

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:**

**TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND OFF GARDEN CLOSE, WITTERING, PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

Planning Reference: 11/00081/FUL

NGR: TF 0549 0249

AAL Site Code: WIGC 14

OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-187984



Report prepared for Amesview Developments Limited

By

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Allenarchaeology



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*Cover Image: General view of site, looking northeast*

## **Executive Summary**

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Amesview Developments Limited to carry out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Garden Close, Wittering, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, as a condition of planning permission for a residential development.
- The site lies in an area of some archaeological interest, particularly for the medieval period.
- The trial trenching revealed a similar sequence of deposits in both trenches, comprising natural geology overlain by a former subsoil and topsoil and a modern topsoil. A single sherd of 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century pottery was recovered from the subsoil layer in Trench 2 and may be indicative of manuring of outlying fields at this time.
- The trial trenching has indicated a negligible archaeological potential for the site.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by Amesview Developments Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Garden Close in Wittering, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.
- 1.2 The site works and reporting conformed to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists 'Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008) and regional guidelines '*Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*' (Medlycott 2011). All relevant English Heritage guidelines on archaeological best practice was also followed ([www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740](http://www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740)).
- 1.3 The documentary archive will be submitted to Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery within six months of the completion of the fieldwork.

## **2.0 Site Location and Description**

- 2.1 The proposed development area is located off Garden Close, adjacent to Church Road on the western side of the village of Wittering. Wittering is in the Soke of Peterborough and lies 6.4km southeast of Stamford and 17.6km northwest of central Peterborough itself (Figure 1). The development area comprised a former council depot, centred on NGR TF 0549 0249, covering an area of approximately 0.14ha.
- 2.2 The bedrock geology of the site comprises Lower Lincolnshire Limestone, with no superficial deposits recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

## **3.0 Planning Background**

- 3.1 Planning permission has been granted for the '*Construction of five dwellings comprising 2no. X 4 – bed houses (plots 1 and 2) and 3no. X 3-bedroom houses (plots 3, 4, and 5) on former PCC depot site*' (Reference 11/00081/FUL). Permission was granted subject to conditions, including for a programme of archaeological work. Following discussion with the Peterborough City Council Archaeologist a programme of evaluation trenching was devised and approved.
- 3.2 The approach adopted is consistent with the recommendations of Chapter 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012) and Policy CS17 of the adopted Peterborough Core Strategy DPD.

## **4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 4.1 Prehistoric remains are well represented in the wider landscape; although no evidence of such activity was identified within 500m of the site.
- 4.2 The only find of Roman date nearby is a 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD finger ring found c.300m west of the proposed development area (English Heritage (EH) monument ref 348105).

- 4.3 Wittering is named in the Domesday survey of 1086, when it contained 3 mills and included mixed ploughland and extensive woodland. Prior to the conquest the settlement was owned by the Abbey of St Peter in Peterborough, but was redistributed to Ansketil of St Medard by 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002).
- 4.4 Medieval remains are better represented within the surrounding area. A priory is documented as having been located less than 400m west of the development site (EH monument ref 348102), while a medieval house and hall is recorded c.200m northwest of the site (EH monument no. 348077). Approximately 350m southeast of the site lies the Church of All Saints, believed to have been built in the 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> century and added to in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 4.5 The site has been utilised as a council depot in recent times, with the former buildings now demolished.

## **5.0 Methodology**

- 5.1 A programme of trial trenching was agreed with the Archaeologist at Peterborough City Council. The works comprised two trenches, one measuring approximately 10m long by 1.6m wide, the other measuring approximately 20m long by 1.6m wide (Figure 2).
- 5.2 In each trench, all topsoil and non-archaeological overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, in spits no greater than 0.10m in thickness. The process was repeated until the uppermost natural geological horizon was exposed.
- 5.3 A full written record of the deposits encountered was made on standard Allen Archaeology Limited context recording sheets. Each deposit was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 2.
- 5.4 The location of the trenches was surveyed with a survey-grade GPS instrument. A representative section of the deposits in each trench was drawn and tied into Ordnance Survey heights using the GPS. Colour photography formed an integral part of the recording strategy, with photographs incorporating scales, an identification board and directional arrow where appropriate.

## 6.0 Results

### *Trench 1*

- 6.1 Natural geology comprising light yellowish orange sandy silt and limestone fragments 103 was encountered in Trench 1 at a depth of 0.42m below the present ground surface. It had been sealed by a 0.13m thick layer of light brownish orange sandy silt, 102, likely to represent a former subsoil. It had in turn been sealed by a 0.15m thick layer of mid orange brown sandy silt, 101, which was almost certainly a layer of buried ploughsoil. The uppermost deposit was formed by a 0.14m thick layer of modern topsoil, 100.



*Plate 1: Trench 1 looking northwest. 2 x 1m scales*

### *Trench 2*

- 6.2 Deposits encountered in Trench 2 were very similar to those in Trench and followed much the same sequence.
- 6.3 A natural geological deposit which comprised light yellowish orange silty sand and limestone fragments, 203, was encountered 0.42m below the present ground surface and had been sealed by a 0.18m thick layer of light yellowish brown sandy silt, 202. This was most likely a continuation of layer 102 in Trench 1 representing a former subsoil. The only find recovered from the site, a single sherd of pottery dated to the late 9<sup>th</sup> to early 10<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from the deposit. A 0.09m thick layer of buried topsoil, 201, sealed layer 202 and was partially sealed by a spread of modern debris, 204, in the central area of the trench. A 0.15m thick layer of modern topsoil, 200 formed the uppermost deposit encountered in the trench.



*Plate 2: Representative section of Trench 2. Looking southeast, 1m scale*

## **7.0 Discussion**

- 7.1 The two trenches revealed a very similar sequence of deposits comprising natural geology sealed by a possible former subsoil and topsoil, and then a modern topsoil. A single sherd of 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century pottery was recovered from the potential subsoil layer in Trench 2. This provides a very tentative for this horizon but does not indicate intensive settlement activity on or near to the site, but is perhaps more likely to indicate an agricultural zone with the sherd of pottery incorporated into the soil as manuring with domestic waste.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

- 8.1 The archaeological evaluation has indicated a negligible archaeological potential for the site, with no features of interest recorded and only a single sherd of pottery recovered, indicative of possible manuring of agricultural soils well beyond any settlement core.

## **9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

- 9.1 The archaeological trial trench methodology was appropriate to the nature and extent of the proposed development and has been effective in indicating the limited archaeological potential of the site.

## **10.0 Acknowledgements**

- 10.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Amesview Developments Limited for this commission.



## 11.0 References

Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*. London, Department for Communities and Local Government

IfA, 1994 (revised 2001 and 2008), *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Institute for Archaeologists, Reading

Medlycott, M (ed.), 2011, *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24

Williams A and Martin GH, 2002, *Domesday Book: A complete translation*, Alecto Historical Editions, London

## Appendix 1: The Ceramic Finds

Dr Anne Irving

### The Pottery

Table 1, Pottery Archive

Cxt	Cname	Full name	Form	NoS	NoV	W (g)	Part	Description	Date
202	LSH	Lincoln Shell-tempered ware	Inturned rim bowl	1	1	8	Rim	Leached; soot	Late 9th to early 10th

### Discussion

No further work is required on the assemblage. The sherd is stable and suitable for long-term storage.

### Spot Dating

The dating in Table 2 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Table 2, Spot dates

Cxt	Date	Comments
202	Late 9th to early 10th	Date on a single sherd

### Abbreviations

ACBMG	Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group
BS	Body sherd
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CXT	Context
LHJ	Lower Handle Join
NoF	Number of Fragments
NoS	Number of sherds
NoV	Number of vessels
TR	Trench
UHJ	Upper Handle Join
W (g)	Weight (grams)

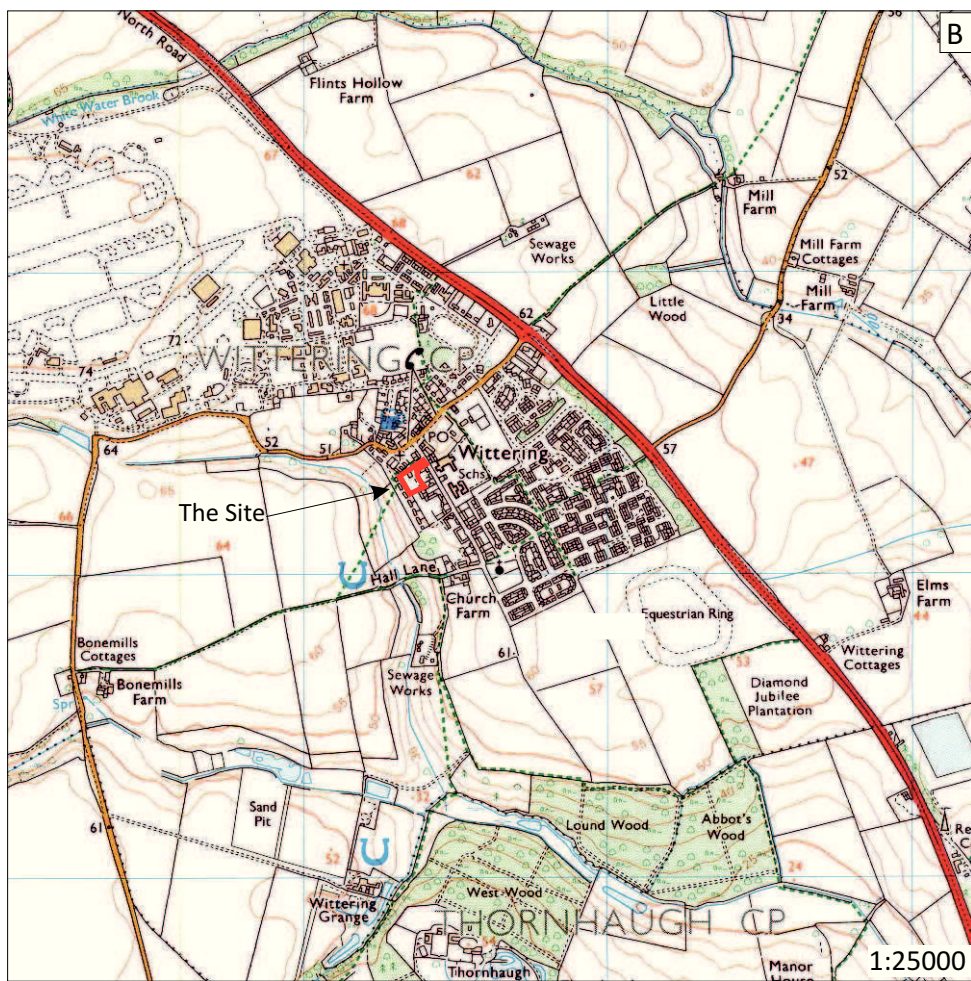
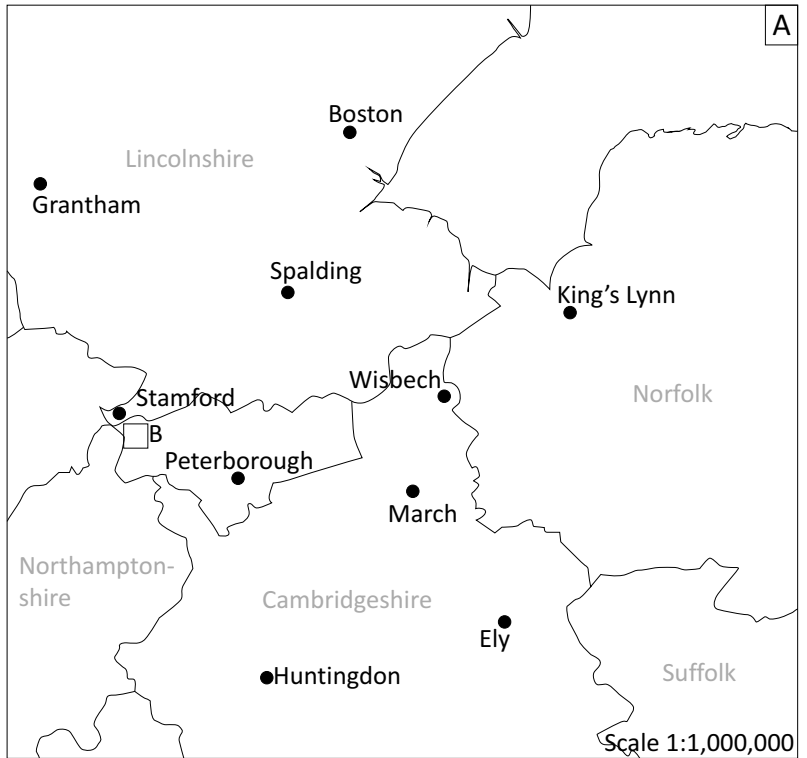
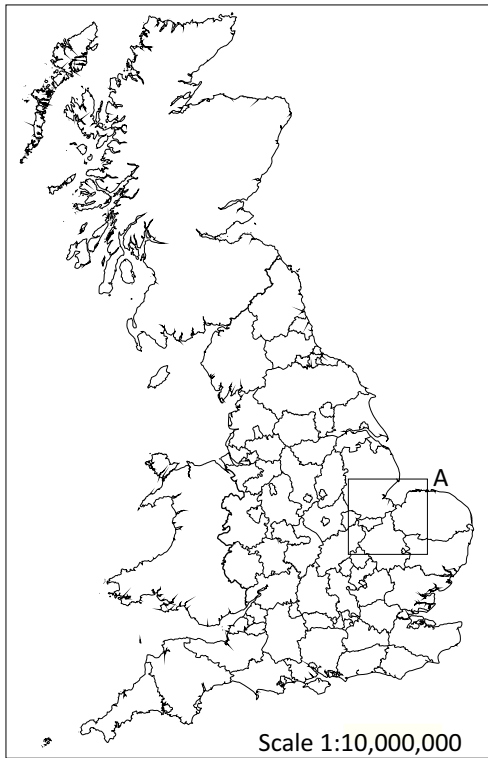
## Appendix 2: Context Summary List

### Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Friable mid brown silty clay, 0.14m thick	Topsoil
101	Layer	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt, 0.15m thick	Buried ploughsoil
102	Layer	Friable light brownish orange sandy slit, occasional small stones, 0.13m thick	Buried subsoil
103	Natural	Light yellowish orange sandy silt with limestone fragments	Natural geology

### Trench 2

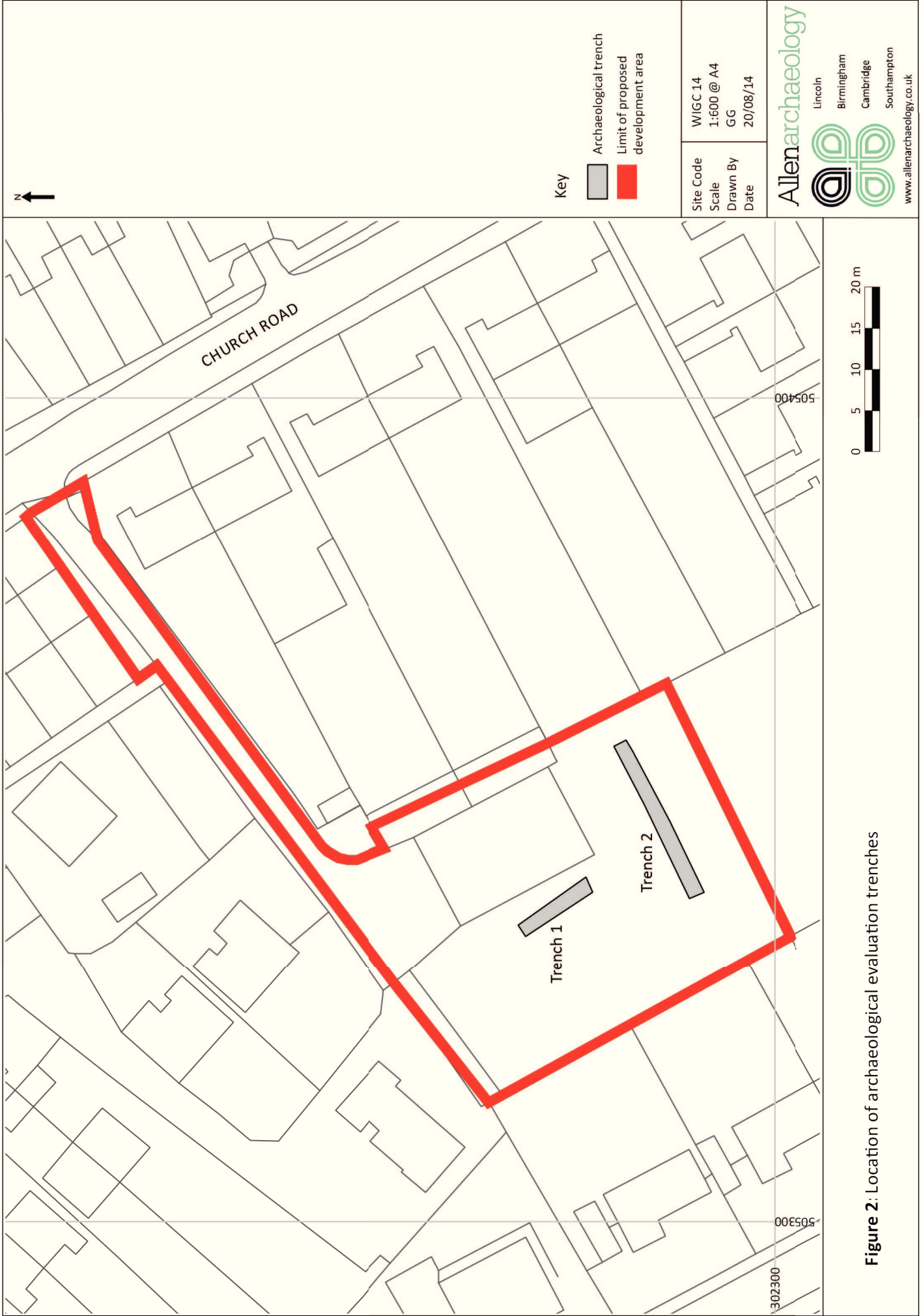
Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
200	Layer	Loose mid brown silty clay, 0.15m thick	Topsoil
201	Layer	Friable mid greyish brown silty clay, 0.09m thick	Buried ploughsoil
202	Layer	Friable light yellowish brown sandy silt, occasional small stones, 0.18m thick	Buried subsoil
203	Natural	Light yellowish orange sandy silt with limestone fragments	Natural geology
204	Layer	Loose dark brown clayey silt and modern debris	Modern dumped deposit



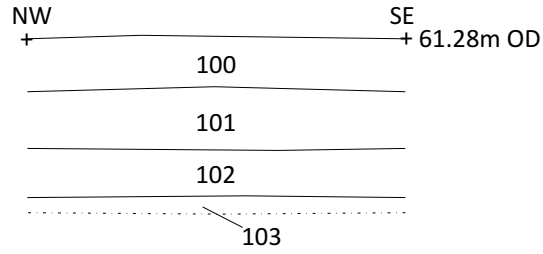
**Figure 1:** Site location outlined in red  
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Site Code WIGC 14  
 Scales 1:10,000,000  
 1:1,000,000  
 1:25,000 @ A4  
 Drawn by GG  
 Date 21/08/14

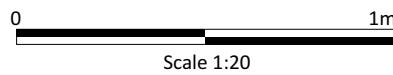
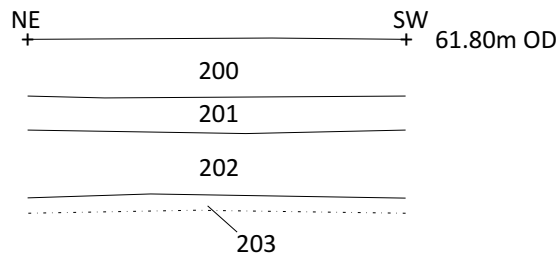
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Trench 1  
Southwest facing section



Trench 2  
Northwest facing section



Site Code	WIGC 14
Scale	1:20 @ A4
Drawn by	GG
Date	21/08/14

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**Figure 3:** Representative sections from Trenches 1 and 2



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