
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**MERCHLAND COTTAGES, MERCHLAND ROAD,
NEW ELTHAM, LONDON SE9**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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NGR: TQ 4447 7291	Report No. 3280
London Borough: Greenwich	Site Code: MCS09
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3211
Signed:	Date: April 2009

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Merchland Cottages, Merchland Road, New Eltham, London SE9</i>		
Project description			
<p><i>In April 2009, Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Merchland Cottages, Merchland Road, New Eltham, London SE9 (NGR TQ 4447 7291). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to permission for the construction of new block of flats and dwellings at the site.</i></p> <p><i>The evaluation revealed modern features and finds including a large extraction pit connected with brick manufacturing. No earlier features or finds were revealed</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>28/04/2009 – 01/05/2009</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>3211</i>	Site code	<i>MCS09</i>
Type of project	<i>Trial trench evaluation</i>		
Site status			
Current land use	<i>Vacant</i>		
Planned development	<i>Residential redevelopment</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern pits and postholes, modern extraction pit</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Greater London</i>	<i>LB Greenwich</i>	<i>Eltham</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>GLSMR</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>SE9</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 7,000m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TQ 4447 7291</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c. 38m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>EH GLAAS</i>		
Project supervisor/(PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>B. & M. McHugh Ltd</i>		
Full title	<i>Merchland Cottages, Merchland Road, New Eltham, London SE9; an archaeological evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z., Higgs, K.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3280</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>April 2009</i>		

MERCHLAND COTTAGES, MERCHLAND ROAD, NEW ELTHAM, LONDON SE9 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In April 2009, Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Merchland Cottages, Merchland Road, New Eltham, London SE9 (NGR TQ 4447 7291). The evaluation was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to permission for the construction of new block of flats and dwellings at the site.

The evaluation revealed modern features and finds including a large extraction pit connected with brick manufacturing. No earlier features and finds were present

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In April 2009, Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Merchland Cottages, Merchland Road, New Eltham, London SE9 (NGR TQ 4447 7291; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by B. & M. McHugh Ltd, in compliance with a condition attached to planning consent and required by the local planning authority (LB Greenwich). The imposition of a condition was based on advice from English Heritage Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (EH GLAAS) (Planning Ref 06/3265/SD (02/0670/O)). It is proposed to redevelop the site for residential use.

1.2 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken according to advice from EH GLAAS and a specification (Written Scheme of Investigation) prepared by AS (dated 30th March 2009). The project conformed to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2001) and the relevant EH GLAAS *Archaeological Guidance Papers* (AGPs, revised 1998) , in particular *Archaeological Guidance Paper No. 3; Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London* and *Archaeological Guidance Paper No. 5; Evaluations*.

1.3 The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to determine, as far as was possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. An adequate sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened were studied, and attention was given to sites and remains of all periods. The evaluation also sought to clarify the nature and extent of surviving disturbance and intrusions and access the degree of archaeological

survival of buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.

Planning policy context

1.4 The relevant planning policies which apply to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage are Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG15) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning' (PPG16) (Department of the Environment).

1.5 PPG16 (1990) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to archaeology. It states that there should always be a presumption in favour of preserving nationally important archaeological remains in situ. However, when there is no overriding case for preservation, developers are required to fund opportunities for the recording and, where necessary, the excavation of the site. This condition is widely applied by local authorities.

1.6 PPG15 (1994) is the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to the conservation of the historic environment by protecting the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and protecting listed buildings (of architectural or historical interest) from demolition and unsympathetic change and safeguarding their settings as far as is possible. This condition is also widely applied by local authorities.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The site of Merchland Cottages lies within New Eltham, which is located within the parish of Eltham, the London Borough of Greenwich and towards the south-eastern extent of Greater London (Fig. 1). The centre of New Eltham is situated 400m to the west of the site, whilst the larger settlement of Eltham lies c.2.5km to the west-north-west. The site is located along the course of the Sidcup railway line, which runs between London and Dartford in Kent. The northernmost section of the site comprises vehicular and separate pedestrian access from Merchland Road to the remainder of the site on the opposite side of the railway line.

2.2 The site lies to the south of Merchland Road, and also predominantly to the south of the Sidcup railway line (Fig. 2). To the south of the site lies the rear property boundaries of residential housing fronting Dulverton Road, whilst to the west lies a recreation ground. To the east of the site lie playing fields associated with Dulverton Primary School. The site comprises an irregular plot of land covering an area of c. 7,000m² and occupied by the residential properties of Merchland Cottages and their associated gardens. The proposed development is for the erection of 14 dwellings and a block of ten flats with 24 car parking spaces, new access bridge and footpath from Eastnor Road.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site has an overwhelmingly urban topography given its location within the London Borough of Greenwich and conurbation of Greater London (Fig. 1). Located along the course of the Sidcup railway line, the site lies in a predominantly residential area of London's south-eastern suburbs. The site has a relatively flat relief and is located at approximately 38m AOD. The surrounding relief is gently undulating sloping only slightly down towards the River Shuttle c.1.5km to the north-east of the site.

3.2 Both the site and the surrounding area are located on a solid geology of Eocene Palaeogene London Clay (BGS 1978). It is overlain by a drift geology of Greenwich Terrace Beds, which also includes pockets of brickearth and clay, as well as alluvial soils and flood plain gravels. The soils of the site remain unsurveyed given its urban location (SSEW 1983), and relatively little previous archaeological work has been undertaken in the surrounding area to reveal anything of the stratigraphy likely to be encountered at the site.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Archaeological advice from EH GLAAS suggested that very little recent archaeological work has been undertaken in the area of the site, and thus the archaeology and history of the New Eltham area remains relatively unknown. The GLSMR database also confirms that the site has only a limited known potential for archaeological remains, and the majority of the nearby findspots comprise isolated, casual discoveries (Fig. 3). The site, however, lies on the area of exposed London Clay close to the boundary with Blackheath and Woolwich Beds, which may possibly been exploited for settlement and resources during the prehistoric periods (MoLAS 2000).

4.2 One of the few recent archaeological evaluations in the area, undertaken in Sidcup Road and 800m to the south of the site, has produced the only known evidence of such prehistoric activity. The work revealed several irregular shallow features, some of which may have been ditches or gullies and were found to contain small fragments of pottery, tentatively dated to the Bronze Age (GLSMRs MLO59853 & MLO59855). The Romano-British period is represented by a single findspot of a Roman coin commemorating the refounding and dedication of Constantinople, which was discovered by a metal detectorist 900m to the north-west of the site (GLSMR MLO11357).

4.3 The Anglo-Saxon and medieval history of the New Eltham area also remains relatively unknown. A Saxon community at Eltham is confirmed by Domesday Book and possibly developed out of a small Romano-British community indicated by traces of a farmstead found at the eastern end of Eltham and located close to the course of Roman Watling Street, which forms the

northern boundary of the parish, 3.5km to the north of the site (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983). The remains of Eltham Palace, 2.3km to the north-west, attest to Eltham's importance during the medieval period, and have produced evidence of both medieval buildings and Henry VIII's chapel (Woods 1976).

4.4 The post-medieval period of the area is represented only by a boundary stone located beside No. 501 Footscray Road (GLSMR MLO67070). The growth of Eltham and the smaller settlement of New Eltham began with the arrival of the railway in the 19th century. The Sidcup line along which the site lies was opened on 1st September 1866, a date which also saw the opening of New Eltham station as '*Pope Street*', 450m to the west (Info Transport website). Early modern remains in the area of the site comprise 19th - 20th century brick walls and associated building materials recorded at Oxleas Wood, early 19th century land drains and a Grade II listed 18th century milestone (GLSMRs MLO77822, MLO63925 & MLO83382).

4.5 The history of the site also remains relatively unknown and no documents referring directly to the site are known. The northern boundary of the majority of the site was formed in 1866, following the construction of the Sidcup railway line, and it is very likely that much of the stratigraphy of the northern section of the site was truncated and disturbed by associated groundworks. The Ordnance Survey map of 1870 confirms the site's location along the course of the railway and suggests that the site formed an undeveloped agricultural plot of land associated with a farm known as '*Lower Redmont*' located 400m to the west.

4.6 The rapid expansion of the suburbs of New Eltham is confirmed by the 1898 Ordnance Survey map, which not only depicts the presence of Merchland Road to the north of the site, but also reveals the late 19th century development of the site. By 1898, the site was labelled as a '*Brick Works*', presumably exploiting the presence of brickearth known to overlie London Clay in certain areas. The site was also occupied by three residential structures, consisting of Chester Cottage in the western section, and Nos. 2 – 3 Merchland Cottages in the eastern section of the site (Vicerey-Weekes 2007). The 1898 map is also the first cartographic source to depict the pedestrian bridge over the railway line, which forms part of the site.

4.7 The settlement of New Eltham continued to expand in the 20th century, and encroached evermore on the site. By 1919, the Ordnance Survey map reveals that the former brick works at the centre of the site was no longer extant, although it is unknown whether the brickearth pits had been in-filled, possibly to incorporate the site into the '*Nurseries*' located to the immediate north. The footprints of the three residential structures within the site, however, remained unaltered in 1919. The final cartographic source of the 1938 Ordnance Survey map depicts no change or development to the site, yet does not depict any of the trees located in the easternmost section of the site, which are understood to be subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 To evaluate the presence of any archaeological remains it was required to excavate trial trenches comprising a 5% sample of the site. Seven trial trenches, each measuring 30m x 1.8m, were excavated in locations approved by EH GLAAS (Fig. 2). The location of Trenches 2, 3 and 6 were altered slightly to avoid causing damage to trees.

5.2 The trenches were mechanically excavated using a 360° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Top soil and undifferentiated overburden were removed mechanically under close archaeological supervision. All further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features and finds. 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 with a metal detector.

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 Trench 1 Figs. 2 & 4

Sample sections:

<i>North west end, south west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.10m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.10m	L1000	Topsoil. Dark blackish grey, soft sandy silt.
0.10 – 0.64m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid greyish brown, firm clayey silt.
0.64m +	L1002	Natural mid orange, compact silty clay with gravel.

Trench 1, Sample Section 2

<i>South east end, south west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.08m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.12m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.12 – 0.48m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.48m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 1, Sample Section 1

Description:

Trench 1 contained one feature F1003. It was a circular pit (0.91 x 0.90 x 0.07m) located in the western part of the trench. It had moderately sloping sides and flat base. Its single fill, L1004, was a dark greyish brown, firm silty clay. It contained early modern pottery, CBM, clay pipe and animal bone.

6.2 Trench 2 Figs. 2 & 4

Sample sections:

<i>North east end, south east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 37.98m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.12m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.12 – 0.38m	L1001	Subsoil. As above
0.38 – 0.70m	L1005	Light greenish cream compact mortar material.
0.70 – 0.85m	L1006	Greyish and orange/brown firm silty clay with demolition rubble.
0.85m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 2, Sample Section 3

<i>South west end, south east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.01m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.60m	L1018	Demolition rubble.
0.60 – 1.00m	L1005	Mortar material. As above.
1.00 – 1.60m	L1006	Rubble. As above.
1.60m +	L1015	Yellow clay. Fill of F1014.

Trench 2, Sample Section 4

Description:

Trench 2 contained Postholes F1007 and F1010, Pit F1012, and a large pit, F1014.

Posthole F1007 was circular (0.43 x 0.36 x 0.26m), and it had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It contained two fills. Its basal fill, L1008, was a mixed red and dark grey, loose sandy silt with CBM. 19th /20th century pottery occurred within this deposit. The upper fill, L1009, was a mid grey, firm sandy silt. It contained no finds.

Posthole F1010 was also circular (0.34 x 0.29 x 0.15m), and adjacent to F1007. It had steep sides and a concave base. Its single fill, L1011, was a dark grey with reddish patches, loose sandy silt. It contained 19th century pottery and CBM.

Pit F1012 was rectangular (1.50 x 0.40+ x 0.20m), and located against the western edge of the trench. It had moderately sloping sides and a ?concave base. Its fill, L1013, was a mixed red and dark brown, loose silty sand with CBM. Finds within L1013 comprised modern pottery and CBM. The pit cut a service trench.

F1014 was a large feature present in nearly 50% of the trench, and occupying the southern sector. It is likely that it represents an extraction pit located in the central and western sectors of the site. It was also recorded in Trench 3. Its fill,

L1015, was a mottled light orangey yellow and light blue grey, compact clay. This fill contained occasional modern CBM.

6.3 Trench 3 Figs. 2 & 4

Sample sections:

<i>North east end, south east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.10m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.06m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.06 – 0.22m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.22 – 0.47m	L1005	Mortar material. As above.
0.47 – 0.73m	L1006	Rubble. As above.
0.73m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 3, Sample Section 5

<i>South west end, north west facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.09m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.06m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.06 – 0.65m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.65m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 3, Sample Section 6

Description:

Trench 3 contained one feature, a large pit, F1014. It was the same feature recorded within Trench 2, and it contained the same clayey fill, L1015. The feature remained unexcavated. It was cut by modern service trench F1016.

6.4 Trench 4 Figs. 2 & 5

Sample sections:

<i>North west end, north east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.02m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.08m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.08 – 0.44m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.44 – 0.57m	L1005	Mortar material. As above.
0.57 – 0.83m	L1006	Rubble. As above.
0.83m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 4, Sample Section 7

<i>South east end, north east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.08m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.06m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.06 – 0.44m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.44 – 0.52m	L1005	Mortar material. As above.
0.52 – 0.90m	L1006	Rubble. As above.
0.90m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 4, Sample Section 8

Description:

No archaeological features or finds were present in Trench 4.

6.5 Trench 5 Figs. 2 & 5

Sample sections:

<i>North west end, north east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 37.97m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.09m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.09 – 0.39m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.39 – 0.78m	L1005	Mortar material. As above.
0.78 – 0.98m	L1006	Rubble. As above.
0.98m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 5, Sample Section 9

<i>South east end, north east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 38.02m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.12m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.12 – 0.66m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.66 – 0.80m	L1005	Mortar material. As above.
0.80 – 1.02m	L1006	Rubble. As above.
1.02m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 5, Sample Section 10

Description:

No archaeological features or finds were present in Trench 5.

6.5 Trench 6 Figs. 2 & 5*Sample sections:*

<i>North east end, south east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 37.92m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.12m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.12 – 0.57m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.57 – 0.66m	L1005	Mortar material. As above.
0.66 – 0.90m	L1006	Rubble. As above.
0.90m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 6, Sample Section 11

<i>South west end, south east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 37.99m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.12m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.12 – 0.80m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.80m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

*Trench 6, Sample Section 12**Description:*

No archaeological features or finds were present in Trench 6.

6.5 Trench 7 Figs. 2 & 5*Sample sections:*

<i>North west end, south west facing</i> <i>0.00 = c. 38.10m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.11m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.11 – 0.59m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.59m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Trench 7, Sample Section 13

<i>South east end, south west facing</i> <i>0.00 = c. 38.13m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.18 – 0.76m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.76m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

*Trench 7, Sample Section 14**Description:*

No archaeological features or finds were present in Trench 7.

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 Topsoil (L1000) and subsoil (L1001) commonly overlay the natural drift geology at between 0.40-0.60m below existing and were present in all seven trenches. L1000 was a dark blackish grey, soft sandy silt. In W part of the site it contained large amounts of CBM and glass. Subsoil L1001 was a mid greyish brown, firm clayey silt.

8.2 Trench 3 contained L1018, a layer of modern demolition debris. L1005 and L1006 also comprised layers of demolition debris.

8.3 These deposits overlay L1002, the natural substrate, a mid orange/yellow, compact clay with patches of gravel. More gravel was present in S and SE part of the site.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Despite the potential for archaeological remains to be present, no archaeological features or finds, except 19th-20th century remains, were located within the area of evaluation.

9.2 Large pit F1014 (Trenches 2 & 3) may be related to the brickworks in the area and may represent a clay extraction pit.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with the Museum of London LAARC. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Internet resources;

Info Transport website;
<http://www.infotransport.co.uk/trains/station/37>

Old Maps website;
<http://www.old-maps.co.uk>

APPENDIX 1

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATABASE (GLSMR)

GLSMR	NGR TQ	Description
Prehistoric (until AD 43)		
MLO59853	4450 7210	Evaluation on Sidcup Road revealed several irregular shallow features, some of which may be ditches or gullies containing small fragments of pottery, tentatively dated to the Bronze Age
MLO59855	4450 7210	Evaluation on Sidcup Road revealed several irregular shallow features, some of which may be ditches or gullies containing small fragments of pottery, tentatively dated to the Bronze Age
Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)		
MLO11357	4400 7370	Roman coin commemorating the refounding and dedication of Constantinople discovered by a metal detectorist in the sports ground to the rear of Avery Hill Park
Post-medieval (AD 1500 - 1750)		
MLO67070	4445 7257	Post-medieval boundary stone located beside No. 501 Footscray Road
Early modern (AS 1750 – 1900)		
MLO77822	4384 7329	Remains of 19 th - 20 th century brick walls, metal and ceramic pipes, mortar and concrete surfaces recorded at Oxleas Wood
MLO63925	4450 7380	Evaluation at the University of Greenwich revealed two phases of land drains, one dated from the early 19 th century, the second later, and both indicative of open land prior to the construction of the college
MLO83382	44431 72575	Grade II listed 18 th century milestone sited on the pavement slightly to the south of axis of No 494 Footscray Road
Undated remains		
MLO59962	4451 7388	Avery Hill Student Village associated with Thames Polytechnic
MLO59850	4450 7210	Evaluation on Sidcup Road revealed a small ditch was found in the southernmost trench, aligned east to west and containing one fragment of brick or tile, possibly of modern date
MLO59851	4450 7210	Evaluation on Sidcup Road revealed a small oval pit was found towards the centre of the site, which contained fragments of burnt clay and charcoal, but no datable finds

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Merchland Cottages, Merchland Road, New Eltham, London SE9. Area of evaluation. Taken from NE.



DP 2. Trial trenching. Taken from E.



DP 3. Trench 1. Taken from SE.



DP 4. Trench 2. Taken from NNE.



DP 5. Trench 1, NW end. Sample section. Taken from SW.



DP 6. Trench 2, NE end. Sample section. Taken from SE.



DP 7. Trench 2. Old extraction pit F1014.
Taken from NE.



DP 8. Trench 2. Features F1007, F1010
and F1012. Taken from SW.



DP 9. Trench 3. Taken from NNE.



DP 10. Trench 4. Taken from NW.



DP 11. Trench 3, NE end. Sample section.
Taken from SE.



DP 12. Trench 4, NW end. Taken from NE.



DP 13. Trench 3. Extraction pit F1014.
Taken from SSW.



DP 14. Trench 5. Taken from SE.



DP 15. Trench 5, NW end. Sample section.
Taken from NE.



DP 16. Trench 5, SE end. Sample section.
Taken from NE.



DP 17. Trench 6. Taken from SW.



DP 18. Trench 7. Taken from NW.



DP 19. Trench 6, SW end. Sample section.
Taken from SE.

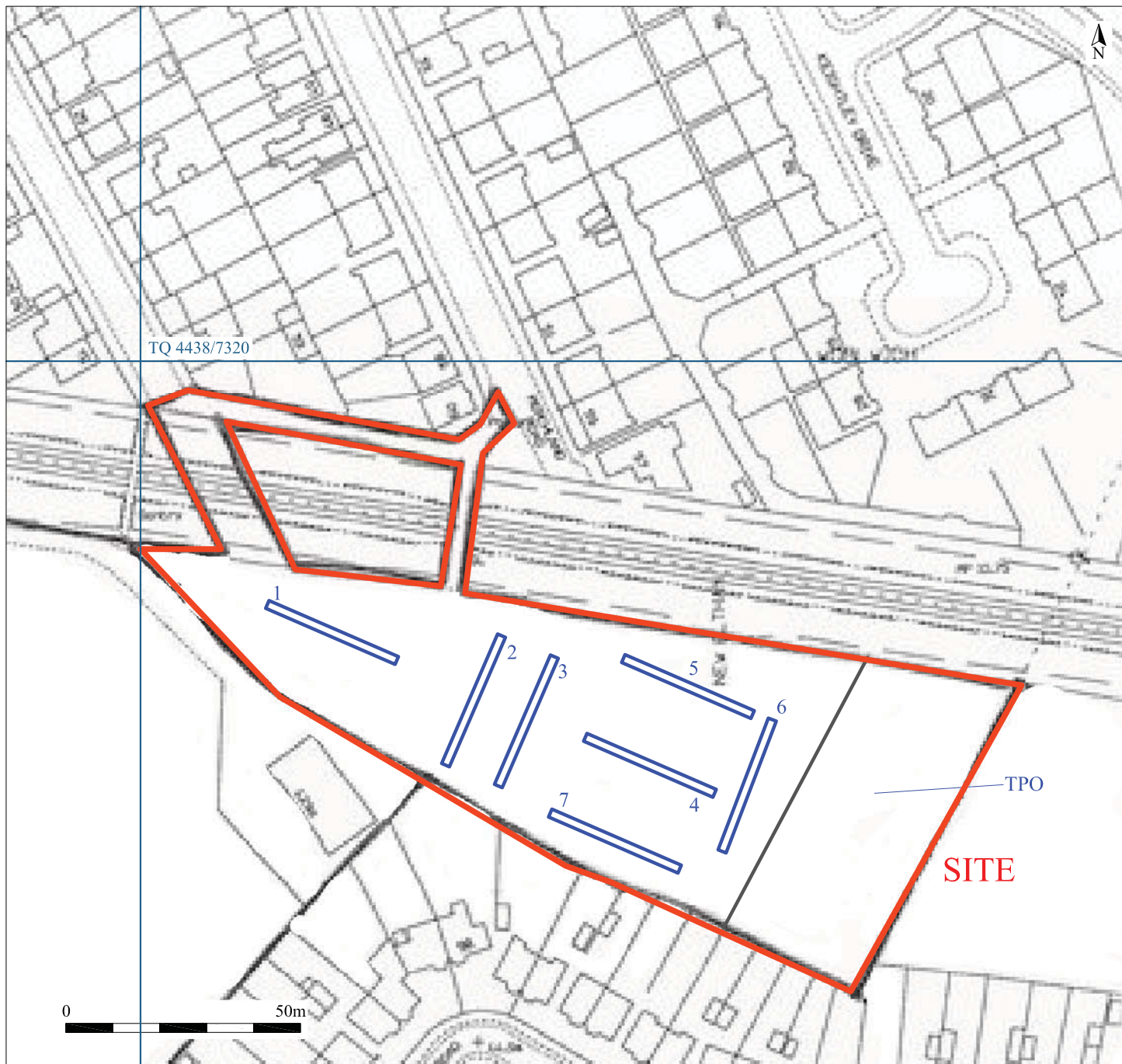


DP 20. Trench 7, NW end. Taken from SW.

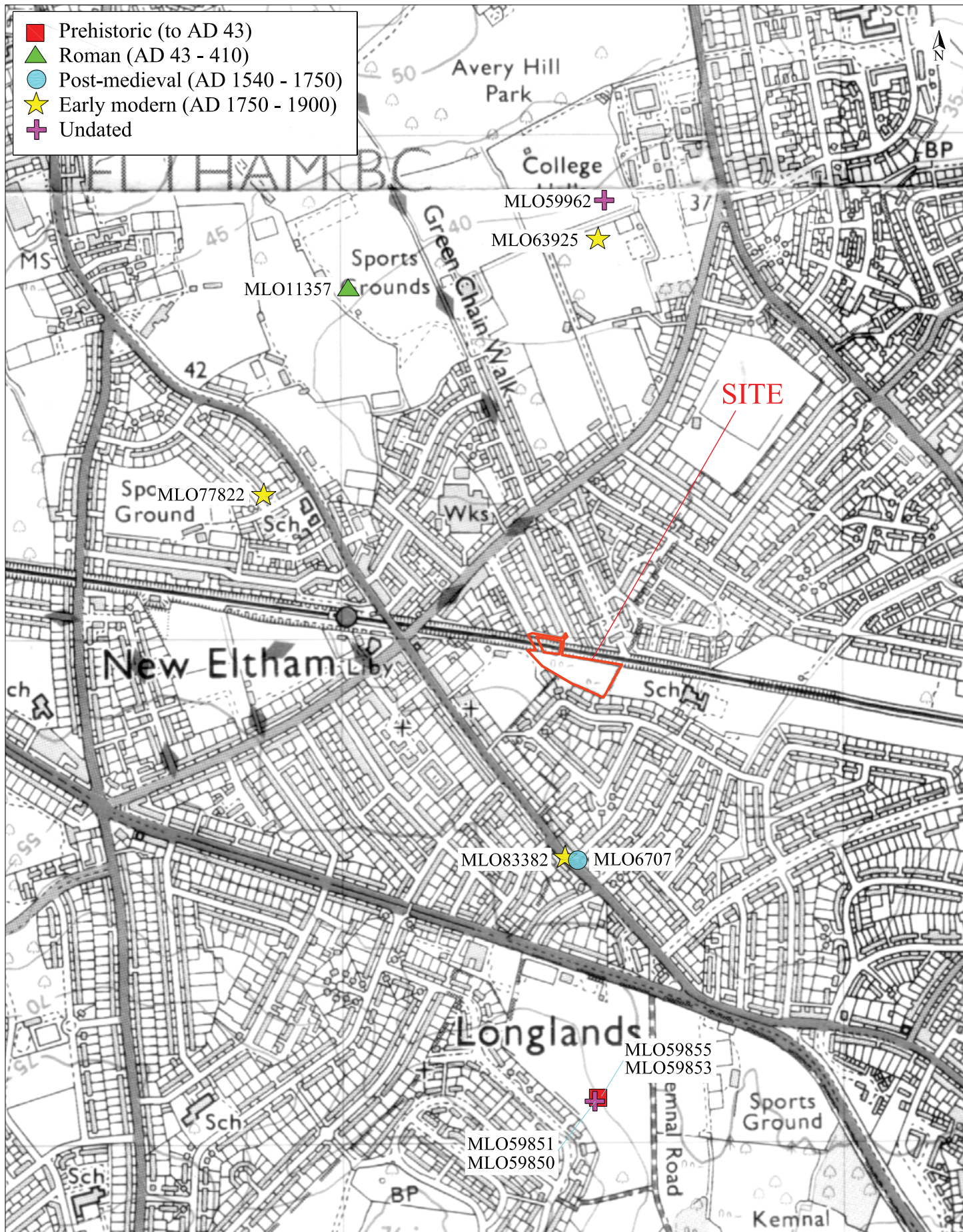


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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Fig. 2 Trench location plan
Scale 1:1250 at A4



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