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**LAND ADJACENT TO POTTERS COTTAGE,
BARDFIELD ROAD, THAXTED, ESSEX CM6 2LP**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Authors:	Gareth Barlow (Fieldwork & report) Kate Higgs MA (Oxon.) (Research)	
NGR: 561729 230813		Report No: 5984
District: Uttlesford		Site Code: PCTX20
Approved: Claire Halpin MCIfA		Project No: 8274
		Date: 30 January 2020

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PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Land adjacent to Potters Cottage, Bardfield Road, Thaxted, Essex. CM6 2LP</i>		
<p><i>In January 2020, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Potters Cottage, Bardfield Road, Thaxted, Essex CM6 2LP (NGR 561729 230813; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for proposed erection a detached dwelling (Uttlesford District Council Planning Ref. UTT/19/0971/FUL). It was required by the LPA based on advice from the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (HEA ECC).</i></p> <p><i>The Essex Historic Environment Record notes that the site lies within an area of archaeological potential, adjacent to the 17th century Potters Cottage, and in an area where high status Roman remains have been found.</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation revealed an undated ditch, a modern wall footing and two large modern rubbish pits.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	28 th January 2020		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>8274</i>	Site code	<i>PCTX20</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>None</i>		
Current land use	<i>Garden</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential development</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern wall and pits, undated ditch.</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>None</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Thaxted</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex County Council Historic Environment Record</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>CM6 2LP</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 400m²</i>		
NGR	<i>561729 230813</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c. 99m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (ECC HEA)</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Gareth Barlow</i>		
Funded by	<i>Ms E Hawkins</i>		
Full title	<i>Land Adjacent to Potters Cottage, Bardfield Road, Thaxted, Essex. CM6 2LP. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Barlow, G</i>		
Report no.	<i>5984</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>January 2020</i>		

LAND ADJACENT TO POTTERS COTTAGE, BARDFIELD ROAD, THAXTED, ESSEX. CM6 2LP

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In January 2020, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Potters Cottage, Bardfield Road, Thaxted, Essex CM6 2LP (NGR 561729 230813; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for proposed erection a detached dwelling (Uttlesord District Council Planning Ref. UTT/19/0971/FUL). It was required by the LPA based on advice from the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (HEA ECC).

The Essex Historic Environment Record notes that the site lies within an area of archaeological potential, adjacent to the 17th century Potters Cottage, and in an area where high status Roman remains have been found.

The evaluation revealed an undated ditch, a modern wall footing and two large modern rubbish pits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2020, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Potters Cottage, Bardfield Road, Thaxted, Essex CM6 2LP (NGR 561729 230813; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning approval for proposed erection a detached dwelling (Uttlesford District Council Planning Ref. UTT/19/0971/FUL). It was required by the LPA based on advice from the Historic Environment Advisor of Essex County Council (HEA ECC).

1.2 The archaeological evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by ECC HEA, *Brief for an Trial Trenching & Excavation on land adjacent to Potters Cottage, Bardfield Road, Thaxted, Essex* (Katie Lee-Smith, dated 9th January 2020), and a specification compiled by AS (dated 10th January 2020). It followed the procedures outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (2014), and also adhered to the relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

Planning Policy Context

1.3 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.

1.4 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 within the town of Thaxted, which lies within the district of Uttlesford and county of Essex (Fig. 1). Thaxted is situated 10km to the east-south-east of Newport, 8km to the south-west of Finchingfield, and 7km to the west of Great Bardfield. The site lies towards the south-eastern extent of the historic settlement and off the southern frontage of Bardfield Road, which is aligned west to eastwards between Thaxted and Great Bardfield. The site lies within a Special Landscape Area (Anon. 1999), which surrounds Thaxted and from where high-status Roman remains have been found.

2.2 The site comprises a roughly rectangular plot of land, which covers an area of approximately 400m² (Fig. 2). It forms part of the existing garden plot to the west of Potters Cottage, which is a Grade II listed 17th century timber framed house also known as Coldhams Fee (HER 37638 - MEX1013078). The remaining garden associated with Potters Cottage lies to the immediate east of the site, whilst gardens associated with Woodbine Cottage and Coldhams Cottage lie to the north. To the immediate west of the site lies a public footpath, with undeveloped agricultural land to the south. The site currently contains an outbuilding, which is to be demolished prior to the construction of a proposed new two storey dwelling.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The town of Thaxted is situated within a varied and undulating landscape, which characterised much of the Uttlesford district). The meandering course of the River Chelmer lies 1km to the west of the site, and a smaller watercourse flows south-westwards 300m to the north. The site lies on a varying relief at approximately 98m AOD. Geologically, the site lies on Palaeogene marine silty clays, clayey and sandy silts of the London Clay association overlying Cretaceous white chalk with flints of the Upper Chalk association (BGS 2015). Its soils are those of the Ludford association, which are described as deep well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy soils, locally flints and in places over gravel (SSEW 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

4.1 Relatively little is known of the prehistory of the Thaxted area and little recent archaeological work has taken place in the area. Residual pottery and a flint flake found during an archaeological evaluation on Weaverhead Lane to the north-west of the site (HER 14672 - MEX39882). Further unspecified prehistoric finds include an axe-hammer and two waste flint flakes found at Pond Bay (HERs 1393 - MEX4977 & 1544 - MEX5581).

4.2 Two sherds of Bronze Age pottery were found in a silt layer off Wedow Road (HER 48235 - MEX1041194). Iron Age finds from the area comprise an early Iron Age amphora found to the south-west and the late Iron Age enclosure surrounding a round house recorded off Wedow Road (HERs 1390 - MEX4969 & 49139 - MEX1049684). The excavations are judged to represent an emerging landscape of relatively dense settlement and land use during the late Iron Age enclosure and Roman period (Oxford Archaeology East 2016).

Romano-British

4.3 The B184 Walden Road/Dunmow Road, which runs on a roughly north to south alignment through Thaxted, follows the original course of a Roman road between Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow (HER 1452 - MEX5205). A section of the road was revealed in trenches dug by Thaxted Primary School in 1960 (HER 9967 - MEX31346). A second Roman road from Braughing and Wixloe, appears to have run to the north of Thaxted and has been located at both Proud's Farm and Terrier's Farm (HERs 7337 - MEX23939 & 7338 - MEX23940).

4.4 Roman finds have been made within and around the town, including coins, tile fragments, brooches and a bust of Bacchus. As noted previously, site lies within a Special Landscape Area (Anon. 1999), which surrounds Thaxted and from where high-status Roman remains have been found. The foundations of Roman dwelling house were found in 1913 on Claypits Farm and 200m to the south-west of the site (HER 1478 - MEX5345). Archaeological excavations uncovered a probably wall of the furnace chamber or a flue leading to a villa

hypocaust or possibly part of a tile kiln. Roman tile fragments have also been found to the east of Claypit Farm (HER 1481 - MEX5357).

Anglo-Saxon

4.5 The town of Thaxted is known to date to the Anglo-Saxon period (Arman 1978). A deed of gift dating from AD 981 refers to a church at Thaxted, and is one of the earliest references to an individual church in the Diocese (HER 1412 - MEX5042). The Saxon church is believed to have stood on the site of the extant Church of St John the Baptist, St Mary and St Laurence to the north-west. Additional Anglo-Saxon evidence is sparse and comprises only a late Saxon copper alloy strap end found at Goddards Farm and a silver coin discovered in antiquity (HERs 45615 - MEX1036912 & 45627 - MEX1036924).

4.6 Place-name evidence suggests that Thaxted developed from *Tachesteda*, meaning 'the place where thatching material grows' (Reaney 1935). The Domesday Book records Thaxted as a well-established and prosperous community in the late 11th century, comprising a single manor held by Richard with 52 villagers, 24 smallholders and 16 slaves (Rumble 1983).

Medieval

4.7 The town of Thaxted grew significantly during the medieval period and was granted a market in 1205, although there is evidence to suggest a market existed prior to the 13th century (HER 1397 - MEX4992). Extensive evidence of medieval activity and occupation is recorded throughout the town and attests to rapid expansion from the 14th century onwards (Thaxted website). The town became the centre for a cutlery industry in the late 13th century, employing a large proportion of the population and attracting a immigrants to the town (Anon. 1999).

4.8 Extant medieval buildings in Thaxted include the Guildhall in Town Street, the 15th century Recorder's House and the parish church, which replaced the Saxon structure in the 14th - 15th century (HERs 1398 - MEX4995, 1399 - MEX5000, 46899 - MEX1039730 & 1413 - MEX5044). Grade II listed Hillside Cottage, which stands 80m to the west of the site, is a 16th century or earlier timber framed house (HER 37637 - MEX1013077). A possible medieval tile kiln is also recorded at Claypits Farm and to the south-west of the site, yet much of tile recovered was of poor quality, indicating wasters (HER 1479 - MEX5355).

Post-medieval and later

4.9 The medieval cutlery industry died out in the 16th century and was partially replaced by a local weaving industry centred upon Newbiggen Street to the south-west (Anon. 1999). A charter of 1556 refers to Thaxted as '*greate ruine and decay by reason of greate povertie and necessyti*' and granted the town the status of a full borough in an attempt to halt the decline. It became a stronghold of Non-conformism in the 17th - 18th centuries (Simcoe 1934), and boasted three mills by the early 19th century. A Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) findspot of post-medieval date from the parish of Little Bardfield and to the east of the site (HER 54101 - MEX1045792).

4.10 Extant early post-medieval standing buildings consist of the tower at the Church of St John the Baptist, St Mary and St Laurence and Claypits Farmhouse (HERs 1414 - MEX5047 & 1480 - MEX5356), the latter of which is Grade II listed and dates to the 16th century. As noted previously, the forms part of the garden associated with Potters Cottage, which is a Grade II listed 17th century timber framed house also known as Coldhams Fee (HER 37638 - MEX1013078).

The site

4.11 The site forms part of the garden associated with Potters Cottage, which is a Grade II listed 17th century timber framed house also known as Coldhams Fee (HER 37638 - MEX1013078). The historic building listing (List Entry No. 1112968) describes it as:

'17th century or earlier small house, timber framed and plastered and part weatherboarded with thatched roof. 1 storey and attics. 2 window range modern casements. One small dormer. Red brick chimney stack. Modern Lean-to extension at south end with red pantile roof.'

4.12 Documentary sources suggest a medieval origin for the place-name Coldhams Fee in Thaxted, yet it is unclear whether it refers to the extant Grade II listed building to the east of the site, or even the site itself. The name Coldhams Fee is first documented in 1599, when Sir John Cutts, Knight, was obliged by licence 'to vest the *'manor and borough of Thaxted, and Spencer's Fee'* in trust to *Thomas Kemp, Esq., who had before purchased a reputed manor in this parish, called Coldham's Fee'* (Brayley & Britton 1803). After 1599 onwards, the *'manor of Coldham's Fee'* appears to have formed and remained part of the larger manor of Thaxted, along with the manors of Horham and Spencers Fee (Ref. D/DHu/T9).

4.13 Little is known about Thaxted manor, particularly given its absence in the relevant *Victoria County History*, and the parish of Thaxted tithe apportionment no longer exists. Chapman and Andre's map of Essex, which dates to 1777 (Fig. 3) reveals that the site formed part of *Maudlin Green*, which consisted of a strip of open green following the route of the extant Bardfield Road. It also depicts two small standing buildings in the vicinity of the site, which are judged to be Potters Cottage/Coldhams Fee and Hillside Cottage to the west.

4.14 The parish of Thaxted tithe map (Ref. D/CT 348 A; Fig. 4) dates to 1844, and it depicts very change in the extent of Thaxted. The site remains some distance to the east of the town and was situated to the south of the west to east aligned road, now known as Bardfield Road. In 1844, a total of five properties stood along the southern frontage of the road and the site is judged to have lain within the gardens or ground between the two small standing buildings regarded as Potters Cottage/Coldhams Fee and Hillside Cottage. The parish of Thaxted tithe apportionment no longer exists, so it was not possible to reveal any further information about the ownership, occupation and usage of the site at the time of the tithe map.

4.15 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, which dates to 1875 (Fig. 5), confirms that the site lay within a residential garden to the south of Bardfield Road. In 1875, the site formed a small section of garden associated with what is now Potters Cottage, which stands to the east and is also known as Coldhams Fee. To the north-west of the site in 1875 stood Woodbine Cottage, with Hillside Cottage further westwards along Bardfield Road. It also reveals that a small standing building was located within the site, possibly comprising the outbuilding, which is to be demolished prior to the proposed development. Subsequent Ordnance Survey maps, which date to 1897 and 1920, show no change or development within the site or its immediate vicinity.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The ECC HEA advice required trial trenches to be excavated across the footprint of the proposed new house and access/parking area. One trench of 10m x 1.8m, one of 7m x 1.8m, and one of 5m x 1.8m, were excavated (Fig. 6). The trenches were mechanically excavated using a 2.5 tonne mechanical 360° excavator with a toothless ditching bucket.

5.2 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. The excavated spoil was checked for finds.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench description is presented below:

Trench 1 (Figs. 6 - 7)

Sample section 1 0.00 = 99.84m AOD		
0.00 – 0.15m	L1000	Topsoil. Firm, dark grey brown clay silt with occasional small and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints.
0.15m+	L1006	Fill of pit F1005. Patches of friable, dark brown grey clay silt, and firm pale yellow brown silty clay with occasional small and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints and chalk.

Description: Trench 1 contained a large modern pit (F1005) and a 20th century wall footing (M1010).

Large Pit F1005 was sub circular (2.00+ x 1.80+m), and its full plan and profile were not defined. Its fill (L1006) comprised patches of friable, dark brown grey clay silt, and firm pale yellow brown silty clay with occasional small and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints and chalk. It contained CBM, and plastic. The feature was not excavated as it was clearly of 20th century date.

Brick Wall Footing M1010 was linear in plan (1.80 x 0.50m), orientated north/south. It was constructed using mid orange red frogged bricks (220 x 110 x 70mm), set within a pale grey cement mortar and sitting on a pale grey concrete base.

Trench 2 (Figs. 6 - 7)

Sample section 2A 0.00 = 98.76m AOD		
0.00 – 0.38m	L1000	Topsoil. As Sample Section 1.
0.38 – 0.49m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, mid yellow brown silty clay with occasional small and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints and chalk.
0.49m+	L1002	Natural deposits.

Sample section 2B 0.00 = 98.77m AOD		
0.20 – 0.15m	L1000	Topsoil. As Sample Section 1.
0.15m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 2A.

Description: Trench 2 contained a very large modern pit (F1008) and a 20th century wall footing (M1010).

Large Pit F1008 was sub circular (4.00 x 1.80+m), and was not defined in plan or profile. Its fill (L1009) comprised patches of friable, dark brown grey clay silt, firm mid orange brown clay silt, and firm pale yellow brown silty clay with occasional small and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints and chalk. It contained CBM and plastic. It was not excavated as it was clearly of 20th century date.

Brick Wall Footing M1010 was linear in plan (1.80+ x 0.50m), orientated east/west, and was a return of the wall footing recorded in Trench 1.

Trench 3 (Figs. 6 - 7)

Sample section 3A 0.00 = 99.66m AOD		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As Sample Section 1.
0.32 – 0.63m	L1001	Subsoil. As Sample Section 2A.
0.63m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 2A.

Sample section 3B 0.00 = 99.56m AOD		
0.00 – 0.32m	L1000	Topsoil. As Sample Section 1.
0.32 – 0.51m	L1001	Subsoil. As Sample Section 2A.
0.51m+	L1002	Natural deposits. As Sample Section 2A.

Description: Trench 3 contained undated Ditch F1003.

Ditch F1003 was linear (2.00+ x 0.70 x 0.28m), orientated north / south. It had steep to moderately sloping sides and a flat base. Its fill (L1004) was a firm, mid yellow brown clay silt with occasional small and medium sub-angular flints. It contained no finds.

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 On the southern side of the site was a 0.32m thick topsoil layer (L1000) of firm, dark grey brown clay silt with occasional small and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints. L1000 overlay a 0.19m – 0.31m thick subsoil (L1001) of firm, mid yellow brown silty clay with occasional small and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded flints and chalk. The natural deposits (L1002) were encountered between 0.51m and 0.63m below the current ground surface.

8.2 On the northern side of the site a thin (0.15m) layer of topsoil (L1000) directly overlay the natural deposits (L1002).

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The Essex Historic Environment Record notes that the site lies within an area of archaeological potential, adjacent to the 17th century Potters Cottage, and in an area where high status Roman remains have been found.

9.2 The evaluation revealed an undated ditch (F1003), a modern wall footing (M1010) and two large modern rubbish pits (F1005 and F1008).

DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with Saffron Walden Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AS would like thank Ms Eleanor Hawkins for funding the works and Mr Peter Hawkins for all his assistance.

AS is also pleased to acknowledge the staff of the Essex Historic Environment Record, in particular Ms Katie Lee-Smith and Mr Richard Havis. AS would also like to thank the staff of the Essex Record Office (ERO), based in Chelmsford.

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Appendix 1 - Concordance of Finds

PCTX20 - P8274, Potters Cottage, Bardfield Road, Thaxted

Feature	Context	Segment	Trench	Description	Spot Date (Pot Only)	Pot Qty	Pottery (g)	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other Material	Other Qty	Other (g)
	1010		1	Wall				1009				

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORT

The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey

Approximately one-third of a single modern brick (1009g) was recovered from Wall S1010. It comprises a Fletton brick stamped (partially) LBC PHORPRES 12. Phorpres bricks were mass-produced by the London Brick Company (Works No.12) throughout the 20th century, with peak production in the 1920s to 1960s.

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX (P8274)



1
General view of site before excavation of trenches



2
Trench 1 looking east



3
Sample section 1 in Trench 1 showing Pit F1005



4
Wall F1010 in Trench 1



5
Trench 2 looking north



6
Sample section 2A in Trench 2



7
Sample section 2B in Trench 2 showing Pit F1008



8
Trench 3 looking east



9
Sample section 3A in Trench 3



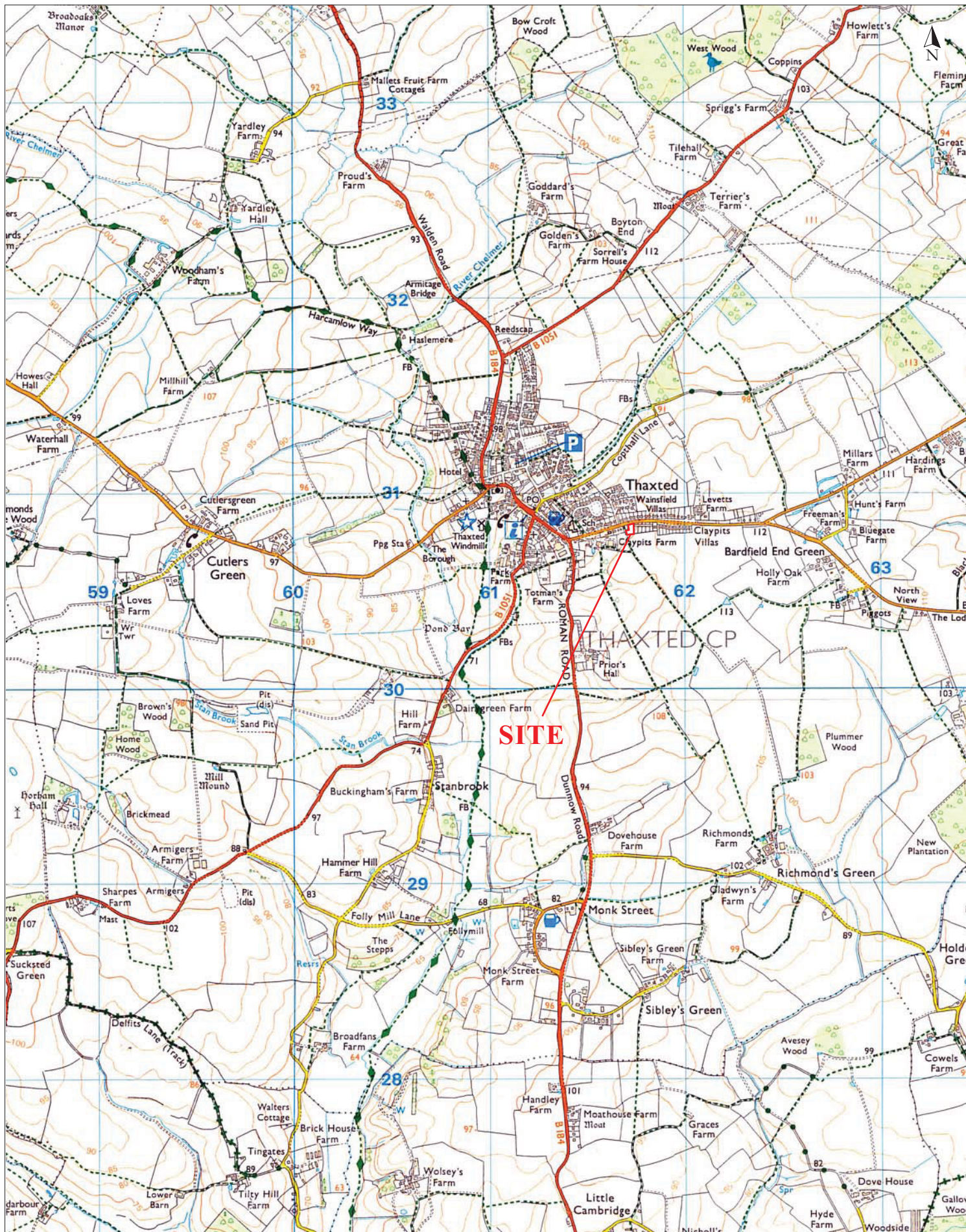
10
Sample section 3B in Trench 3 showing Ditch F1003



11
General view of site after excavation of trenches

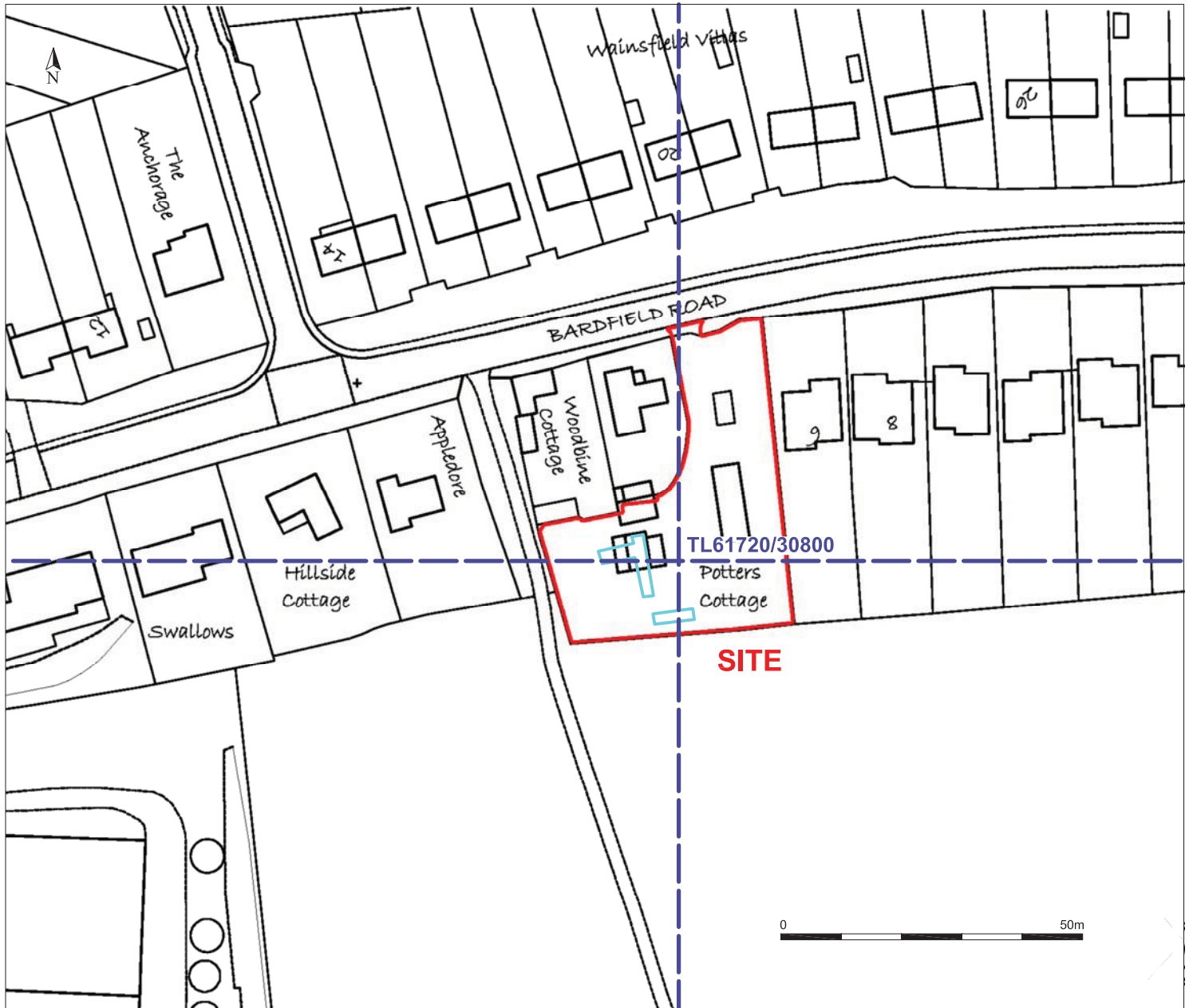


12
General view of site after excavation of trenches



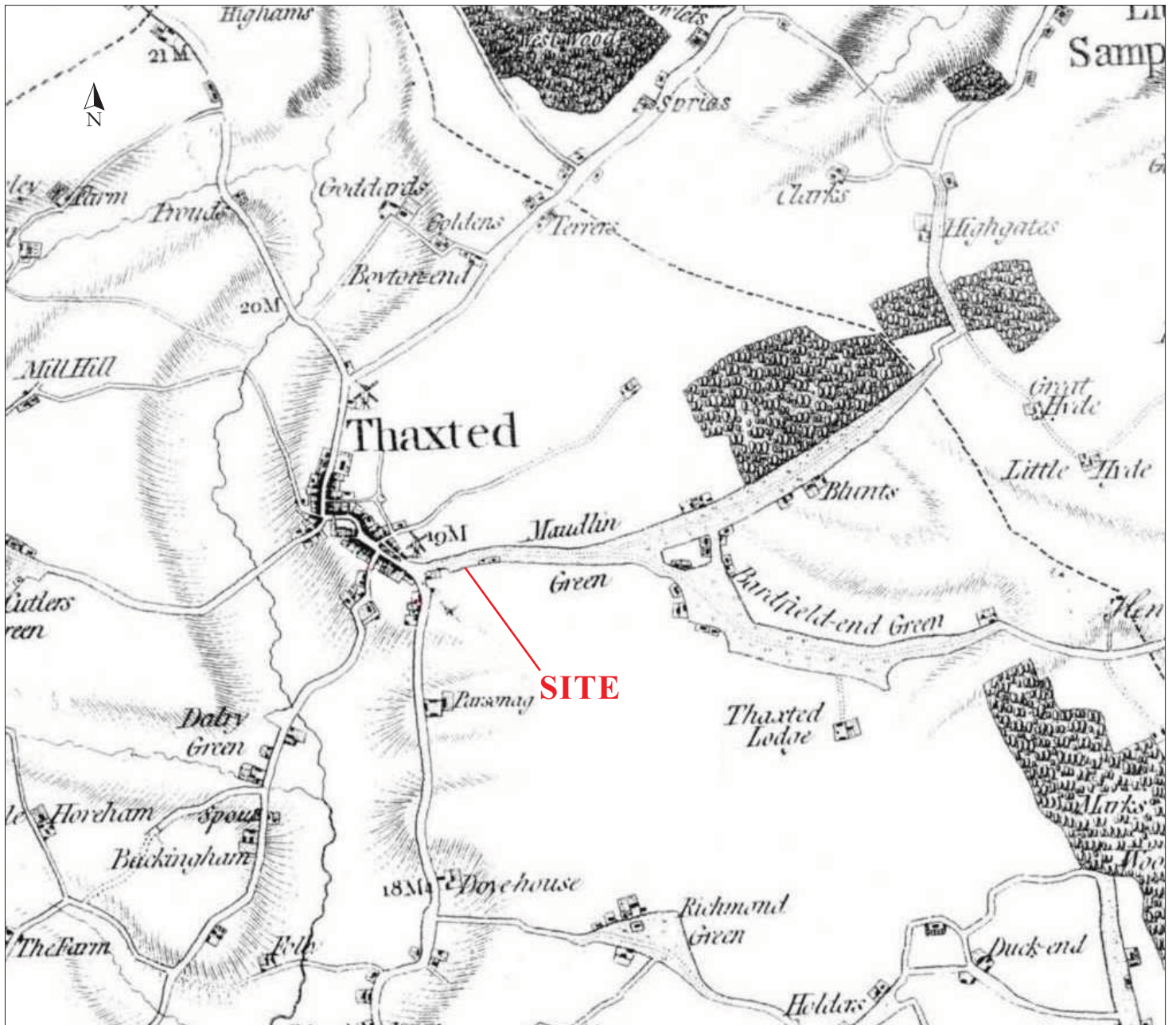
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4
 Potters Cottage, Bardfield Rd, Thaxted, Essex (P7584)

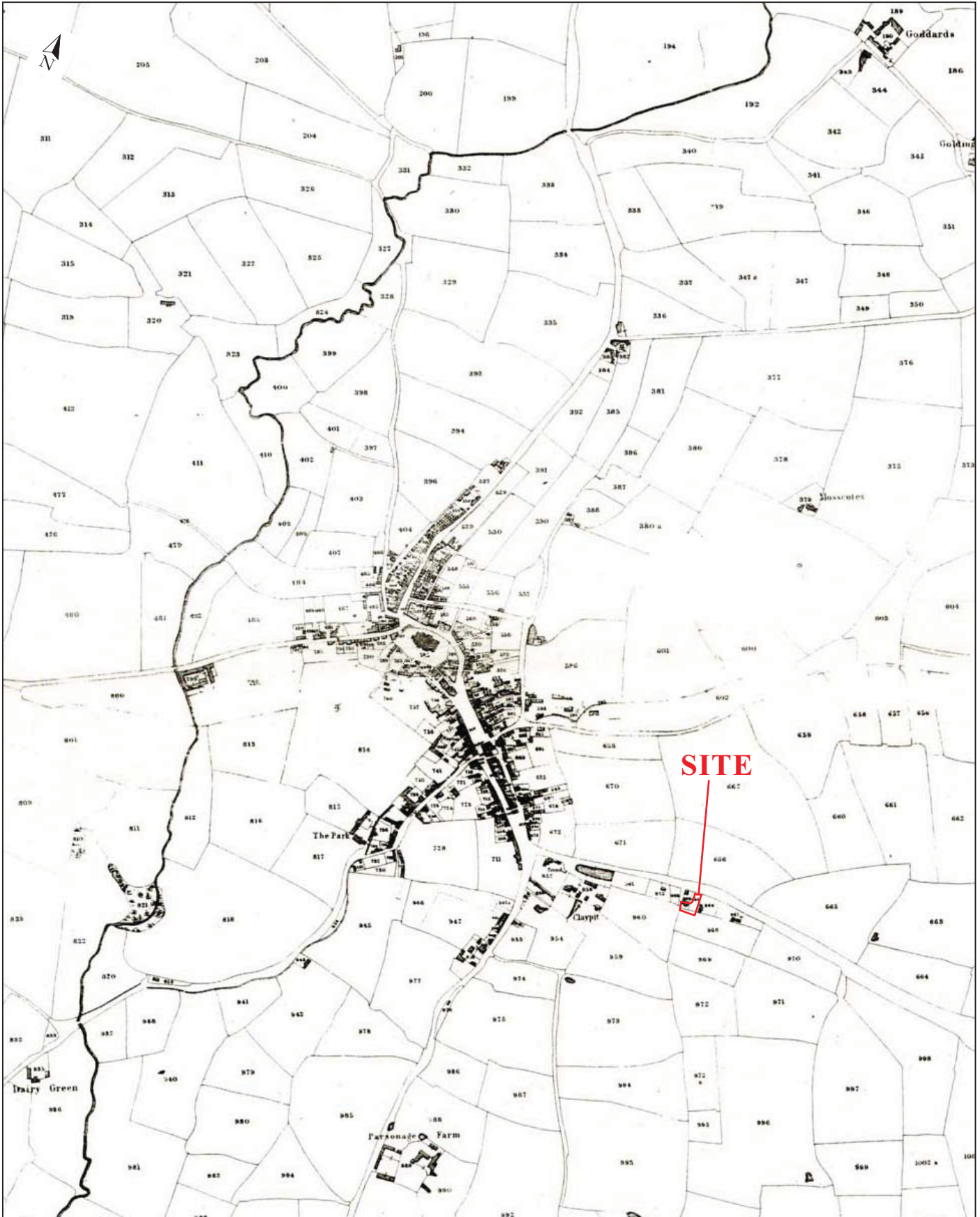


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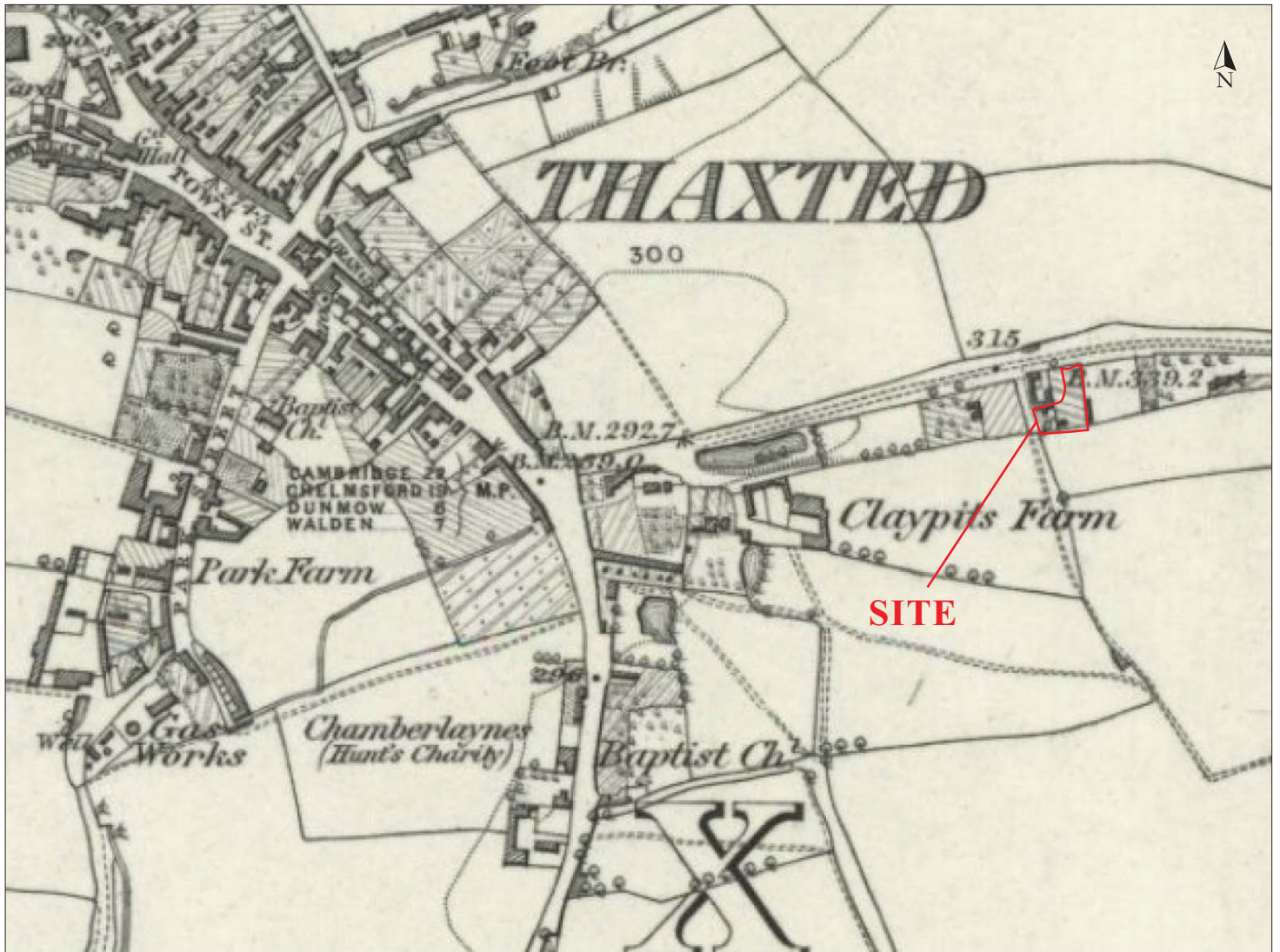
<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
Scale 1:1000 at A4
Potters Cottage, Bardfield Rd, Thaxted, Essex (P8274)



<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
Fig. 3 Chapman & Andre, 1777
Not to scale
Potters Cottage, Bardfield Rd, Thaxted, Essex (P7584)



Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Fig. 4 Tithe map, 1844
Not to scale
Potters Cottage, Bardfield Rd, Thaxted, Essex (P7584)



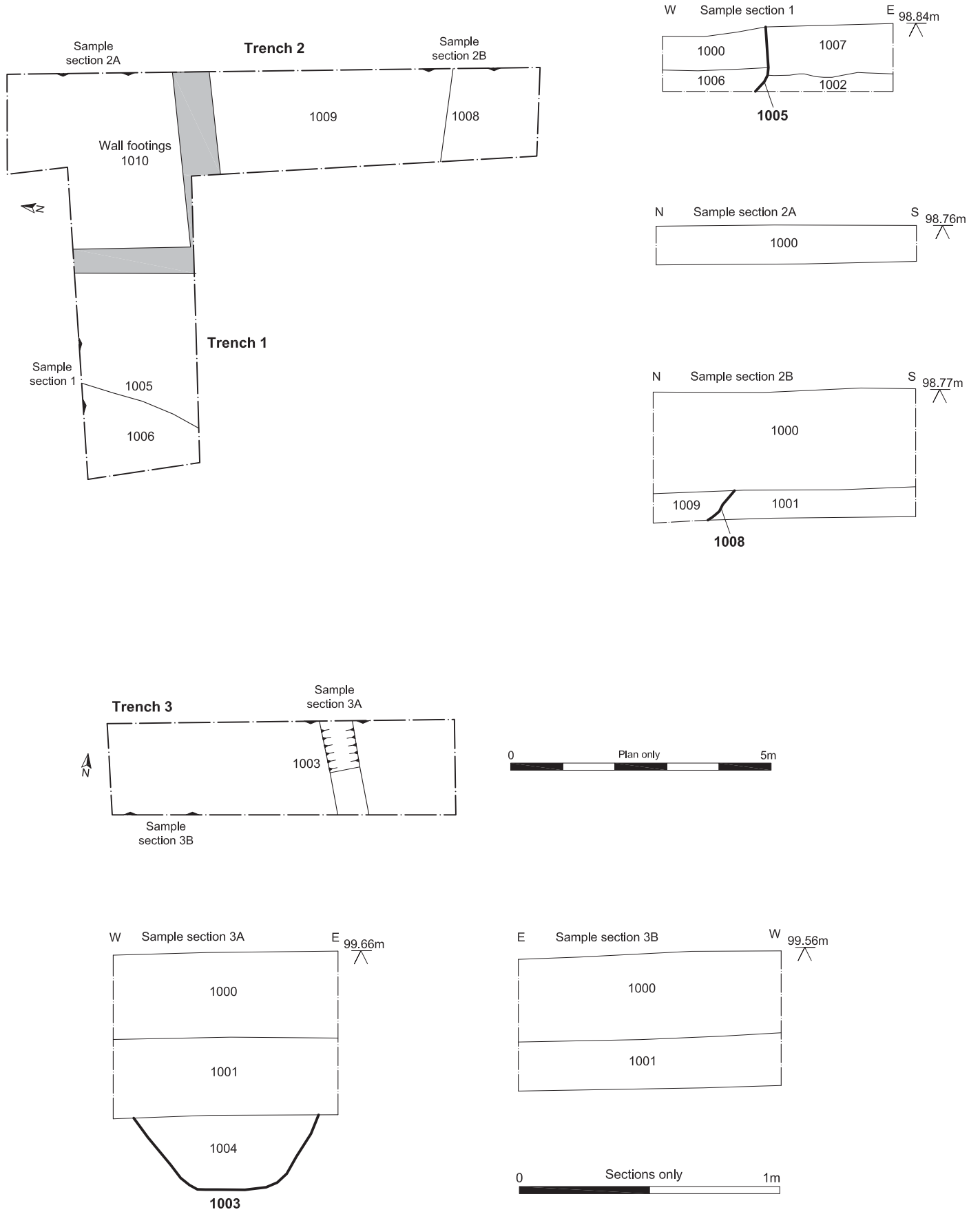
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Fig. 5 OS map, 1875
Not to scale
Potters Cottage, Bardfield Rd, Thaxted, Essex (P7584)



0 15m

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Fig. 6 Trench location plan
 Scale 1:250 at A4
 Land Adjacent to Potters Cottage, Bardfield Rd (P8274)



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Fig. 7 Trench plans and sections

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

Land Adjacent to Potters Cottage, Bardfield Rd (P8274)