

**LAND SOUTH OF HEATH ROAD, SCOTHERN,
WEST LINDSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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WLDC Planning Ref.: Pre-application
PCAS job no. 1302
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Prepared for
Chestnut Homes

by
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Summary

An archaeological evaluation consisting of four 20m x 2m trenches was undertaken on land to the south of Heath Road, on the western edge of the village of Scothern in the West Lindsey district of Lincolnshire, in order to inform a forthcoming planning application for a residential development.

Although there is little evidence for activity in any period prior to the Norman Conquest, medieval Scothern was a substantial settlement divided among several landowners. Archaeological recording around Scothern has identified undated surfaces and features thought to relate to the medieval occupation of the village, while ridge-and-furrow earthworks have been identified to the north and south of the village, including less than 300m to the northeast of the proposed development site, and other earthworks possibly deriving from medieval settlement have been identified around the periphery of the village.

Two possible linear features were encountered in one of the trenches, but seemed most likely to be natural gullies caused by weathering of the limestone brash geology. No features were identified in any of the other three trenches, and the archaeological potential of the site is assessed as being low.

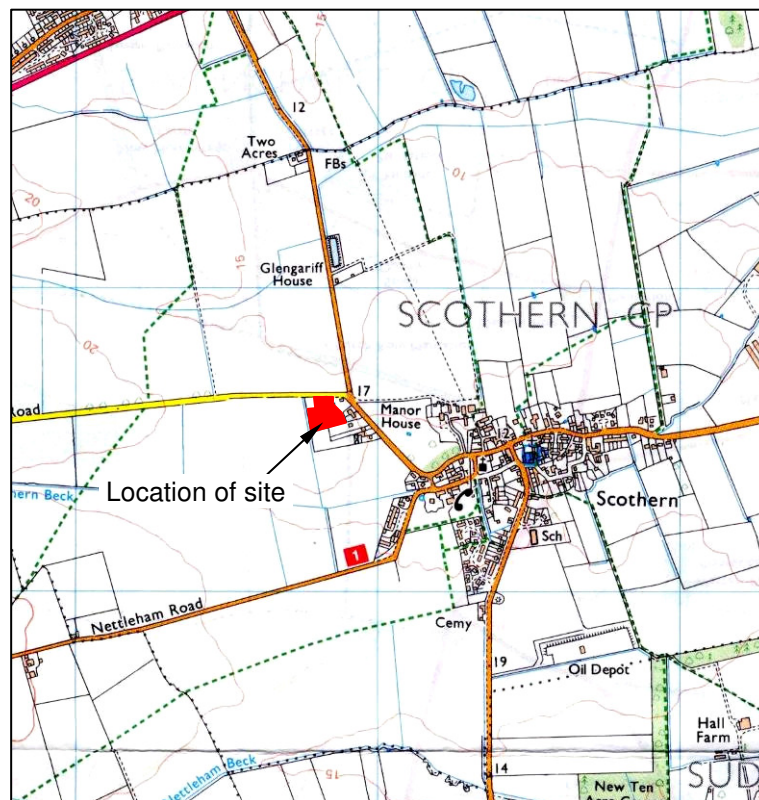


Figure 1: Location plan of the site at scale 1:25,000. The position of the proposed development site is marked in red. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by Chestnut Homes to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land to the south of Heath Road, on the western edge of the village of Scothern in the West Lindsey district of Lincolnshire. The evaluation took place in order to inform a forthcoming planning application for a residential development.

2.0 Location and description (figs. 1 and 3)

The village of Scothern lies within the district of West Lindsey, some 6km north-east of Lincoln; it is one of a chain of villages running along the spring line near the foot of the eastern slope of the Lincoln Edge. Scothern is sited at the junction of several local roads connecting the neighbouring villages of Sudbrooke, Nettleham, Dunholme and Welton.

The proposed development site lies to the north-west of the village, on the south side of the minor Heath Road near its junction with the Scothern to Dunholme road. It is roughly a broad L-shape, with an interior angle to the north-west, measuring approximately 120m x 100m. The site is bounded to the north by Heath Road, with open arable land beyond, to the east and south-east by the rear boundaries of residential properties fronting on to Dunholme Road, to the south and south-west by the premises of the Scothern Nurseries Plant Centre and to the west by a small plot of grassland, also with open arable land beyond.

The site appears to have formerly been a garden centre, but to have been abandoned for a number of years. At the time of the evaluation, it was occupied by several derelict glasshouses and poly-tunnels in the centre and at the south side, and stacks of hard landscaping and building materials to the north, and was heavily overgrown with brambles, briar rose, shrubs and small trees, with a small area of accessible open space running from the site entrance, off Heath Road, to approximately the centre (plates 1 and 2).

Central National Grid Reference: TF 02828 77590.

3.0 Topography and Geology

Scothern is situated on the open, gently undulating land at the foot of the east-facing slope of the Lincoln Edge. The land around is low-lying and largely artificially drained, with drains acting as field boundaries and emptying into the Scothern Beck or the Scothern Fen Drain. The topography of the site itself could not be ascertained during the evaluation due to its overgrown condition, but levels taken on the trenches indicate that the site slopes slightly from west to east, lying generally between 17m and 17.5m above Ordnance Datum sea level.

Drift geology is recorded only in the north-west corner of the site, which overlies the edge of an isolated patch of glacial Till. The village is situated on a sequence of bedrock types exposed in the scarp slope of the Lincoln Edge; the solid geology on the majority of the proposed development site is recorded as limestone cornbrash, while undifferentiated Kellaways Formation sandstone and mudstone is present at the eastern edge of the site, and Blisworth Clay Formation mudstone in the south-west corner (bgs.ac.uk).

4.0 Planning Background

A planning application for a residential development, with five new houses along the south side of Heath Road, additional housing and parking within the site and a new access road, is currently in preparation for submission to West Lindsey District Council.

As the archaeological potential of the site was unknown, the acting Historic Environment Officer for West Lindsey District advised that a scheme of trial trenching was required to inform the planning process. This scheme aims to investigate the survival and character of any encountered archaeological remains, and determine the potential for archaeological remains to be impacted by the development proposals.

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

There is very little evidence of prehistoric activity in Scothern: a polished stone axe was recovered in a garden on Elmdene c.0.80km east of the site, and a Bronze Age bronze gouge was also found in the village (LHER ref: 53105/53129).

The site lies some 2.5km to the north-west of the Roman road north-eastwards out of Lincoln, now followed by the A158, and about 5.4km to the east of Ermine Street, the main Roman road from London to York via Lincoln. Roman occupation has been confirmed in Dunholme and Welton to the north, but there is little evidence for Roman activity in Scothern: a small number of unstratified pottery sherds have been recovered from around the village, which would indicate a Roman presence, but no archaeological features dated to the Roman period have been identified within the village (Lane, 2014).

Although there is little known physical evidence for pre-Conquest occupation, Scothern was a substantial settlement by the Domesday Survey of AD 1086. The principal manorial holding belonged to Colsuain [Kolsveinn], but this incorporated lands in Scothern, Holme and Sudbrooke, and it is not recorded how much of the arable land and meadow assessed, or how many of the 18 households, were associated with which settlement; a mill is listed, but again, this could have been sited in any of the three settlements, and would probably have served them all. Norman de Arci had a smaller manor in Scothern, with eight households occupying arable and meadow land. The minor landowner Rannulf de Sancto Walarico had a small amount of arable land in Scothern attached to his manor of Reepham; a church is recorded here, and a priest who also farmed the land. Ilbert de Laci also had a small amount of arable land in Scothern, but there is no record of anybody living there. Peterborough Abbey's manor of Fiskerton had an outlying land holding in Scothern, but again, this was jointly assessed with its other outlying properties in Holme and Sudbrooke, and it is not recorded how much of the land and population belonged to each settlement (Foster and Longley, 1976, pp.54, 100, 118, 149, 165). This would indicate a polyfocal settlement gradually coming together to form the current village (LHER ref: 53131). Earthworks identified around the periphery of the village may be the remains of the shrunken medieval village (PastScape ref: Scothern).

St. Germain's church (LHER ref: 53110) lies 500m southeast of the proposed development site. The nave and chancel arch date from the 12th century, although the church underwent several schemes of rebuilding throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods. Fragments of carved stone have been recovered from the surrounding area, probably part of the original fabric of the church removed during one of these schemes. Archaeological recording around Scothern has identified undated surfaces and features thought to relate to the medieval occupation of the village. Ridge-and-furrow earthworks of medieval and post-medieval farming practices have been identified to the north and south of the village, including less than 300m to the northeast of the proposed development site. Two undated cropmark enclosures have been identified on aerial photographs 400m south of the site, north of Nettleham Road (LHER ref: 55445).

Scothern continued as an agricultural settlement throughout the post-medieval period. Historic mapping indicates a windmill to the south of the village that remained in use until it was replaced in the early 20th century by an oil-driven engine mill (LHER ref: 53128).

Historic Ordnance Survey mapping indicates the site has remained undeveloped during the post-enclosure period. The site lay within an area of four small fields until the mid-20th century, when the former field boundaries were removed and housing extended along the west side of Dunholme Road, east of the development site. The lines of the former field boundaries can still be traced among the property boundaries on modern mapping, and the site appears to lie within the two northerly fields, with its southern boundary corresponding to the former internal east-to-west boundary (figure 2).

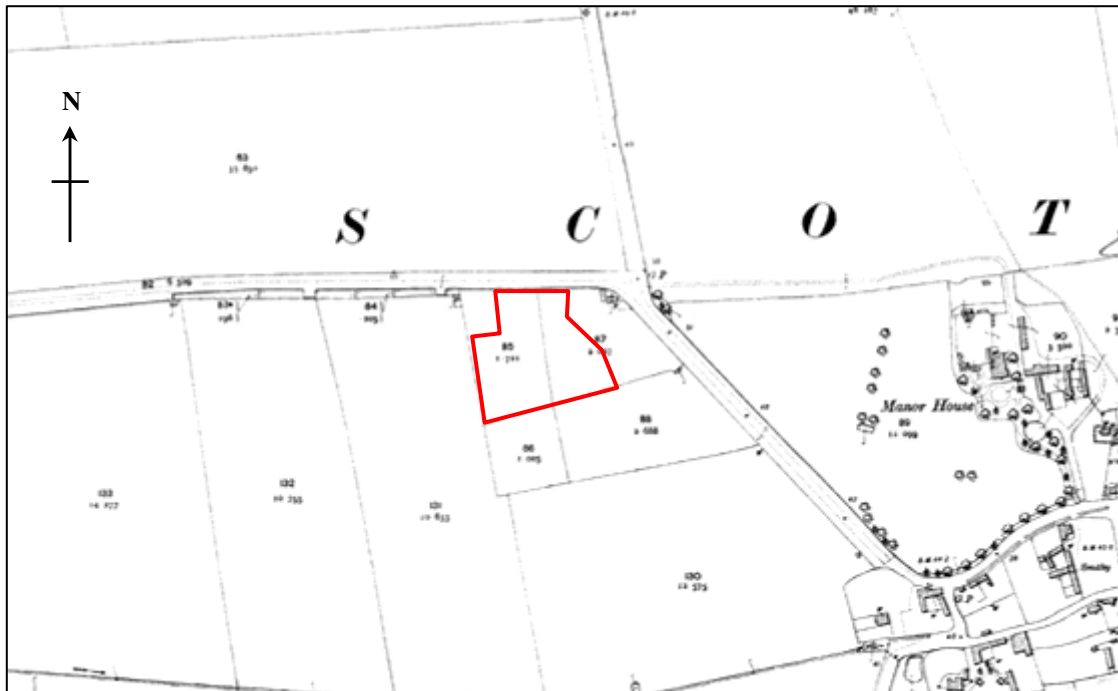


Figure 2: Extract from the 2nd edition 25" to the mile Ordnance Survey map of 1906 (not to scale), showing the probable position of the site in red.

6.0 Methodology

The evaluation consisted of four 20m x 2m trenches, which had originally been randomly positioned to sample the whole site, as there was no earlier information on which they could be targeted. Site conditions prevented the location of the trenches in their proposed positions, as large areas of the site, including the whole of the perimeter, proved to be inaccessible either on foot or by the machine. Following consultation with the Historic Environment Officer for West Lindsey, the trenches were excavated in the areas that could be reached, and were subsequently located on the site plan by GPS plotting (fig. 3; plates 3 and 4).

The trenches were machine excavated under archaeological supervision, using a 180° 3CX excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand, and the features encountered were sample excavated.

A trench plan (at a scale of 1:50) was drawn in Trench 3 only, as no features were present in the other trenches; excavated features were drawn in plan and section at scale 1:20. Sample sections of the trench baulks were drawn at scale 1:20 in the trenches where no features

were encountered. Ordnance Datum levels on all drawings were taken using a Global Positioning System. Deposits were recorded on standard PCAS trench record sheets, and an excavation site diary was also kept; a digital photographic record was made, and extracts from this are reproduced in Appendix 1.

The fieldwork was carried out by Alison Lane and the author, and took place between the 11th and 12th of September, 2014. Weather conditions were generally favourable, although low, direct sunlight made some photography difficult.

7.0 Results

7.1 Trench 3 (fig. 4)

Trench 3 was positioned as close to the west side of the site as was possible, and was oriented north-east to south-west (fig. 3). This was the only trench in which possible features were encountered.

The trench was excavated by machine to the natural limestone brash, deposit 302 (plate 7). Two narrow linear features were seen cut into 302: features **304** and **306** both appeared to be straight, with dark fills, when exposed in plan, and were at first thought to be buried services associated with the former use of the site. On excavation, the apparent dark fills proved to have been remnants of topsoil settling into the slightly depressed upper surfaces of the feature fills; both features were filled by a light brownish-grey sandy clay with no inclusions, which could not easily be distinguished from the matrix of the natural limestone brash (plates 5 and 6). Feature **304** was the larger at 0.95m wide and 0.20m deep, running north-west to south-east across the trench, and had a generally shallow, bowl-shaped profile, while the narrower **306** ran north to south, was no more than 0.26m wide x 0.12m deep, and had steeper sides (figs. 4a-c). No dating evidence was retrieved from either feature. The irregularity of the sides and bases of the two features, with the similarity of their fills to natural 302, suggests that they may not have been man-made, but were more likely to be naturally occurring gullies in the weathered surface of the solid geology.

Features **304** and **306** were sealed by fine-sandy clay subsoil 301, up to 0.28m deep, which also closely resembled the matrix of the natural geology, and was principally distinguishable from it by the absence of stone inclusions. The trench was sealed by 0.40m depth of modern topsoil 300, which contained a quantity of modern refuse, principally in the form of fragments of black polythene sheeting, probably associated with the former horticultural use of the site.

7.2 The negative trenches (fig. 5)

No possible features were encountered in any of the other three trenches. Trench 1 was oriented north-west to south-east and positioned as far towards the north-west corner of the site as could be reached without impeding access to the site; Trench 2 was oriented north-north-west to south-south-east and positioned near the centre of the site, while Trench 4 was oriented east-north-east to west-south-west and positioned as far towards the south-east site corner as could be reached (fig. 3).

All three trenches were excavated to natural geological deposits (plates 8-10). Natural 402 in Trench 4 was the same limestone brash as was seen in Trench 3, while natural 202 in Trench 2, although broadly similar, contained clay and sand lenses, and natural 102 in Trench 1 was completely different, being a compact, plastic silty clay mottled in a wide range of colours: this material was probably the natural drift Till shown on the geological mapping. No features were identified cutting the natural in any of the trenches.

All three trenches contained a fine-sandy clay subsoil (respectively contexts 101, 201 and 401) overlying the natural: this was deepest towards the south-east corner of the site, where

layer 401 in Trench 4 was up to 0.50m deep, and shallowest towards the north-west, where layer 101 in Trench 1 was present only in patches no more than 0.15m deep.

All trenches were sealed by roughly 0.3m depth of modern topsoil (respectively contexts 100, 200 and 400), displaying modern refuse – as in Trench 3, chiefly material associated with the former horticultural use of the site. The topsoil in Trench 1 also contained a number of complete modern, decorative brick paving setts, representing part of the merchandise stored on site rather than indicating the presence of a structure.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The archaeological potential of the site appears to be low. Features were only seen in one of the four trenches excavated, and these seemed more likely to be natural gullies caused by weathering of the limestone brash geology than to have been deliberately made. Although the site is likely to have lain in medieval Scothern's agricultural hinterland, there was not even any indication of ridge-and-furrow cultivation: furrows can sometimes be missed on evaluation sites if they run parallel to the trenches, but the different orientations of the four trenches should have allowed for furrows to be identified in at least one trench, had they been present.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

Archaeological evaluation was effective in ascertaining that the site has little archaeological potential, in a situation where non-invasive methods, such as geophysical survey, could not have been carried out due to the derelict and overgrown condition of the site. The body of data thus produced will be sufficient to inform the planning and development process.

10.0 Project Archive

The project archive, consisting of the site recording and the finds, will be deposited with printed copies of this report and the forthcoming full report at The Collection, Lincoln, in or before April 2015; following deposition, the archive will be available for consultation under the LCNCC accession number 2014.175. A copy of the full report will also be uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database, where it will be publicly accessible online.

11.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services would like to thank Chestnut Homes for this commission. Thanks are also due to Mick Kirk (machine-driver) for his co-operation during the evaluation.

12.0 References

- British Geological Survey (BGS), consulted online at
<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>
- Foster, C. W. and Longley, T., 1924, reprinted 1976, *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*: The Lincoln Record Society vol. 19. G. W. Belton, Gainsborough.
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Ordnance Survey, 2006, *Lincoln, Sleaford, Metherringham & Navenby: Explorer Series Sheet 272, scale 1:25 000*. The Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

Ordnance Survey, 1906, 25" to the mile 2nd edition mapping consulted online at <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html>

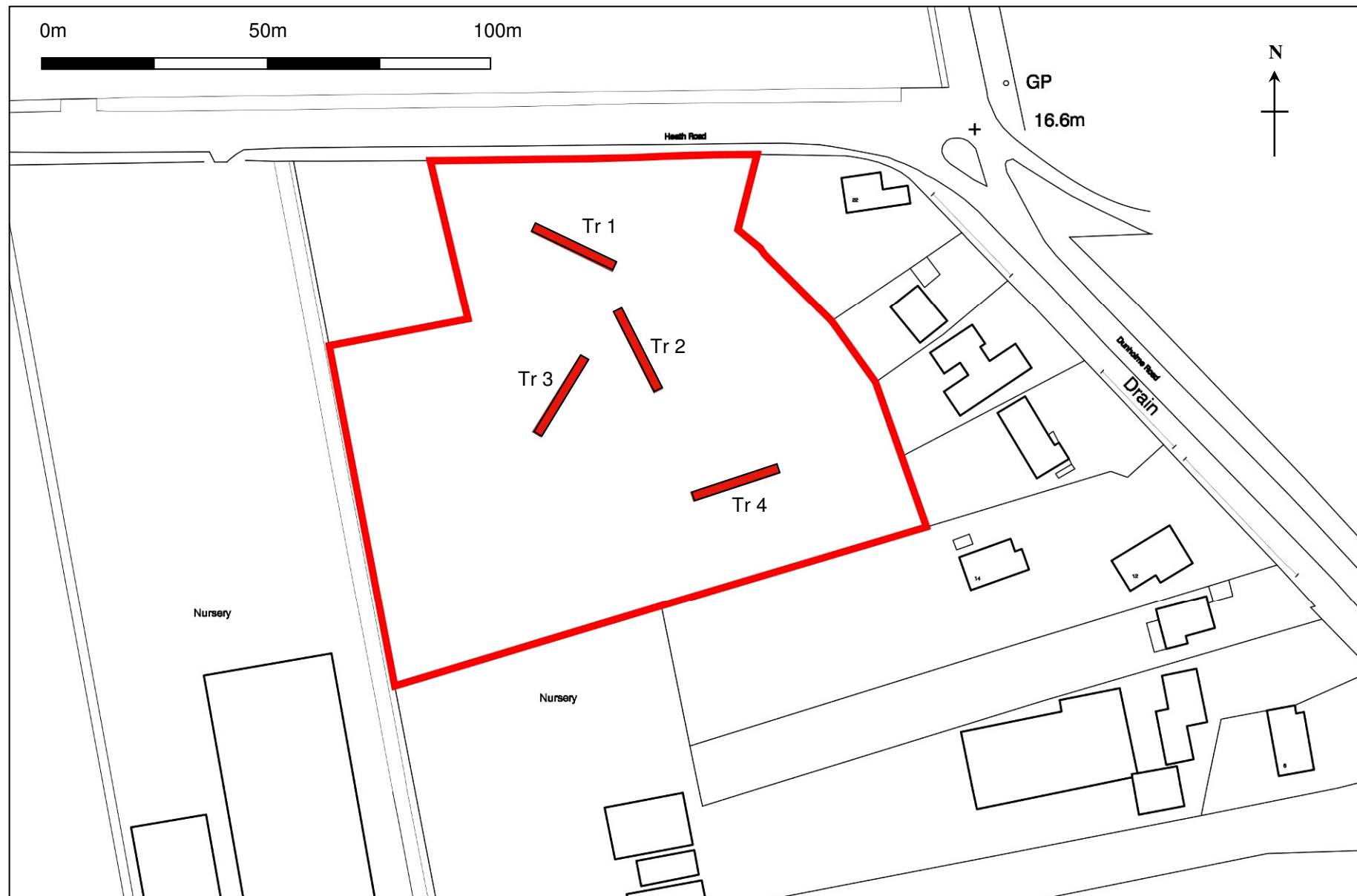


Figure 3: Plan of the site at scale 1:1250, showing the trench layout. Plan supplied by developer.

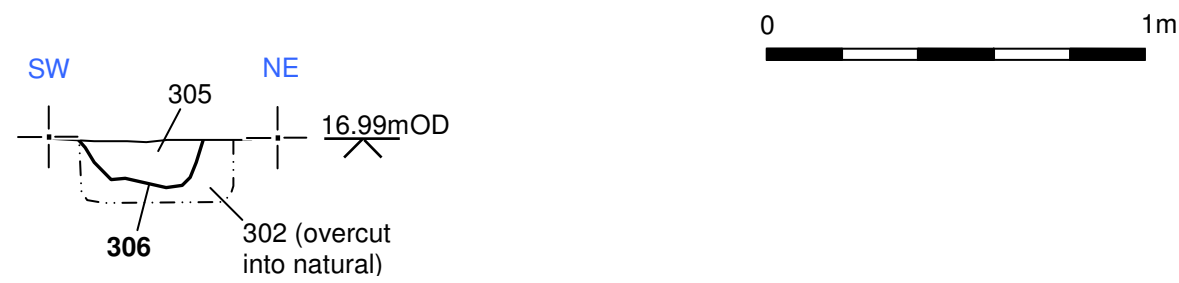


Figure 4c: Section through feature **306** at scale 1:20.

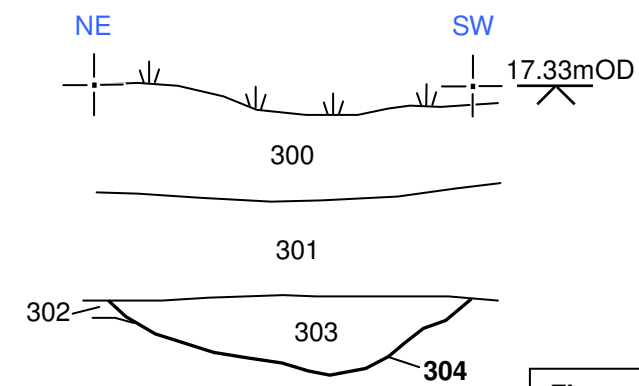


Figure 4b: Section through feature **304** at scale 1:20.

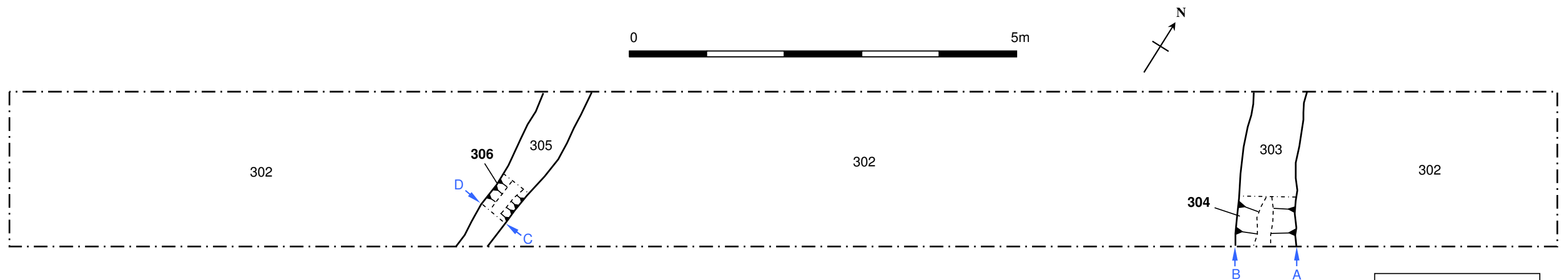


Figure 4a: Plan of Trench 3 at scale 1:50.

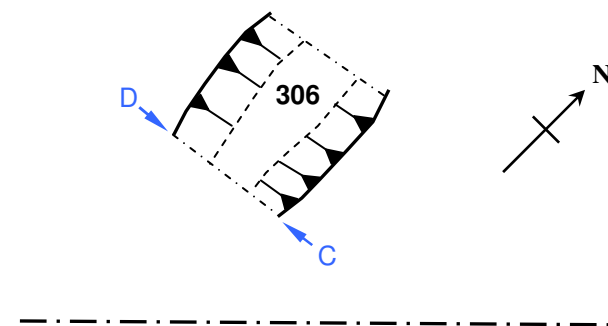


Figure 4e: Plan of the excavated section through feature **306** at scale 1:20.



Figure 4d: Plan of the excavated section through feature **304** at scale 1:20.

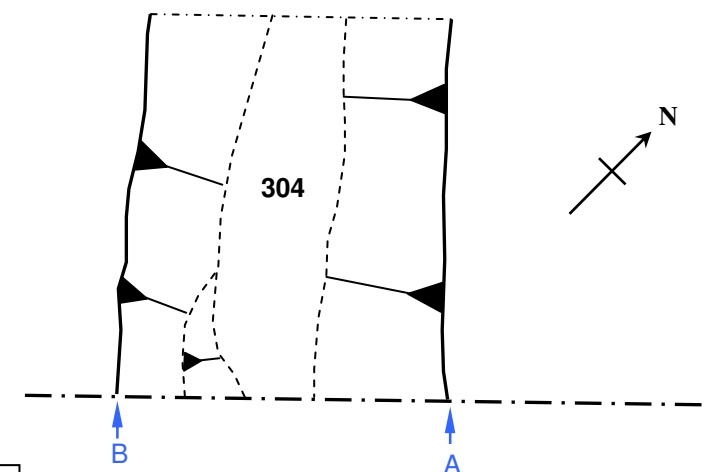


Figure 4: Plan and section drawings in Trench 3, at scales 1:50 and 1:20.

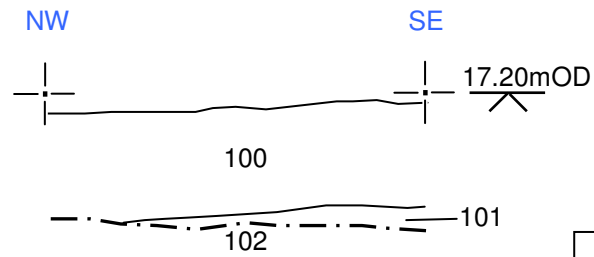


Figure 5a: Sample section in Trench 1.

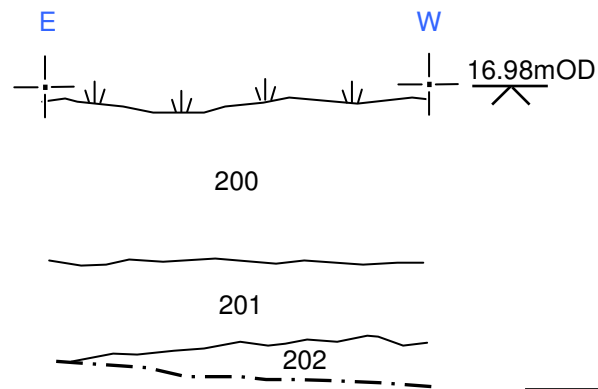


Figure 5b: Sample section in Trench 2.

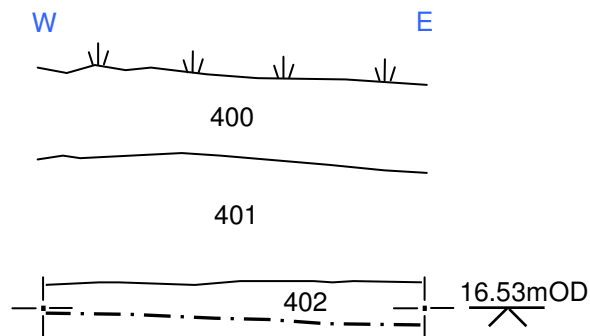


Figure 5c: Sample section in Trench 4.



Figure 5: Sample sections in the trenches that contained no archaeological features, at scale 1:20.



Figure 6: As-proposed plan of the site at scale 1:1250, showing the trench locations. Plan supplied by developer.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General shot of the site at the completion of the evaluation, looking S from the site entrance.



Plate 2: General shot illustrating the derelict condition of the site, looking SE from Trench 3.



Plate 3: Working shot during the machining of Trench 2, looking N towards the site entrance, with part of a derelict poly-tunnel in the foreground.

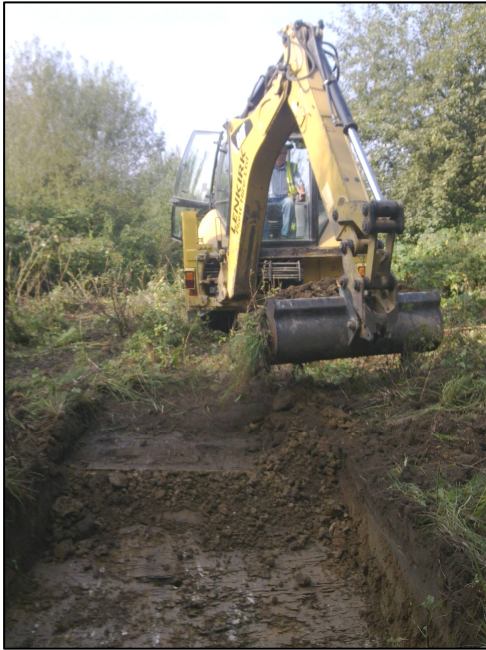


Plate 4: Working shot during machining of Trench 4, looking W.



Plate 5: Feature 304 in section in Trench 3, looking SE.



Plate 6: The excavated portion of feature 306 in Trench 3, looking N.



Plate 7: Trench 3 completed,
looking NE.



Plate 8: Trench 1 completed,
looking W.



Plate 9: Trench 2 completed,
looking W.



Plate 10: Trench 4 completed,
looking SW.

Appendix 2: Context Summary

| Context no. | Type | Description | Finds/dating |
|-------------|-------|---|----------------|
| Trench 1 | | | |
| 100 | Layer | Mid-brownish-grey friable humic clayey fine sand, 0.28m deep, with frequent modern refuse (chiefly black polythene sheet fragments) throughout and several complete modern, decorative brick paving setts near W end. | Modern topsoil |
| 101 | Layer | Subsoil below topsoil 100: light greyish-brown friable fine-sandy clay, up to 0.15m deep where present; occurs only in patches c. 3m and 5m long respectively at W end and centre of trench. | |
| 102 | Layer | Compact, plastic natural silty clay, mottled mid-brown, light yellowish-brown, mid-brownish-grey and light bluish-grey, with moderate small limestone fragments. | |
| Trench 2 | | | |
| 200 | Layer | Mid-brownish-grey friable humic clayey fine sand, 0.32m deep, with occasional modern refuse and one patch of abundant charcoal flecks near N end of trench. | Modern topsoil |
| 201 | Layer | Subsoil below topsoil 200: light greyish-brown friable fine-sandy clay, 0.20m deep. | |
| 202 | Layer | Compact, slightly plastic natural fine-sandy clay, mottled mid-brown/light grey, with abundant limestone and flint fragments and occasional lenses of compact, plastic, light greyish-blue clay and clean, friable dark yellow medium sand. | |
| Trench 3 | | | |
| 300 | Layer | Mid-brownish-grey friable humic clayey fine sand, 0.40m deep, with frequent modern refuse (chiefly black polythene sheet fragments) and very extensive root growth. | Modern topsoil |
| 301 | Layer | Subsoil below topsoil 300: friable fine-sandy clay, 0.28m deep, mostly light greyish-brown to light brown, but with light grey mottling similar to that seen in natural 302; chiefly distinguishable from 302 by the absence of inclusions. | |
| 302 | Layer | Compact, slightly plastic natural fine-sandy clay, mottled mid-brown/light grey, with abundant limestone and flint fragments. | |
| 303 | Fill | Light brownish-grey plastic fine-sandy clay with no inclusions, filling feature 304 . | |
| 304 | Cut | NW-SE aligned linear feature near NE end of trench: 0.95m wide x 0.20m deep, shallow and irregular in profile, but straight and regular in plan. | |
| 305 | Fill | Light brownish-grey plastic fine-sandy clay with no inclusions, filling feature 306 . | |
| 306 | Cut | Very narrow N-S aligned linear feature, 0.26m wide x 0.12m deep, with steep sides and irregular base; clearer in plan than in section. | |
| Trench 4 | | | |
| 400 | Layer | Mid-brownish-grey friable humic clayey fine sand, 0.32m deep, with occasional modern refuse and very extensive root growth. | Modern topsoil |
| 401 | Layer | Subsoil below topsoil 400: light greyish-brown friable fine-sandy clay, 0.40m to 0.50m deep. | |
| 402 | Layer | Compact, slightly plastic natural fine-sandy clay, mottled mid-brown/light grey, with abundant limestone and flint fragments. | |

Appendix 3: OASIS Summary