

**2 ST. MARY'S CLOSE, REDBOURN,
HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Authors: Walter McCall (Fieldwork & report) Andrew Peachey (Desk-based research)	
NGR: TL 1008 1198	Report No. 3547
District: Saint Albans	Site Code: AS1313
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3674
Signed:	Date: April 2010

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Archaeological Solutions Ltd, 98 – 100 Fore Street, Hertford SG14 1AB.
Tel: 01992 558170 Fax: 01992 553359 E-mail: info@ascontracts.co.uk
Web: www.archeologicalsolutions.co.uk
Registered Number: 4702122

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OASIS SUMMARY SHEET			
Project name	<i>2 St. Mary's Close, Redbourn, Hertfordshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
<p><i>In May 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation at the 2 St. Mary's Close, Redbourn, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1008 1198). The evaluation was commissioned by The Gates Ettington Development Joint Venture and was undertaken in advance of proposals to demolish the existing structure and erect a pair of detached residential dwellings. It was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission.</i></p> <p><i>The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. Numerous archaeological remains have been recorded in the vicinity including a Neolithic flint axe (SMR 559) to the south-west and two Roman spindle whorls (SMR 1488) to the west. Worked flints dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (SMR 9638) have been observed east of the Common, near the High Street.</i></p> <p><i>In the event the evaluation revealed only a modern feature.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>May 24th-27th 2010</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>3674</i>	Site code	<i>AS1313</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>None</i>		
Current land use	<i>Dwelling</i>		
Planned development	<i>2 detached dwellings</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>St. Albans</i>	<i>Redbourn</i>
HER for area	<i>Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HCC HER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c.1200m²</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 1008 1198</i>		
Height AOD (max)	<i>c.104m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>St. Albans District Council (SADC)</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>The Gates Ettington Development Joint Venture</i>		
Full title	<i>2 St. Mary's Close, Redbourn, Hertfordshire. An Archaeological Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Walter McCall and Andrew Peachey</i>		
Report no.	<i>3547</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>May 2010</i>		

2 ST. MARY'S CLOSE, REDBOURN, HERTFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

SUMMARY

In May 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation at the 2 St. Mary's Close, Redbourn, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1008 1198). The evaluation was commissioned by The Gates Ettington Development Joint Venture, and was undertaken in advance of proposals to demolish an existing structure and erect a pair of detached residential dwellings. It was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission.

The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. Numerous archaeological remains have been recorded in the vicinity including a Neolithic flint axe (SMR 559) to the south-west and two Roman spindle whorls (SMR 1488) to the west. Worked flints dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (SMR 9638) have been observed east of the Common, near the High Street.

In the event the evaluation revealed only a modern feature.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In May 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation at the 2 St. Mary's Close, Redbourn, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1008 1198; Figs. 1 & 2). The evaluation was commissioned by The Gates Ettington Development Joint Venture and was undertaken in advance of proposals to demolish an existing structure and erect a pair of detached residential dwellings. It was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition attached to planning permission.

1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with advice issued by Simon West of St. Albans District Council (e-mail dated 01-10-09) and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AS (dated 13th October 2009). It complied with the Institute of Archaeologists' (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* (1994, revised 2008).

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.

Planning policy context

1.4 PPG16 (1990), the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to archaeology and PPG15 (1994) 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) have been replaced by Planning Policy Statement 5 (2010), the national Planning Policy Statement that applies to the historic environment

1.5 PPS5 states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement 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. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE Figs.1 - 2

2.1 The site is located in the south-west of Redbourn, a small Hertfordshire town situated in the valley of the River Ver to the north-west of St. Albans. The historic parts of the town are disposed around the Common and the High Street. The latter follows the route of Roman Watling Street. St. Mary's Close is a cul-de-sac extending northwards from North Common, with No.2 St. Mary's Close comprising an irregular polygonal plot situated at the north-western end of the residential street, with an existing detached residential dwelling and garden. The modern town has expanded considerably, developing suburban areas such as the area of the site, but is now limited on most sides by major roads including the M1 c.500m to the west

3 METHODOLOGY (DESK BASED RESEARCH)

Information was sought from a variety of available sources in order to meet the objectives of the assessment.

3.1 *Archaeological databases*

The standard collation of all known archaeological sites and find spots within Hertfordshire comes from the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HCC HER). Significant entries within an approximate 300m radius of the site were highlighted by Simon West of St. Albans District Council. Where relevant, these sites and finds have been discussed in Section 4.2.

3.2 *Historical and cartographic sources*

The principal sources for this type of evidence were the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS). Relevant documents are listed in Appendix 1 and reproduced in Figs. 3-5.

3.3 *Secondary sources*

The principal sources of secondary material were Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, as well as AS's own in-house library. Unpublished sources regarding the assessment area, such as previous field evaluation reports and desk-based assessments, have also been consulted. All sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 *Geological/geotechnical information*

A description of the superficial and solid geology of the local and surrounding area was compiled in order to assess the likely presence and potential condition of any archaeological remains on the site. This information was drawn from appropriate maps published by the Geological Survey of Great Britain (BGS 1978) and the Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983).

4 THE EVIDENCE

4.1 Topography, Geology & Soils

4.1.1 The site is located at c.104m AOD on the floor of the valley of the River Ver, which runs on an approximately north-south course c.700m to the east. The surrounding valley rises moderately steeply to the east and west, while the site actually slopes very slightly down towards the south. The site is situated on a low gravel terrace, which is slightly elevated above the floodplain of the River Ver.

4.2 Archaeological & Historical Background

4.2.1 Previous archaeological investigations have recovered prehistoric material in the vicinity of the site and suggest Mesolithic to Neolithic occupation or activity on the gravel terrace on the west side of the River Ver in the Redbourn area. Recorded finds include Mesolithic struck flint from the rear of 80 High Street (HER 6495), Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flints found to the east of the Common to the rear of 38 High Street (HER 9638, West 2006), and a Neolithic flint axe (HER 559) has also been recorded to the south-west of the site.

4.2.2 Redbourn High Street follows the course of the major Roman Road of Watling Street (HER 4607) from London to Wroxeter. Traces of Roman domestic occupation have been recorded close to the High Street (HER 6496) although the extent of any settlement remains unknown. Two Roman spindle whorls (HER 1488) have also been recorded to the west of the site.

4.2.3 The Domesday survey notes that Redbourn had a population of 100 in 1086, with c.2000 acres of arable land under cultivation. The parish was still heavily wooded at this time, and there are several references to the lack of pasture available in the medieval period. The common, whose northern/north-western edge is c.200m to the south and east of the site, is recorded as being the site of St James Chapel in 1178. Also in 1178, two barrows on the common were excavated by the monks. The excavation revealed ten skeletons and associated grave goods. One of the bodies was interpreted as being that of St Amphibalus (the clerk who converted St Alban). The chapel of St James was enlarged into a small priory. The abbey owned most of the village since before Domesday, but the building of the priory after 1178 was one of the reasons for a gradual shift in settlement to the main road. However, a survey of 1617 shows that the village still had two principal centres either side of the Common at this stage, Church End (c.200m to the south-west of the site) and Street End, closer to the High Street with relatively little development along the old Roman road. The site appears to have been beyond the extent of the medieval settlement at Redbourn (Thompson 2002), although sparse farms have been recorded around the periphery of the Common, a zone into which the site may be included. The site remained beyond the extent of settlement throughout the post-medieval period as housing and commerce developed along the High Street and Church End to the south-west, although Almshouses were erected c.100m to the south in the 19th century.

4.4 Cartographic Sources

Pre-1925 Cartographic Sources

4.4.1 Dury and Andrew's 1766 map of Hertfordshire and Bryant's 1822 map of Hertfordshire both depict the area of the site as undeveloped agricultural land to the north of the Common and Church End. This continues to be the case into the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as depicted by the Ordnance Survey maps of 1894 (Fig.3) and 1924 (Fig.4) which clearly depict the extent of development along the High Street to the east and Church End to the south.

Ordnance Survey Map, 1970, Sheet TL 10 11 (Fig.5)

4.4.2 The 1970 Ordnance Survey map depicts the suburban development of Redbourn to its modern extent, with St. Mary's Close and the site part of a group of detached residential properties to the north of Redbourn Common, which remains largely un-encroached upon by modern development.

5 METHODOLOGY (TRIAL TRENCHING)

5.1 Two trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket (Fig. 2). Trench locations corresponded with the footprints of the proposed residential dwellings. Topsoil and undifferentiated overburden were mechanically excavated under close archaeological supervision.

5.2 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.

5.3 The measurements and orientation of each trench are tabulated below:

Trench No.	Length (m)	Width (m)	Orientation
1	3.90	1.50	NE/SW
2	4.60	1.00	NW/SE

Measurement and orientation of trenches

6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

Trench 1 Figs. 2-6, DP 3-4

Sample section: South-west end, north-west facing 0.00 = 103.57m AOD		
0.00 – 0.28m	L1000	Friable, mid grey brown sandy silt topsoil with occasional small stones, overlain by a thin turf layer.
0.28 – 0.56m	L1001	Compact, dark yellow grey clayey silt subsoil with pockets of gravel and occasional CBM.
0.56m+	L1002	Natural drift geology. Compact, mid brown red silty clay and gravel.

Description: A modern pit, F1003, was observed in the south-eastern baulk of the trench at the south-western end. It was sealed by the subsoil, L1001.

Pit F1003 (1.16 x 0.44m) was observed in profile. It had moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L1004, was a compact, dark red grey silty clay. Finds comprise modern brick.

Trench 2 Figs. 2-6, DP 5-6

Sample section: North-west end, north-east facing 0.00 = 103.65m AOD		
0.00 – 0.21m	L1000	Topsoil. As above.
0.21 – 0.42m	L1001	Subsoil. As above.
0.42m+	L1002	Natural drift geology. As above.

Description: No archaeological finds or features were present.

7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features and finds

8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The site comprises a level front garden area of an existing dwelling with a height range of 103.29 – 103.94m AOD (DP 1-2). A basic stratigraphic sequence of topsoil and subsoil was revealed in both trenches.

8.2 Topsoil L1000 comprised a friable, medium grey brown sandy silt covered by a thin turf layer (0.21-0.28m). The subsoil below was a compact, dark yellow grey clayey silt with pockets of gravel throughout (0.21 - 0.28m thick).

8.3 The solid geology, L1002, comprised a compact, medium brown red silty clay.

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 A modern pit, F1003, was observed in section in Trench 1. It contained modern brick fragments. Modern CBM was also visible in the subsoil which sealed the pit. No other finds or features were present.

9.2 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. Numerous archaeological remains have been recorded in the vicinity including a Neolithic flint axe (SMR 559) to the south-west and two Roman spindle whorls (SMR 1488) to the west. Worked flints dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (SMR 9638) have been observed east of the Common, near the High Street.

9.3 In the event only a modern feature was present

DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank The Gates Ettington Development Joint Venture for their co-operation and funding of this project (in particular Mr Nick Martin for his assistance).

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Simon West, District Archaeologist for St. Albans District Council

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APPENDIX 1 CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Date	Description	Scale	Location
1766	Dury & Andrews' map of Hertfordshire	1.95":1 mile	AS
1822	Bryant's map of Hertfordshire	1.5":1 mile	AS
1898	Ordnance Survey Map, Herts Sheet XXVII.14	25":1 mile	HALS
1924	Ordnance Survey Map, Herts Sheet XXVII.14	25":1 mile	HALS
1970	Ordnance Survey map sheets TL 10 11	1:2,500	HALS

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1 No.2 St Mary's Close.
Trench 1 (background) and Trench 2
(foreground). Looking SW.



2
Trench 1 and front garden. Looking SW.



3
Trench 1. Looking SW



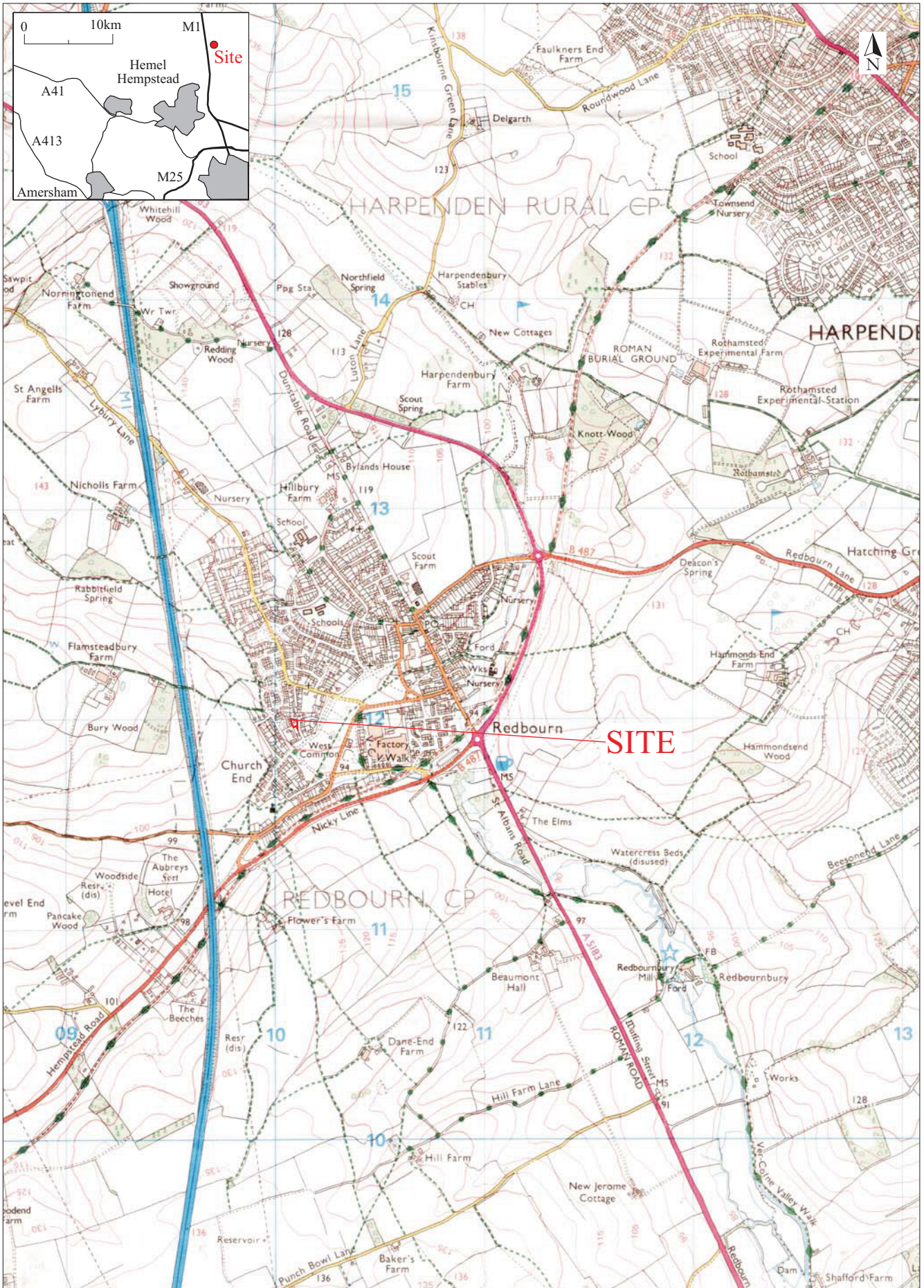
4
Sample Section 1. Looking SE



5
Trench 2. Looking NW.

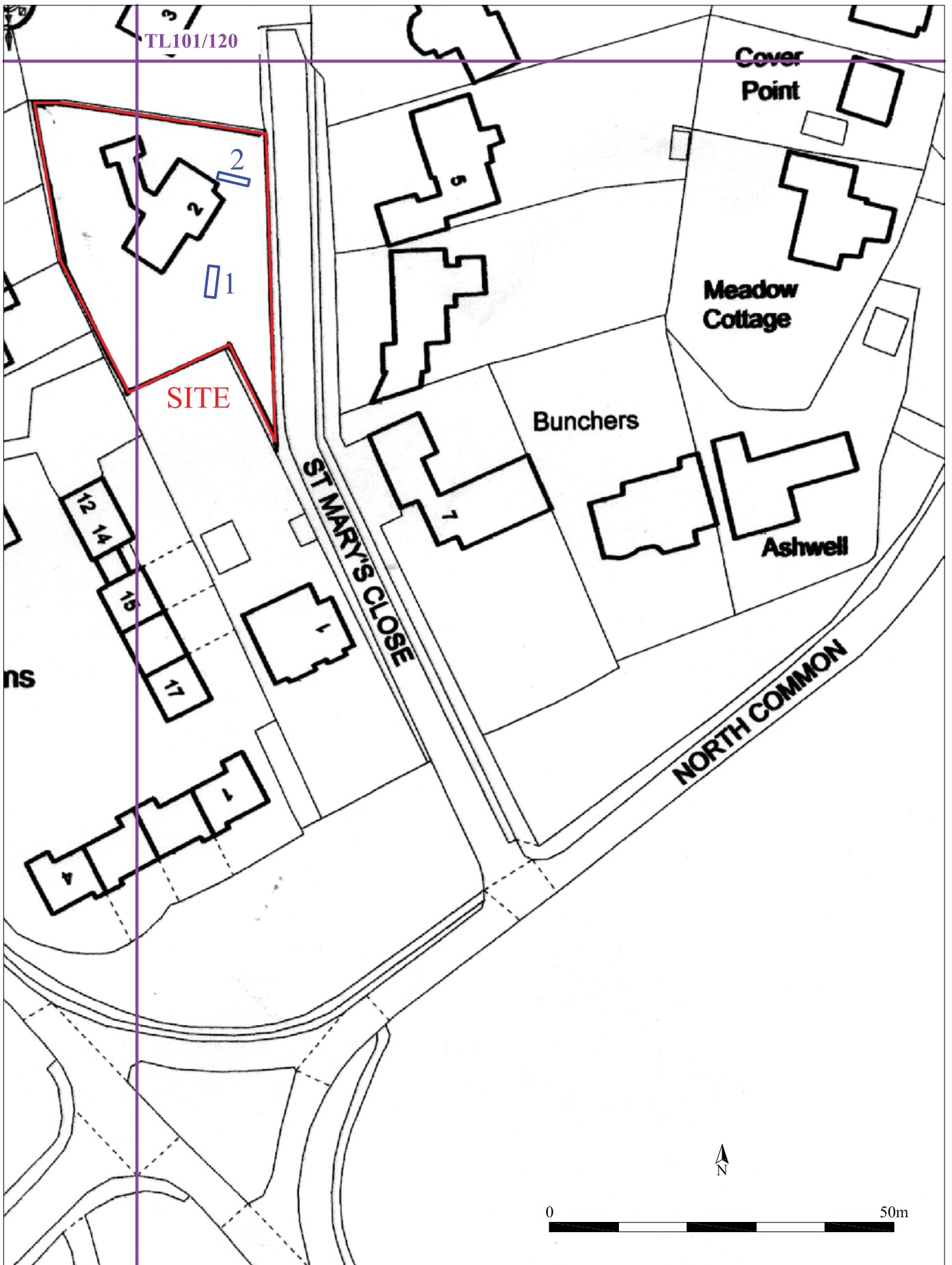


6
Sample Section 2. Looking SW.



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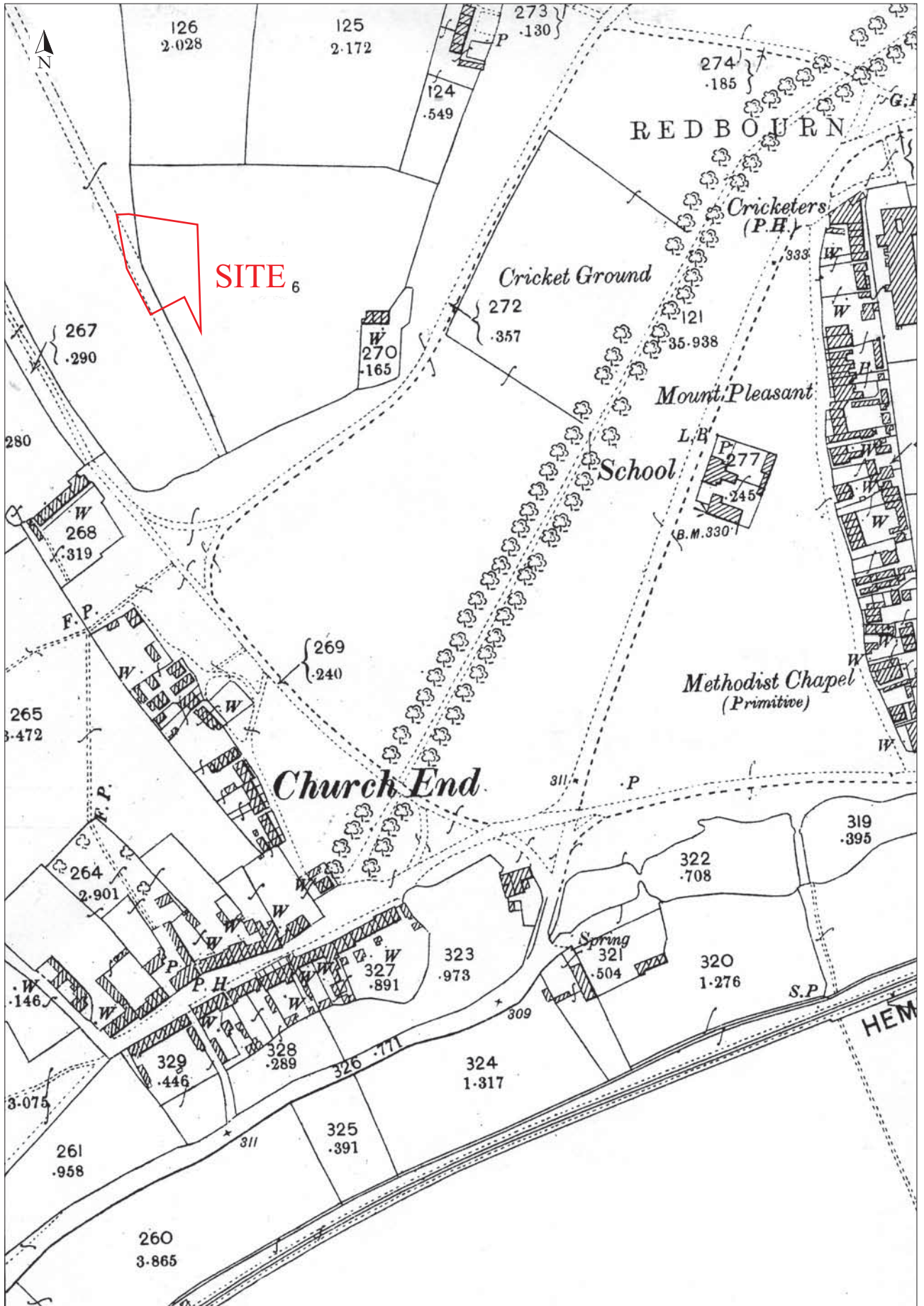
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



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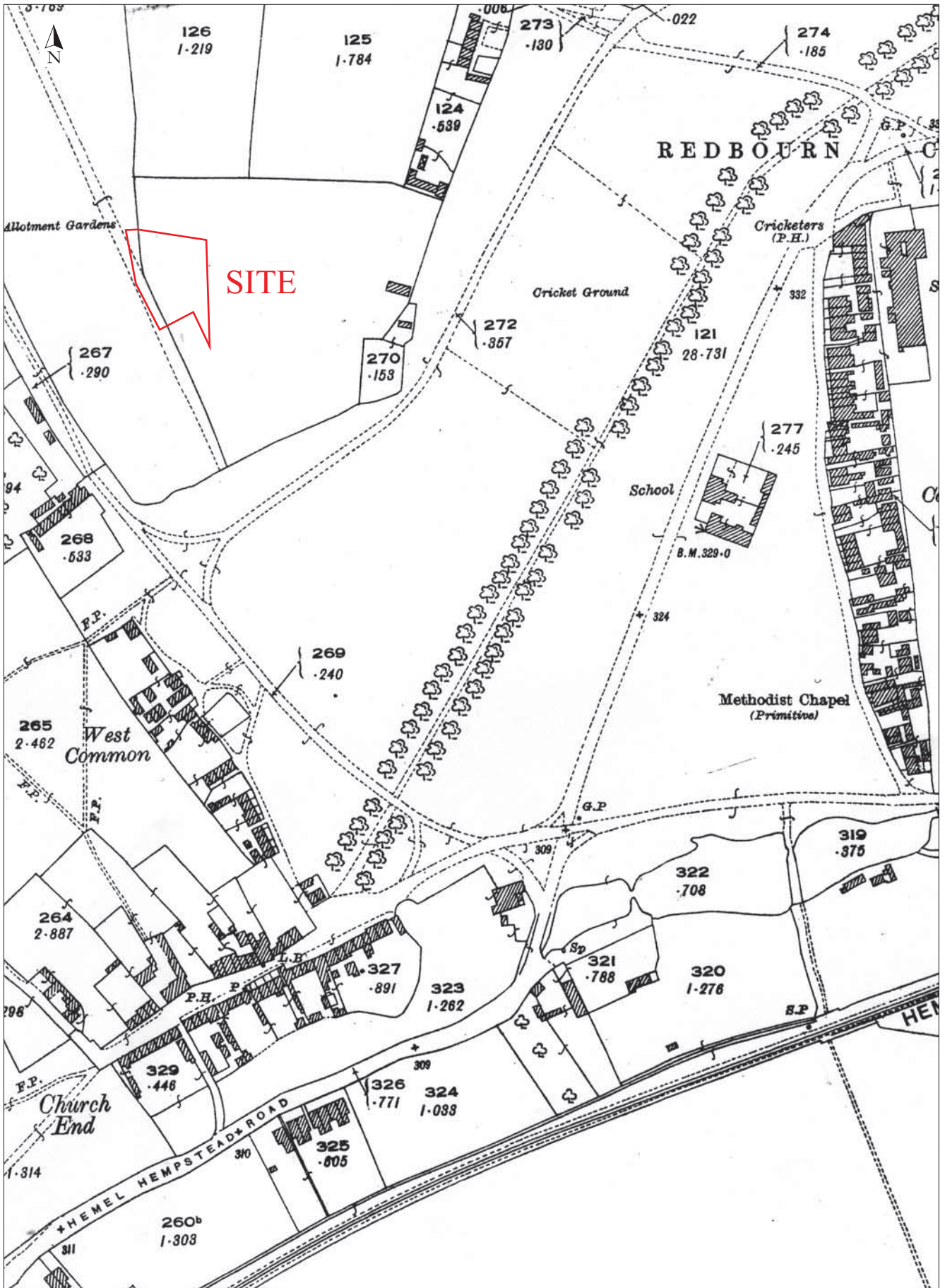
Fig. 2 Trench location plan

Scale 1:750 at A4



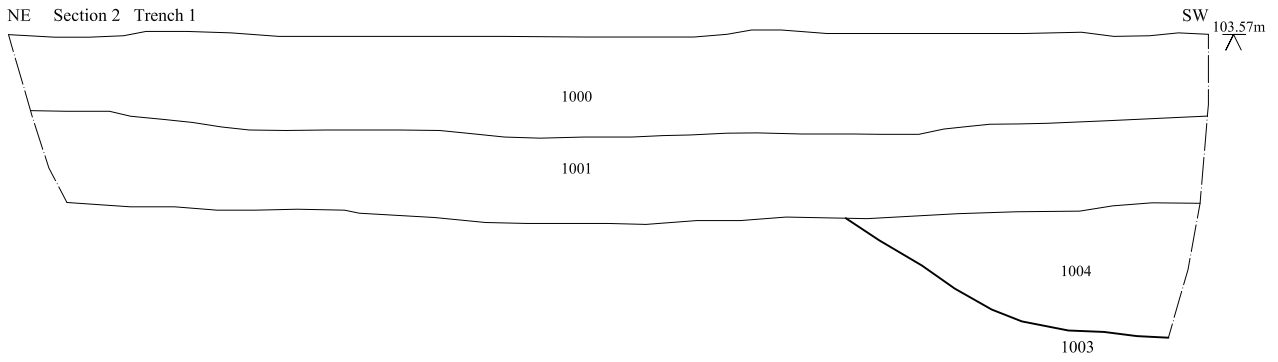
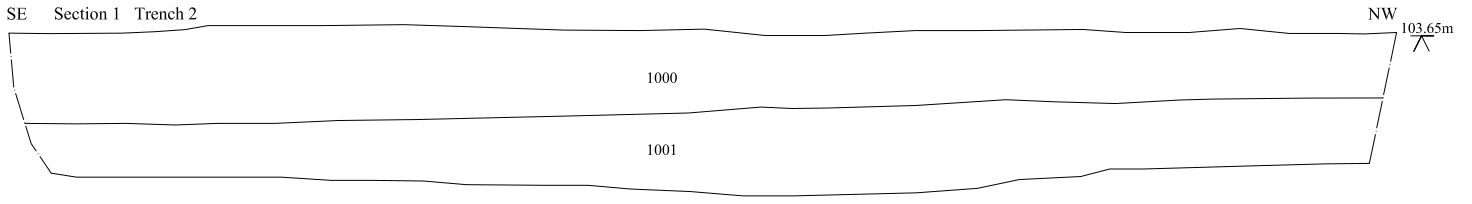
Reproduced from the 1894 Ordnance Survey 25" to 1 mile map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown copyright Archaeological Solutions Ltd Licence number 100036680

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Fig. 3 OS map, 1894
 Scale 25 inch to 1 mile at A4



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 Fig. 4 OS map, 1924
 Scale 25 inch to 1 mile at A4



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Fig. 6 Trench edge sections
Scale 1:25 at A4