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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**MELBOURNE STUD, WATEREND LANE,  
AYOT ST PETER, WELWYN, HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION  
VIA 'STRIP, MAP & RECORD'  
AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND  
RECORDING**

Authors: Zbigniew Pozorski MA	
NGR: TL 2152 1428	Report No. xx
District: Welwyn Hatfield	Site Code: AS 1243
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 3512
Signed:	Date: October 2009

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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
<b>Project name</b>	<i>Melbourne Stud, Waterend Lane, Ayot St Peter, Welwyn, Hertfordshire</i>		
<p><i>In September and October 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological investigation via 'strip, map and record' and archaeological monitoring and recording at Melbourne Stud, Waterend Lane, Ayot St Peter, Welwyn, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2152 1428). The programme was commissioned by Mr. J. Robson, and was undertaken as part of a planning condition on approval of erection of a new front porch and a basement for the existing house.</i></p> <p><i>The programme revealed one, possibly pit dated to 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century, probably in connection with construction of the house.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>29<sup>th</sup> September and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>
P. number	<i>3512</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1243</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Investigation via 'Strip. Map &amp; Record' and Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>		
Site status	<i>Within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 28</i>		
Current land use	<i>Yard between houses</i>		
Planned development	<i>New porch and basement</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>One pit (18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century)</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>Welwyn Hatfield</i>	<i>Ayot St. Peter</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Hertfordshire HER</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>AL6 9BB</i>		
Area of site			
NGR	<i>TL 2152 1428</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>110 – 115m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>HCC HEU</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Zbigniew Pozorski, Andrew Newton</i>		
Funded by			
Full title	<i>Melbourne Stud, Waterend Lane, Ayot St Peter, Welwyn, Hertfordshire; Archaeological Investigation via 'Strip. Map &amp; Record' and Archaeological Monitoring and Recording</i>		
Authors	<i>Pozorski, Z.</i>		
Report no.	<i>xx</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>October 2009</i>		

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**SUMMARY**

*In September and October 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological investigation via 'strip, map and record' and archaeological monitoring and recording at Melbourne Stud, Waterend Lane, Ayot St Peter, Welwyn, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2152 1428). The programme was commissioned by Mr. J. Robson, and was undertaken as part of a planning condition on approval of erection of a new front porch and a basement for the existing house.*

*The programme revealed one, possibly pit dated to 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century, probably in connection with construction of the house.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In September and October 2009 Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological investigation via 'strip, map and record' and archaeological monitoring and recording at Melbourne Stud, Waterend Lane, Ayot St Peter, Welwyn, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 2152 1428; Figs. 1 & 2). The programme was commissioned by Mr. J. Robson, and was undertaken as part of a planning condition required by the local planning authority (Welwyn Hatfield DC Planning Ref. N6/2009/369/FP). The work was carried out during the groundworks for the proposed new front porch and basement adjacent to existing house.

1.2 The programme was undertaken according to advice from Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit (HCC HEU; dated 20/04/2009) and a specification Written Scheme of Investigation) prepared by AS (dated 26/05/2009) and approved by HCC HEU. The project conformed to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (revised 2001), the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (revised 2001), as well as the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The project objectives of the archaeological investigation via 'strip, map and record' of the area of the new front porch and basement room were:

- to investigate and record any surviving archaeological remains within the area subject to development;

- to secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site in appropriate conditions;
- to provide an adequately detailed project report that will place the findings in their local and regional context;
- to secure the full analysis and interpretation of the site archive and the appropriate publication of project results, if required.

1.4 The programme of archaeological monitoring and recording of any other groundworks aimed:

- to ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect buried archaeological remains;
- to secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme;
- to secure the production, analysis, conservation and deposition of the project archive.

#### *Planning policy context*

1.5 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).

1.6 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.

1.7 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 is located within Melbourne Stud property in Ayot St Peter, c. 2.5km to the south-west of Welwyn and c. 2km to the west of town centre of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire (Fig 1). It is situated to the south of Waterend Lane, to the immediate north-west of Ayot Green village but within the boundaries of another village of Ayot St Peter, located c. 1km to the north.

2.2 The site is occupied by farmhouse and barn, both Grade II listed. The site is surrounded by agricultural land to the south of Waterend Lane. The excavation area is located to immediate south-west of the main house (DP 1-3).

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

3.1 The site of Melbourne Stud is situated on the land sloping east/west, at height 110 – 115m AOD. The excavation area is located at c. 113m AOD. The River Lea has its north-west/south-east course c. 1.2km to the south-west of the site.

3.2 The solid geology of the area is of Upper Chalk overlain by Glacial Till (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). The Glacial Till is described as a stiff, brown-grey to orange brown, slightly sandy or gravelly clay. The Upper Chalk is composed of structureless, off-white chalk with localised yellow-brown staining and slightly silty gravel.

### **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 The site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 28. The designation reflects the presence of Iron Age pottery finds nearby indicative of an occupation site of this period in the vicinity (HER 261). Also a Roman main road passes the site c. 0.6km to the east and a possible route of a secondary Roman road between Verulamium (St Albans) and Ware passes to the south-west (Thompson 2002). In the medieval and post-medieval periods the assessment site appears to be located within an agricultural landscape to the south of Welwyn.

4.2 The buildings on the site, the farmhouse and barn, are Grade II listed and date from 18<sup>th</sup> century. Western wing of the house was built in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, advice from HCC HEU suggests that such post-medieval farm complexes can have their origins in the medieval period.

### **5 METHODOLOGY**

5.1. The archaeological investigation comprised the observation of all groundworks, inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features, the examination of spoil heaps and the recording of soil profiles. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro-forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed as necessary. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and the excavated area was scanned by metal detector.

5.2 The principal elements monitored were mechanically excavated trench for basement and porch. The groundworks comprised construction of concrete piling and foundation base at the first stage and excavation of the trench

afterwards. The investigation also included monitoring of test trench excavated within the site prior to main groundworks.

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

6.1 In the event one archaeological feature has been revealed within investigation area. F1004 was recorded within south-east part of the trench and remained the feature of unknown shape, possibly circular. It measured 5 x 1.20m and it had gently sloping sides and concave base (Fig. 3, DP 5-6). It contained two fills. The basal fill (L1005) was a dark brown, compact clayey silt with frequent CBM (brick fragments) It measured 0.25-1.20m in thickness. The upper fill (L1006) was a dark orangey yellow, compact sandy clay and it was 1m thick. No finds were recovered from both deposits. F1004 may have been a pit.

6.2 Deposits overlaying natural geology have been recorded in sample section presented below.

<i>Sample section 1 (DP 4): test trench SW side, NE facing</i>		
<i>0.00 = c. 113.00m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.40m	L1000	Made ground. Light brown, loose silty sand with CBM.
0.40 – 0.55m	L1001	Black and dark greyish brown, compact sandy silt.
0.55m+	L1002	Natural light grey to mid and dark yellow, compact clay.

## 7 CONFIDENCE RATING

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the programme of archaeological investigation via 'strip, map and record' and archaeological monitoring and recording.

## 8 DEPOSIT MODEL

8.1 The area of excavation located between the buildings was covered with layer of made ground L1000 situated on the top of buried ground surface L1001, containing CBM. These deposits measured c. 0.50 – 0.60m in thickness in total and were replaced by concrete foundation M1003 along the edges of the trench.

8.2 Natural geology was present c. 0.50 – 0.60m below existing as compact clay (L1002). It was light grey in upper parts changing to mid and dark yellow in lower levels.



## 9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Despite the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, in particular for the Iron Age, no archaeological features or finds different than modern were located.

9.2 Pit F1004 can be related to construction of the house, more likely to its western extension built in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The basal fill (L1005) of the pit seemed to be deposit of spoil mixed with CBM leftovers while the upper fill (L1006) probably was a levelling backfill created to flatter the yard.

9.3 The site represents very limited potential for future successive archaeological investigation. It may reveal remains connected with construction of the house in 18<sup>th</sup> century with possible medieval precursor to the farm complex. Any earlier remains may have been affected by that development.

## 10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

10.1 Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at the Hertford 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. J. Robson for commissioning and funding this project and Mr. Alp Arikoglu for his assistance.

AS would also like to acknowledge the input and advice of Mr. Andy Instone of Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Unit.

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## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1. Melbourne Stud, Ayot Green, Welwyn Garden City. The house. View NE.



DP 2. The groundworks. View N.



DP 3. Excavation area. View S.



DP 4. Test trench within excavation area. View SW.



DP 5. SE side of the excavation with F1004. View S.



DP 6. SE side of the excavation, F1004. View SE.



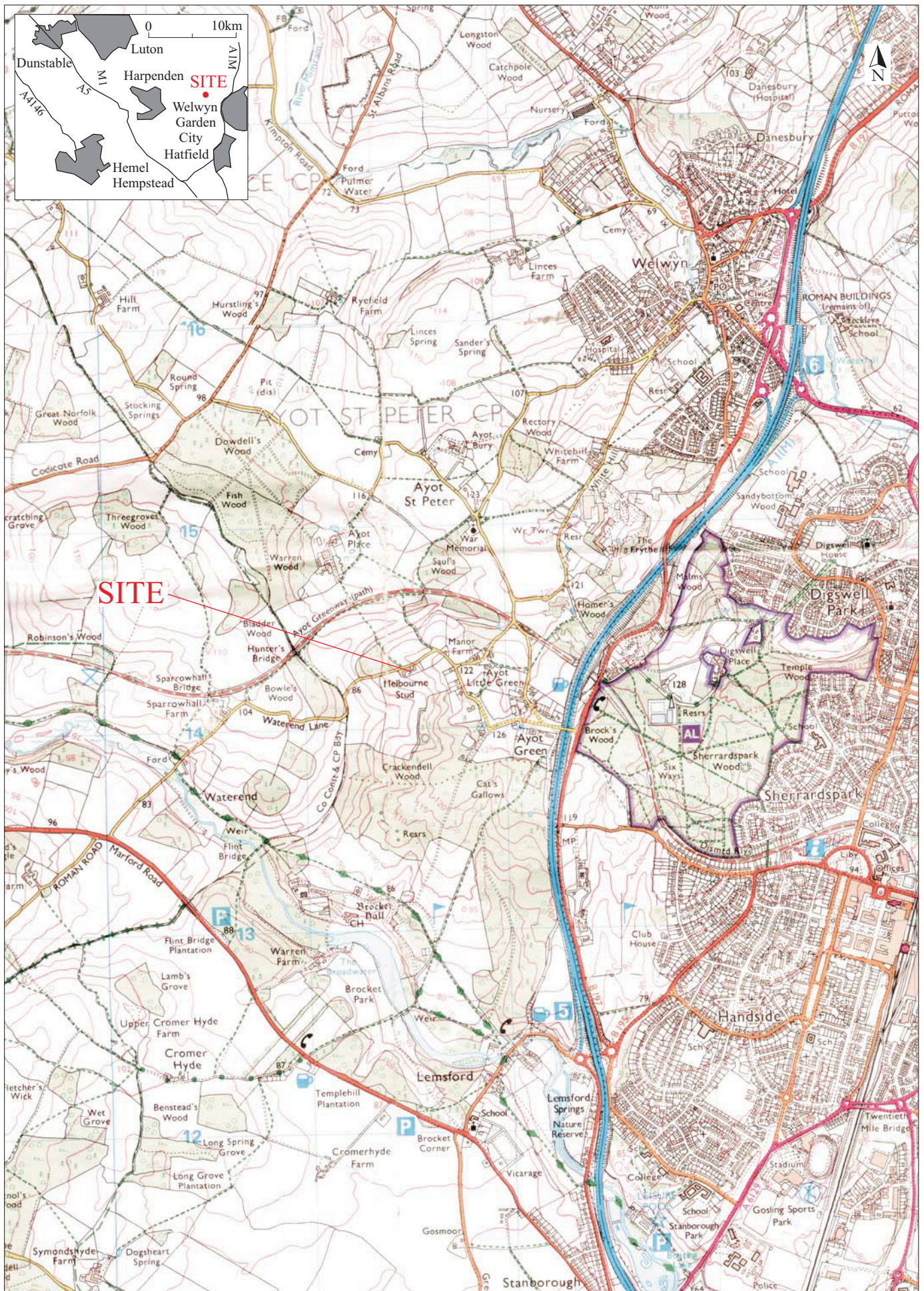


DP 7. E corner of the excavation. View ESE.



DP 8. W corner of the excavation. View W.

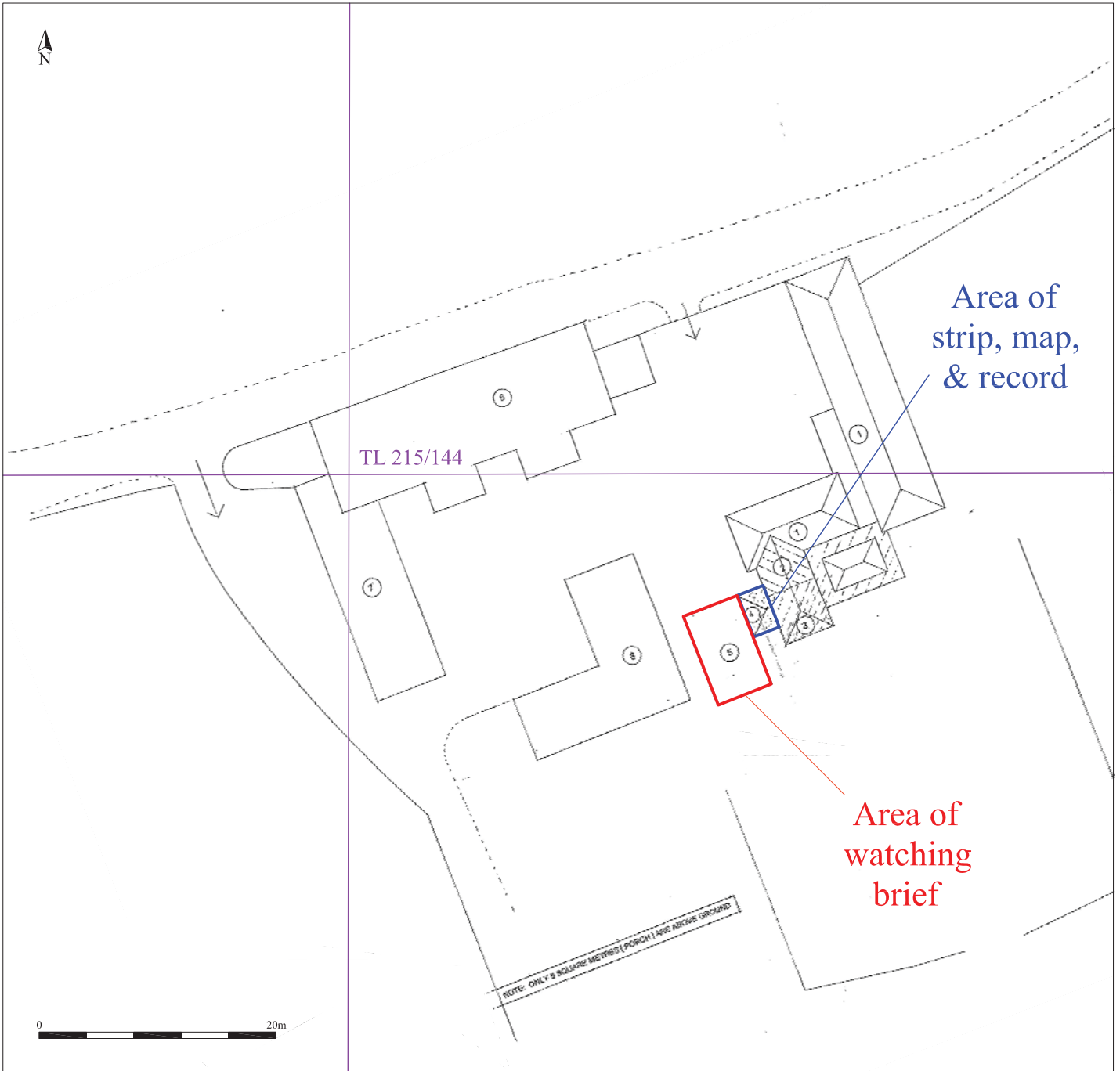




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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4

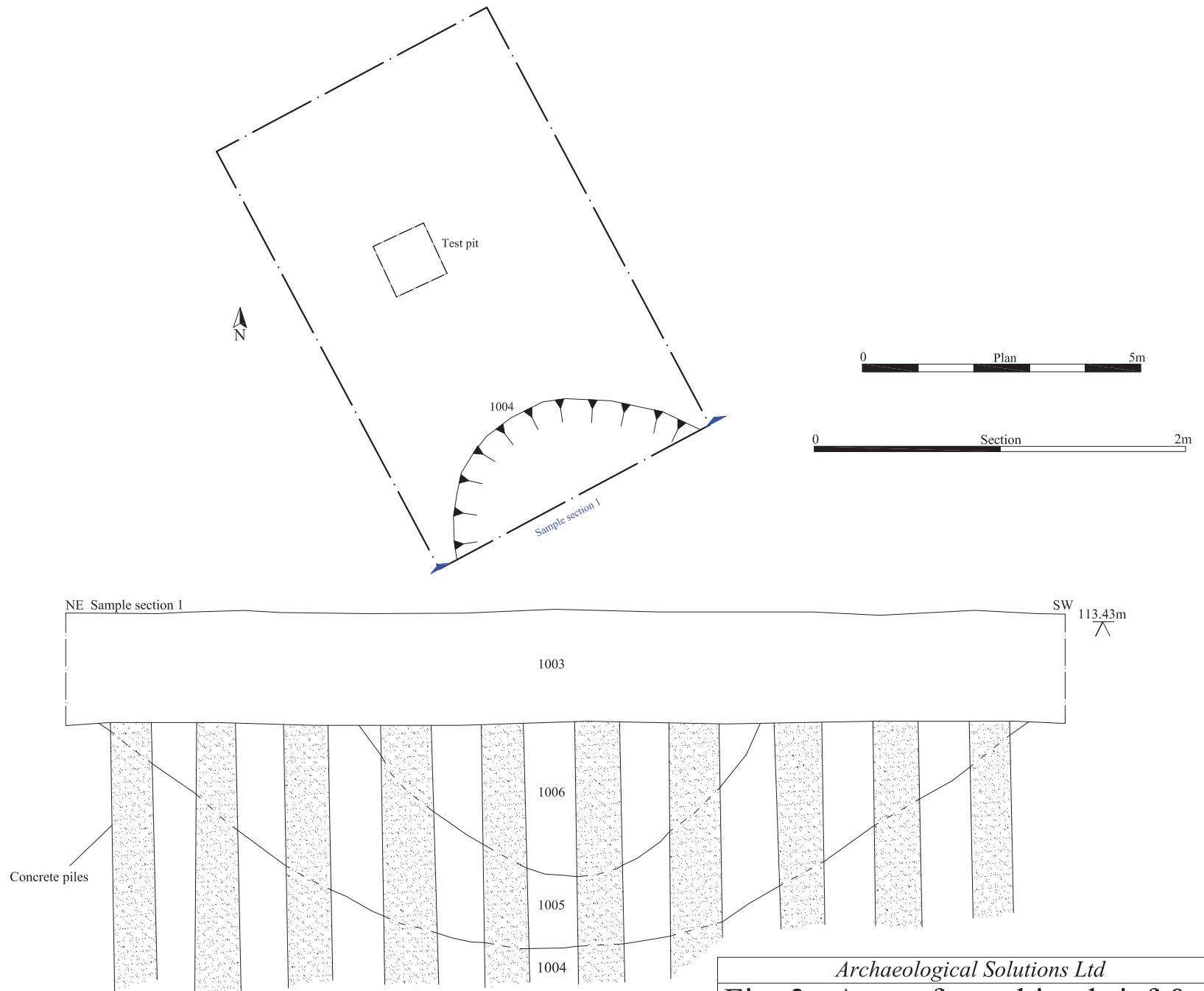




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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**

Scale plan at 1:500 at A4



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**Fig. 3 Area of watching brief & section**

Scale plan at 1:100 & section at 1:30 at A4