

**30–48 Castle Street,
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for George Wimpey (West London) Ltd**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CHW 07/20

October 2007

Summary

Site name: 30–48 Castle Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SU 8675 9305

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 27th and 28th September 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: CHW 07/20

Area of site: c. 930 sq m

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 08.10.07 Steve Preston ✓ 08.10.07
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30–48 Castle Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 07/20b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 30–48 Castle Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire (SU 8675 9305) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Gary Webster of George Wimpey (West London) Ltd, Stratfield House, Station Road, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 9PQ.

Planning permission (app no 05/07284/FUL) has been gained from Wycombe District Council to develop the site for residential and retail use. A field evaluation was requested, in order to provide information on the archaeological potential of the site, on the basis of which a mitigation strategy could be devised as appropriate.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, Archaeological Officer with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, adviser to the District on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and James Haygreen on the 27th and 28th September 2007 and the site code is CHW 07/20. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located the south side of Castle Street on a plot of land formerly occupied by a row of buildings forming numbers 30–48 and associated parking areas (Fig. 2). The site is currently a demolition site from the former buildings and it has a pronounced slope from Castle Street to the rear of the site. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of hard white chalk (BGS 1990), although clay with flints and clayey chalk was actually observed in the trenches, and the site lies at a height of c.80m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been identified in a brief for the project prepared by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (Radford 2007) drawing on information from a desk-top study

(Lowe 2007). In summary the site is identified as having a moderate archaeological potential due to little development appearing to have occurred in recent history allowing for the possibility of archaeological deposits being well preserved. Some Roman activity is recorded in the near vicinity including pottery and coin finds and a tessellated floor (mosaic). Two Saxon burials were identified in the grounds of Castle Hill House with medieval activity being most prevalent. This includes a house platform, a well and the nearby All Saint's Church.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

Specific aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant have survived on this site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if any deposits relating to Roman, Saxon or medieval occupation are present.

Four trenches were to be dug, each 15m in length and 1.6m wide using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Four trenches were eventually dug measuring between 11.10m and 15.00m in length, using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. (Fig. 3). The spoilheaps were monitored for finds. The majority of the trenches were shorter than originally intended due to the presence of a roadway into the site which was being retained for the new development, and a need to avoid the corridor occupied by four high voltage power cables.

Trench 1

This trench measured 11.70m in length and was 1.44m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of demolition rubble overlying re-deposited chalk containing bricks and concrete overlying chalky clay natural geology. Much of the west end of the trench had been disturbed in recent times. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 2

This trench measured 15.00m in length and was 1.9m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of demolition rubble directly overlying chalky clay-with-flints geology. Some modern disturbance of the natural geology was observed towards the southern end. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 3 (Pl. 1)

This trench measured 13.00m in length and was 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of demolition rubble directly overlying clay-with-flints geology. Some modern disturbance of the natural geology was observed. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 2)

This trench measured 11.10m in length and was 2.18m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of demolition rubble overlying a mid brown silty clay overlying clay with flints natural. Some modern disturbance of the natural geology was observed. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Finds

No finds of any archaeological interest were retrieved.

Conclusion

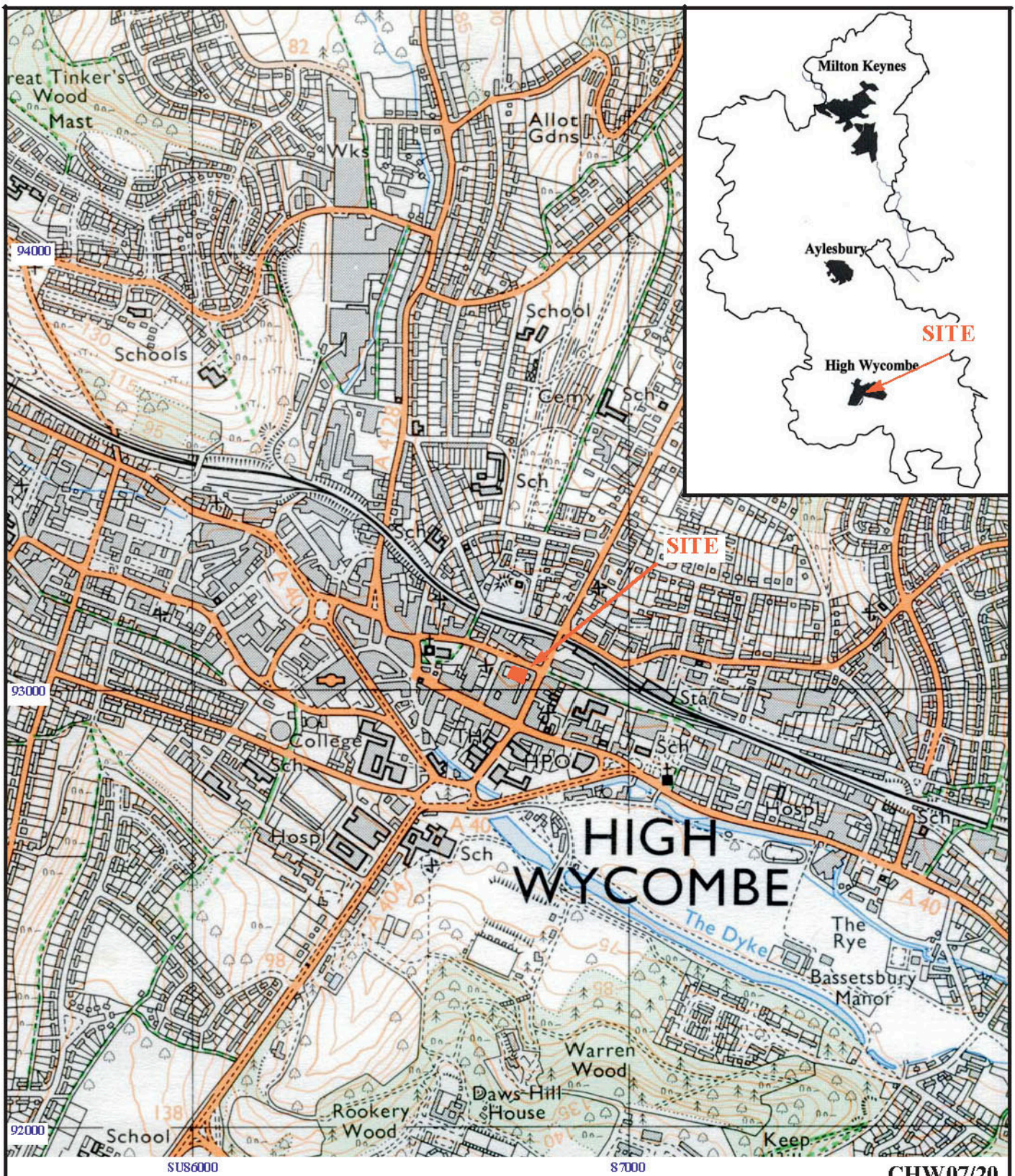
Despite the potential of the site for having archaeological deposits surviving the evaluation did not identify any deposits or finds of an archaeological nature. It would appear that the majority of the site has been severely truncated by the construction of the former buildings. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

References

- BGS, 1990, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 255, Drift Edition, Keyworth
Lowe, J, 2007, 30-48 Castle Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, an archaeological desk-base assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 07/20, Reading
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
Radford, D, 2007, 'Brief for an Archaeological Excavation, Project: Edric House, 30-48 Castle Street, High Wycombe', Buckinghamshire County Council

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at S or W end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	11.70	1.80	1.44	0.00m-1.03m demolition rubble; 1.03m-1.44m re-deposited chalk; 1.44m+ chalky clay natural geology. Much modern disturbance of western end
2	15.00	1.80	1.90	0.00m-1.90m demolition rubble; 1.90m+ chalky clay natural geology. Some modern disturbance of southern end
3	13.00	1.80	0.55	0.00m-0.55m demolition rubble; 0.55m+ clay with flints natural geology. Some modern disturbance. [Plate 1]
4	11.10	1.80	2.18	0.00m-0.43m demolition rubble; 0.43m-2.18m mid brown silty clay; 2.18m+ clay with flints natural geology. Some modern disturbance. [Plate 2]



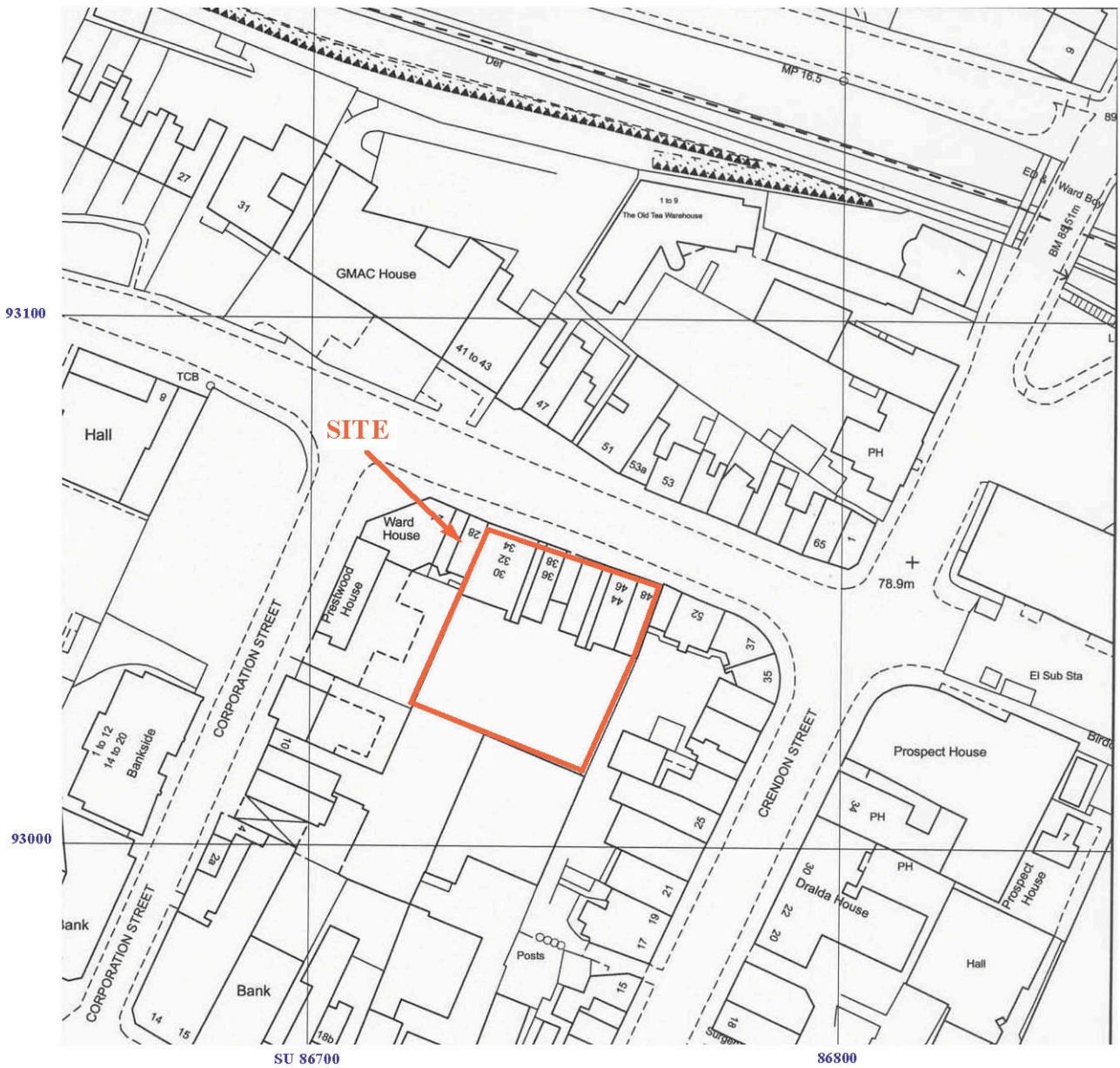
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Figure 1. Location of site within High Wycombe and Buckinghamshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site within High Wycombe.

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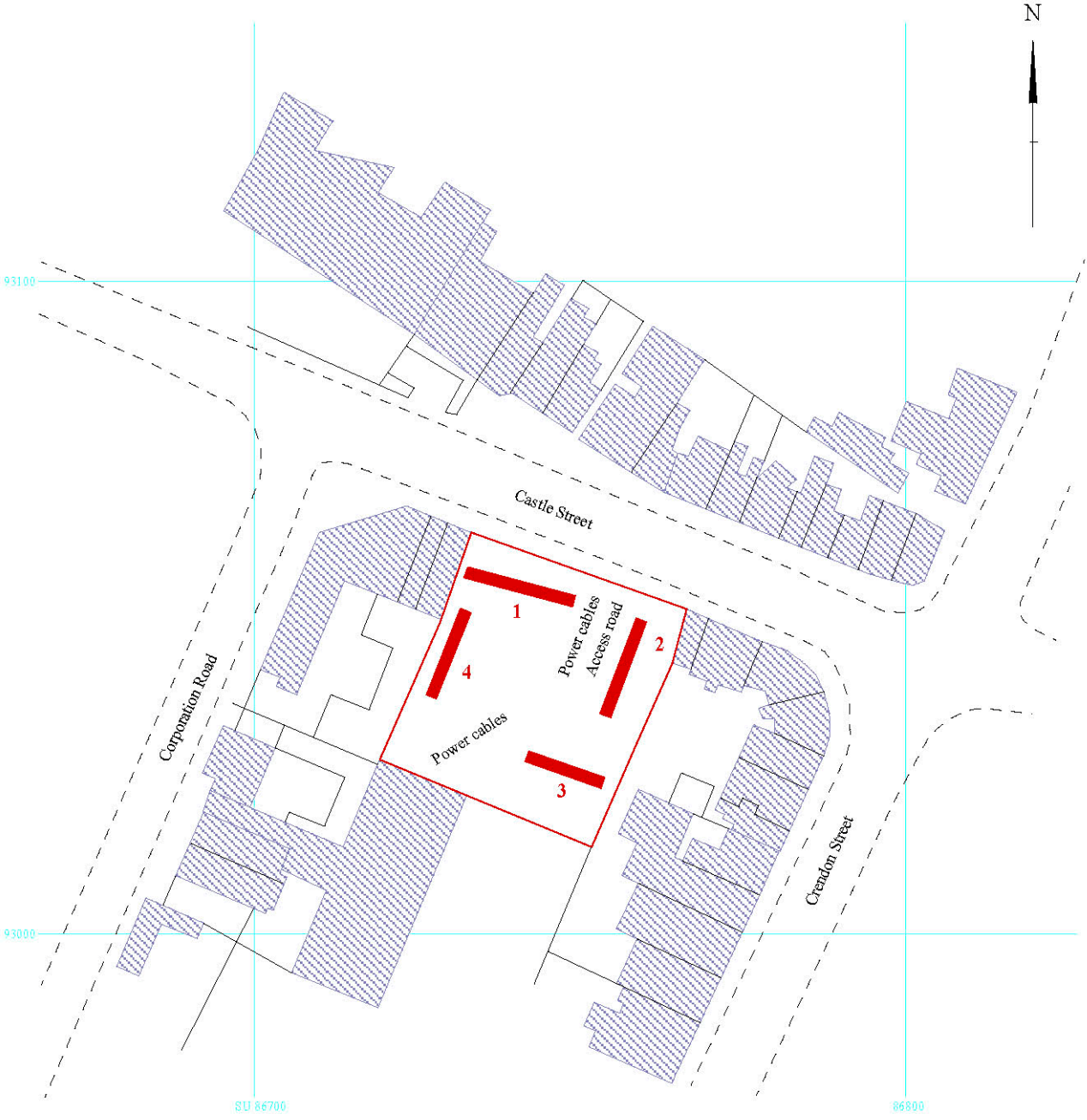


Figure 3: Trench Locations

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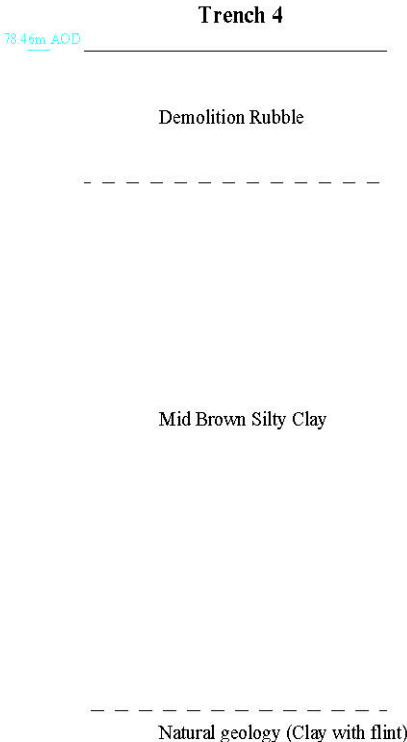


Figure 4: Representative section of Trench 4.



Plate 1. Trench 3 looking north, scales 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 4 looking south east.