

**PHOENIX TUNNEL SITE, MALBORNE WAY, ORTON MALBORNE,
PETERBOROUGH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR:	TL 17091 95462
Planning Ref.:	14/01210/FUL
PCAS job no.	1291
Site code:	PTPE 14
Archive acc. code:	TBC

Prepared for
HSP Consulting
by
R. D. Savage

September 2014



Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd
47, Manor Road
Saxilby
Lincoln
LN1 2HX

Tel. 01522 703800
e-mail info@pre-construct.co.uk

©Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd

Contents

	Summary	1
1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Location and description	2
3.0	Geology and topography	2
4.0	Planning background	2
5.0	Archaeological and historical background	3
6.0	Methodology	3
7.0	Results	4
8.0	Discussion and conclusions	4
9.0	Effectiveness of methodology	5
10.0	Project archive	5
11.0	Acknowledgements	5
12.0	References	5

Appendices

Appendix 1: Colour Plates

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Appendix 3: OASIS summary

Illustrations

Fig. 1: Location map at scale 1:25,000

Fig. 2: Location plan at scale 1:10,000

Fig. 3: As-existing plan of the site (outlined in red) at scale 1:1000, showing the positions of the excavated trenches

Fig. 4: Plan and section drawings in Trenches 1 and 2, at scales 1:50 and 1:20

Fig. 5: Plan and section drawings in Trenches 3 and 4, at scales 1:50 and 1:20

Fig. 6: As-proposed plan of the site at scale 1:750, showing the altered trench locations

Colour Plates

- PI. 1:** General shot of the site from the entrance, looking ESE
- PI. 2:** Working shot: Trench 4 relocated to avoid trees and existing play equipment, looking SW
- PI. 3:** Trench 1 post-excavation, looking WSW
- PI. 4:** Trench 2 post-excavation, looking ENE
- PI. 5:** Trench 3 post-excavation, looking NNW
- PI. 6:** Trench 4 post-excavation, looking ENE
- PI. 7:** The earthwork bank in section in Trench 1, looking SSW
- PI. 8:** The earthwork bank in section in Trench 2, looking N

Summary

An archaeological evaluation consisting of four trenches was undertaken on the site of the former Tunnel Play Centre off Malborne Way in the Orton Malborne district of Peterborough, in order to inform a forthcoming planning application for the construction of a proposed new Special Educational Needs school.

An archaeological desk-based assessment carried out as part of this project found little evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity in the area. From the medieval period onwards, the site was believed to have lain within the agricultural hinterland of the village of Orton Longueville, and post-enclosure historic maps show it as lying within fields until the area was developed in the 1970s. The archaeological potential of the site was interpreted as low

No evidence for uses of the site pre-dating its present function as a children's play centre and its former use as a contractors' compound during the construction of the A1139 was encountered during the evaluation, confirming the assessment reached by the ADBA that the archaeological potential of the site is low.

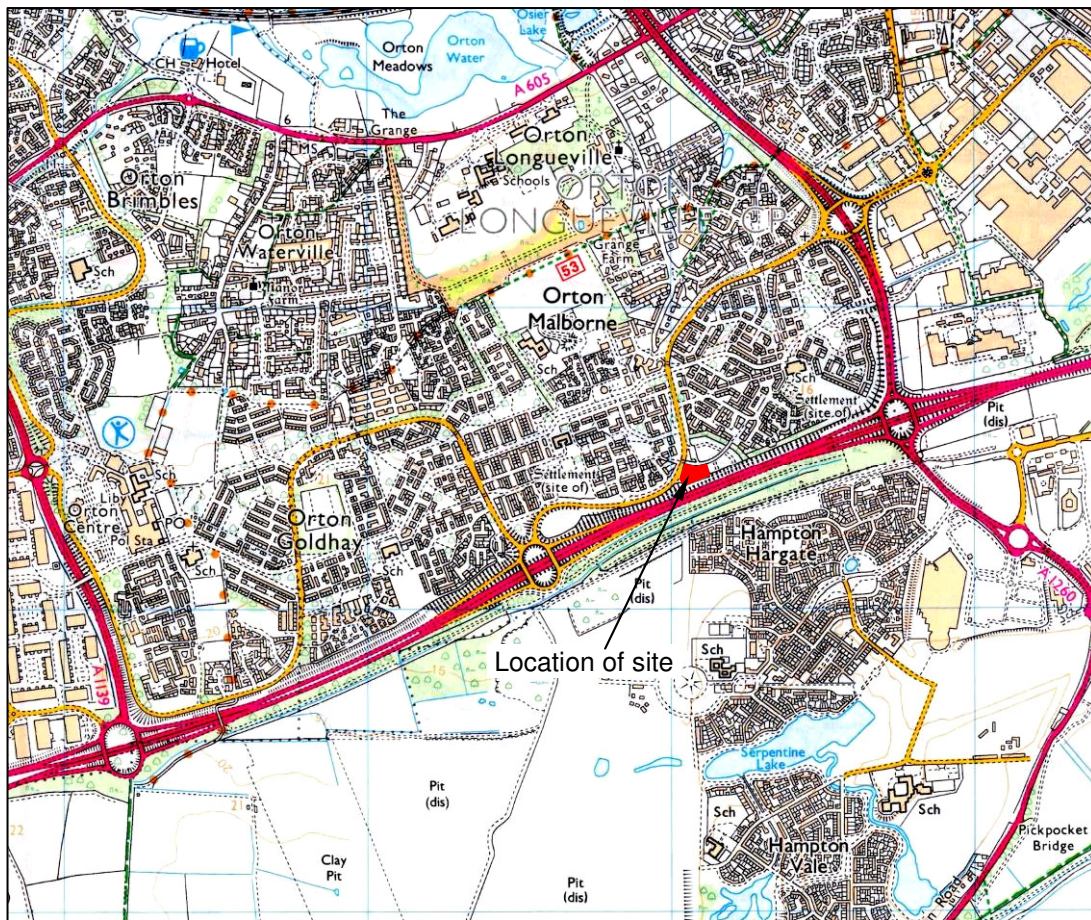


Figure 1: Site location plan at scale 1:25,000. The site is marked in red. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS Licence No. 100049278.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by HSP Consulting to carry out a scheme of archaeological evaluation trenching prior to the construction of a proposed new Special Educational Needs school on the site of the former Tunnel play centre off Malborne Way in the Orton Malborne district of Peterborough.

The results of this project will be submitted in support of the planning application for the construction of the new school, and used to determine whether any further archaeological intervention is required in order to mitigate any potential damage to the archaeological record (by preservation *in situ* or by further investigation and recording).

2.0 Location and Description (figs. 1 and 2)

The proposed development site is located within the Orton Malborne residential area of the city of Peterborough in Cambridgeshire. Peterborough lies on the River Nene, with the city centre sited on the north bank: Orton Malborne is sited on the south bank, where a number of former villages have been subsumed into the expanding city.

The site lies directly to the north of the A1139 (Fletton Parkway), and was still occupied by the Tunnel Play Centre – a re-used sheet metal Romney hut (similar to a Nissen hut, but larger) of Second World War date – and its exterior play equipment at the time that the evaluation took place (plates 1 and 2). It was formerly used as a constructors' compound during the construction of the A1139, and was surrounded by a metal security fence, screened by trees on the south side.

The central National Grid Reference of the site is TL 17091 95462.

3.0 Topography and Geology

The site lies in the valley of the River Nene, on land sloping very gradually towards the river to the north. The north and east parts of the site, occupied by the play centre building and a basketball court, were broadly level, rising to the south; to the south-west, the ground also rose to a level platform with a small, east to west-aligned bank. Earthworks, in the form of a large, sub-circular mound and a curving bank, were observed to the south-east and south-west of the play area during a site visit made for a desk-based assessment at an earlier stage of the project, but were interpreted as modern landscaping features created during the development of the site in the 1980s (Driscoll, 2014); the PCAS Field Officer carrying out the evaluation suggested that the bank was more likely to be a fuel tank bund from the site's earlier use as a construction compound.

Drift geology, in the form of River Terrace Deposits, is recorded only at the southern edge of the site; the solid geology is Oxford Clay Formation Mudstone, exposed across the majority of the site. (*ibid.*).

4.0 Planning Background

A planning application for the construction of a new two-storey Special Educational Needs school building, with associated landscaping and external works, together with the demolition

of the existing Tunnel Play Centre building, is under consideration by Peterborough City Council (planning application number 14/01210/FUL). The results of this evaluation will be submitted in support of the planning application, and will be drawn upon to devise a suitable scheme of archaeological mitigation if necessary.

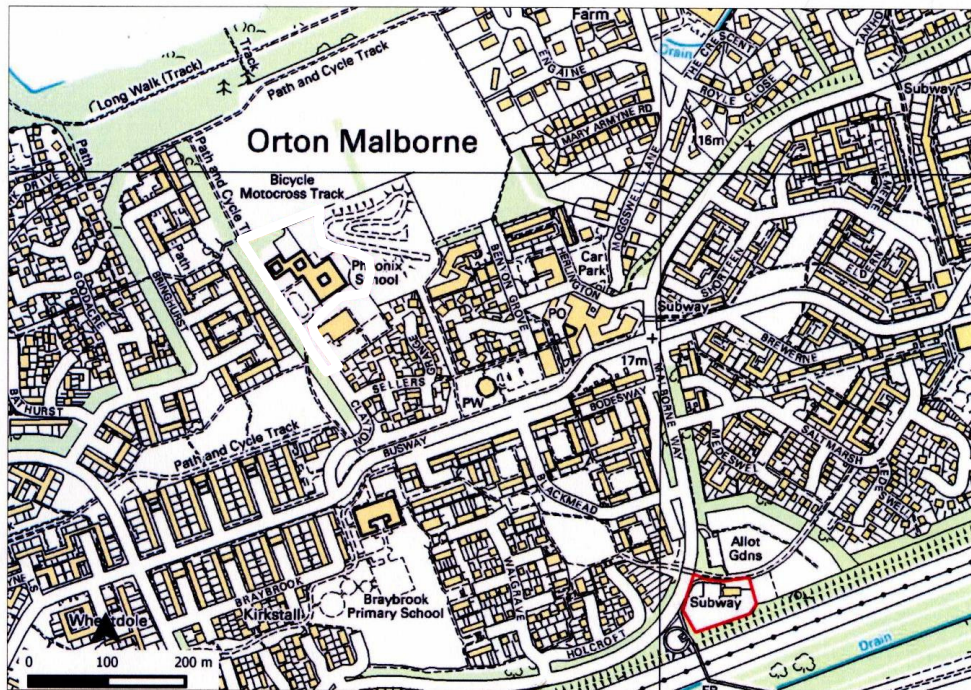


Figure 2: Location plan of the site at scale 1:10,000. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS Licence No. 100049278.

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

A detailed archaeological and historical background for this site can be found in a desk-based assessment prepared by Absolute Archaeology (Driscoll, 2014).

The DBA identified no potential archaeological remains within the proposed development site, and few in its immediate vicinity. A prehistoric and Romano-British settlement, now a Scheduled Ancient Monument, lies c. 380m to the west-south-west, on the north-east side of the roundabout on Fletton Parkway; otherwise, only a single find of a prehistoric flint implement has been recorded a short distance to the north of the site. From the medieval period onwards, the site was believed to have lain within the agricultural hinterland of the village of Orton Longueville, and post-enclosure historic maps show it as lying within fields until the area was developed in the 1970s. The archaeological potential of the site was interpreted as low (*ibid.*).

6.0 Methodology

The evaluation consisted of four trenches, which were originally intended as measuring 15m x 2m trenches positioned in order to sample the grassed areas of the site. The original trenching plan had to be extensively adapted on site, as the presence of buried services, as well as the continuing presence of pieces of play equipment, meant that excavation could not be carried out in some areas and the machine could not reach or manoeuvre in others (plate

2). Trench 1 was reduced to a length of 11m and Trench 2 to 12m, and Trenches 1, 2 and 4 were repositioned (fig. 3).

The trenches were set out in the most accessible areas, and located on the site plan using a Global Positioning System; they were then machine excavated under archaeological supervision, using a 180° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand to check for possible features.

The evaluation trenches were drawn in plan at a scale of 1:50 and sample sections of the trench baulks were drawn at scale 1:20. The section drawings were located on the base plans; Ordnance Datum levels were taken using GPS. Deposits were recorded on standard PCAS 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 Simon Savage and took place between the 4th and 5th of September 2014. Weather conditions were variable, but generally favourable.

7.0 Results (figs. 4 and 5)

All trenches were excavated to the natural geology, which was coarse gravel in all trenches, either clayey or with clay patches, and was variously numbered 102, 202, 302 and 402 according to trench number.

No archaeological features were seen in any of the trenches (plates 3-6). The earthwork bank running from south-east to north-west through Trenches 1 and 2 (with a return to the south-west passing outside the west end of Trench 1) proved to consist entirely of topsoil, confirming that it was a recently constructed feature (plates 7-8); the only other feature seen in Trench 1 was a modern soakaway. Trench 2 contained a number of modern wooden posts and concrete pads, probably indicating the former site of a piece of play equipment. Trench 3 was undisturbed apart from the edge of a modern soakaway at the south end. Trench 4 contained a modern pit and trench, both of which displayed fragments of modern brick and tarmac in their fills; the trench also contained a number of roundwood stakes, suggesting that these were also the foundations of former play equipment. What at first appeared to be a broad linear feature running perpendicularly across Trench 4 proved on excavation to be a natural depression no more than 0.06m deep.

Above the natural in all trenches was a deposit interpreted as the surface of the former contractors' compound: a sandy clay layer with gravel and rubble fragments, varying in depth from 0.33m to 0.12m across the trenches and variously numbered 101, 201, 301 and 401 according to trench number. Loose sheets of poured concrete incorporated into this layer in Trench 3 were probably deposited by the washing out of concrete mixers while the contractors' compound was in use. The compound surface was overlain by the modern landscaped topsoil, varying in depth from no more than a turf layer sealing Trench 3 to the raised bank of some 0.40m thickness in Trench 2, which was variously numbered 100, 200, 300 and 400 according to trench number.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

No evidence for uses of the site pre-dating its present function as a children's play centre and its former use as a construction contractors' compound was encountered during the evaluation. The archaeological potential of the site is assessed as low.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

Archaeological evaluation was effective in demonstrating the low archaeological potential of the site, confirming the findings of the non-intrusive desk-based assessment previously carried out. The body of data thus produced will be sufficient to inform the planning and development process.

10.0 Project Archive

The project archive, consisting in this case only of the site recording as no finds were retrieved, will be deposited with printed copies of this report at Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery within six months of the completion of the project. Following deposition, the archive will be available for consultation under a PETMG accession number which will be assigned at the start of the archiving process; liaison with the receiving museum is in progress. 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 HSP Consulting for this commission.

12.0 References

Driscoll, P., 2014, *Desk-Based Assessment, Phoenix School, Clayton, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5SD*. Unpublished client report for Absolute Archaeology on behalf of HSP Consulting.

Ordnance Survey, 2006, *Peterborough, March, Whittlesey, Chatteris & Oundle: Explorer Series Sheet 227, scale 1:25 000*. The Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

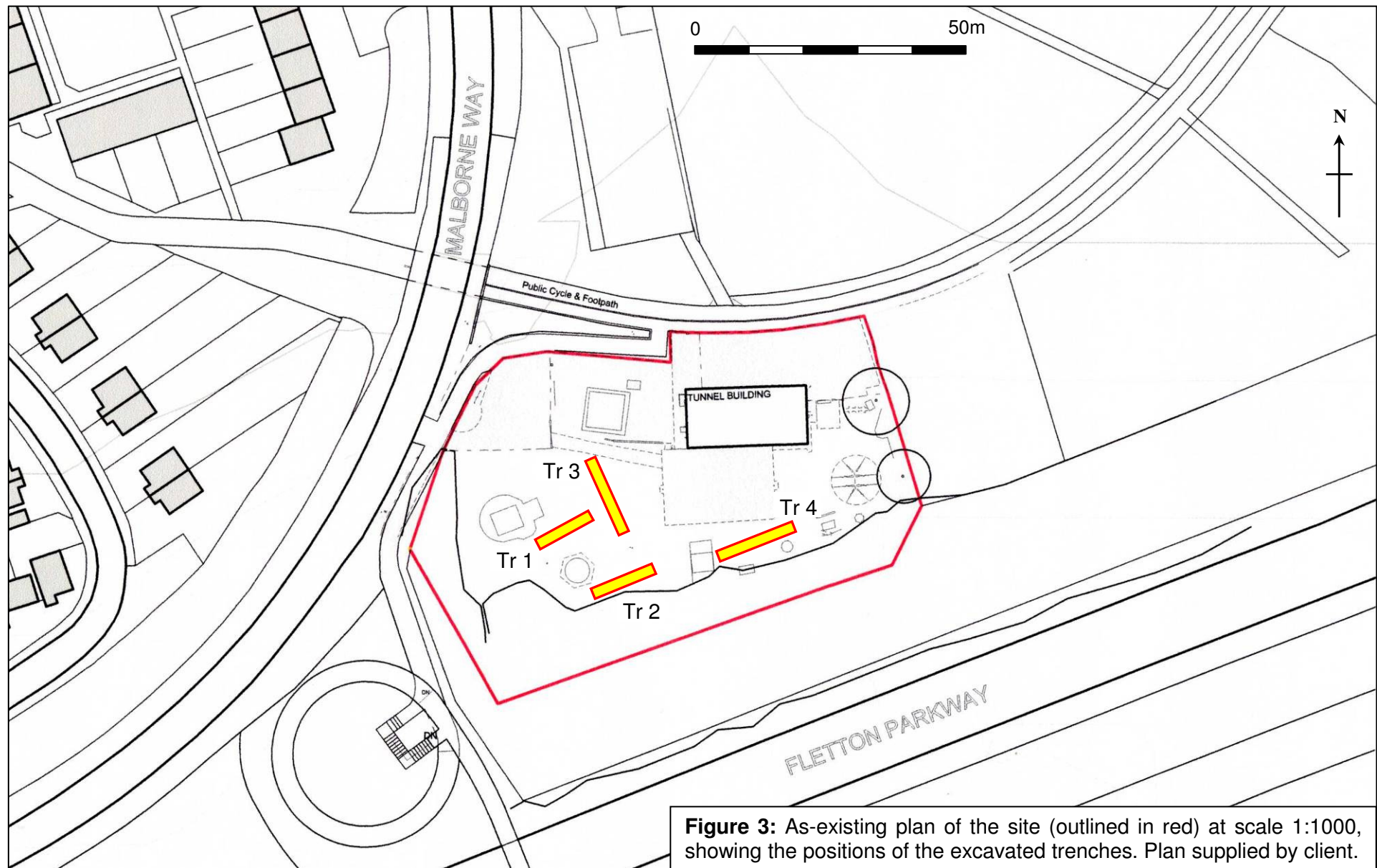


Figure 3: As-existing plan of the site (outlined in red) at scale 1:1000, showing the positions of the excavated trenches. Plan supplied by client.

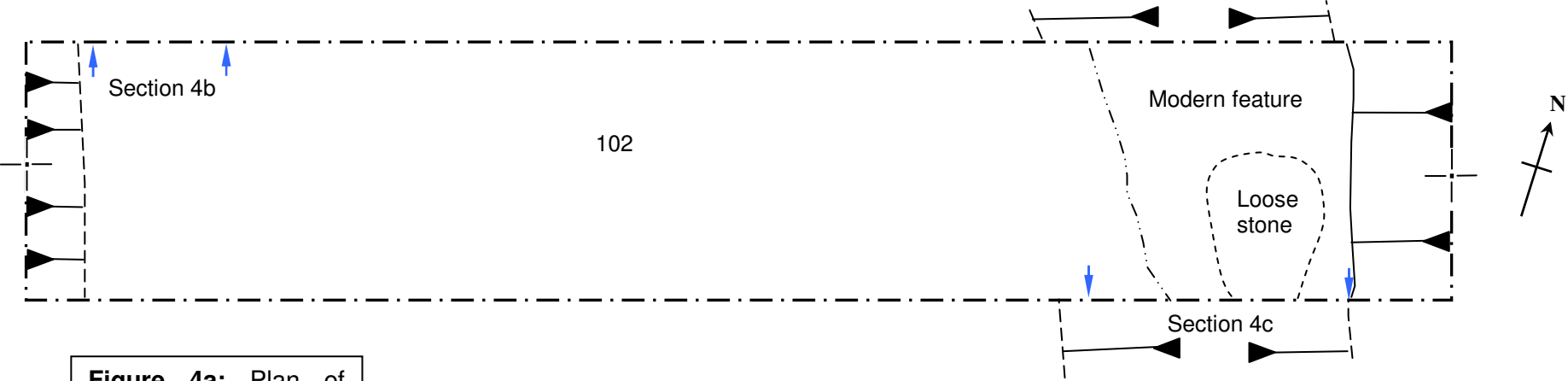


Figure 4a: Plan of Trench 1 at scale 1:50.

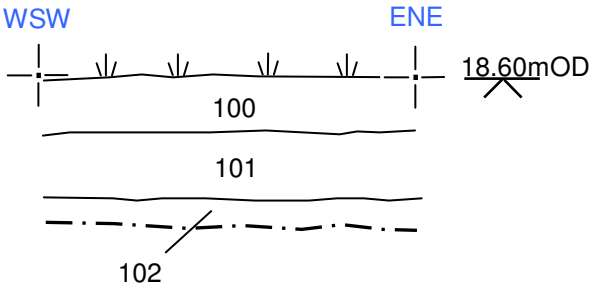


Figure 4b: Sample section in Trench 1 at scale 1:20.

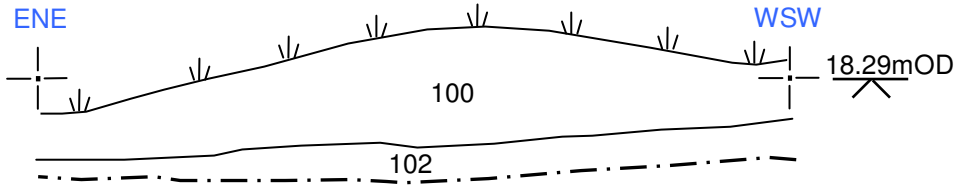


Figure 4c: Section through the 'earthwork' in Trench 1 at scale 1:20.

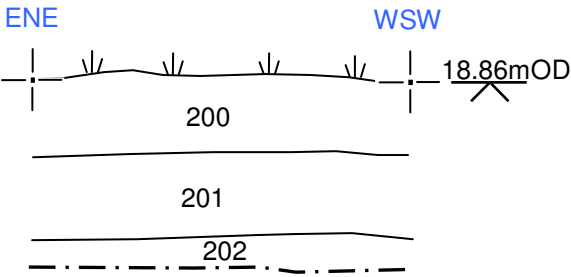


Figure 4e: Sample section in Trench 2 at scale 1:20.

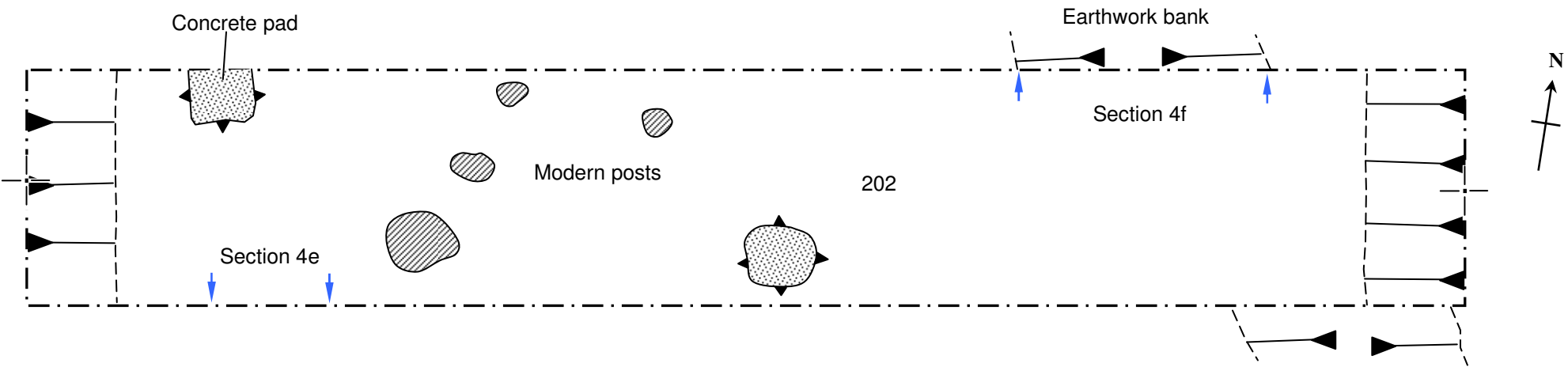


Figure 4d: Plan of Trench 2 at scale 1:50.

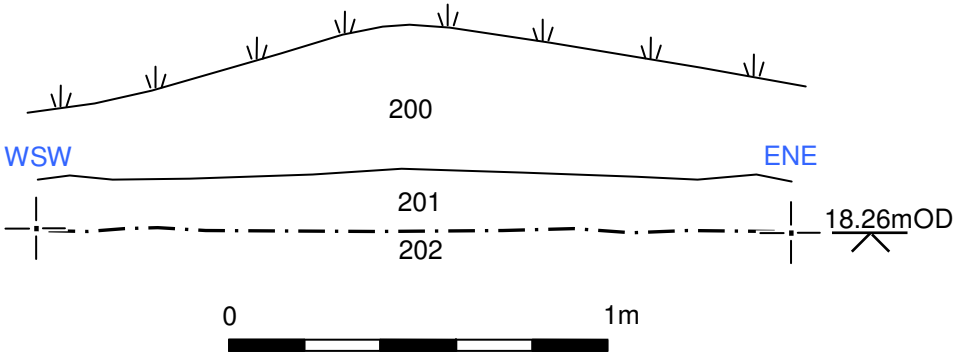


Figure 4f: Section through the 'earthwork' in Trench 2 at scale 1:20.

Figure 4: Plan and section drawings in Trenches 1 and 2, at scales 1:50 and 1:20.

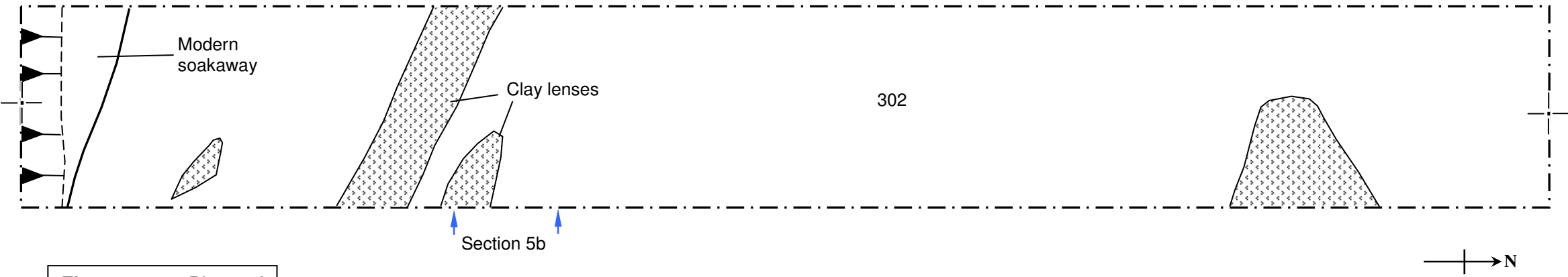


Figure 5a: Plan of Trench 3 at scale 1:50.

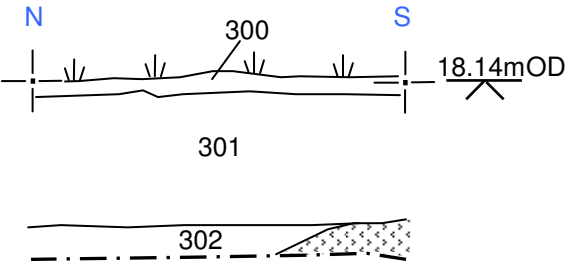


Figure 5b: Sample section in Trench 3 at scale 1:20.

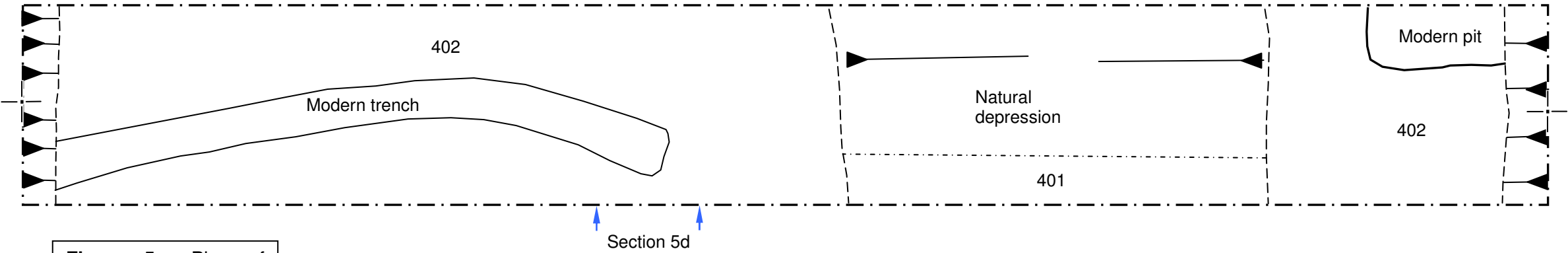


Figure 5c: Plan of Trench 4 at scale 1:50.

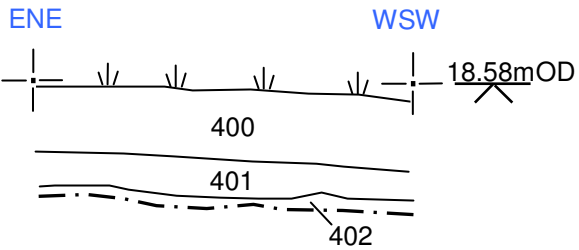


Figure 5d: Sample section in Trench 4 at scale 1:20.

Figure 5: Plan and section drawings in Trenches 3 and 4, at scales 1:50 and 1:20.

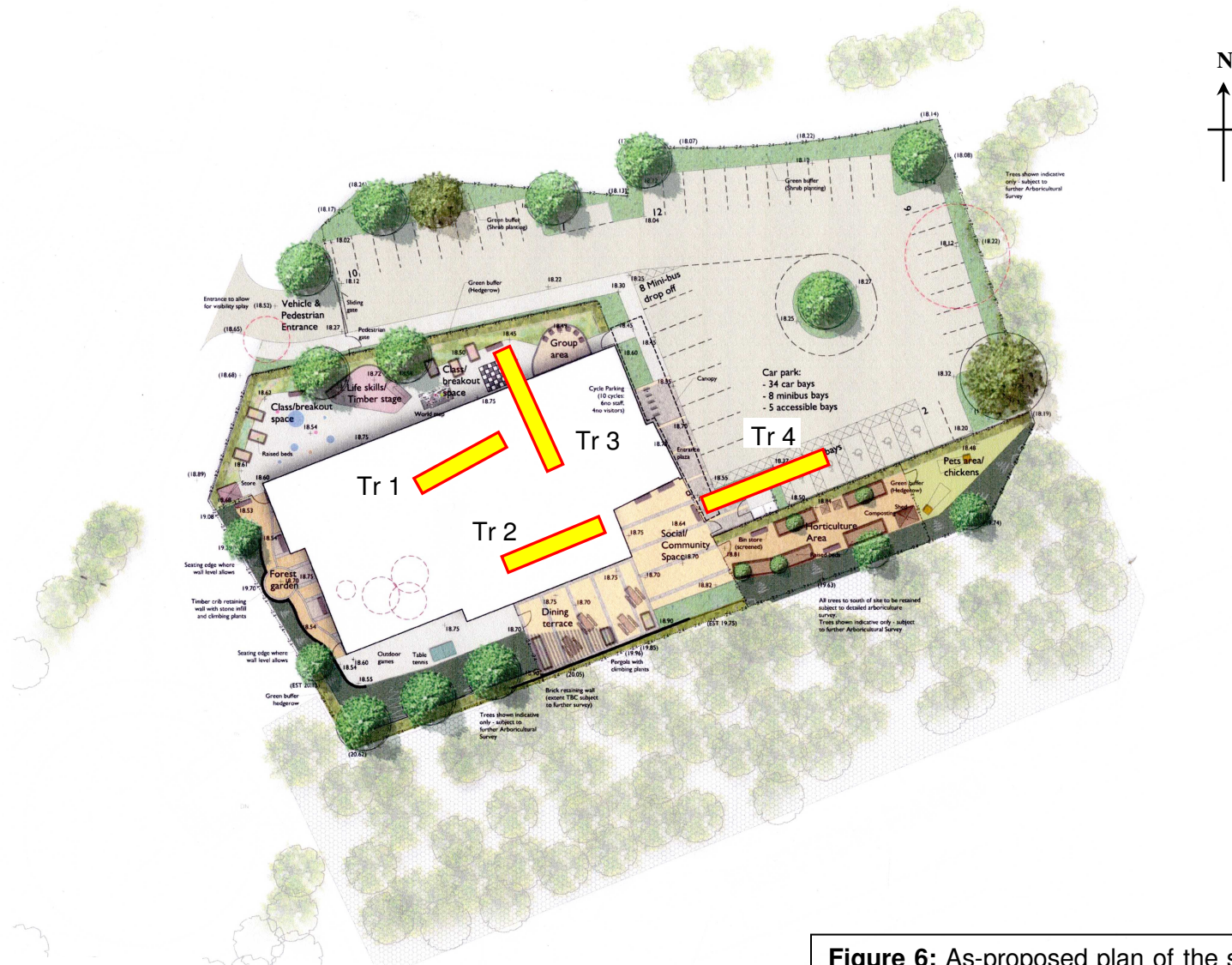


Figure 6: As-proposed plan of the site at scale 1:750, showing the altered trench locations.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General shot of the site from the entrance, looking ESE; the edge of the Tunnel play centre is visible at the left-hand side of the picture.



Plate 2: Working shot: Trench 4 relocated to avoid trees and existing play equipment, looking SW.



Plate 3: Trench 1 post-excavation, looking WSW.



Plate 4: Trench 2 post-excavation, looking ENE.



Plate 5: Trench 3 post-excavation, looking NNW.



Plate 6: Trench 4 post-excavation, looking ENE.



Plate 7: The earthwork bank in section in Trench 1, looking SSW.



Plate 8: The earthwork bank in section in Trench 2, looking N.

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Context no.	Type	Description	Finds/dating
Trench 1			
100	Layer	Modern topsoil: dark brown, loose, slightly silty sand with occasional gravel, 0.15m deep except at E end of trench where it rises to form a landscaped bank	
101	Layer	Compact, mid-brown clayey sand with occasional to common coarse gravel, occasional charcoal flecks and occasional brick and concrete rubble fragments; 0.15m deep	
102	Layer	Natural mottled mid-orange-brown clayey coarse gravel	
Trench 2			
200	Layer	Modern topsoil: very dark greyish-brown, friable, slightly silty sand with occasional concrete fragments and loose gravel; 0.20m deep	1 sherd of post-medieval pottery discarded during post-ex
201	Layer	Mid-brown friable clayey sand with occasional small/medium rounded pebbles and occasional brick and concrete fragments	
202	Layer	Natural: mid-orange-brown clayey gravel	
Trench 3			
300	Layer	Modern topsoil: thin layer of very dark greyish-brown material, chiefly consisting of turf roots, intermittently present in trench area; 0.05m deep where present	
301	Layer	Mixed modern material, chiefly mid-brown and mid-greyish-brown sandy clay with layers of loose, poured concrete and frequent fragments of concrete and brick rubble, 0.33m deep	
302	Layer	Mottled whitish-orange natural coarse and medium gravel with patches of mid-orange-brown and blue clay	
Trench 4			
400	Layer	Modern topsoil: friable dark brown slightly silty sand with occasional small to medium gravel and charcoal flecks, 0.18m deep	
401	Layer	Mid-brown clayey sand with occasional fragments of brick and concrete, 0.12m deep	
402	Layer	Mottled mid-orange-brown and whitish-brown natural coarse and medium gravel with occasional patches of mid-brown clay	

Appendix 3: OASIS Summary