
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

**BEAR ASH, BEAR LANE, HARE HATCH,
READING, BERKSHIRE**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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NGR: SU 8074 7920	Report No. 3448
District: Wokingham	Site Code: AS 1263
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3598
Signed:	Date: December 2009

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

Project details			
Project name	<i>Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Hare Hatch, Reading, Berkshire</i>		
<p><i>In December 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at the site of Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Hare Hatch, Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 8074 7920). The evaluation was commissioned by The Hall Partnership on behalf of their client Mr Paul Harris, in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a replacement five-bedroom dwelling and garage following the demolition of the existing house.</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within a rural location off Bear Lane c.1.25km north-north-east of the village of Hare Hatch. It lies in the vicinity of a Scheduled Ancient Monument comprising possibly a medieval moat. The site had a potential for medieval archaeological remains.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed a pit containing fragments of modern bricks and tiles.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>14th-15th December 2009</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>3598</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1263</i>
Type of project	<i>An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Residential dwelling with associated gardens</i>		
Planned development	<i>Demolition of existing building and construction of a new house and swimming pool</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Modern pit</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Berkshire</i>	<i>Wokingham</i>	<i>Ruscombe</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Berkshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>RG10 9XR</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. m²</i>		
NGR	<i>SU 8074 7920</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c.78m</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>Advice from Berkshire Archaeology</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski</i>		
Funded by	<i>Mr Paul Harris</i>		
Full title	<i>Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Hare Hatch, Reading, Berkshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3448</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>December 2009</i>		

BEAR ASH, BEAR LANE, HARE HATCH, READING, BERKSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In December 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at the site of Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Hare Hatch, Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 8074 7920). The evaluation was commissioned by the hall Partnership on behalf of their client Mr Paul Harris, in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a replacement five-bedroom dwelling and garage following the demolition of the existing house.

The site lies within a rural location off Bear Lane c.1.25km north-north-east of the village of Hare Hatch. It lies in the vicinity of a Scheduled Ancient Monument comprising possibly a medieval moat. The site had a potential for medieval archaeological remains.

In the event the evaluation revealed a pit containing fragments of modern bricks and tiles.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation at the site of Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Hare Hatch, Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 8074 7920; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by the Hall Partnership, on behalf of their client Mr Paul Harris, in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission for the construction of a replacement five- bedroom dwelling and garage following the demolition of the existing house (Wokingham BC Planning Ref. F/2009/1928).

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with an advice from Mary O'Donoghue of Berkshire Archaeology (archaeological advisors to Wokingham Borough Council) and a written scheme of investigation prepared by AS (dated 27/11/2009), and approved by Berkshire Archaeology. The project conformed to the Berkshire Archaeology document *General Standards for Fieldwork Projects*, and the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA, formerly Institute of Field Archaeologists) *Code of Conduct Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2001).

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. The specific aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine or confirm the presence/absence and general nature of the remains present
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remains and the effect of the development proposals on them
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present; and
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present; and
- To assess the status of the remains as regards economy, social activity and place in the generic contemporary landscape.

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 site lies within a rural location off Bear Lane, Hare Hatch, Berkshire. It is located c. 1.25km north-north-east of the village of Hare Hatch, c. 2km east of Wargrave and c. 10km north-east of Reading town centre.

2.2 The site comprises a large detached residential property set in mature landscaped grounds. The house is surrounded by gardens to the south and west, and to the north-west lie some farm buildings. The site is situated to the west of the north/south course of Bear Lane linking Hare Hatch and Bowsey Hill.

3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

3.1 The site is located on the southern side of Bowsey Hill, on ground sloping towards the south. It is situated at a height of 75-80m AOD. The natural slope seems to have been disturbed by flattening/terracing of the land to the immediate south of the house, currently part of the gardens.

3.2 The solid geology of the environs is Palaeocene clay with some silt, sand and gravel. Soils on the site are those of the Windsor association described as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils mostly with brown subsoils. Those are also some fine loamy over clayey and fine silty over clayey soils and, locally on slopes, clayey soils with only slight seasonal waterlogging (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

4.1 There are no prehistoric finds known close to the site. The substantial collection of Lower Palaeolithic handaxes and other tools was gathered at various locations in Ruscombe and Twyford, c. 2.5-3km south-east of the site. A Mesolithic flint blade was recovered at Knowl Hill, c. 1km to the east. A possible Neolithic mortuary is located c. 3km to the south-west. A Neolithic polished axe was found in Twyford, c. 3km south-east of the site. A Bronze Age round barrow was situated at LittleWick Green, c. 3km to the north-east of the site. In 1957 a Bronze Age sword was been dredged from the River Thames c. 2.3km to the west of the site. Bronze Age pottery was recovered to the east of Ruscombe, c. 2km south of Bear Ash. An Iron Age gold stater was found between Waltham St Lawrence and Shurlock Row c. 4km south-east. Iron Age pottery was found at Warner's Clay Pit, Knowl Hill, c. 1km east of the site indicating the presence of some settlement which continued into the Roman period.

Romano-British

4.2 The area in vicinity of the site contains numerous archaeological remains of Romano-British activity. The remains of a basilica villa or an aisled building were found in 1930s at Cunhurst Farm, Knowl Hill, c. 1.2km west of the site, dated to the 1st-2nd century AD. Another Roman aisled building was found in Knowl Hill at Tanhurst Farm, c. 300m east-south of the site. Possible Roman lead weights were found by a metal detector user c. 650m south-west of the site. Roman pottery was recovered from hearths and pits located at Warner's Clay Pit, Knowl Hill, c. 1km east of the site and from a garden in Hare Hatch, c. 1.3km to the south. An almost complete Roman (1st century AD) pot was found at Wargrave, c. 2km to the south-west. Numerous Roman coins are known from Ruscombe. During the construction of a railway in 1837 in Shottesbrooke, at the Waycock field, c. 2.25km to the south-east of the site, an inhumation cemetery was recorded, containing 30 skeletons, including one burial in a lead coffin. Also a Roman well was located 1km further to the south.

Saxon

4.3 The remains for this period are limited to some residual finds recovered to the west of the site. A Late Saxon spearhead was found at Wargrave, c.1.75km of the site. Another Late Saxon (9th-10th century AD) spearhead was dredged from the River Thames 2.3km to the west.

Medieval

4.4 The site is located in the vicinity of the medieval settlement of Wargrave documented in Domesday as a royal manor. It was granted to the bishops of Winchester in 1199, who owned it until the 16th century. The town was granted to borough status in the 13th. Subsequent documentation refers to Wargrave as a rural settlement, although industries such as tanning, malting and brick and tile making are mentioned.

4.5 The site lies in a short distance from a moated site located some 150m to the south-east, which is a Scheduled as an Ancient Monument, and may date from the medieval period. It is a rectangular moat with two east/west causeways. It was thought possible that ancillary remains associated with the site may extend into the current area of proposed development. The moat may have been an original home of the A'Bear family, recorded in the parish as early as 1318. They were also known by the Norman name De La Bere (Ford 1996).

Post-medieval & modern

4.6 From the 18th century the area attracted the aristocracy whose presence is reflected in the number of large houses built on the slopes overlooking the rivers or on the banks of the Thames. The house to the east of the moat was built in 1784. The A'Bear family owned the property until 1895.

4.7 Other evidence noted on the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record includes surface finds from the East Berkshire Archaeological Survey to the south of the site, and fishpond associated with the moat some 200m to the south of the site, and two post-medieval listed buildings, to the north-west and east-north-east of the site

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Two trenches were excavated using a mechanical 180° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). The trench locations were approved by Berkshire Archaeology and were situated to overlie the footprints as far as possible of the proposed new dwelling (Trench 1) and swimming pool (Trench 2). Trench 1 measured 15 x 1.6m and Trench 2 measured 10 x 1.6m.

5.2 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. 3, DP 2-3)

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 5): NW end, SW facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 75.60m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.20m	L1000	Topsoil. Mid to dark greyish brown, soft silty clay.
0.20m +	L1002	Natural mid yellow with reddish and grey, compact clay with sandy lenses.

<i>Sample section 2 (DP 6): SE end, SW facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = 75.50m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.18m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.18m +	L1002	Natural clay. As above.

Description: The trench contained a single modern pit, F1003.

F1003 was a rectangular feature (1.30+ x 0.53+ x 0.55m+; Fig. 3; DP 4) located in the south-east end of the trench. It extended beyond the trench limits. It had vertical sides, and the base was not reached. Its fill, L1004, was a dark greyish brown, compact clayey silt with occasional modern brick and tile fragments. F1005 may have been a pit

6.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 2, DP 7-8)

<i>Sample section 3 (DP 9): NE end, SE facing</i> <i>0.00 = 78.74m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.30m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.30 – 0.60m	L1001	Subsoil. Mid yellow, compact clayey silt.
0.60m +	L1005	Natural mid yellow, compact clay.

<i>Sample section 4 (DP 10): SW end, SE facing</i> <i>0.00 = 78.06m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.26m	L1000	Topsoil. As above, Tr. 1.
0.26 – 0.48m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.48m +	L1005	Natural clay. As above.

Description: Trench 2 contained no archaeological features or finds.

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 The trenches were overlain by garden topsoil, L1000. It was a mid to dark greyish brown, soft, silty clay. Within Trench 1 it measured 0.15-0.20m in thickness whilst within Trench 2 it measured 0.30m. It overlay subsoil L1001, a mid yellow, compact, clayey silt (c.0.30m thick).

8.2 Within Trench 1 the topsoil directly overlay the natural solid geology, a mid yellow with reddish and grey, compact clay with some sandy lenses, L1002, present at depth of c. 0.20m below ground level. Within Trench 2 the natural geology was a mid yellow, compact clay, L1005, encountered at c.0.60m below existing.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site had a potential for archaeological remains, in particular for the medieval and post-medieval remains associated with the moated site to the immediate east of Bear Ash. It also had a potential for Romano-British remains.

9.2 In the event the only feature present was modern ?pit, F1003. The latter may have been associated with the construction of the house or a garden feature. No residual archaeological finds were recovered during the evaluation.

9.3 The evaluation did not reveal any structural remains. The land to the south of the house, where Trench 1 was located, was subject to extensive landscaping to level the ground for a tennis court (now disused, and part of the garden). The area contained numerous modern land drains.

10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 The archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with Reading Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr Paul Harris for funding the project, and his architect, Bjorn Hall of the Hall Partnership, for commissioning the works and for his kind assistance.

AS is also pleased to acknowledge the input and advice of Ms Mary O'Donoghue of Berkshire Archaeology.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Bear Ash, Bear Lane, Hare Hatch, Berkshire. View NE.



DP 2. The site with Trench 1. View NNW.



DP 3. Trench 1. View NW.



DP 4. F1003, Trench 1. View SE.



DP 5. Trench 1, NW end. Sample section. View NE.



DP 6. Trench 1, SE end. Sample section. View NE.



DP 7. The site with Trench 2. View S.



DP 8. Trench 2. View SW.



DP 9. Trench 2, NE end. Sample section.
View NW.

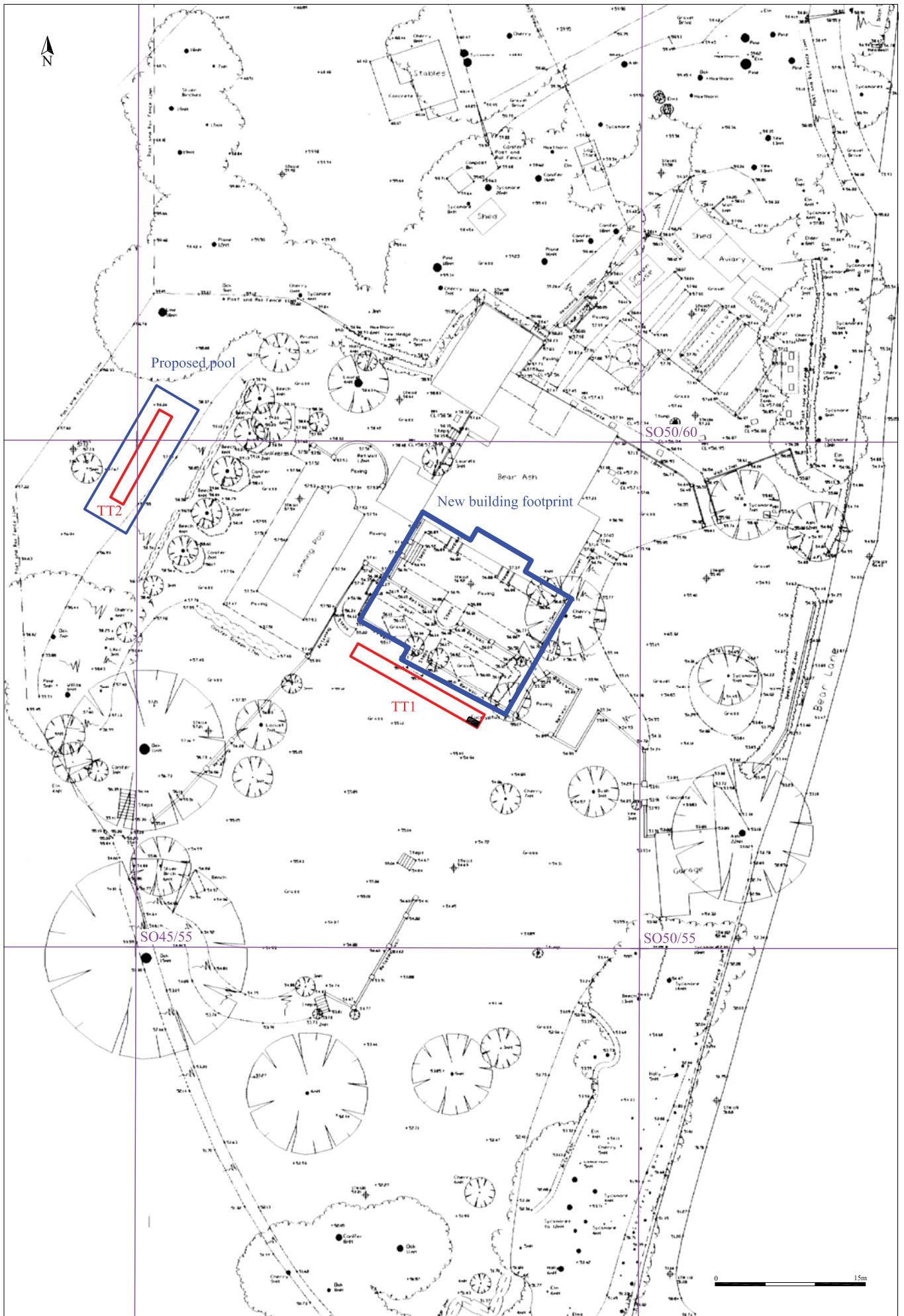


DP 10. Trench 2, SW end. Sample section.
View NW.

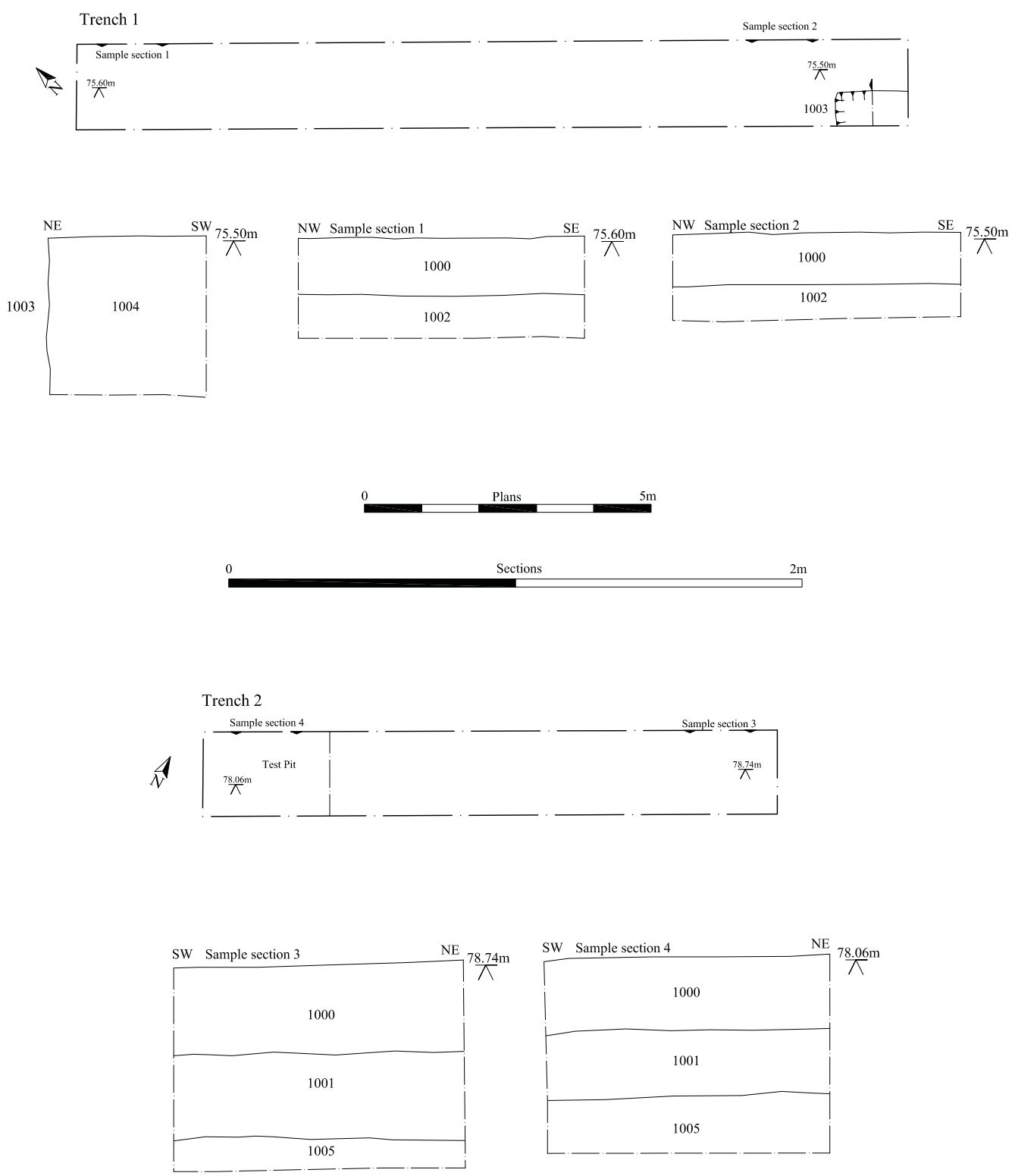


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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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Fig. 2 Trench location plan
 Scale 1:500 at A4



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Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections

Scale plans at 1:100 and sections at 1:20 at A4