

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT: TRIAL TRENCHING AT 3 ROUNDHOUSE CLOSE, PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Planning Reference: 10/01001/FUL
NGR: TL 2088 9896
AAL Site Code: FERC 10
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-88699



Report prepared for Sav Fasulo Services Ltd

By
Allen Archaeology Limited
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Document Control

Element	Name	Date
Report prepared by:	Kathryn Brook	03/12/2010
Illustrations prepared by:	Tom Smith	03/12/2010
Report edited by:	Chris Clay	06/12/2010
Report produced by:	AAL 2010071	06/12/2010

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Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Sav Fasulo Services Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at 3 Roundhouse Close in Peterborough, in advance of a proposed industrial development.
- The site is situated with an important archaeological landscape with abundant evidence for Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British activity recorded nearby
- A single 40m long trench was excavated, exposing a plough soil containing 18th to 20th century artefacts, sealed by a sequence of recent dumped deposits.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Sav Fasulo Services Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at 3 Roundhouse Close in Peterborough, in advance of a proposed industrial development.
- 1.2 The excavation, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (IfA 1999), English Heritage documents '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (English Heritage 2006) and '*Management of Archaeological Projects*' (English Heritage 1991). Regional guidance was also adhered to, comprising 'Standards for field archaeology in the East of England' (Gurney 2003), and a specification prepared by this company (Allen 2010).
- 1.3 The archive will be submitted to the Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery within twelve months of the completion of the report.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Peterborough is situated approximately 47km north-north-west of central Cambridge, and the current site is to the east of the town centre, c.1.2km north of the River Nene, and immediately to the east of Roundhouse Close. The site centres on NGR TL 2088 9896 and lies at a height of approximately 3m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2 The local superficial geology comprises river terrace deposits, overlying a bedrock geology of Kellaways Clay (British Geological Survey 1984).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application was submitted to Peterborough City Council on 23rd July 2010 for four new industrial units for light industrial use, with office and toilet facilities at No 3 Roundhouse Close in Fengate, Peterborough (Planning Reference 10/01001/FUL). The archaeological evaluation has been requested by Peterborough City Council Archaeological Services (PCCAS) in advance of the determination of the application, to provide additional information to mitigate for any archaeological deposits of significance.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 The earliest evidence of activity is a Palaeolithic hand axe that was recovered from the local gravels in 1926, less than 100m to the east of the site (Peterborough Historic Environment Record (Hereafter PHER) Reference 07862).
- 4.2 The Neolithic period is represented by a substantial settlement site that comprised saucer-shaped pits identified as dwellings and numerous other pits, c.100m to the south-east (PHER Reference 10045). In the same area archaeological investigations in advance of development have identified late Neolithic and early Bronze Age settlement remains, comprising a complex of postholes, stake holes, drainage gullies and a circular pit (Casa-Hatton 2010).

- 4.3 Neolithic activity has also been recorded c. 350m to the north, where excavations exposed two Neolithic ditches on the site of a later Iron Age settlement (PHER Reference 50545).
- 4.4 Further excavations in the surrounding landscape exposed a concentration of Bronze Age or Iron Age inhumations and cremations (PHER Reference 02823). The grid reference given in the PHER places these works immediately to the north of the development area, although a recent reassessment of the data suggests that these discoveries were also c.100m to the south-east of the site. The burials were first investigated in 1945 in association with a large surrounding ring ditch, and the data re-assessed in 2008 (PHER Reference 51816, Evans and Appleby 2008). The 'Great Fengate Ring Ditch' was oval in shape, measuring 27.4m by 25.6m, and was enclosed by a ditch measuring 3.66m wide and 1.52 – 1.83m deep. Approximately 80 cremations were present within the ditched area, including some cut into the ditch, along with 28 inhumation burials. The data suggests that around the early Bronze Age (c.2500 BC) both funerary rites were in use unusually. It has been suggested that the site was probably a family or tribal burial ground, possibly people from the Continent in search of copper who had established an outpost trading settlement on one of the main copper trading routes from Ireland to the continent.
- 4.5 Aerial photographs of an 8km area between Fengate and Northey, to the east of the proposed development, show evidence for field systems and droveways that are likely to date back to the Bronze Age (PHER Reference 51499).
- 4.6 Approximately 75m to the south of the site, excavations by Wyman Abbott identified a Roman settlement site where walls, wells, burials and large quantities of pottery were discovered (Casa-Hatton 2010).
- 4.7 A number of undated cropmarks are also noted immediately to the north-west of the site, including a number of enclosures, trackways and linear features (PHER References 08194a and b). Excavations nearby have recorded evidence for Neolithic and Iron Age activity (PHER Reference 50545).

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by a team of two experienced field archaeologists on Wednesday 10th November 2010. The evaluation entailed the excavation of a single trench measuring 40m x 1.8m (Figure 2) within the footprint of the proposed new industrial units.
- 5.2 Machine excavation was carried out using a 360° tracked mini-excavator fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless ditching bucket. The soil was removed in spits not exceeding 0.1m in thickness until either the natural geology or the first archaeological horizon was exposed. All further excavation was then carried out by hand.
- 5.3 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard AAL context recording sheets. 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 2. All plans and sections were drawn at an appropriate scale, with Ordnance Datum heights being displayed on each drawing.
- 5.4 A photographic record was maintained throughout the fieldwork; a selection of these images is included in Appendix 1.

6.0 Results (Figure 3)

- 6.1 The uppermost deposit throughout the trench was a mixed layer of modern hardcore, 100, which was c.0.26m thick. This sealed a dark grey clayey silt 101, containing coal and modern pottery fragments, which was interpreted as a modern dumping or levelling layer. It sloped gradually downwards to the east and varied in thickness from 0.22m in the west end of the trench to c.0.42m in the east.
- 6.2 101 in turn sealed a thin lens of mid orange sand, 102, only 0.02m thick. This is also likely to be relatively modern dumping layer associated with quarrying of sand and gravel in the immediate area.
- 6.3 In the west end of the trench an orange/brown sandy silt, 103 was observed. This layer contained frequent charcoal and coal fragments and occasional pieces of modern pottery. This layer was partially sealed by 101 and sand dump 102, and is likely to be another recent dumped deposit.
- 6.4 Below dumping layers 102 and 103 was a possible buried ploughsoil, 104. This consisted of mid grey sandy silt with coal and charcoal flecks, and varied in thickness from c.0.06m to c.0.10m. It contained three clay tobacco pipe stems, a slate pencil and a fragment of buff ware pottery, all dating from the 18th to 20th centuries. A single residual fragment of glazed earthenware bowl was also recovered, dated to the mid 16th to 18th century. This layer sealed the natural drift geology, 105, an orange sand with small flint gravel.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded during the groundworks. The sequence of deposits comprised a natural gravel sealed by a former ploughsoil. Dating evidence from this layer was of 18th to 20th century date, and there was no evidence for any earlier finds or features on the site. The ploughsoil was sealed by a sequence of modern dumped deposits, probably associated with the infilling of former gravel pits/quarries in the vicinity, and in turn sealed by a modern hardcore layer.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 8.1 The evaluation was appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. It demonstrated that the proposed development area is devoid of finds or features of archaeological significance and the development will have a negligible impact on the archaeological resource.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Sav Fasulo Services Limited for this commission.

10.0 References

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Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General view of the site during machining, looking east-north-east



Plate 2: The evaluation trench after machining, looking east



Plate 3: Representative south facing section. Looking north

Appendix 2: Post-Roman Pottery Archive

By Jane Young

context	cname	full name	sub fabric	form type	sherds	weight	part	description	date
104	NCBW	19th-century Buff ware		large bowl	1	31	base	footring base	19th to 20th
104	GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware	sandy fabric	bowl	1	8	rim	abraded;internal glaze	mid/late 16th to early 18th

Appendix 3: Clay Tobacco Pipe Report

By Kevin Trott

Three plain stem fragments (5 grams) were recovered from the archaeological investigations at Fengate in 2010.

The three stem fragments from three individual clay tobacco pipes were recovered from the buried plough soil layer, 104. The pipe fragments were relatively fresh in appearance and no signs of soil abrasion were noted. One stem had been in contact with a heat source that was evident on its polished exterior and broken end. The average stem diameter of all three stem fragments was between 0.06-0.08m and internal bore between 0.01-0.02m. This would indicate this small group of plain stems derive from clay tobacco pipes of a late 18th or 19th century date.

References

Oswald, A. 1975. *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist*. British Archaeological Reports **14**, Oxford.

Appendix 4: Slate Pencil Report

By Kevin Trott

A single complete slate pencil was recovered from the archaeological investigations at Fengate in 2010.

The pencil was recovered from the buried plough soil layer 104. The surviving length of this pencil was 0.06m in length with an average shaft diameter of 6mm tapering to a blunt point (2mm diameter). It is made from a solid piece of softer graded Welsh slate that was commonly used in the middle of the 19th and early 20th century by school children who used them to write on harder grades of Welsh slate set into wooden frames. These pencils could be used wrapped in paper or encased in wood like a lead pencil. The use of slate pencils was gradually phased out during the 1930's.

Appendix 5: Context Summary List

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Lens of orange brown hardcore, over grey compact clay then mid brown hardcore	Hardcore ground surface
101	Layer	Compact dark grey silt containing coal and blue and white pottery fragments	Dumping / ground levelling
102	Layer	Lens of orange sand	Dumped deposit
103	Layer	Fairly soft mixed orange – brown sandy silt. Containing some charcoal and coal. Fragments of blue and white pottery	Dumped deposit
104	Layer	Fairly compact light-mid grey sandy silt with coal, charcoal and blue and white pottery	Buried ploughsoil
105	Layer	Orange sand and small flint gravel	Natural geology

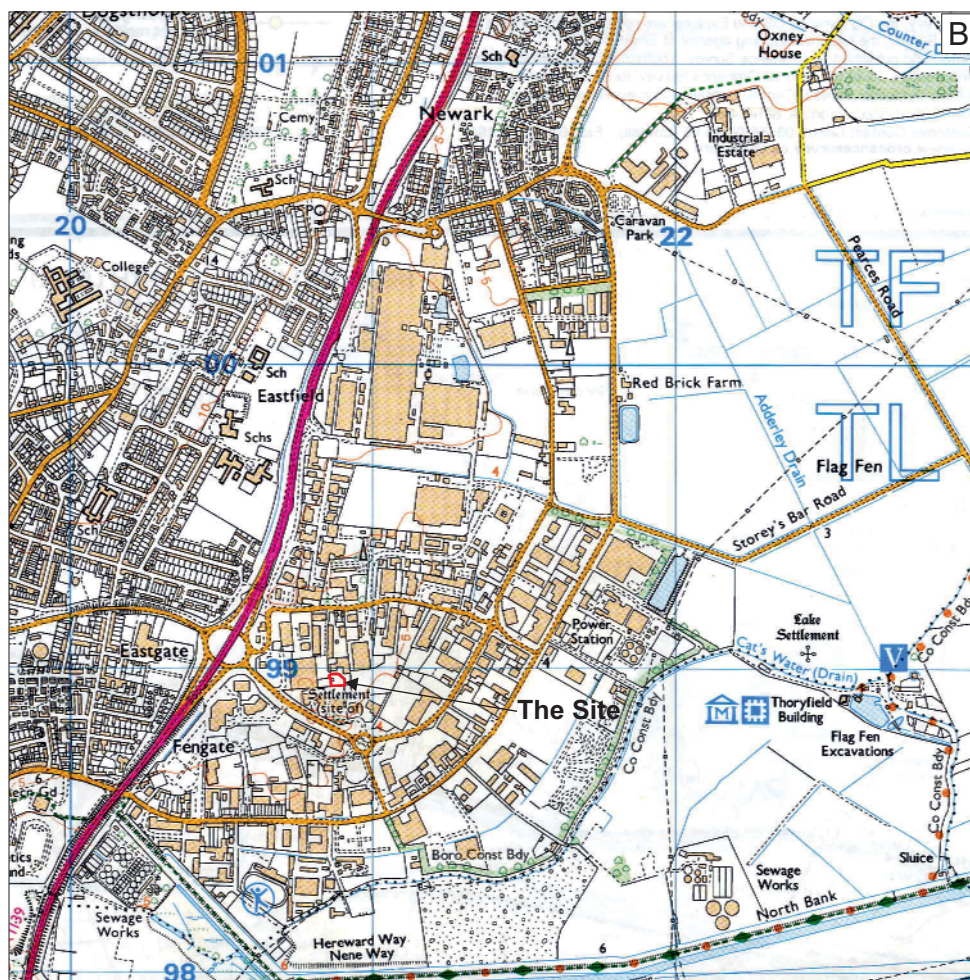
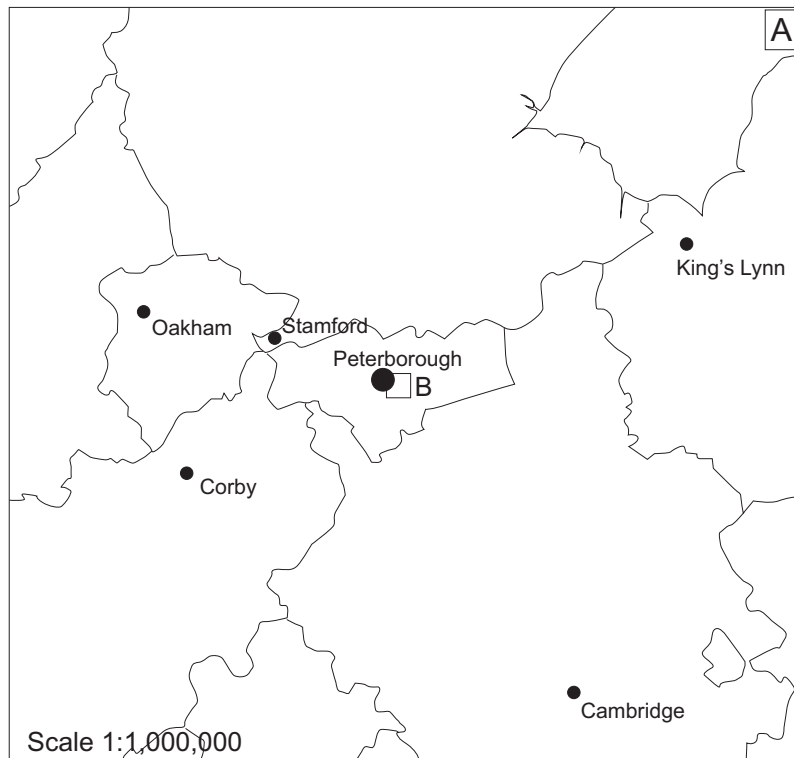
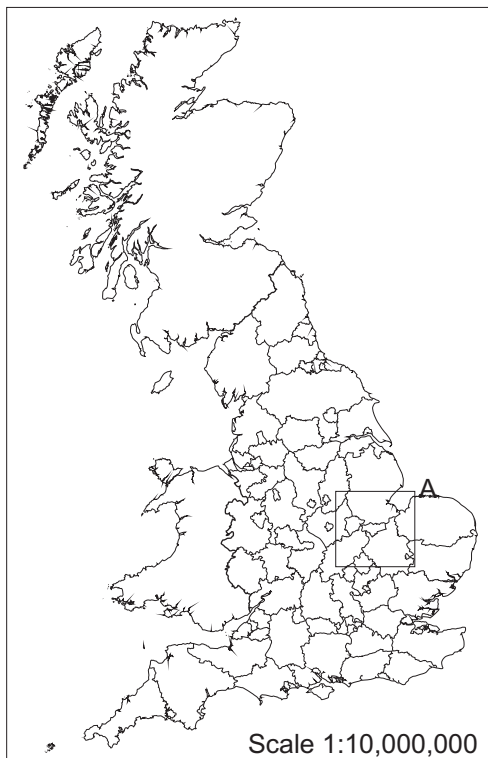


Figure 1: Site location at scale 1:25,000, with the site outlined in red
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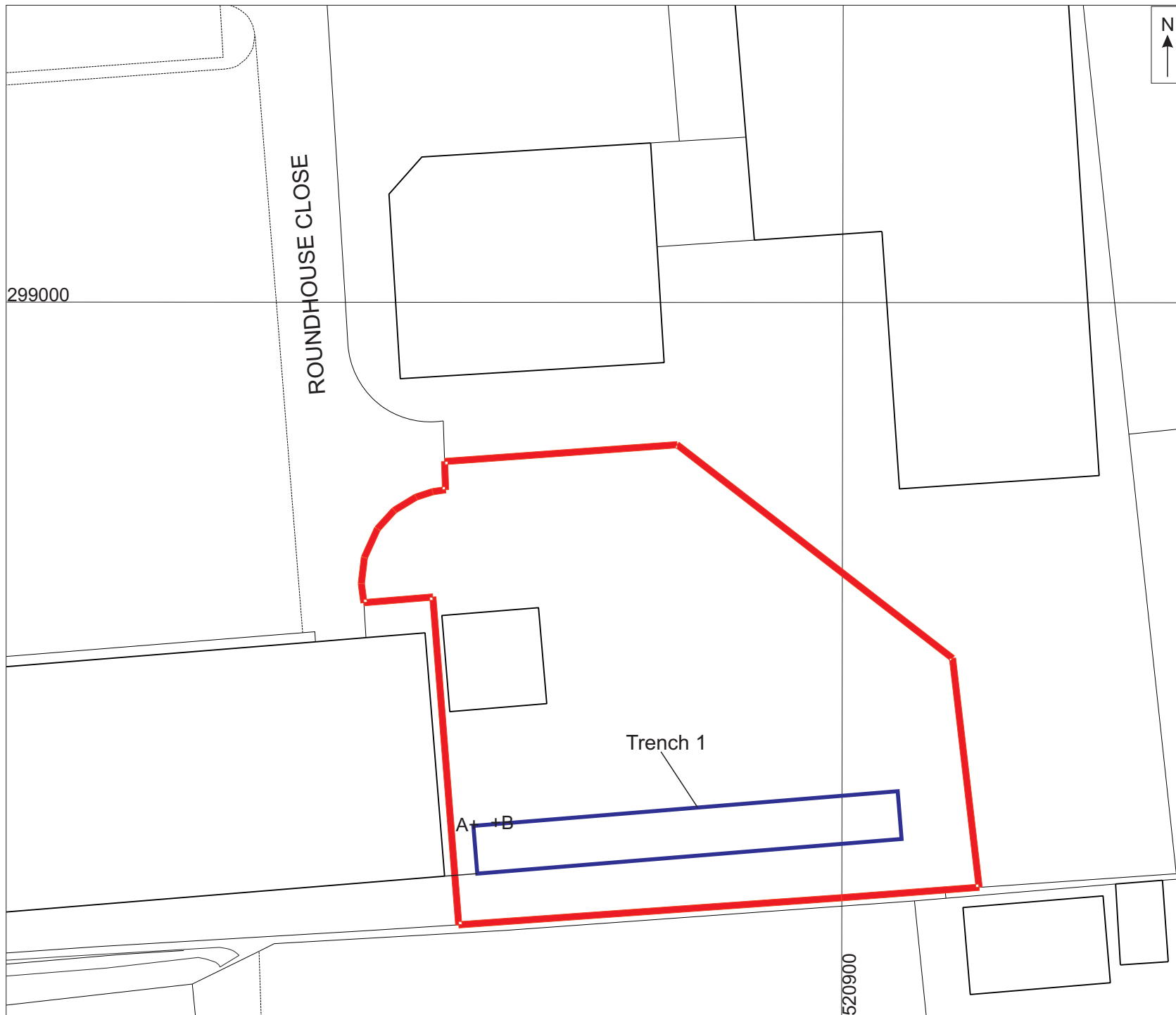


Figure 2: Trench location in blue at scale 1:500. The site is outlined in red. Section A-B shown on Figure 3

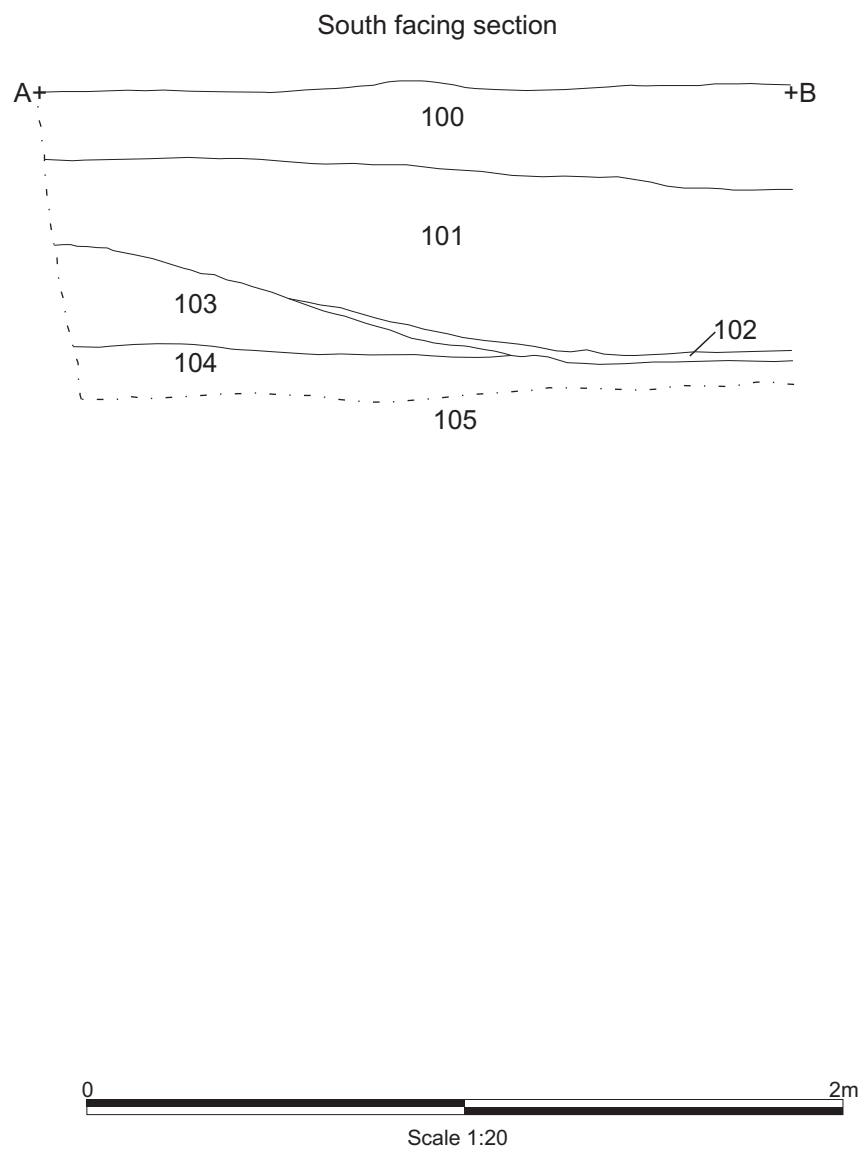


Figure 3: Representative section at scale 1:20. Located on Figure 2