
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**THE RISING SUN, SUN STREET, BIGGLESWADE,
BEDFORDSHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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NGR: TL 18886 245044	Report No. 3379
District: Bedfordshire	Site Code: AS1228
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3610
Signed:	Date: September 2009

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>The Rising Sun, Sun Street, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire. An Archaeological Evaluation.</i>		
<i>Project description (250 words)</i>			
<i>In September 2009 Archaeological Solutions Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at The Rising Sun, Sun Street, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 18886 245044). The archaeological evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition on approval for the demolition of the Rising Sun PH and the construction of a part one storey and part two storey building to provide 12 temporary family dwellings.</i>			
<i>Four trenches were excavated. Trench 2 revealed modern gullies and a modern pit. No other archaeological features or finds were encountered.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>14th Sept – 15th Sept 2009</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	
P. number	<i>3610</i>	Site code	<i>AS1228</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological evaluation</i>		
Site status			
Current land use	<i>Public house, garden and car park</i>		
Planned development	<i>Twelve temporary residential dwellings</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Late post-medieval / modern gullies, modern pit</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Bedfordshire</i>	<i>Biggleswade</i>	
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists (CBC)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>SG18 0BP</i>		
Area of site	<i>1024m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 18886 245044</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c. 35m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Central Bedfordshire County Archaeologist</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Lisa Smith</i>		
Funded by	<i>Habco Ltd</i>		
Project bibliography			
Full title	<i>The Rising Sun, Sun Street, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire. An Archaeological Evaluation.</i>		
Authors	<i>Smith, L.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3379</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>September 2009</i>		

THE RISING SUN, SUN STREET, BIGGLESWADE, BEDFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In September 2009 Archaeological Solutions Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at The Rising Sun, Sun Street, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 18886 245044). The archaeological evaluation was carried out in compliance with a planning condition attached to the approval for the demolition of the Rising Sun Public House and the construction of a part one-storey and part two-storey building to provide 12 temporary residential dwellings.

Four trial trenches were excavated. Trench 2 revealed late post-medieval / modern gullies and a modern pit. No other archaeological features or finds were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September 2009 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) at The Rising Sun, Sun Street, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 18886 245044) (Figs. 1-2). The evaluation was commissioned by Habco Ltd. It was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to the approval for the demolition of the existing Rising Sun Public House and the construction of a part one-storey and part two-storey building to provide 12 temporary residential dwellings (Central Bedfordshire Council Planning Ref. MB/TP/2008/2412).

1.2 The archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) was conducted in response to a brief received from Central Bedfordshire County Archaeologist (CBCA) (dated 9th September 2009), and a specification prepared by AS (dated 19th August 2009). It complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* (revised 2001). It also adhered to Gurney (2003) *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*.

1.3 The aims of the evaluation were to determine the location, extent, date, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential on the southern side of Sun Street, within the historic medieval and post-medieval core of the town of Biggleswade. It lies within the valley of the River Ivel, which flows to

the west. The site is located on deposits of river terrace sand and gravels above Lower Greensand, at c.35m AOD.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The brief notes that Biggleswade was recorded at Domesday, but no evidence of Saxon settlement is known from the core of the later town. The historical development of the town has been detailed in the Extensive Urban Survey prepared for the town (BCC 2005). The town received the grant of a weekly market by the 13th century, with a trapezoidal market place developing on the eastern side of the parish church of St Andrew (Historic Environment Record HER 1018). The main streets at this time became High Street, Church Street, Shortmead Street and Mill Lane. Biggleswade gained town status in the 14th century (HER 17124)

3.2 The Bedfordshire and Luton Historic Environment Record was consulted prior to the preparation of the WSI. The brief notes that only a relatively small number of archaeological investigations have been carried out in the town of Biggleswade. These investigations were undertaken in Market Place in 1995, which revealed three phases of market development (BCAS 1995), and in Shortmead Street where evidence for an 18th century wharf was recorded (HAT 2000).

3.3 Bedfordshire and Luton HER entries in the area surrounding the site are dominated by post-medieval and modern evidence, mostly in the form of extant or former buildings. The closest of these to the site is the building of the Rising Sun Public House (HER 16464) which was built in 1925, replacing an earlier building. The Rising Sun was opened in 1836 following the closure of the Sun Inn which stood on the opposite side of Sun Street. The Red Lion Public House (HER 1127), on London Road, is of medieval origin with later additions. To the east of the site, Nos. 95B - 101, High Street are late medieval timber framed buildings (HER 7389). Shortmead Street is the site of a medieval vicarage, visited in 1399 by Bishop Henry Beaufort who found it ruined due to non-residence (HER13432).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Four trenches, each measuring between 10m and 25m in length, were excavation. All the trenches were linear and measured 2.20m in width (Fig 2). The trenches were excavated within the footprint of the new building and car park/amenity area and included the area occupied by the Rising Sun Public House, following its recent demolition.

4.2 Undifferentiated overburden was mechanically excavated, thereafter all further investigation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1 Figs. 2 & 3, DP 1

<i>Sample Section 2 Fig. 3</i> <i>North-east end, north-west facing</i> <i>0.00m = 30.11m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.12m	L1002	Modern hardcore surface. Light yellowish white limestone in a sandy matrix.
0.12 – 0.47m	L1001	Topsoil. Dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent flecks and fragments of limestone, moderate fragments of CBM.
0.47 – 0.84m	L1003	Subsoil. Mid greyish brown sandy silt with frequent limestone fragments, moderate flecks and fragments of CBM.
0.84 – 1.02m	L1004	Buried soil. Light yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional flecks and fragments of limestone and CBM.
1.02m+	L1005	Sandy gravel natural. Frequent small and medium angular gravel within a light yellowish brown silty sand. Occasional mid reddish brown silt patches throughout.

<i>Sample Section 1 Fig. 3</i> <i>South-west end, north-west facing</i> <i>0.00m = 29.97m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1002	Modern hardcore surface. As above.
0.20 – 0.35m	L1001	Topsoil. As above.
0.35 – 0.48m	L1003	Subsoil. As above.
0.48 – 0.77m	L1004	Buried soil. As above.
0.77m+	L1005	Sandy gravel natural. As above.

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

5.2 Trench 2 Figs. 2 & 3, DP 2

<i>Sample Section 3 Fig. 3</i> <i>South-west end, north-west facing</i> <i>0.00m = 30.03m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.08m	L1001	Topsoil. As above Tr.1
0.08 – 0.22m	L1014	Gravel surface and sand
0.22 – 0.49m	L1003	Subsoil. As above Tr.1
0.49 – 0.71m	L1004	Buried soil. As above Tr.1
0.71m+	L1005	Sandy gravel natural. As above Tr.1

<i>Sample Section 4 Fig. 3</i> <i>North-east end, north-west facing</i> <i>0.00m = 29.67m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.86m	L1000	Demolition material. Mid greyish brown silty sand with frequent CBM, angular gravel
0.86m+	L1005	Sandy Gravel Natural. As above Tr.1

Description: Two gullies (F1006 and F1008), a possible gully terminus (F1012) and a pit (F1010) were present in Trench 2. F1006 and F1008 contained late post-medieval/modern CBM. F1010 contained modern finds.

Gully F1006 (>5.50m x 0.60m x 0.20m) was linear in plan aligned east to west. It had shallow moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill (L1007) was a mid reddish brown silty sand with frequent flint gravel. Late post-medieval / modern CBM (70g) was present.

Gully F1008 (>5.50m x 0.60m x 0.04m) was linear in plan aligned east to west. It had shallow sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill (L1009) was a mid yellowish brown silty sand with frequent flint fragments and angular gravel (DP 3). Late post-medieval / modern CBM (16g) was present. It was cut by possible Pit F1010.

Pit F1010 (>1.0m x 0.50m x 0.56m) was rectangular in plan with vertical sides and a flattish base (Fig 3). Its fill (L1011) was a mid yellowish brown sandy silt with frequent flint fragments and gravel (DP 3). Twentieth-century pottery (14g), late post-medieval / modern CBM (240g) and clay pipe stem fragment (1g) were present. Pit F1010 cut Gully F1008.

Possible Gully Terminus F1012 (>0.50m x 0.46m x 0.07m) was linear in plan, aligned north to south. It had shallow sides and a flattish base. Its fill (L1013) was a light bluish grey silty sand with moderate flint gravel (DP 3). A clay pipe stem fragment (1g) was present.

5.3 Trench 3 Figs. 2-3, DP 4

<i>Sample Section 5 Fig. 3</i> <i>South-east end, south-west facing</i> <i>0.00m = 29.24m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.70m	L1000	Demolition material. As above Tr. 2
0.70m+	L1005	Sandy Gravel Natural. As above Tr.1

<i>Sample Section 6 Fig. 3</i> <i>North-west end, south-west facing</i> <i>0.00m = 29.33m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.84m	L1000	Demolition material. As above Tr. 2
0.84m+	L1005	Sandy Gravel Natural. As above Tr.1

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

5.4 Trench 4 Figs. 2-3, DP 5

<i>Sample Section 8 Fig. 3</i>		
<i>North end, east facing</i>		
<i>0.00m = 30.02m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.12m	L1001	Topsoil. As above Tr.1
0.12 – 0.63m	L1003	Subsoil. As above Tr.1
0.63 – 0.73m	L1004	Buried soil. As above Tr.1
0.73m+	L1005	Sandy gravel natural. As above Tr.1

<i>Sample Section 7 Fig. 3</i>		
<i>South end, east facing</i>		
<i>0.00m = 30.06m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.10m	-	Modern tree mulch.
0.10 – 0.18m	L1002	Modern hardcore surface. As above Tr.1
0.18 – 0.65m	L1003	Subsoil. As above Tr.1
0.65 – 0.86m	L1004	Buried soil. As above Tr.1
0.86m+	L1005	Sandy gravel natural. As above Tr.1

Description: No archaeological features or finds were present.

6 CONFIDENCE RATING

6.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features and finds during the archaeological investigation.

7 DEPOSIT MODEL

7.1 Modern material (L1000) resulting from the recently demolished Rising Sun Public House was encountered in north-eastern sectors of the site (Trenches 2 and 3). It consisted of a mid greyish brown silty sand with frequent CBM, angular gravel and modern inclusions (0.70m - 0.86m thick). It directly overlay the natural (L1005).

7.2 A modern hardcore surface (L1002) was located in the south-western corner of the site (Trenches 1 and 4). It was a light yellowish white limestone in a sandy matrix (0.12m - 0.20m thick).

7.3 Topsoil (L1001) covered the remaining areas of the site. It was a dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent flecks and fragments of limestone, moderate fragments of CBM and modern finds. It varied between 0.08m and 0.35m thick. In the main it directly overlay the subsoil except in Trench 2

where it sealed a modern gravel surface with a sand base (L1014; 0.14m thick).

7.4 Subsoil L1003 was identified in Trenches 1, 2 and 4 after the removal of topsoil. It consisted of a mid greyish brown sandy silt with frequent limestone fragments, moderate flecks and fragments of CBM and modern finds (0.13m - 0.47m thick). It directly overlay a thin buried soil L1004 in Trenches 1, 2 and 4. L1004 was a light yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional flecks and fragments of limestone and CBM (0.10m - 0.29m thick). It sealed all the archaeological features recorded in Trench 2. Elsewhere it directly overlay the natural (L1005).

7.5 At the base of the stratigraphic sequence was L1005, the sandy gravel natural. It consisted of frequent small and medium angular gravel fragments within a light yellowish brown silty sand with occasional mid reddish brown silt patches throughout (0.70m - 1.02m below the present ground surface).

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 The archaeological evaluation revealed two late post-medieval / modern gullies (Tr. 2 F1006 & F1008), a late post-medieval/modern gully terminus (Tr.2 F1012 and a modern pit (Tr. 2 F1010). All the features were contained within Trench 2, and no other archaeological features or finds were encountered.

8.2 The site had been subjected to much modern disturbance relating to the Rising Sun Public House, and the excavated features are likely associated with the public house.

8.3 Four trenches were excavated and were broadly distributed across the site. No evidence of medieval or early post-medieval activity was encountered potentially indicating that the growth of the town did not extend this far north until the late post-medieval and modern periods.

9 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

9.1 A full archive will be prepared for all work undertaken, and deposited with the local museum, Bedford. The museum accession number is BEDFM:2009.66.

9.2 The archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited, as well as any donated finds from the site, at the local museum (Bedford). The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed and 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.

9.3 The archive will be prepared in accordance with the UK Institute for Conservation's *Conservation Guidelines No. 2* and the *Guidelines for the*

*preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990) as well as according to the document *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museum in Bedfordshire (1998)*.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**APPENDIX 1
CONCORDANCE OF FINDS**

APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORTS

The Pottery

The evaluation recovered 5 abraded modern sherds weighing 10g. They represent a minimum of four vessels, and can all be assigned a 20th century date.

The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey

The evaluation recovered a total of 14 fragments (326g) of highly fragmented, late post-medieval to early modern peg tile. The peg tile was locally manufactured in an oxidised red-orange fabric with inclusions of sparse medium sand and calcareous inclusions (voids). The bulk of the peg tile: 11 fragments were contained in Pit F1010 (L1011), while scarce fragments were also contained in Linear F1006 (L1007) and Pit F1008 (L1009).

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1
Trial Trench 1. Looking South West.



2
Trial Trench 2. Looking South West.



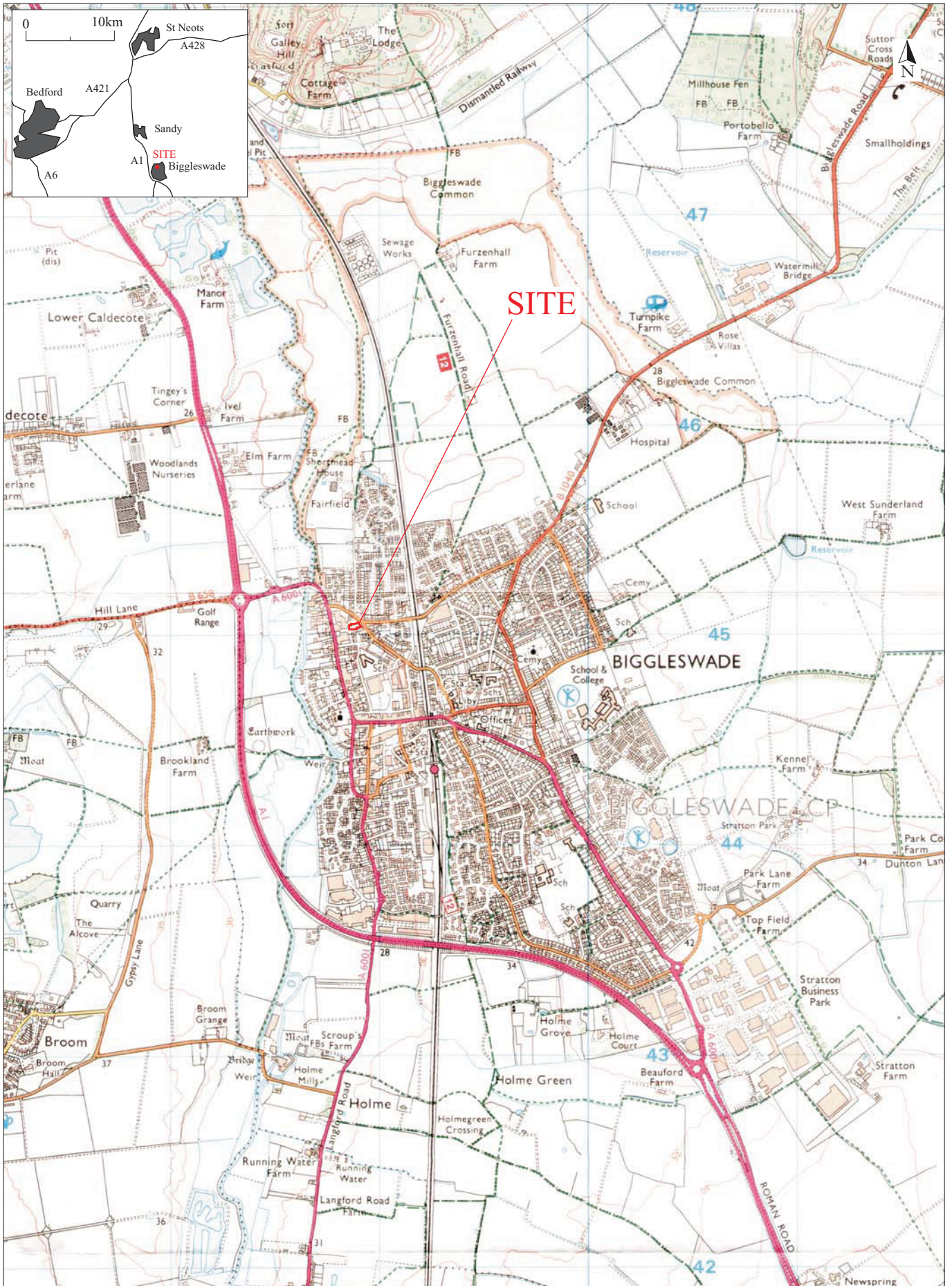
3
Trial Trench 2. Pit F1008, Gullies F1010 & F1012. Looking West.



4
Trial Trench 3. Looking North West

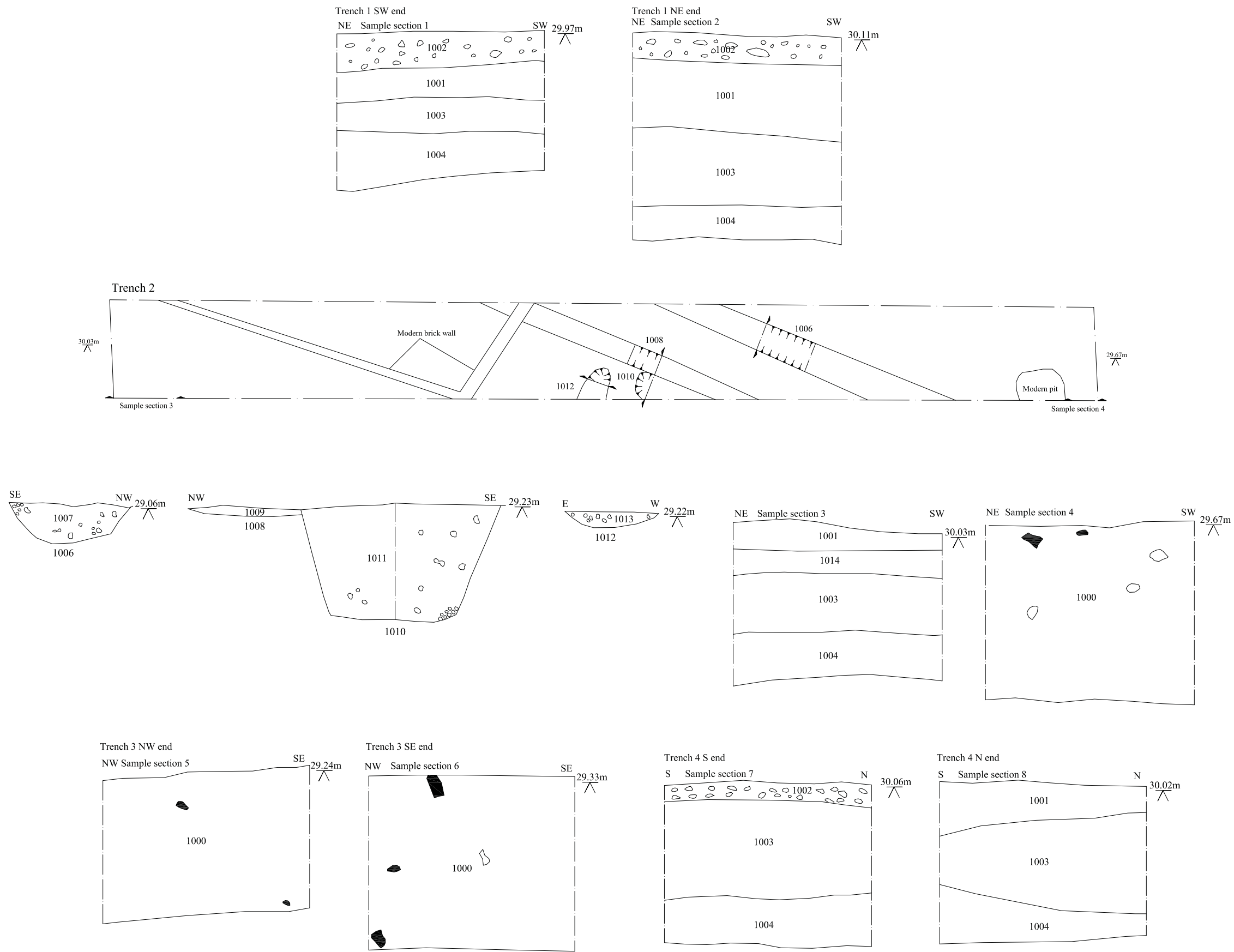


5
Trial Trench 4. Looking North.



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



0 Plans 5m

CBM

0 Sections 2m

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Fig. 3 Trench plans & sections
 Scale plans at 1:100 & sections at 1:20 at A3