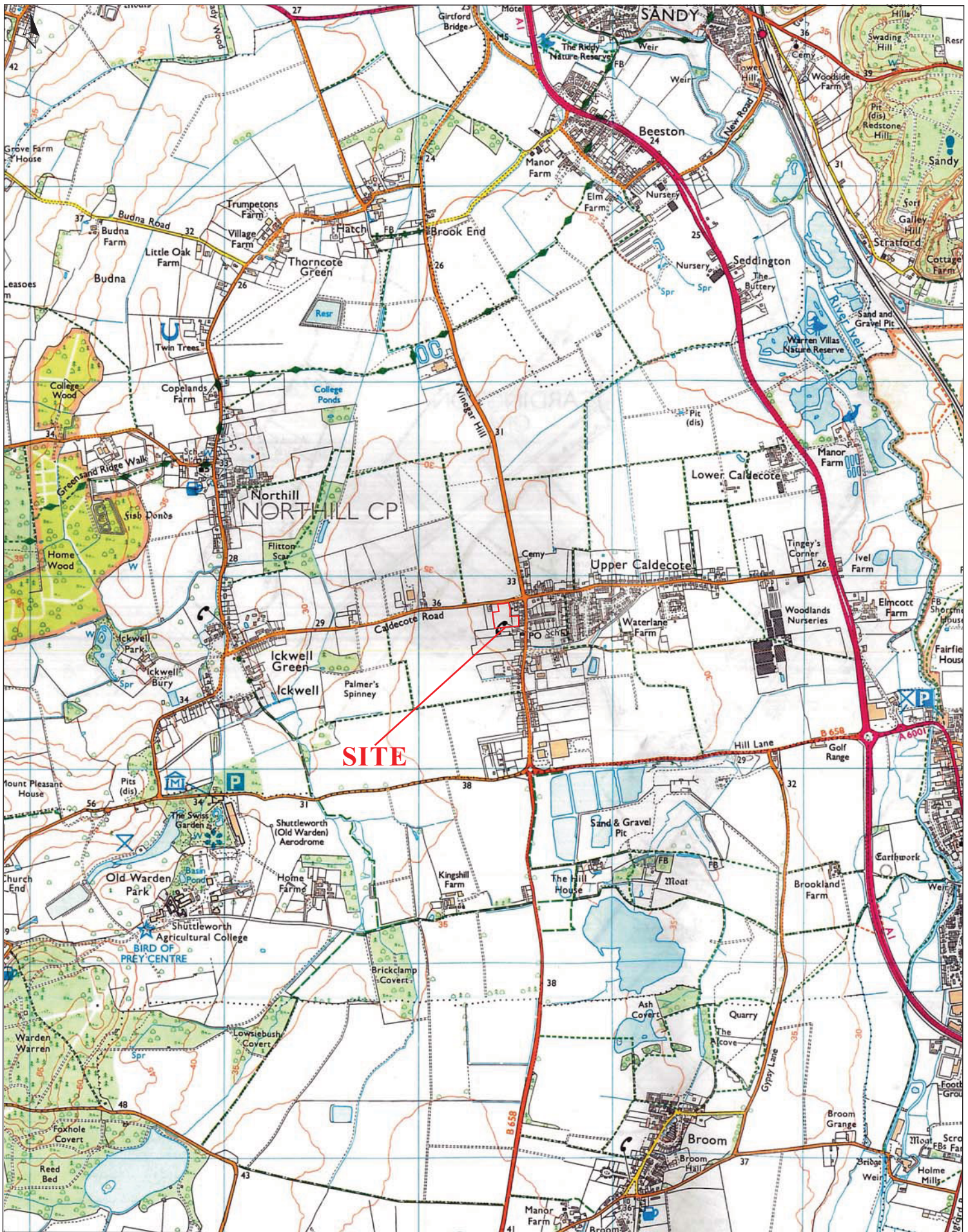
11  
Trench 7 looking west



12  
Trench 8 looking north-west

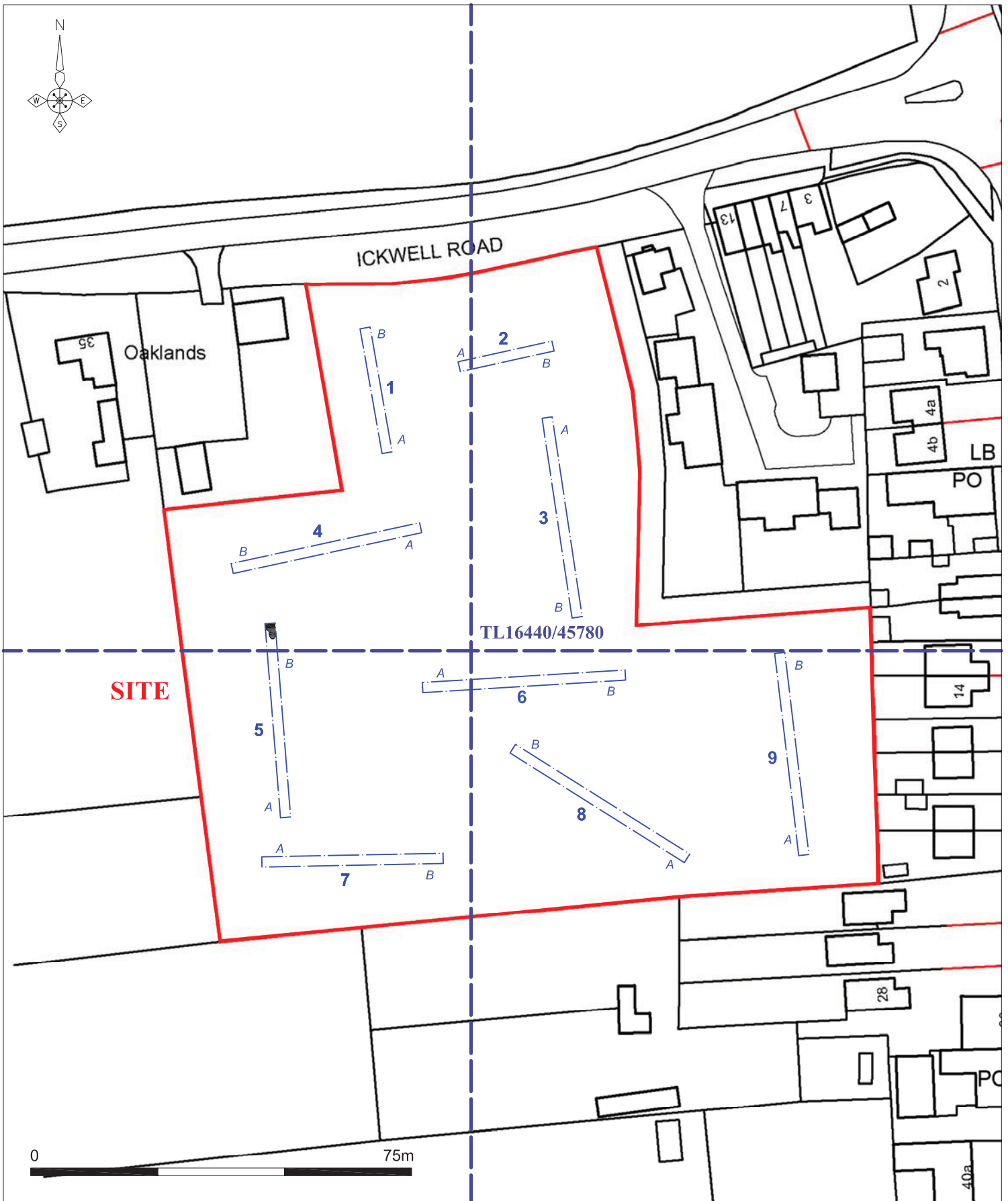


13  
Trench 9 looking south



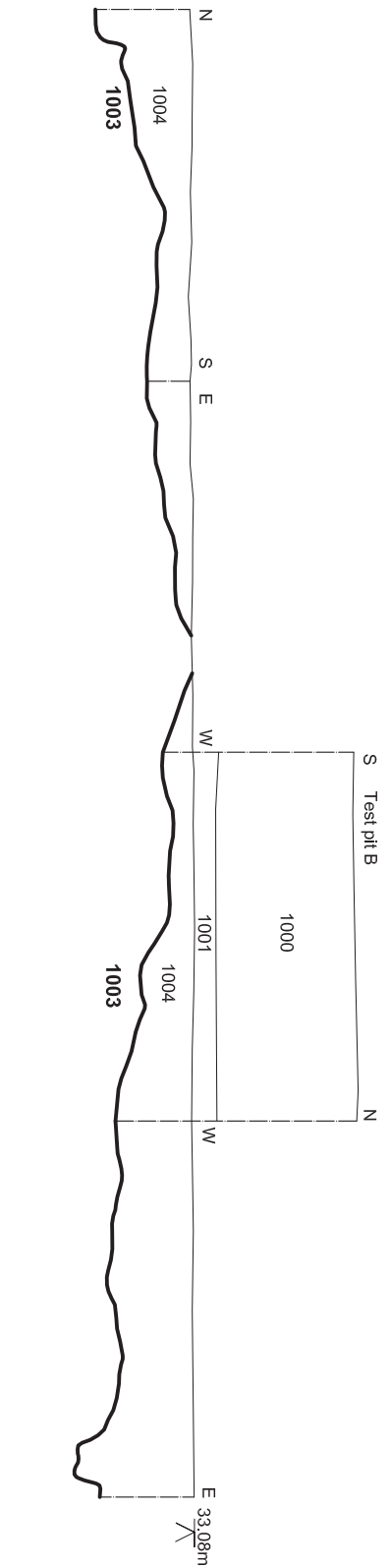
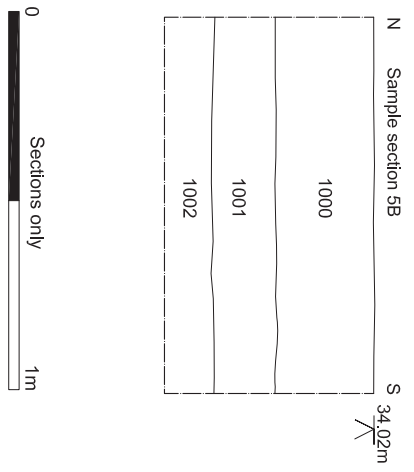
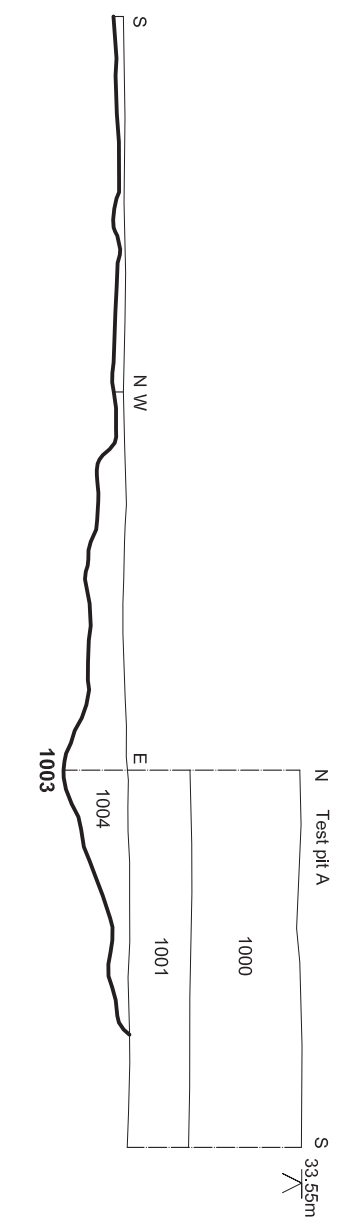
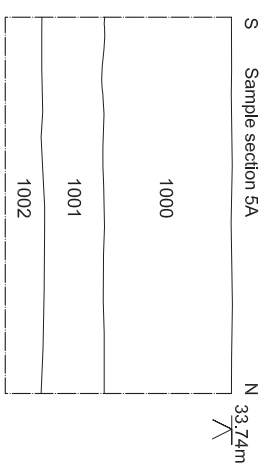
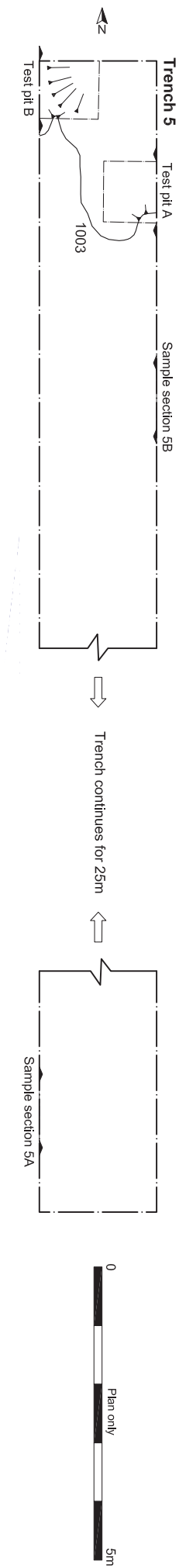
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4  
 Ickwell Road, Upper Caldecote (P7683)



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<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
<b>Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan</b>
Scale 1:1000 at A4
Ickwell Road, Upper Caldecote (P7863)



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**Fig. 3 Trench plan and sections**

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

Ickwell Road, Upper Caldecote (P7863)