

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCHEME OF WORKS:**

**LAND AT ST. JOHNS SCHOOL, ORTON GOLDHAY, PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

Planning Reference: 14/00353/R4FUL

NGR: TL 1545 9506

AAL Site Code: PESJ 14

OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-192537



Report prepared for Kier Construction Eastern

By  
Allen Archaeology Limited  
Report Number AAL2014125

November 2014



Allenarchaeology



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## Document Control

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## **Executive Summary**

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Kier Construction Eastern to undertake an archaeological scheme of works comprising a strip, map and record and watching brief on land at St Johns School, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition for a proposed extension to the existing school.
- The site lies in a wider area of known archaeological potential, and although a previous geophysical survey failed to clearly identify any anomalies likely to be of archaeological significance, evaluation trenches immediately to the south of the proposed building footprint identified a number of truncated archaeological features of Roman and possible Bronze Age date.
- The watching brief on the attenuation tank revealed no features of archaeological interest, recording natural deposits overlain by modern overburden.
- The strip, map and record revealed a number of very shallow undated discrete features, at least some of which are likely to be natural features. It is highly likely that the construction of the current school and playground has destroyed or severely truncated any better preserved remains that may have been present on the site.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by Kier Construction Eastern to undertake an archaeological scheme of works on land at St Johns School, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The works were undertaken as a condition of planning consent for an extension to the existing school.
- 1.2 The works conform to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological excavations*' (IfA 1995, revised 2001 and 2008), '*Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008), the English Heritage documents '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (English Heritage 2006) and '*Management of Archaeological Projects*' (English Heritage 1991). Regional guidelines '*Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*' (Medlycott 2011) were also followed.
- 1.3 The documentary and physical archive will be submitted to Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery within six months of the completion of the report.

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The proposed development area is located at St Johns School in the parish of Orton Goldhay, to the southwest of central Peterborough. The development area comprised the southern end of the existing school grounds and a portion of the playing fields, centred on NGR TL 1545 9506, covering an area of approximately 0.2ha.
- 2.2 The bedrock geology of the site comprises Oxford Clay, 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 '*Demolition of existing school buildings and construction of a new single infant and junior school building together with improved access, hard and soft landscaping, car and parking and other associated infrastructure*' (Reference 14/00353/R4FUL). Permission was granted subject to conditions, including for a programme of geophysical survey, in addition to any follow up intrusive investigations that may be required, dependent upon the geophysical survey.
- 3.2 The geophysical survey was undertaken by this company in early 2014 (AAL 2014a), and revealed a number of geophysical anomalies of likely modern origin. The Peterborough City Council Archaeologist subsequently required a programme of evaluation trenching which revealed a complex of undated, Roman and possibly prehistoric linear features (AAL 2014b).
- 3.3 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 activity is well represented in the vicinity of the site, generally in an area to the north and northeast of the site. Excavations at Orton Longueville Sports Hall, approximately 1.5km to the northeast identified a number of ditched enclosures and droveways of Neolithic to Bronze Age date, with later enclosures of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age date (PHER Reference 51125). Gravel quarrying nearby in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century exposed hut circles, which produced Neolithic Peterborough Ware pottery, as well as Bronze Age cremations in Collared Urns and Iron Age and Roman pottery (PHER Reference 01807b, c and d), and further scattered lithic finds of Neolithic and Bronze Age date have been made in the same broad area (PHER References 00853, 07861 and 51277).
- 4.2 Aerial photographs have also identified a group of five further probable barrow ditches, located approximately 1.4km to the north-northwest and sealed by medieval ridge and furrow (PHER Reference 01436). Some limited investigation of the features has been undertaken indicating ring ditches approximately 1m wide containing small quantities of worked flint.
- 4.3 Extensive Iron Age to Roman activity is also evident in the vicinity of the site, such as an extensive area of enclosure cropmarks located 1km to the east-northeast (PHER Reference 01434). Excavation exposed a number of hut circles of late Iron Age to Roman date as well as a group of Roman inhumations.
- 4.4 Post-Roman activity is also located in a broad swathe to the north and northeast of the site. In the same area of gravel quarrying in the 20<sup>th</sup> century where quantities of prehistoric and Roman material was recovered, pottery of 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century date has been identified, along with bone pins, spindle whorls and bone combs (PHER Reference 01807f). A little to the northwest of this findspot, two possible grubenhaus were also recorded (PHER Reference 02016). Excavations at Cherry Orton Road exposed further grubenhaus, enclosure ditches, pits and postholes of early Saxon date (PHER Reference 51270, 51271 and 51282).
- 4.5 The settlements of Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville appear in the Domesday Book of 1086, with Orton Goldhay being a later development associated with the expansion of Peterborough in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Orton Longueville was owned by Eustace the Sherriff, and populated by seven villagers of varying status, along with their dependents. Orton Waterville was split between the Bishop of Lincoln and Peterborough Abbey, with the estates belonging to St. Peters reserved '*for the sustenance of the monks*'. This parish was also populated by seven villagers (Williams and Martin 2002). The place name Orton is probably of Old English derivation but of uncertain meaning, possibly meaning '*higher/ridge/bank settlement*'. The suffixes refer to feudal tenants of the estates, the de Longaville and de Waltreville families (<http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk>).
- 4.6 The current site lies well beyond the core of these settlements, and this is attested by ridge and furrow recorded approximately 500m to the north-northwest (PHER References 51593 and 51918), a similar distance to the northeast (PHER Reference 50374) and also a little further to the west and southwest of the site (PHER References 51131, 51344 and 51854).
- 4.7 A programme of geophysical survey by magnetometry was undertaken by this company in May of this year (AAL 2014a). No anomalies of potential archaeological significance were identified within the survey results; however there was significant modern interference

potentially masking more subtle remains. A subsequent programme of evaluation trenching in the playing field immediately to the south of the site did reveal a series of linear features suggesting some activity in the Romano-British period and possibly the Bronze Age (AAL 2014b).

## 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The strip, map and record methodology was applied to the footprint of the new school building, plus a 2.5m additional buffer around the site edge in total, comprising approximately 0.15ha. The area of investigation was located on site by the main contractor. Site stripping was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, and was monitored at all times by an experienced field archaeologist.
- 5.2 Previous trial trenching exposed a number of archaeological features sealed beneath two soil horizons measuring approximately 0.60m thick in total. These layers were removed by mechanical excavator in spits not exceeding 0.10m in thickness, until the first archaeological horizon was encountered. Following machine stripping of the site, the area was cleaned sufficiently to determine the presence/absence, nature and extent of archaeological features. No machinery was tracked across stripped areas at any time during the archaeological works.
- 5.3 The area was subsequently photographed and digitally planned using a Leica GS08 GPS unit receiving RTK corrections with hand drawn plans on permatrace also produced at a suitable scale (provisionally 1:50). The overall site plan was also complimented by additional detailed hand drawn plans of complex feature groups and small pits and postholes at a suitable scale (1:10 or 1:20). Spoil heaps and the stripped area of the site were scanned by metal detector to aid recovery of artefacts.
- 5.4 Following the site strip, exposed archaeological deposits were subjected to sample excavation in order to determine their depth, profile, orientation, date and function.
- 5.5 All other groundworks beyond the footprint of the new school building were subject to an archaeological watching brief, comprising excavation for an attenuation tank and drainage and foul water pipes.
- 5.6 An experienced field archaeologist was present during all groundwork excavations. They acted strictly in accordance with the contents of this document, and were familiar with national and local guidelines regarding agreed best practice for archaeological monitoring and recording projects (IfA 1994).
- 5.7 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded on standard AAL context sheets with plans and section drawings drawn at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20 and 1:50). Photographs formed an integral part of the recording methodology and a selection of these have been included in this report
- 5.8 Each deposit, layer or cut was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 1. Four digit numbers within square brackets reflect cut features (e.g. pit [1035]).

## 6.0 Results (Figures 2-7)

- 6.1 The earliest deposits present were natural geology of an orange brown sandy gravel 1006, and a grey clay 1007 (recorded as 1002 and 1003 respectively within the area of the attenuation tank). These were reached at a height of between 20.81m and 21.40m OD and formed part of a natural fenland deposit sequence, representing former stream channels meandering across the site.



*Plate 1: General shot of site, looking west with two 1m scales*

- 6.2 Across the stripped area there were a number of potential pits revealed, all of which were half-sectioned. Most features were extremely shallow, often less than 0.1m deep with irregular sides and bases. They varied in size from no more than c.0.2m in diameter (cut [1050] to wide shallow cut [1046], measuring in excess of 3.4m wide. There were no archaeological finds recovered from any of the excavated features and it is highly likely that a proportion of the features, if not all of them, are the result of natural bioturbation, caused by former trees and bushes with occasional animal burrows on the site.
- 6.3 A small number of the features, such as [1012] and [1014] were elongated in plan and may represent the truncated remnants of linear features rather than pits.
- 6.4 A full summary of all features is included as Appendix 1.





*Plate 2: Pits [1020] and [1022], looking south with a 1m scale*

- 6.5 There were also a large number of land drains crossing the site, cutting through the earlier pits/natural features.



*Plate 3: Pit [1046], looking east with two 1m scales. A land drain cuts through the centre of the pit orientated northeast to southwest.*

## **7.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

- 7.1 The strip, map and record revealed a number of very shallow features that produced no archaeological finds. It is possible that the original construction of the school and playground either destroyed or severely truncated any archaeological remains that had been present on the site, leaving only the very bases of the features. It appears likely that a large number of the uncovered features were purely the result of bioturbation or from

animal activity such as rabbit burrowing. A similar level of truncation was noted in the trial trenching immediately to the south of the site.

7.2 There were no archaeological features uncovered during the monitoring of the attenuation tank.

7.3 A brief review of available historic mapping suggests the site lay in open farmland at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with limited development on this side of Peterborough until the 1970s. As such the historic mapping does not aid in the interpretation of these features.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

8.1 The archaeological methodology was appropriate to the nature and extent of the proposed development. It has demonstrated that no remains of archaeological significance survived at the site and the impact of the proposed development upon the archaeological resource was negligible.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

9.1 Allen Archaeology would like to thank Kier Construction Eastern for this commission, and for their cooperation during the site works.

## **10.0 References**

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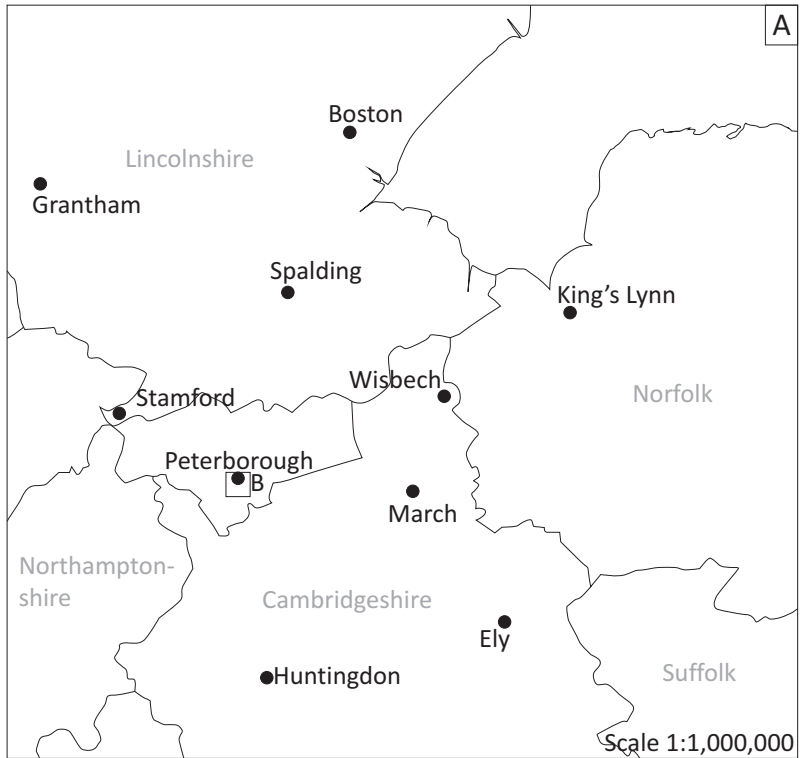
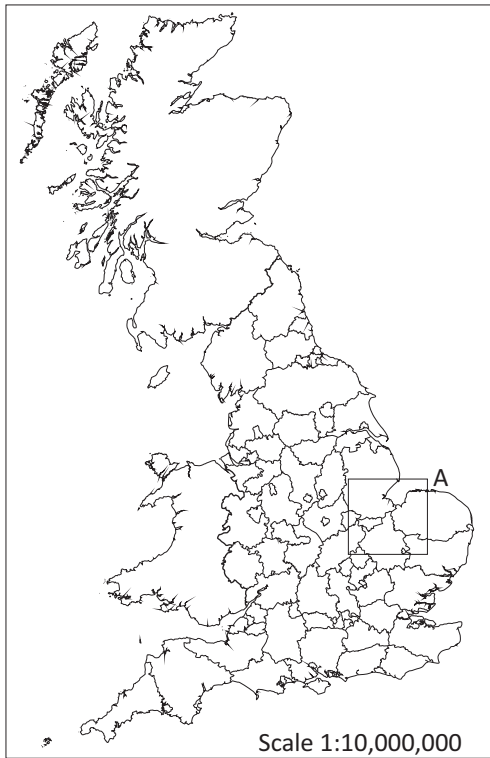
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## Appendix 1: Context Summary List

Context Number	Deposit Type	Description	Interpretation
1000	Layer	Moderately well compacted, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional gravel, seals 1001, 0.30m thick	Topsoil.
1001	Layer	Moderately well compacted, orangey brown sandy clay with brick fragments and gravel. Sealed by 1000, seals 1002, 1003. Sealed by 1000, 0.25m thick	Made ground.
1002	Layer	Friable/loosely compacted, orangey brown sandy gravel. Sealed by 1001	Natural
1003	Layer	Well compacted, grey clay. Sealed by 1001	Natural
1004	Layer	Moderate/loosely compacted, mid/dark brown sandy silt with frequent small stones/gravel and occasional brick fragments Seals 1005, 0.10m thick	Topsoil.
1005	Layer	Moderately well compacted, light brown sandy silt with frequent gravel, brick fragments and charcoal. Sealed by 1004, seals 1006, 0.42m thick	Made ground.
1006	Layer	Friable, orangey brown sandy gravel, sealed by 1005.	Natural
1007	Layer	Well compacted, grey clay, cut by [1008]	Natural
1008	Cut	Circular, moderately steeply sloping sides and concave base, 0.50m diameter by 0.13m deep. Filled by 1009, cuts 1007	Undated pit
1009	Fill	Friable, mid orangey brown clayey silt with occasional small stones, fills [1008], sealed by 1005, 0.13m thick	Natural silting in feature [1008]
1010	Cut	Irregular, orientated NE/SW, gently sloping sides and undulating base. Filled by 1011, cuts 1007. 0.72m long by 0.5m wide by 0.06m deep.	Vegetation/treebole
1011	Fill	Firm, mid brown with black patches clayey silt, occasional small stones, flint fragments and charcoal flecks, 0.06m thick, fills 1010, sealed by 1005.	Bioturbation in feature [1010]
1012	Cut	Irregular/oblong feature, orientated North-South, shallow sloping sides and flattish base. 0.4m long by 0.23m wide by 0.07m deep. Filled by 1013, cuts 1007.	Vegetation/treebole
1013	Fill	Well compacted, mid grey slightly sandy clay with flecks of charcoal and occasional small stones, 0.07m thick. Fills [1012], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1012]
1014	Cut	Irregular/oblong, orientated northeast-southwest, very steep, near vertical sides with a concave base, 1.25m long by 0.42m wide by 0.24m deep. Filled by 1015, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1015	Fill	Friable, mid/dark grey sandy clay with occasional small stones, 0.24m thick. Fills [1014], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1014]
1016	Cut	Oblong, orientated east-west, very shallow, flattish base, 1m long by 0.18m wide by 0.05m deep. Filled by 1016, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1017	Fill	Well compacted, light grey sandy clay with occasional small stones, 0.05m thick. Fills [1016], sealed by 1005.	Bioturbation in feature [1016]
1018	Cut	Oblong, orientated east-west, shallow sloping sides, steeper at western end, irregular base. Measures 2.08m long by 0.9m wide by 0.1m deep. Filled by 1019, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1019	Fill	Friable, mid/light brown clayey silt with occasional small stones, 0.1m thick. Fills [1018], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1018]

1020	Cut	Circular/sub-circular, shallow sloping sides, concave base. Measures 1.2m diameter by 0.1m deep. Filled by 1021, cuts 1007	Undated Pit
1021	Fill	Friable, mid brown clayey silt with occasional flint fragments and stone specks, 0.1m thick. Fills [1020], sealed by 1005	Possible backfill of [1020]
1022	Cut	Circular/sub-circular, orientated east-west, shallow sloping sides, concave base. Measures 1.3m long by 0.96m wide by 0.1m deep. Filled by 1023, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1023	Fill	Friable, mid brown clayey silt with occasional flint fragments and stone specks, 0.1m thick. Fills [1022], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1022]
1024	Cut	Irregular, orientated north-south, shallow sloping southeast side, steeper northwest side, concave base. Measures 1.3m long by 1m wide by 0.12m deep. Filled by 1025, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1025	Fill	Firm, mid/light brown clayey silt with frequent small stones and stone specks, 0.12m thick. Fills [1024], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1024]
1026	Cut	Semi-circular/irregular, orientated east-west, shallow sloping sides. Continues into baulk. Measures 2.2m long by 0.12m deep. Filled by 1027, cuts 1007. Cut by land drain.	Undated pit
1027	Fill	Friable, mid/light brown clayey silt with moderate stone specks, 0.12m thick. Fills [1026], cut by 1028	Natural silting in feature [1026]
1028	Cut	Land drain cuts 1027	Land drain
1029	Fill	Friable, mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional small stones, 0.1m thick. Fills [1030], sealed by 1005	Natural silting in feature [1030]
1030	Cut	Sub-oval, shallow sides and flat base. Measures 1.02m long by 0.85m wide by 0.1m deep. Filled by 1029, cuts 1007	Undated pit
1031	Cut	Sub-circular, orientated northwest-southeast, fairly steep sides and flattish base. Measures 0.9m long by 0.56m wide by 0.08m deep. Filled by 1032, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1032	Fill	Well compacted, light/mid grey sandy clay with occasional small stones, 0.08m thick. Fills [1031], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1031]
1033	Cut	Oval, orientated north-south, steeply sloping irregular sides and irregular base. Measures 1m long by 0.62m wide by 0.14m deep. Filled by 1034, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1034	Fill	Well compacted, light orange grey sandy clay with occasional small stones/gravel, 0.14m thick. Fills [1033], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1033]
1035	Cut	Oval, orientated north-south, steeply sloping west side, gentle sloping east side, flat/undulating base. Measures 1.25m long by 0.7m wide by 0.17m deep. Filled by 1036, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1036	Fill	Well compacted, orange grey sandy clay with occasional small stones, 0.17m thick. Fills [1035], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1035]
1037	Cut	Circular, very shallow. Measures 0.7m diameter by 0.05m deep. Filled by 1038, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1038	Fill	Moderately well compacted, light grey sandy clay with occasional small stones, 0.05m thick. Fills [1037], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1037]

1039	Cut	Sub-rectangular, orientated northwest-southeast, fairly steeply sloping sides and slightly concave base. Measures 2.5m long by 1m wide by 0.22m deep. Filled by 1040, cuts 1007	Undated pit
1040	Fill	Moderately/well compacted light grey sandy clay with occasional small stones, 0.22m thick. Fills [1039], sealed by 1005	Natural silting in feature [1039]
1041	Cut	Sub-circular, orientated northwest-southeast, near vertical east side, steeply sloping west side, rounded base. Measures 0.77m long by 0.4m wide by 0.33m deep. Filled by 1042 and 1045, cuts 1007	Undated pit
1042	Fill	Well compacted, mid grey slightly sandy clay with very occasional small stones, 0.19m thick. Sealed by 1005, seals 1045	Secondary fill of pit [1041]
1043	Cut	Oval, orientated northeast-southwest, gently sloping south side, slightly steeper north side, undulating base. Measures 1.45m by 0.65m by 0.15m. Filled by 1044, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1044	Fill	Well compacted, orange/greyish brown sandy clay with occasional small stones, 0.15m thick. Fills [1043], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1043]
1045	Fill	Well compacted, orange grey sandy clay with occasional small stones, 0.14m thick. Fills [1041], sealed by 1042	Primary fill of [1041]
1046	Cut	Irregular, gently sloping sides, irregular base. Measures 3m long by 1.4m wide by 0.2m deep. Filled by 1047, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1047	Fill	Friable, orangey brown with greyish blue mottling, clayey silt with occasional small stones and stone specks, 0.2m thick. Fills [1046], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1046],
1048	Void		
1049	Void		
1050	Cut	Circular, very shallow. Measures 0.15m diameter by 0.03m deep. Contains 1051	Undated posthole
1051	Fill	Friable, very dark grey clay, 0.03m thick. Fills [1050], Sealed by 1005	Natural silting in feature [1050]
1052	Cut	Sub-rectangular, orientated northwest-southeast, gently sloping east side and slightly steeper west side, concave base. Measures 1.3m long by 0.7m wide by 0.18m deep. Filled by 1053, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1053	Fill	Firm, mid brown clayey silt with occasional flint fragments and stone specks, 0.18m thick. Fills [1052], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1052]
1054	Cut	Oval, orientated east-west, very shallow concave base. Measures 1m long by 0.28m wide by 0.08m deep. Filled by 1055, cuts 1007.	Vegetation/treebole
1055	Fill	Well/moderately compacted orange/greyish brown sandy clay with occasional small stones, 0.08m thick. Fills [1054], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1054]
1056	Cut	Sub-circular, orientated northeast-southwest, very shallow, flattish base. Measures 1.2m long by 0.8m wide by 0.04m deep. Filled by 1057, cuts 1007	Vegetation/treebole
1057	Fill	Moderately well compacted/friable, orange grey sandy clay with frequent gravel, 0.04m thick. Fills [1056], sealed by 1005	Bioturbation in feature [1056]



**Figure 1:** Site location outlined in red

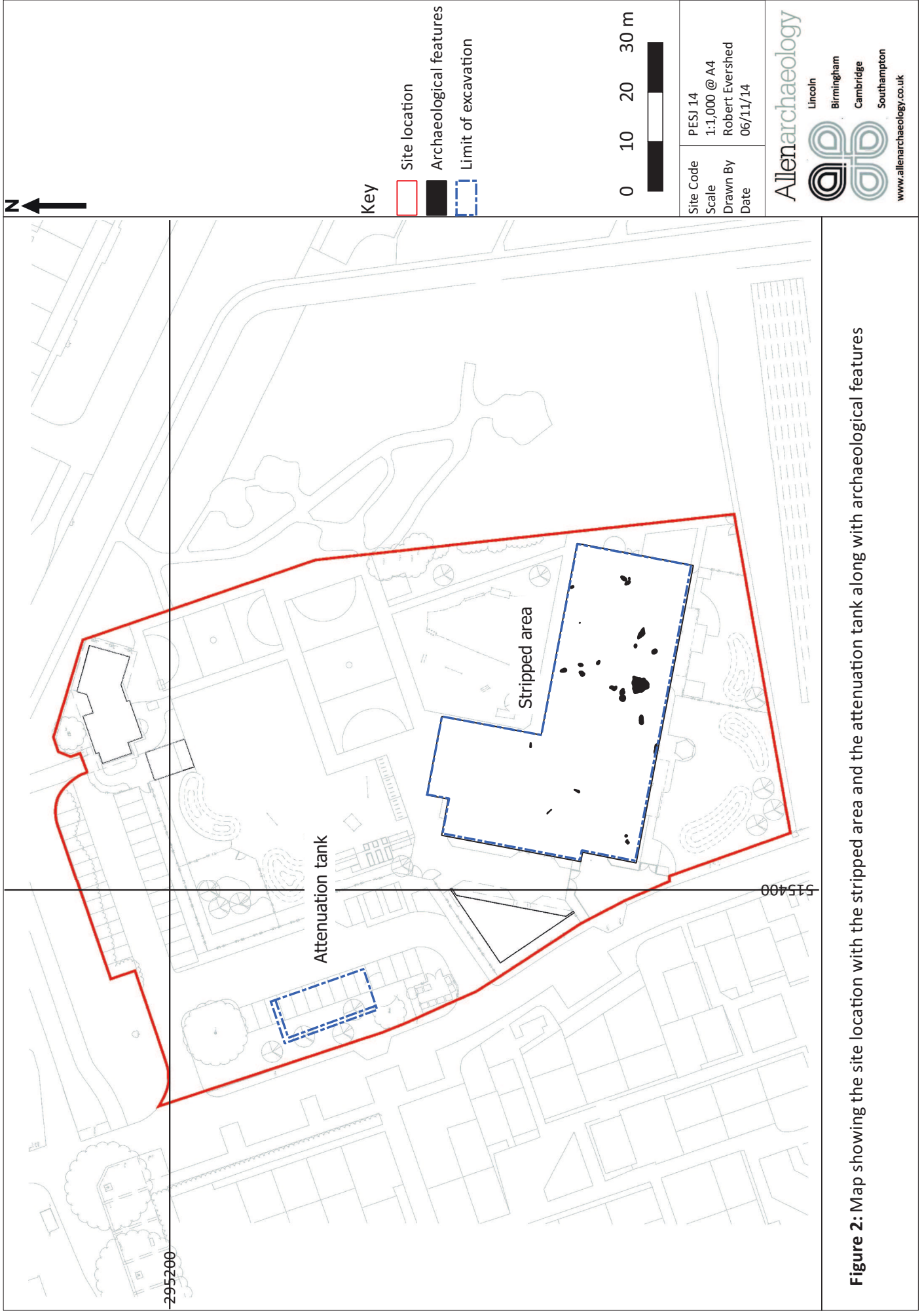
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Site Code	PESJ 14
Scales	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	R Evershed
Date	04/11/14

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**Figure 2:** Map showing the site location with the stripped area and the attenuation tank along with archaeological features



Key  
Attenuation tank

0 2 4 6 8 10 m

Site Code PESJ 14  
Scale 1:100 @ A3  
Drawn By R Evershed  
Date 06/11/2014

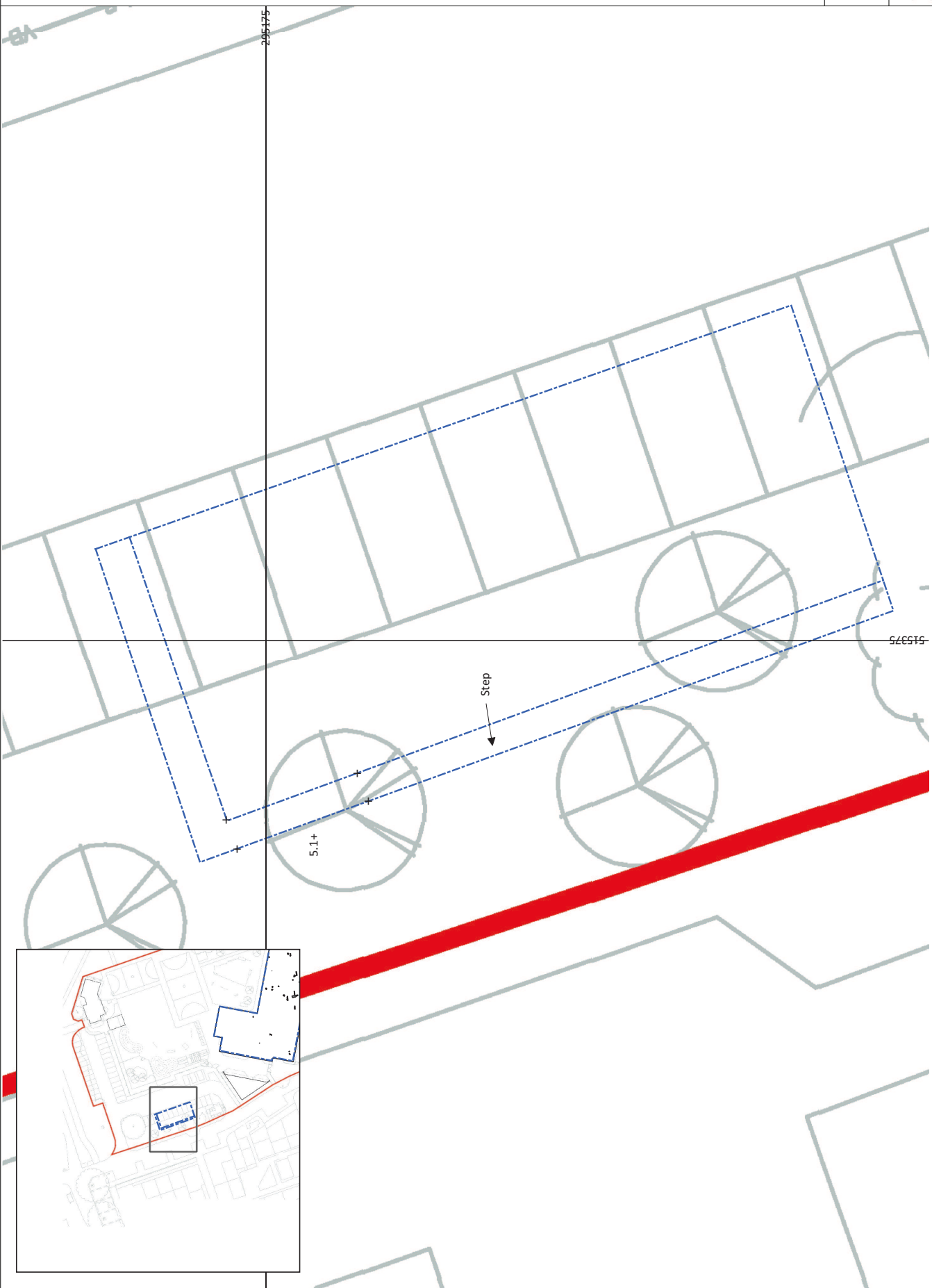


Figure 3: Plan of attenuation tank with section shown on figure 5



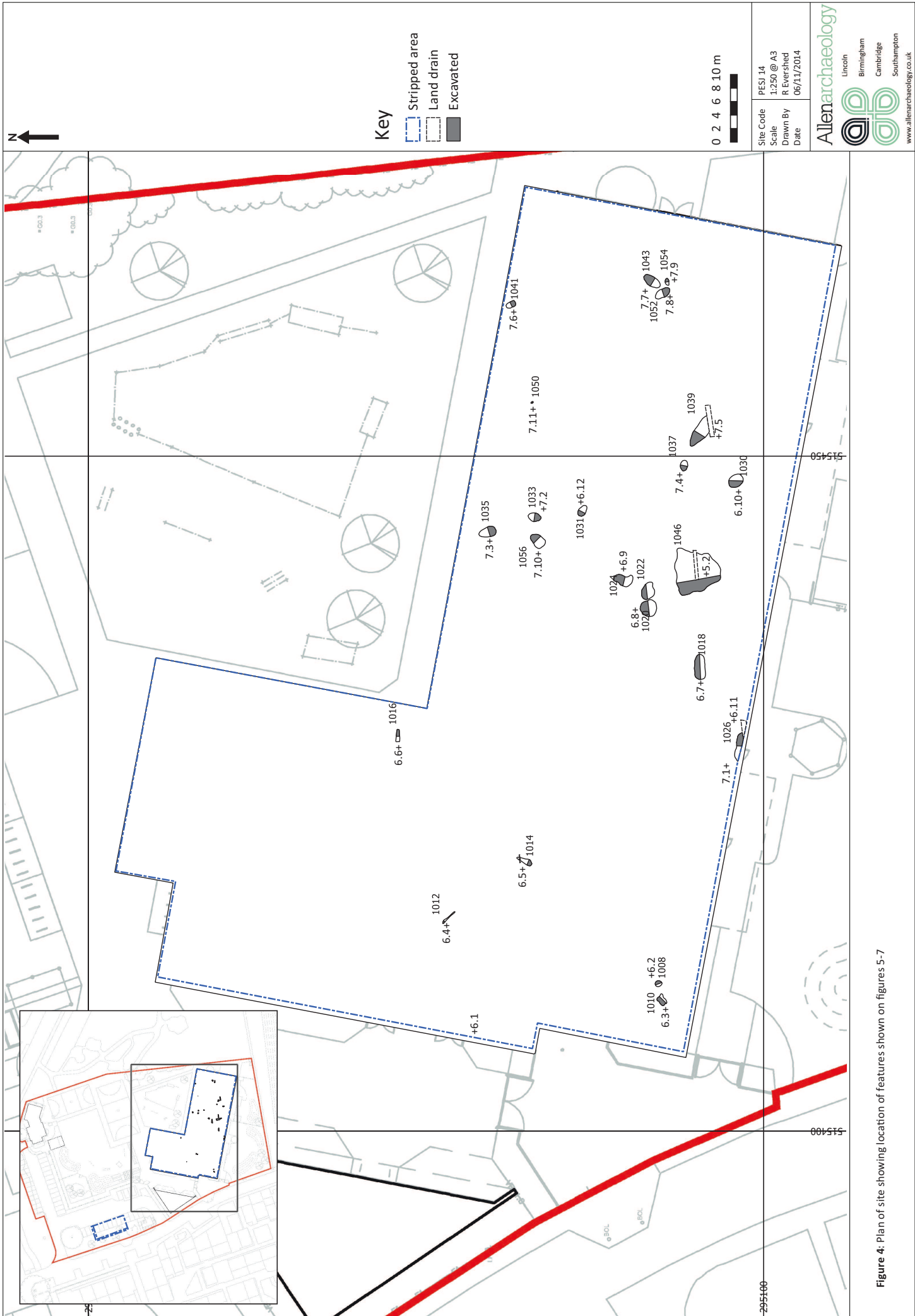
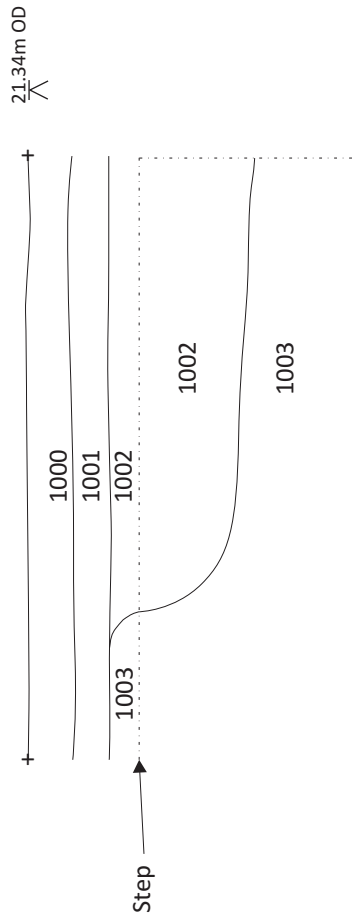
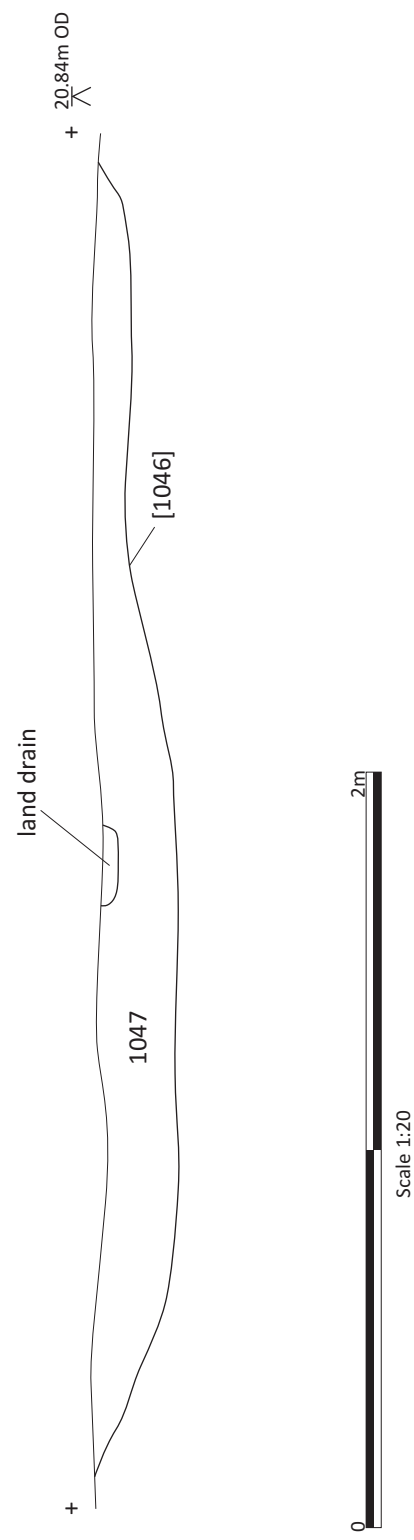


Figure 4: Plan of site showing location of features shown on figures 5-7

East Facing Section 5.1



West Facing Section 5.2

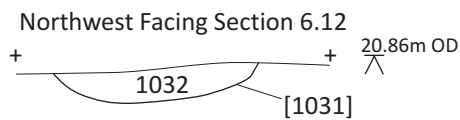
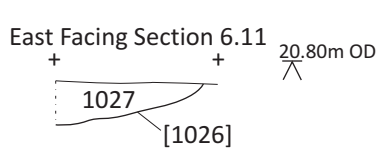
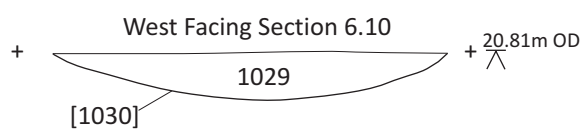
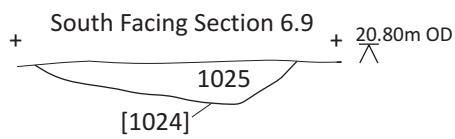
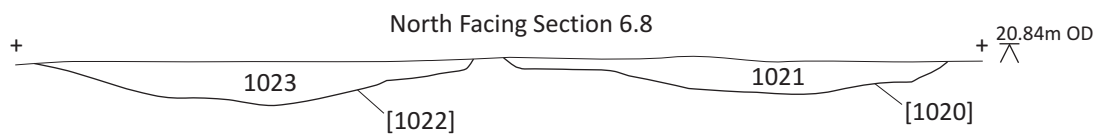
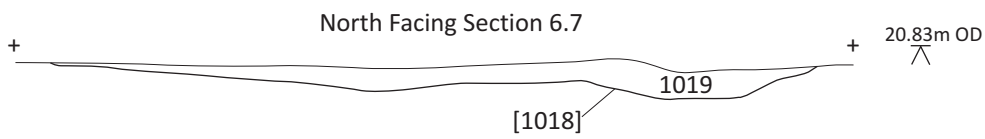
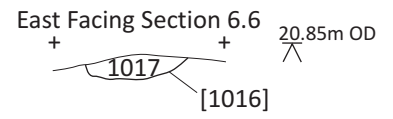
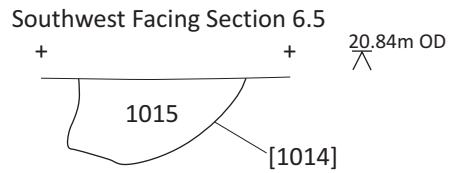
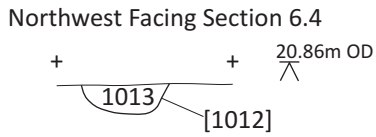
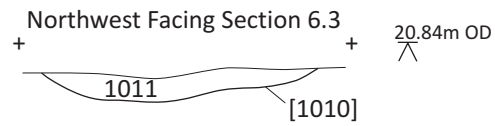
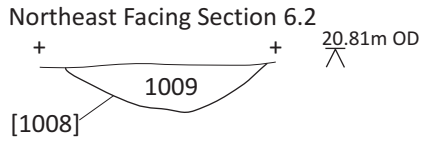
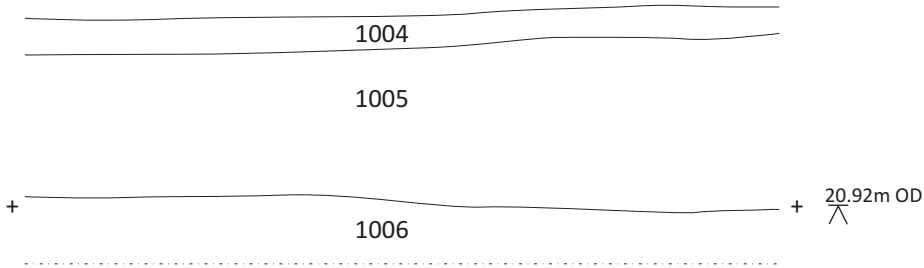


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Drawn by	M Wood
Date	06/11/14


  
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Figure 5: Sections from figures 3 and 4

East Facing Section 6.1



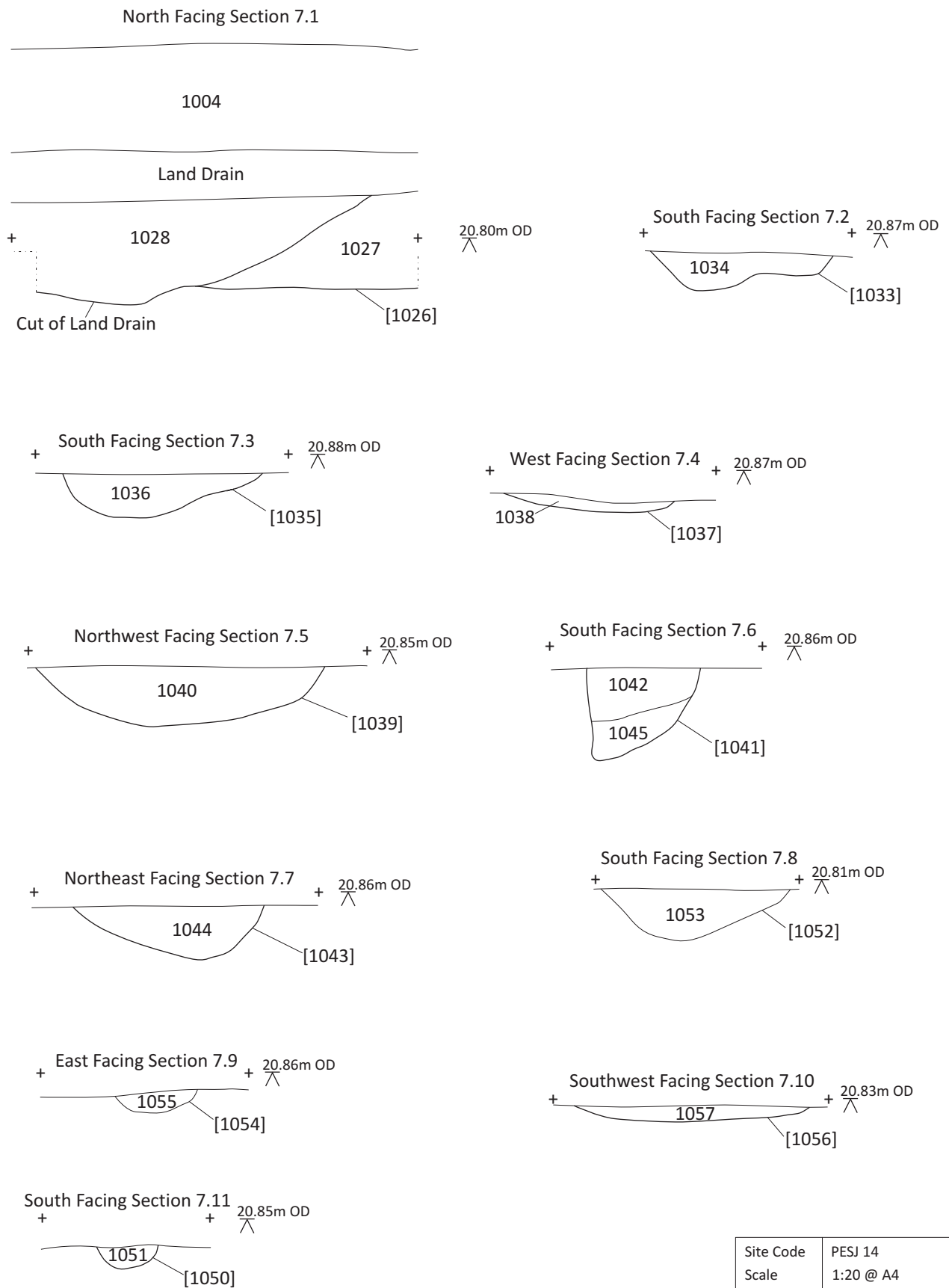
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Figure 6: Sections from Figure 4



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**Figure 7:** Sections from Figure 4



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