

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**S O U T H**

**White Notley Hall, White Notley,  
Witham, Essex**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Sean Wallis and Tim Dawson**

**Site Code: WNH11**

**(TL 7842 1835)**

# **White Notley Hall, White Notley, Witham, Essex**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr Scott Cranfield**

by Sean Wallis and Tim Dawson

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WHN11

**December 2011**

## Summary

**Site name:** White Notley Hall, White Notley, Witham, Essex

**Grid reference:** TL 7842 1835

**Planning reference:** BTE/00746/11 and BTE/00747/11/LBC

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 2nd November 2011

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Tim Dawson

**Site code:** WNH11

**Summary of results:** No archaeological finds or features were recorded during the watching brief, which monitored the digging of footing trenches for the new rear hall and cloak room.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Braintree Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 12.12.11
	Steve Preston ✓ 12.12.12

# White Notley Hall, White Notley, Witham, Essex An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Sean Wallis and Tim Dawson

**Report 11/88b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at White Notley Hall, White Notley, Witham, Essex (TL 7842 1835) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the owner of the property, Mr Scott Cranfield.

Planning permissions (BTE/00746/11 and BTE/00747/11/LBC) have been gained from Braintree District Council to demolish an existing single-storey lean-to and outbuilding, and to construct a new single-storey back entrance hall. Various alterations and general improvements to the main house are also proposed. The permissions are subject to standard conditions relating to archaeology, which require the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of any building work. A brief was prepared by Ms Maria Medleycott, of Essex County Council Historic Environment Management (HEM) Team, indicating that two distinct elements of work were required to satisfy the planning conditions. These entail building recording of the house prior to the commencement of building work, and an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during groundworks in respect of the new rear entrance hall. This report is solely concerned with the watching brief, and a separate report details the results of the building recording.

This is in accordance with *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, 2010), and the District Council's policies on the historic environment. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the Essex County Council HEM Team. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson on 2nd November 2011, and the site code is WNH11. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Braintree Museum in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

White Notley Hall is located just to the west of the historic core of White Notley, which is a small village about 3.5km north-west of Witham, Essex (Figs 1 and 2). The parish church (St Etheldreda's) is situated about 150m to the south-east of the house, and access to the property is via Church Hill. The main house is a Grade II\* Listed Building, and stands within a small complex of former farm buildings, some of which are Grade II Listed. The house sits on a hill, with the ground generally sloping away to the east and south. However, the area to the rear

of the house is relatively flat, and lies at a height of approximately 38m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying natural geology consists of Kesgrave sands and gravels (BGS 1982), and this was confirmed during the watching brief although, it was capped by a light brownish yellow sterile clay.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief prepared by the Essex County Council HEM Team. In summary, this potential stems from its location close to the historic core of the village and the fact that the existing house, which dates from the 16th century, is thought to have been built on or near to an earlier “halle”, recorded in 1320. Finds of medieval date from the vicinity also support this theory. In addition, the results of small-scale excavations around the main house suggest Roman settlement nearby, with the nature of finds recovered indicating the presence of a possible villa. In addition, a Roman circular brick-built tomb was excavated to the south of the house (ECC HEB 2011).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, including foundation trenches for the new building. Sufficient time was to be allowed within the developer’s and groundworker’s schedules to record any archaeological features revealed.

## **Results**

The proposed building, to the rear of the existing house, was originally planned to incorporate a new back hall, cloak room and log store. However, due to potential logistical problems it was decided not to construct the log store. The footing trenches for the back hall and cloak room were 0.65m wide, and approximately 1m deep (Fig. 3). Despite the fact that some buildings had recently been demolished in the area, there was surprisingly little disturbance visible in the footing trenches, although several modern service runs were noted. The stratigraphy generally consisted of 0.20m of turf and topsoil, which overlay a mixed layer of modern made ground and soil, up to 0.32m thick and containing 19th- and 20th-century building rubble. This deposit lay directly above the natural geology, which consisted of brownish red sand and gravel, overlaid by a band of light brownish yellow

clay (Fig. 4; Pls 1 and 2). No archaeological finds or features were recorded during the monitoring exercise, and the lack of any clear buried soil horizons suggests that the area had been truncated to some extent in the past.

## **Finds**

No archaeological finds were recovered during the watching brief.

## **Conclusion**

The watching brief at this site successfully examined the area which was disturbed by the construction of new hall. The results suggest that some truncation has occurred in the area in the past. No archaeological deposits nor artefacts were recorded during the project.

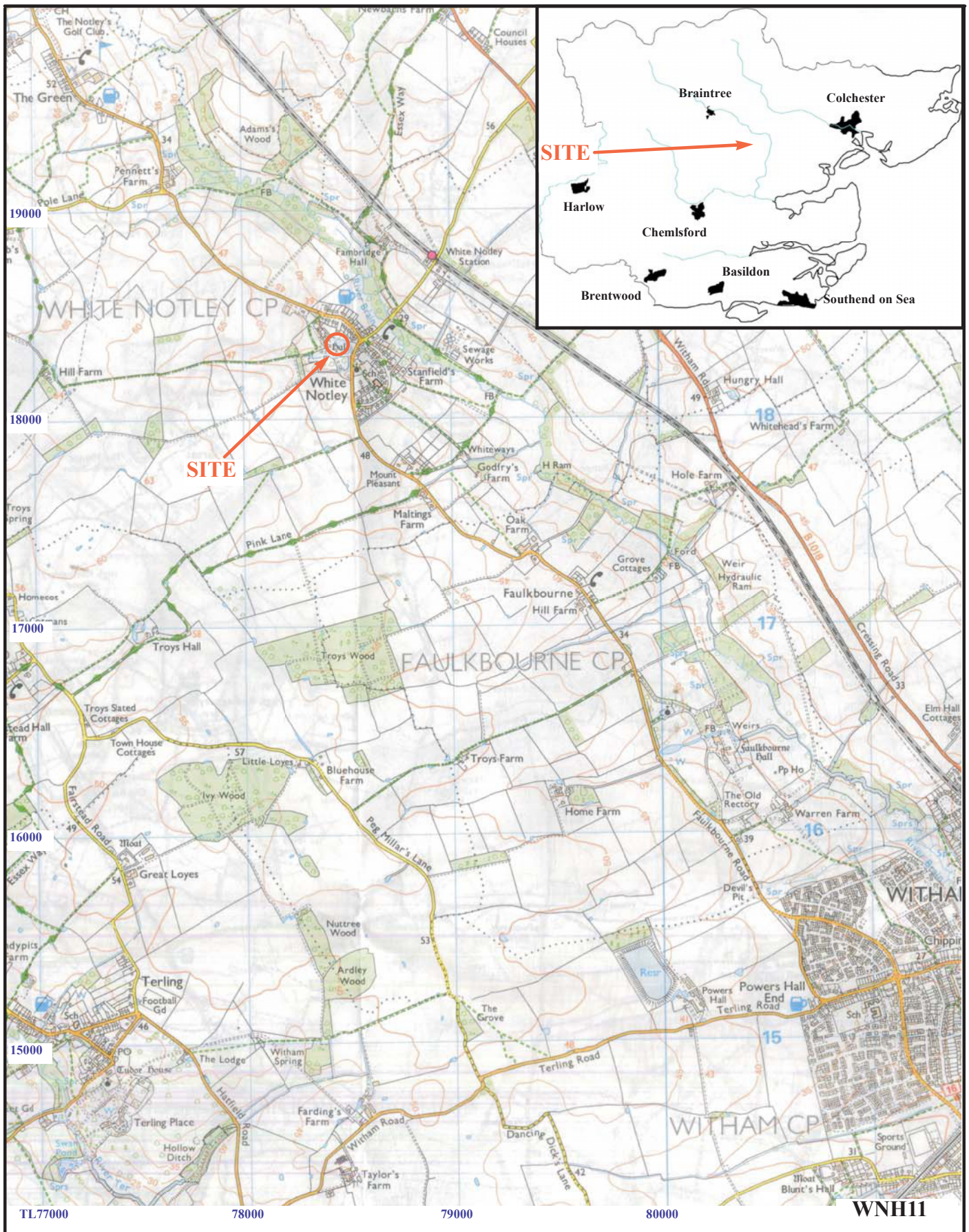
## **References**

- BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 223, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth  
ECC HEB, 2011, 'Historic building recording and archaeological monitoring at White Notley Hall, Church Hill, White Notley, Essex', County Council Historic Environment Branch brief, Chelmsford  
PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, Planning Policy Statement 5, The Stationery Office, Norwich

**ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD/ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY**

**SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Site name/Address:</b> White Notley Hall, White Notley, Witham, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> White Notley	<b>District:</b> Witham
<b>NGR:</b> TL 7842 1835	<b>Site Code:</b> WNH 11
<b>Type of Work:</b> Watching Brief	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Sean Wallis Thames Valley Archaeological Services
<b>Date of Work:</b> 2nd November 2011	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> c. 30 sqm
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Braintree	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER No.s:</b>
<b>Final Report:</b> Wallis, S and Dawson, T, 2011, 'White Notley Hall, White Notley, Witham, Essex: an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd unpubl rep 11/88b, Reading	
<b>Periods Represented:</b> None	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>	
<p>A watching brief was carried out at White Notley Hall, during the excavation of foundation trenches for a new back hall and cloak room. No archaeological finds or features were recorded.</p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b>	
<p>Wallis, S, 2011, 'White Notley Hall, White Notley, Witham, Essex: building recording', Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd unpubl rep 11/88, Reading</p>	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Sean Wallis	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 13th December 2011

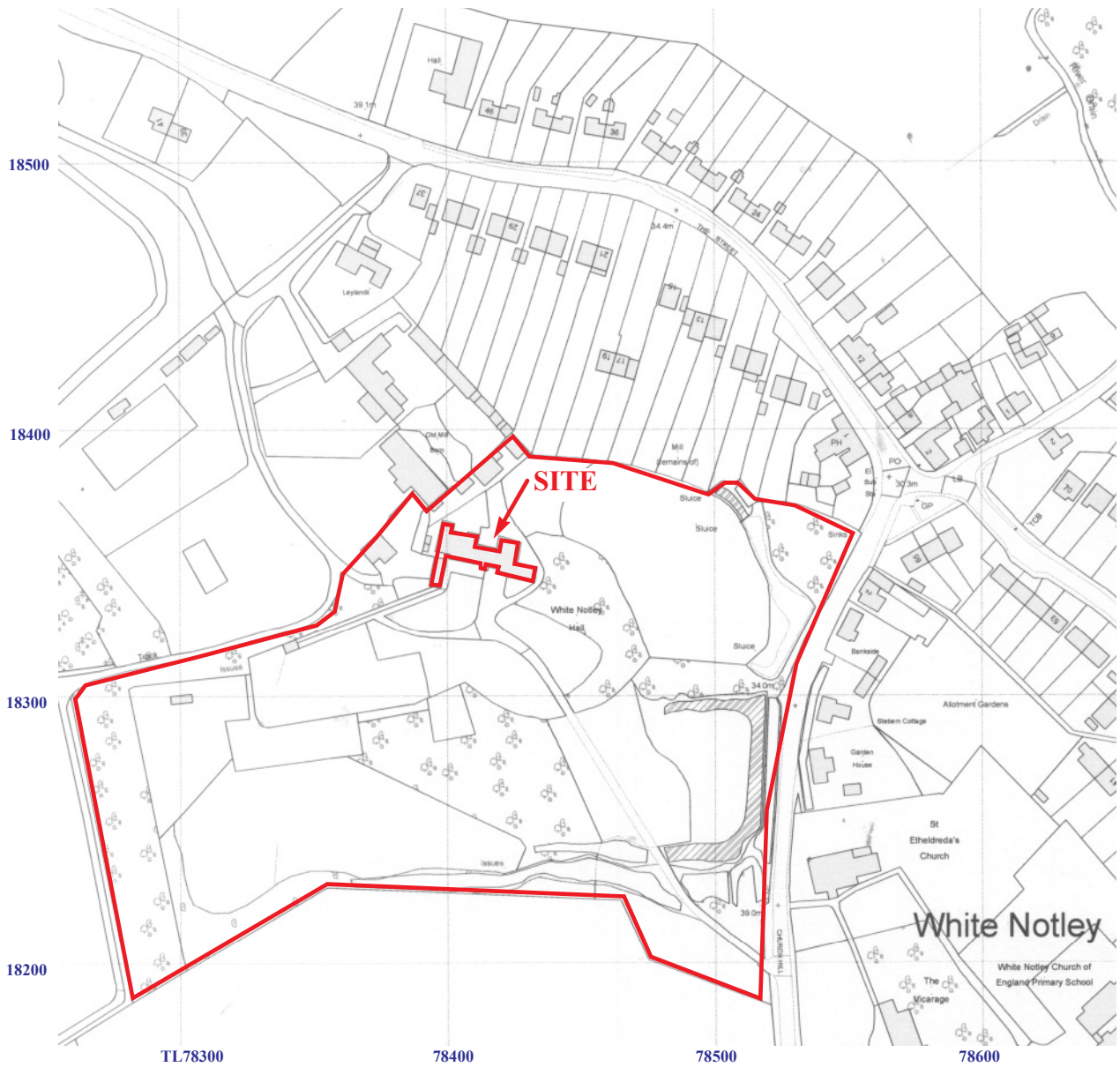


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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Witham and Essex.

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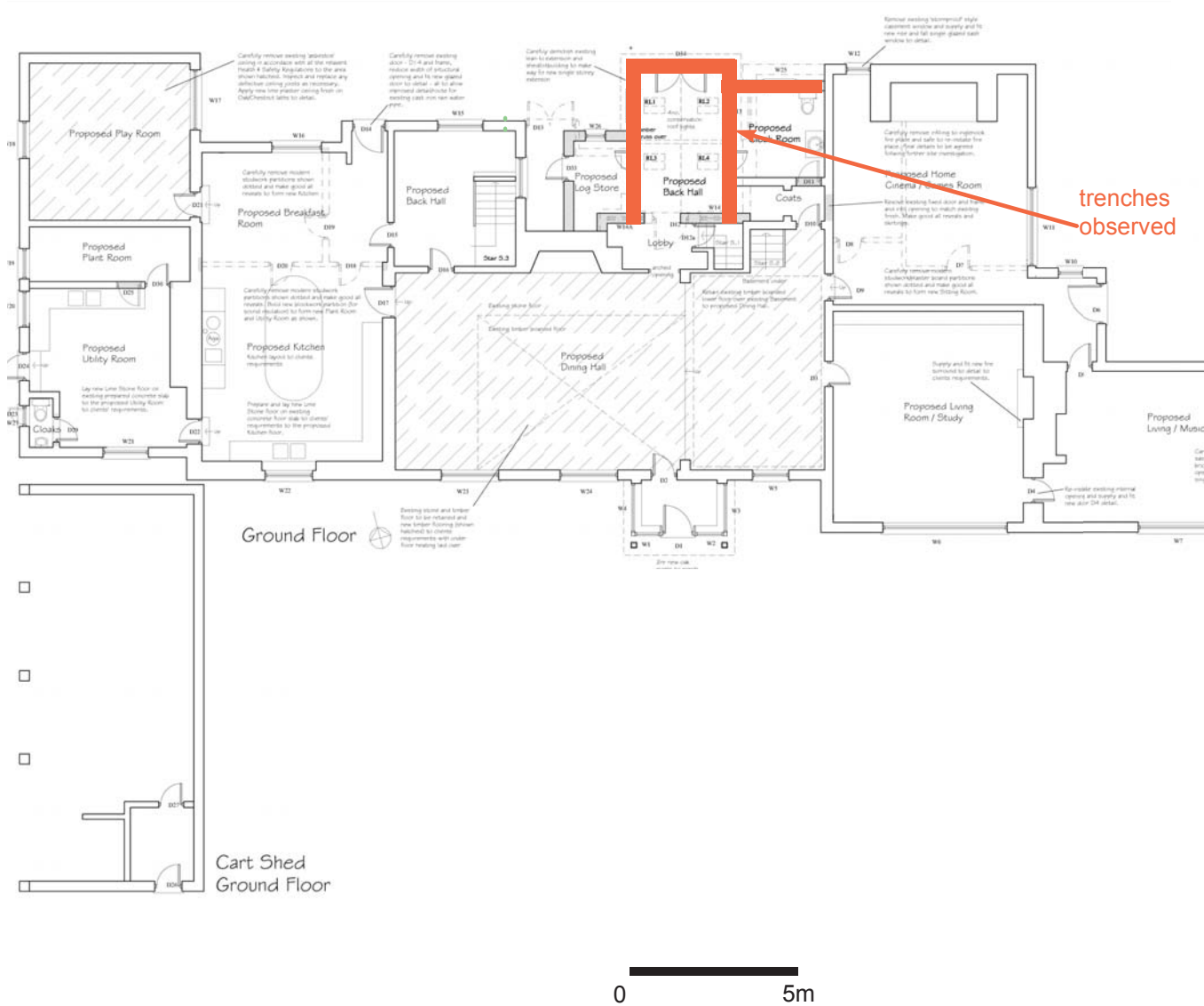


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

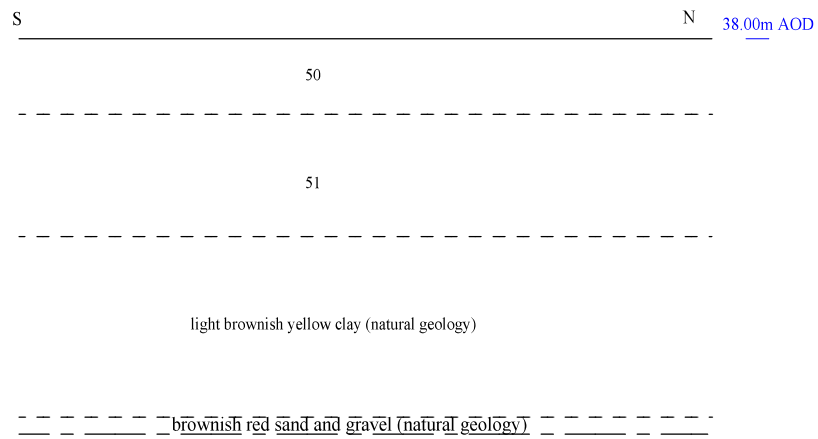
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Figure 3. Plan of house showing footing trenches monitored (in red).



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Figure 4. Representative Section





Plate 1. The excavated footings, looking south west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. The excavated footings, looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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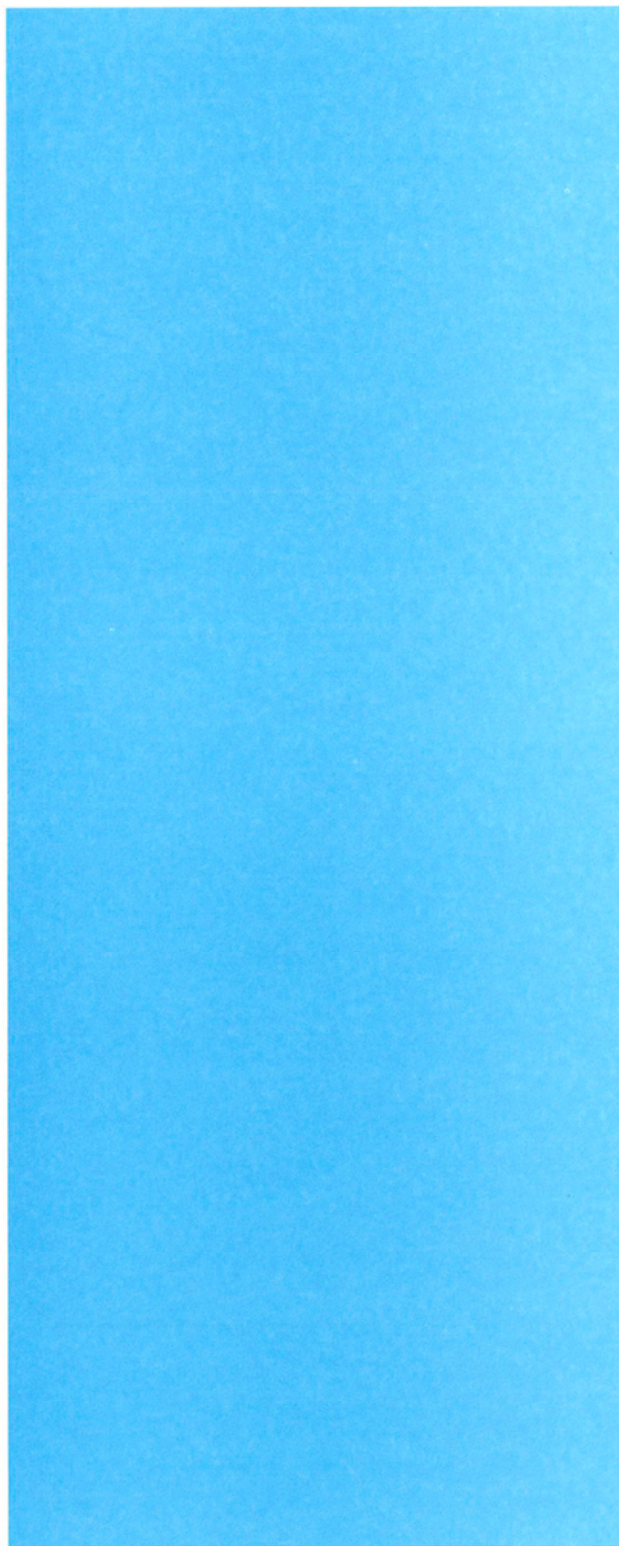
Plates 1 and 2.

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## TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





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