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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**THE SWAN PUBLIC HOUSE, WATLING STREET,  
PARK STREET, ST ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

|                               |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA |                     |
| NGR: TL 1477 0404             | Report No. 3438     |
| District: St Albans           | Site Code: AS 1118  |
| Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA  | Project No. 3134    |
| Signed:                       | Date: December 2009 |

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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

|   |   |                     |                   |
|---|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Project details</b>  |   |                     |                   |
| <b>Project name</b>   | <i>The Swan Public House, Watling Street, Park Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire</i>                               |                     |                   |
| <p><i>In August 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological evaluation at the site of The Swan Public House, Watling Street, Park Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1477 0404). The programme was undertaken as part of a planning condition on approval for proposed residential redevelopment of the site.</i></p> <p><i>The village of Park Street lies c. 2.5km to the south of the centre of St. Albans. The site lies towards the northern end of the historic core of the village, on the west side of roman Road of Watling Street. It has a potential for Romano-British archaeological remains.</i></p> <p><i>The programme revealed one undated gully and a residual prehistoric struck flint fragment. The gully runs c.13m to the west of the modern road (Park Street) and potentially represents the remainder of the roadside ditch for Watling Street, although the lack of finds recovered makes it difficult to firmly establish this.</i></p> |   |                     |                   |
| Project dates (fieldwork)   | <i>9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> December 2009</i>   |                     |                   |
| Previous work (Y/N/?)   | <i>Y</i>  | Future work (Y/N/?) | <i>N</i>          |
| P. number   | <i>3134</i>   | Site code           | <i>AS 1118</i>    |
| Type of project   | <i>An Archaeological Evaluation</i>   |                     |                   |
| Site status   |   |                     |                   |
| Current land use  | <i>Disused public house</i>   |                     |                   |
| Planned development   | <i>New dwellings and pub building conversion</i>  |                     |                   |
| Main features (+dates)  | <i>Undated gully</i>  |                     |                   |
| Significant finds (+dates)  | <i>Prehistoric struck flint</i>   |                     |                   |
| <b>Project location</b>   |   |                     |                   |
| County/ District/ Parish  | <i>Hertfordshire</i>  | <i>St Albans</i>    | <i>St Stephen</i> |
| HER/ SMR for area   | <i>Hertfordshire HER</i>  |                     |                   |
| Post code (if known)  |   |                     |                   |
| Area of site  | <i>c. 1000 m<sup>2</sup></i>  |                     |                   |
| NGR   | <i>TL 1477 0404</i>   |                     |                   |
| Height AOD (max/ min)   | <i>73/72m</i>   |                     |                   |
| <b>Project creators</b>   |   |                     |                   |
| Brief issued by   | <i>SADC</i>   |                     |                   |
| Project supervisor/s (PO)   | <i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>  |                     |                   |
| Funded by   | <i>Ideal Rise Ltd</i>   |                     |                   |
| Full title  | <i>The Swan Public House, Watling Street, Park Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire: An Archaeological Evaluation</i> |                     |                   |
| Authors   | <i>Pozorski, Z.</i>   |                     |                   |
| Report no.  | <i>3438</i>   |                     |                   |
| Date (of report)  | <i>December 2009</i>  |                     |                   |

# **THE SWAN PUBLIC HOUSE, WATLING STREET, PARK STREET, ST ALBANS, HERTFORDSHIRE**

## **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

### **SUMMARY**

*In September 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological evaluation at the site of The Swan Public House, Watling Street, Park Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1477 0404). The programme was commissioned by Mr Terry O Sullivan of Ideal Rise Ltd in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of the new residential development on land at the former public house.*

*The village of Park Street lies c. 3km to the south of the centre of St. Albans. The site lies towards the northern end of the historic core of the village, on the west side of roman Road of Watling Street. It has a potential for Romano-British archaeological remains.*

*The programme revealed one undated gully and a residual prehistoric struck flint fragment. The gully runs c.13m to the west of the modern road (Park Street) and potentially represents the remainder of the roadside ditch for Watling Street, although the lack of finds recovered makes it difficult to firmly establish this.*

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In September 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological evaluation at the site of The Swan Public House, Watling Street, Park Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1477 0404; Figs. 1 & 2). The programme was commissioned by Mr Terry O Sullivan of Ideal Rise Ltd in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of the new residential development on land at the former public house (St Albans Planning Ref. 5/09/1327).

1.2 The programme was undertaken in accordance with an advice from the St Albans City & District Council District Archaeological Officer (SADC) (S. West, dated 16/11/09) and a specification prepared by AS (dated 20/11/2009) and approved by SADC. The project conformed to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2001), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14 (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. In particular, it aimed to establish the presence or absence of any remains relating to the activity in the Romano-British period associated with the course of Watling Street, and/or to identify any evidence of later street frontage occupation. It was also important to understand the level of truncation on the site.

#### *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 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 village of Park Street lies c. 3km to the south of the centre of St. Albans, on the south side of the A414 (Fig. 1). The A5183 which follows the line of Roman Watling Street and links London to St. Albans runs on a north-west to south-east alignment through the village (DP 1), whilst the St. Albans to London railway line extends north-east to south-west.

2.2 The site lies towards the northern end of the historic core of the village, on the west side of Watling Street and c. 600m east of the railway line. It comprises a rectangular plot of land; the public house building standing in the northern part of the site with a car parking area to the south. A small enclosed yard containing a modern outbuilding lies to the rear of the site.

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

3.1 The site lies on flat or gently undulating land on the western bank of the River Ver. Land to the north and west of the site climbs very gradually while to

the south and east it gently undulates remaining at the same average height in the direction of London. The site is situated at the height c. 72.50m AOD.

3.2 Park Street lies on a solid geology of Cretaceous Upper Chalk. The soils of the area are unsurveyed by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983) but the surrounding areas display the well drained flinty fine soils over clayey soils and similar fine loamy soils (associated with flinty and chalky drift geologies) of the Charity 2 association; the deep stoneless well drained silty soils and similar soils affected by groundwater, associated with Aeolian silty drift, of the Hamble 2 association; and the well drained flinty coarse loamy and sandy soils of the Sonning 1 association which are derived from plateau gravel and river terrace drift geologies (SSEW 1983).

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 Prehistoric remains in the area of The Swan, are limited to finds of flint implements (HER 4546) including 24 scrapers, 7 knives, 4 awls and pierces, 2 burins, 5 retouched flakes and blades, and a core. In addition, a late Gaulish coin was recovered to the south east of the site (HER 9763), the coin dates to c. 40BC. The Roman road, Iter II, later known as Watling Street (HER 4576), runs immediately to the east of the site, and would have formed an important Roman routeway into Verulamium (St Albans).

4.2 A 16<sup>th</sup> century coin hoard was recovered in 1886 to the immediate south of the site (HER 4722); it consisted of 221 gold coins of Henry VI, VII, and VIII, Edward IV and Richard III, concealed in an oak beam in two large holes, plugged with willow. To the north of the site is a medieval hall house, at 61-63 Park Street (HER 9500), it dates to the late medieval period and is an example of an 'in series' hall house. To the east of the site is an area known locally as "Pilgrims Rest" (HER 9702) which local tradition states was a resting place for pilgrims on their way to St Albans Abbey. Timber cottages which were formerly located on the site were demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, allegedly revealing earlier masonry remains.

4.3 To the immediate north east of the site is a former water mill for the processing of corn (HER 5832), known as Park Mill, which was erected in 1846. Originally on this site there was a medieval corn mill belonging to the abbey estate and built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was repaired c.1330 by the Abbot, Richard of Wallingford, and was rebuilt by Abbot John Moot in the 1390s. The mill was taken over by the Beament family, who finished rebuilding the mill in 1846. To the east of the site is a forge, which is known to have been associated with Park Mill since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It was located at this site since at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and was demolished in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. To the east of the site the property of the Toll Cottage (HER 13011) is a timber-framed house built on a brick plinth. Despite its name it is unlikely to have ever served a function as a Toll House, as it lies in an isolated position, and the closest road of Watling Street was never turnpiked, or subject to tolls.

4.4 Other remains in the area relate to the coming of the railways and comprise the Frogmore and Park Street Station (HER 5469) which formerly consisted of a small wooden station building with brick chimneys and wooden canopy, a single wooden platform on wooden stilts, single track and coal siding, but has since been replaced by a modern prefabricated structure. To the north of the site, there was a short branch line which ran from the Midland Railway main line in the vicinity of Napsbury to the LNWR branch line at Park Street, accounts relating to the branch line are confused, and it seems likely that it was never actually used. In addition, a brick built railway bridge was located to the northwest of the site. The original bridge was built in 1857, and had the initials of the landlord of the Swan, George Martin, in the key brick, as many of the railway navvies were put up at The Swan. The bridge has since been replaced by a steel girder bridge.

4.5 A detailed historic building appraisal of the structure of the Swan PH was carried out by AS prior to the grant of planning permission (Williamson and Prosser 2008). This concluded that although the majority of the visible fabric of the building is of 20<sup>th</sup> century date, the north part of the building is likely to have its origins in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The original building has however been extensively reworked, leaving only traces of the original fabric and to all intents and purposes the building which now survives is a 1930s pub. Several features of the period survive including the bar, the staircase and several of the doors. A single storey range at the rear of the building is likewise essentially of 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 One trench was excavated using a mechanical 360° tracked mini-excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The trench location was approved by SADC and was situated to cover the footprints of proposed new build dwellings.

6.2 Topsoil and undifferentiated overburden were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and examined for archaeological features. 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 by a metal detector.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 2, DP 3-5)

|  |       |   |
|--|-------|---|
| <i>Sample section 1 (DP 7): S end, SW facing</i> |       |   |
| <i>0.00 = 72.50m AOD</i>                         |       |   |
| 0.00 – 0.17m                                     | L1000 | Tarmac. Surface of the car park for the public house. |
| 0.17 – 0.45m                                     | L1001 | Levelling layer. Light to mid yellow loose sand with  |

|              |       |   |
|--------------|-------|---|
|              |       | CBM rubble.   |
| 0.45 – 0.95m | L1002 | Made ground. Mid grey, compact clayey silt with occasional CBM, charcoal and chalk. |
| 0.95 – 1.05m | L1003 | ?Alluvium. Light to mid yellow, compact clayey silt.                                |
| 1.05m +      | L1004 | Natural greenish brown compact clay with gravel.                                    |

|  |       |                                     |
|--|-------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Sample section 2 (DP 8): W end, SE facing</i><br><i>0.00 = 72.50m AOD</i> |       |                                     |
| 0.00 – 0.14m   | L1000 | Tarmac. As above.                   |
| 0.14 – 0.45m   | L1001 | As above.                           |
| 0.45 – 1.05m   | L1002 | As above.                           |
| 1.05 – 1.18m   | L1003 | ?Alluvium. As above.                |
| 1.18m +  | L1004 | Natural clay with gravel. As above. |

### *Description of results:*

The trench contained one feature, F1005, an undated ?gully.

F1005 was a linear feature (1.60+ x 0.45 x 0.21m; DP 6) aligned north-west/south-east, located within western part of the trench. It had moderately sloping sides and concave base. Its single fill (L1006) was a light greyish brown, compact clayey silt with chalk chunks. No finds were recovered from this deposit. F1005 may have been a gully or a field drain.

One fragment of struck flint was recovered from a layer L1003 in northern part of the trench. It was a primary flake of debitage (16g) of indeterminate prehistoric date.

## **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 Deposits present on the site were sealed by modern tarmac surface L1000 and levelling layer/base for tarmac L1004. At c. 0.45m below existing, a layer of made ground L1002 was present. It measured c. 0.50m in thickness and it was the most substantial deposit revealed during the evaluation. It was a mid grey, compact clayey silt and it contained occasional fragments of CBM, charcoal and chalk.

8.2 Below made ground, at c. 1m below existing, a layer of light to mid yellow, compact clayey silt (L1003) was present. This deposit varied in depth from 0.10 to 0.30m and it measured more in thickness within northern part of



the trench. This layer may have been an alluvial deposit relating to the valley of River Ver located to the east of the site.

8.3 Natural solid geology was encountered at 1.05 – 1.20m below ground level and it was L1004, a greenish brown, compact clay with large amounts of gravel.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the Romano-British period, related to the course of Roman Watling Street which runs past the site.

9.2 Despite the archaeological potential of the site, in the event the only feature present was undated ?gully F1005, which is located c.13m from the present road (Park Street). It is possible that this ?gully represents the remainder of the roadside ditch for Watling Street, although the lack of finds makes it impossible to firmly establish this. The only residual find, a struck flint of prehistoric date, was recovered from L1003, possibly an alluvial deposit which may have relocated this artefact from area further to the west or north-west of the site where the land gradually climbs.

9.3 The evaluation did not reveal any remains of structures or buildings occupying the site. The layer of made ground (L1002) was likely created in post-medieval/modern era.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at the St Albans Museum. 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**

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Terry O Sullivan of Ideal Rise Ltd for commissioning and funding the project and for his kind assistance, as well as Mr Will O Sullivan for his kind on-site assistance.

AS gratefully acknowledge the input and advice of Mr Simon West of St Albans City & District Council.

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## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. The Swan PH site, Watling Street, Park Street, St Albans, Herts. View WNW.



DP 2. The site. View WNW.



DP 3. E part of Trench 1. View NW.



DP 4. W part of Trench 1 with L1003. View SW.



DP 5. W part of Trench 1. View SW.



DP 6. Trench 1, F1005. View NW.



DP 7. Trench 1, E part, S end. Sample section. View NE.

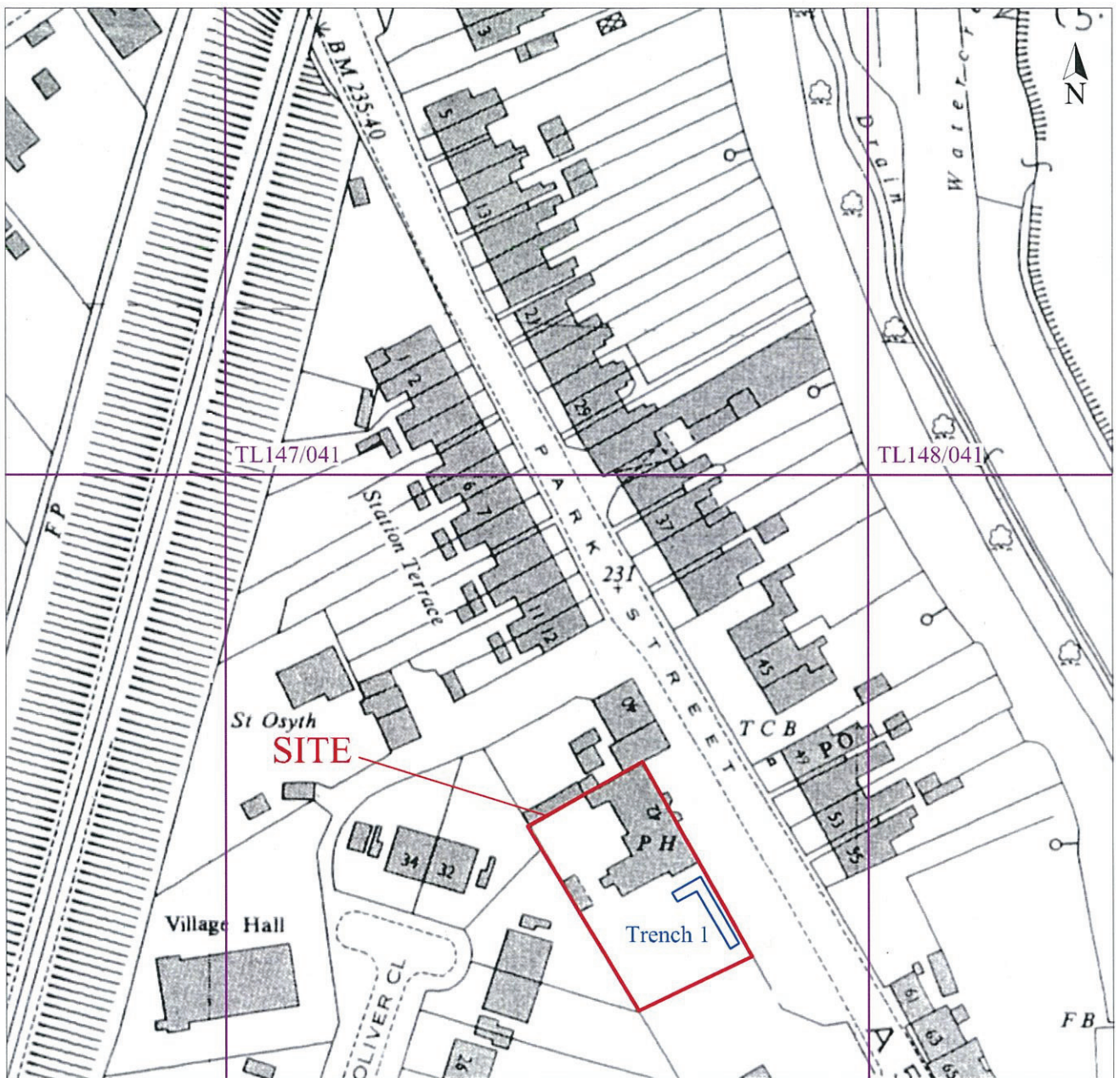


DP 8. Trench 1, W part, W end. Sample section. View NW.



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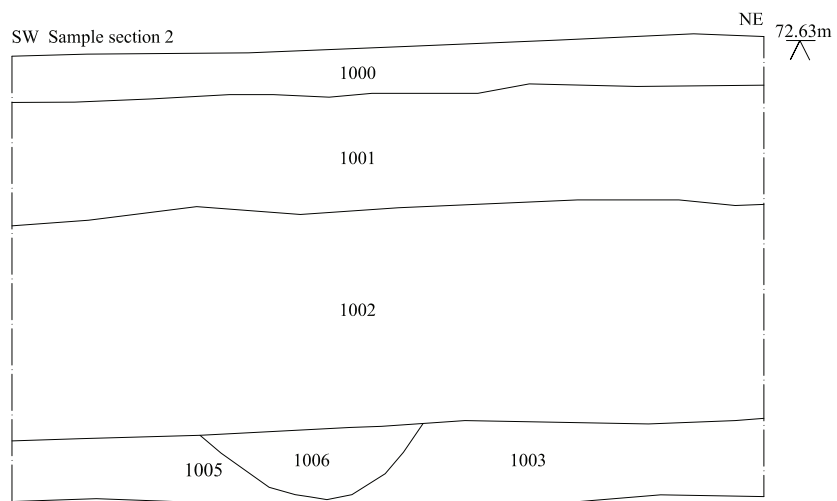
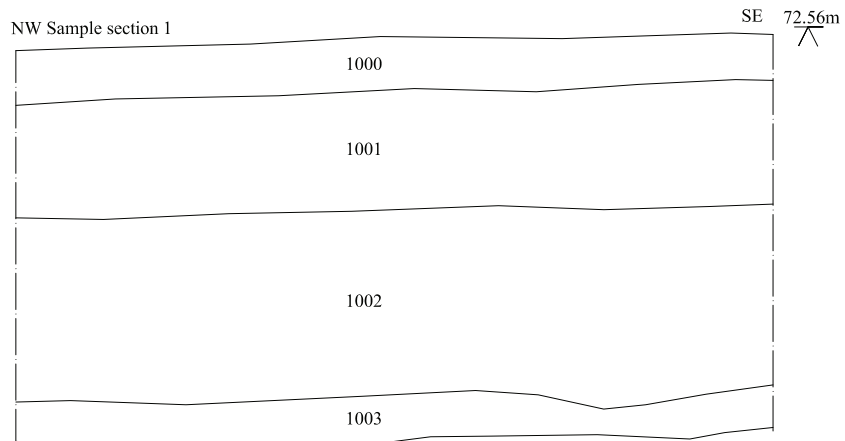
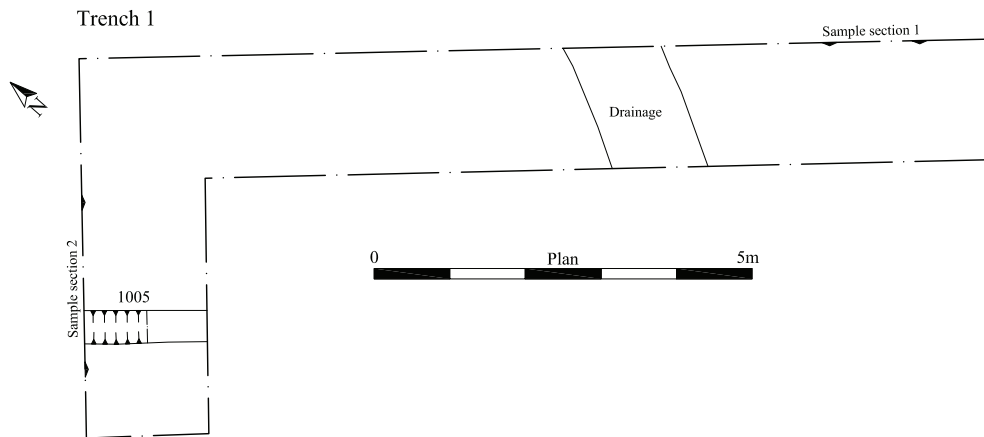
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**Fig. 1 Site location**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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0 50m

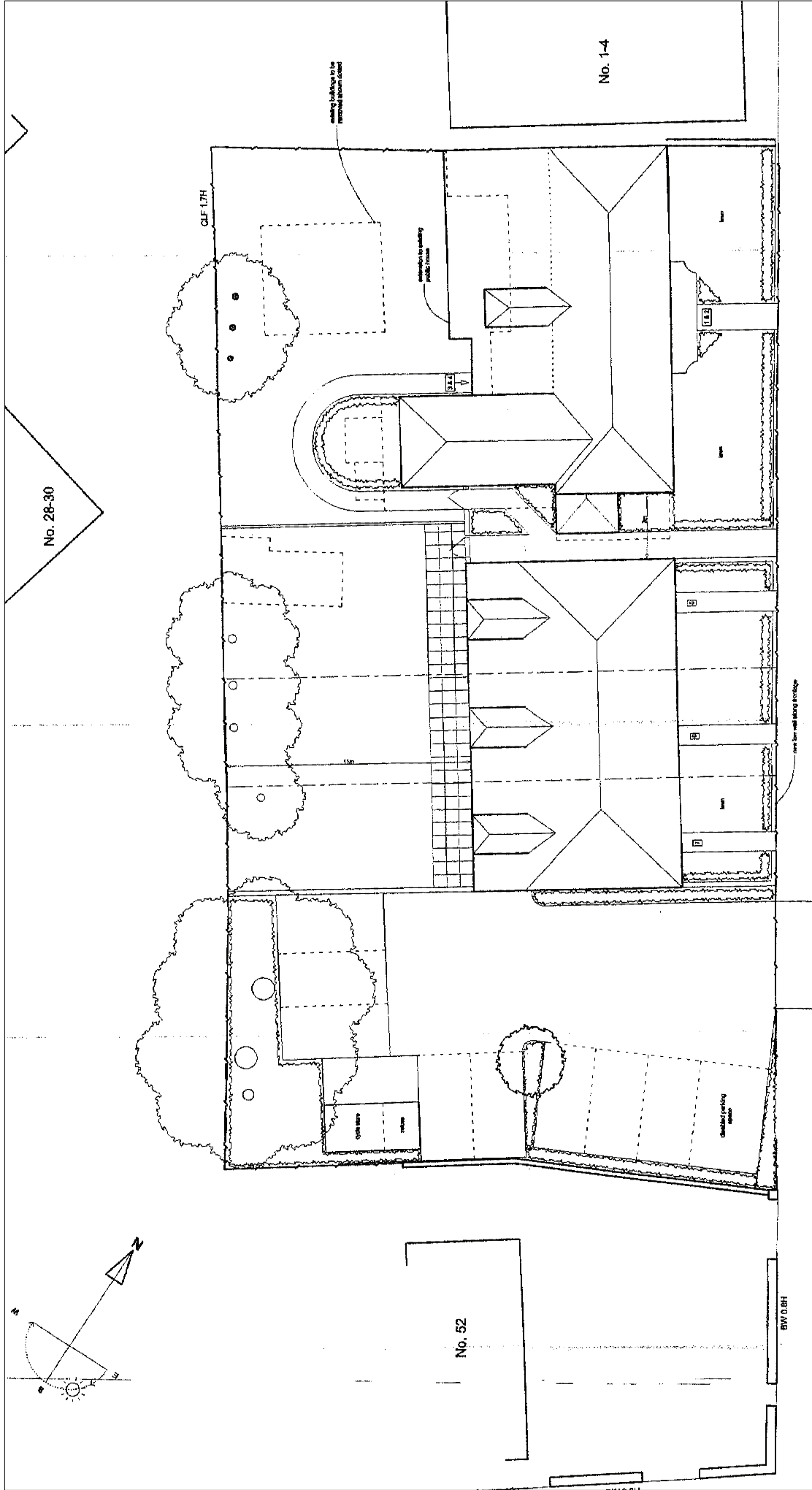
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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location**  
 Scale: 1:1,000 at A4



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**Fig. 3 Trench plan and sections**

Scale plans at 1:100 and sections at 1:20 at A3



P A R K S T R E E T

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Fig. 4 Proposed site plan  
Scale 1:250 at A4

