
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND
RECORDING AT
WHITEGATES
CHURCH HILL
RAVENS DEN
BEDFORDSHIRE
(RVCH22)**

Work Undertaken For
Cecil Estate Family Trust
Mr and Mrs S Bolton

October 2022

Report Compiled by
Mark Peachey BA (Hons)

Planning Application Nos: 21/02067/FUL
National Grid Reference: TL 0778 5428
Bedford Museum Accession No: 2022.151
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-510161

APS Report No. **69/22**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



DRAFT

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1. SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during groundworks for a house extension at Whitegates, Church Hill, Ravensden, Bedfordshire.

The site is archaeologically sensitive, lying within the medieval core of the village which is represented by the late 12th century church of All Saints', located immediately to the northeast.

The investigation revealed a sequence of natural, made ground and modern rubble deposits.

There were neither archaeological features nor finds.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

The site was the subject of a planning application (21/02067/FUL) for a single storey rear extension, garage conversion and a new garage roof. Permission was granted subject to a programme of archaeological investigation comprising monitoring and recording. Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by the Cecil Family Estate Trust, on behalf of Mr and Mrs S Bolton, to undertake this work which was carried out on 14th and 15th September 2022 in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the planning archaeologist for Bedford Borough Council.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Ravensden is located 6.9km northeast of Bedford in the Bedford Borough Council District of Bedfordshire (Fig. 1).

The site lies immediately southeast of the church of All Saints on the northeast side

of Church Hill, at National Grid Reference TL 0778 5428 (Fig 2).

The site lies at a height of c. 64m AOD on land that slopes down to the southwest, towards the Ravensden Brook.

Local soils are calcareous pelosols and argillic pelosols of the Hanslope Association (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 209). These soils are developed on a drift geology of glacially derived till which in turn seals a solid geology of mudstones of the Peterborough Member (BGS 2010).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Ravensden is located in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Roman period to the present day. A small quantity of Roman and medieval pottery has been recovered east of the site (HER14054) while an Anglo-Saxon disc brooch of early 7th century date was recovered in the vicarage garden, a short way to the north, in 1866 (HER14762).

Ravensden is first mentioned in AD1180. Referred to as *Rauenesden*, the name simply means 'the valley of the ravens' (Ekwall 1976, 381).

The medieval linear settlement of Church End, Ravensden is best represented by the extant parish church of All Saints (MBD 1102) which has its origins in the late 12th century (Pevsner 2002, 136). It has a 15th century tower and monitoring during the construction of a French drain in 1992 revealed that the original church had both a nave and a chancel (BCAS 1993).

Apart from the church, the most notable buildings in the vicinity are a number of timber framed cottages. Just to the north of the church is Oak Cottage (MBD 1742) which has a thatched roof and an adjacent row of three cottages (MBD 9580), two also thatched. Harper cottages (MBD 1743) including the former 'The Case is Altered' public house lie 200m to the

southwest.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the work was to record and interpret the deposits and any archaeological features exposed during the development groundwork.

The objectives of the investigation were to:

- Determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered;
- Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;
- As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features; and
- Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.
- Determine the significance of the archaeological remains identified.
- Assess the potential impact of the proposed development scheme on buried archaeological and human remains.

4. METHODS

The footings for the extension were excavated by machine to the depths required, under archaeological supervision. Following excavation, selected sides of the trenches were cleaned and rendered vertical. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and a section was

drawn at a scale of 1:10. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services' practice.

5. RESULTS (Figs 4, 5; Plate 4)

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

The earliest deposit revealed during the excavation of the footings was a natural mid brown silty clay (003), revealed at a depth of between 0.9m and 1.07m. This was overlain by an up to 0.7m thick made ground deposit, a mix of mid brown silty clay and occasional brick rubble (002) over which was an up to 0.37m thick layer of brick and concrete hardcore (001) (Fig. 5, Sections 1, 2; Plates 2, 3).

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits comprised a mid brown silty clay with chalk flecks.

This was overlain by a layer of made ground, probably dating from the building of the house and a recent deposit of hardcore.

7. CONCLUSION

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken on groundworks for an extension at Whitegates, Church Hill, Ravensden as the site lay in the in the core of the medieval village.

However, the investigation revealed a sequence of natural, made ground and modern rubble deposits. No archaeological features were observed during the groundworks and no finds were retrieved.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Cecil Estate Family Trust for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis on behalf of Mr and Mrs S. Bolton. The work was co-ordinated by Paul Cope-Faulkner who also edited this report.

BCAS Bedfordshire County Archaeological Services

BHER Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Site Supervisor: Ryan Godbold
Photographic reproduction: Mark Peachey
CAD Illustration: Mark Peachey
Post-excavation analysis: Mark Peachey
Archiving: Denise Buckley and Maria Leroi

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

BCAS 1993 *All Saints Church, Ravensden, Archaeological Recording during the construction of a French Drain in 1992* BCAS report no. **6/93**

BGS, 2010 *Bedford; bedrock and superficial deposits*, 1:50,000 map sheet **203**

Ekwall, E, 1976 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names* (4th edition)

Hodge, CAH, Burton, RGO, Corbett, WM, Evans, R and Seale, RS, 1984 *Soils and their use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales Bulletin No. **13**

Pevsner, N, 2002 *Bedfordshire, Huntingdon and Peterborough* The Buildings of England

11. ABBREVIATIONS

AOD Above Ordnance Datum

APS Archaeological Project Services



Figure 1 - General location map

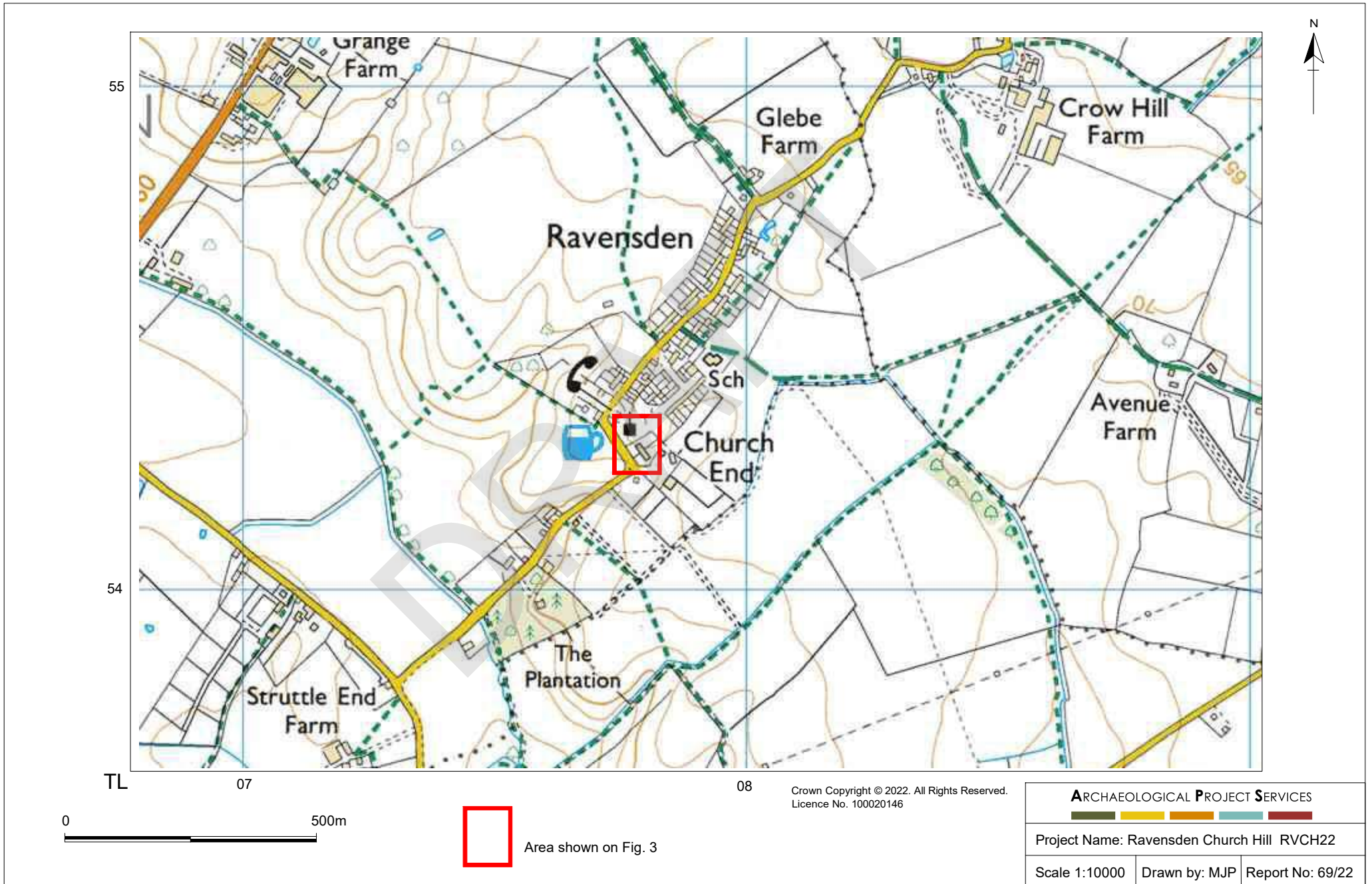


Figure 2. Site location plan

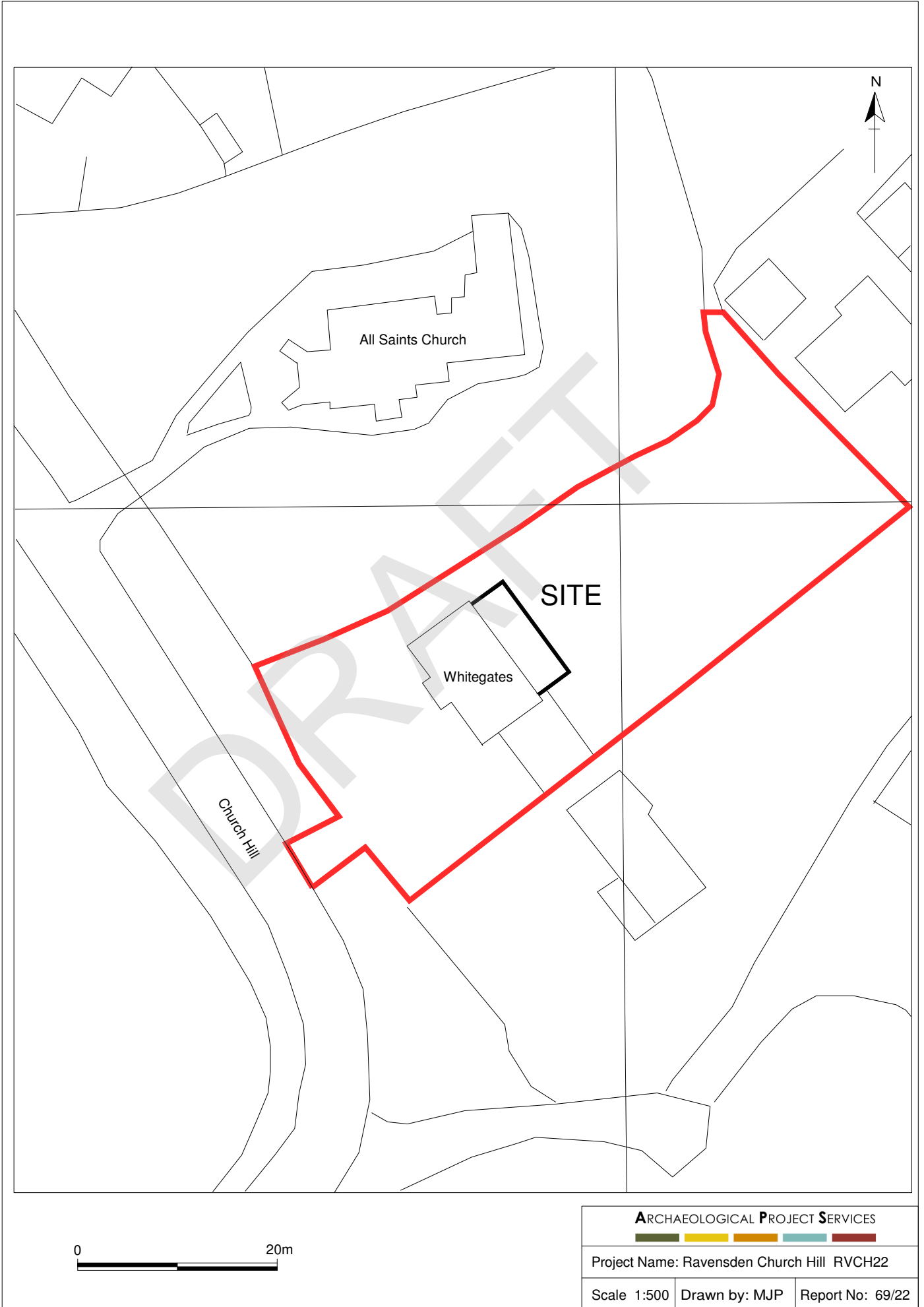


Figure 3. Site plan

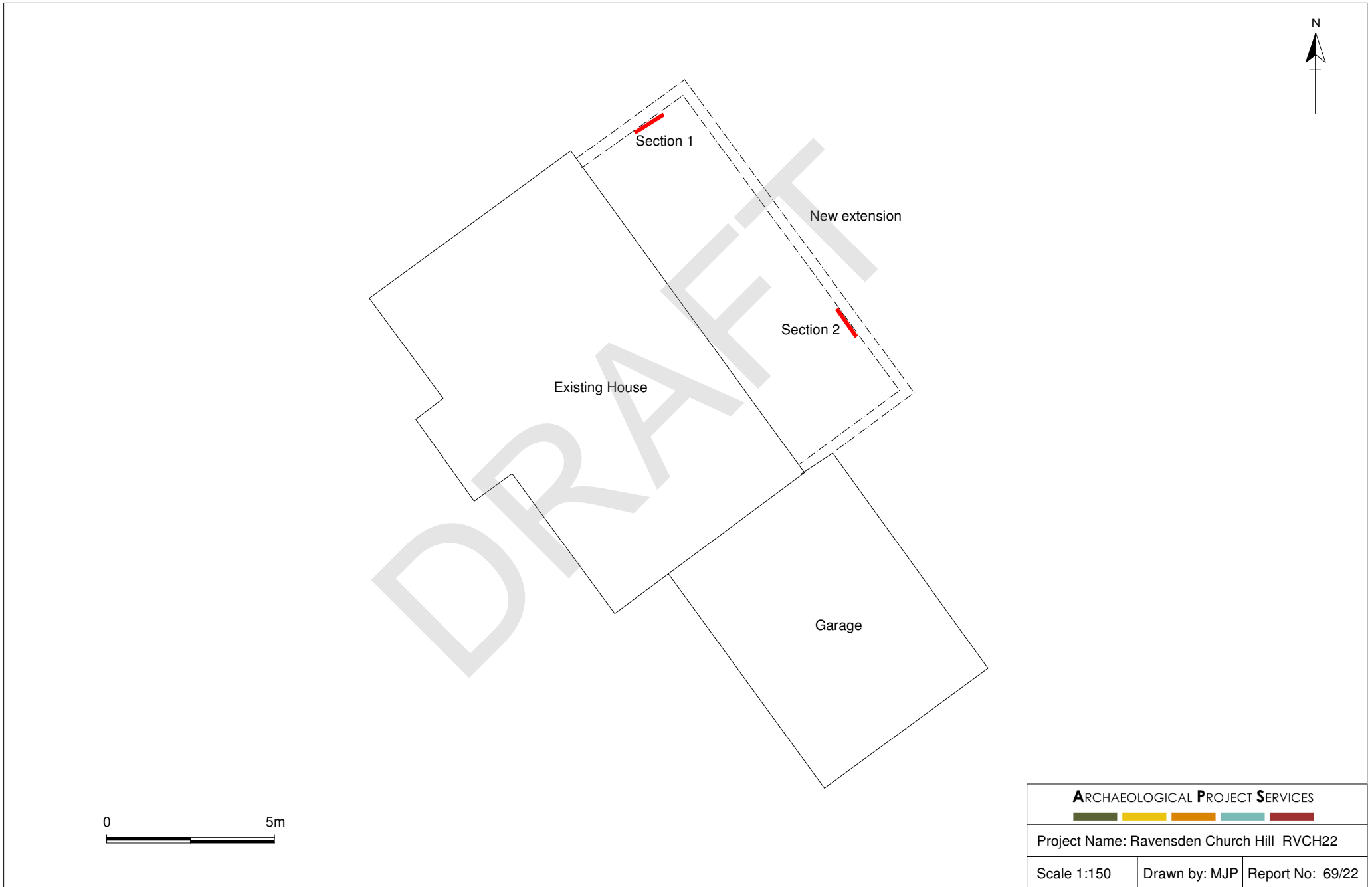
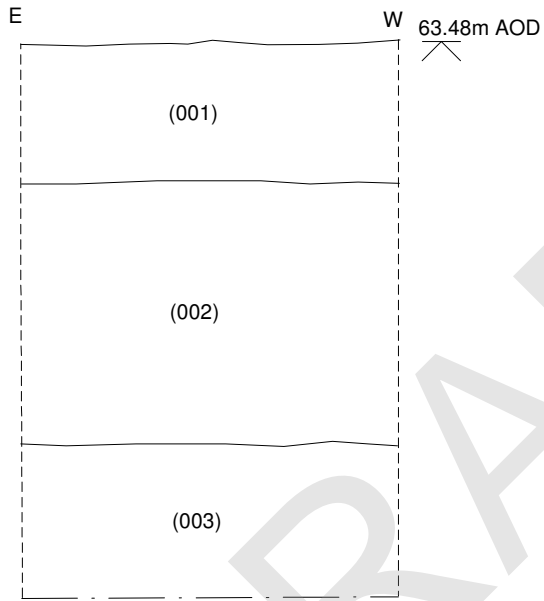
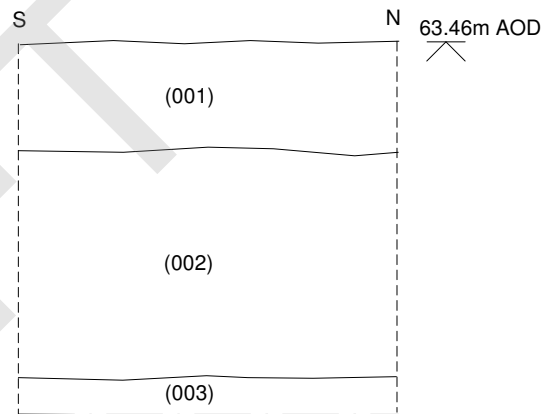


Figure 4. Plan of footings



Section 1



Section 2



ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES		
Project Name: Ravensden Church Hill RVCH22		
Scale 1:20	Drawn by: MJP	Report No: 69/22

Figure 5. Sections



Plate 1. General pre-machining view of the site, looking northwest, towards the church



Plate 2. Representative Section 1, looking southeast



Plate 3. Representative Section 2, looking southwest



Plate 4. The completed footings, looking south

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Hard mixed building rubble including concrete, up to 0.37m thick	Hardcore layer
002	Compact mix of mid brown silty clay and occasional brick rubble, up to 0.7m thick	Made ground
003	Firm mid brown silty clay with occasional chalk flecks, at least 0.4m thick	Natural

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Appendix 2

GLOSSARY

Anglo-Saxon	Pertaining to the period when Britain was occupied by peoples from northern Germany, Denmark and adjacent areas. The period dates from approximately AD 450-1066.
Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> [004].
Layer	A layer is an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Till	A deposit formed after the retreat of a glacier. Also known as boulder clay, this material is generally unsorted and can comprise of rock flour to boulders to rocks of quite substantial size.

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 1 Context register sheet
- 3 Context record sheets
- 1 Photographic record sheet
- 1 Section record sheet
- 2 Daily record sheets
- 1 Sheet of scale drawings

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Bedford Museum
Castle Lane
Bedford
MK40 3XD

Accession Number: BEDFM 2022.151

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: RVCH 22

Oasis Record No: archaeo11-510161

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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Summary for archaeol1-510161

OASIS ID (UID)	archaeol1-510161
Project Name	Watching Brief at Whitegates, Church Hill, Ravensden, Bedfordshire
Sitename	Whitegates, Church Hill, Ravensden, Bedfordshire
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	4621
Planning Id	21/02067/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Archaeological Project Services
Project Dates	14-Sep-2022 - 15-Sep-2022
Location	Whitegates, Church Hill, Ravensden, Bedfordshire NGR : TL 07780 54280 LL : 52.1762588362731, -0.425236422921219 12 Fig : 507780,254280
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Bedfordshire District : Bedford Parish : Ravensden
Project Methodology	Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out on the footings for an extension to the rear of 'Whitegates'.
Project Results	A sequence of natural and modern deposits was revealed.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Bedford Borough HER - noRev - LITE
Person Responsible for work	M, Peachey
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Documentary Archive - to be deposited with Bedfordshire Archives & Records Service;