



**Interim Archaeological Excavation
Report for 28 Church Street,
Hoo St. Werburgh, Rochester, Kent
*May 2009***

SWAT. Archaeology
Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company
School Farm Oast, Graveney Road
Faversham, Kent
ME13 8UP
Tel: 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112

28 Church Street
Hoo St. Werburgh
Rochester

NGR 578282 171864

SWAT Archaeology/Interim Excavation Report

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1. Introduction

Between January and May 2007 SWAT Archaeology carried out an archaeological investigation on land at 28 Church Street, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester (NGR 578282 171864; Figure 1; planning reference MC2004/2006). The excavation was conducted in accordance with a written specification issued by the Heritage Conservation Group, Kent County Council issued May 2006 (KCC 2006).

The excavation was carried out in four separate phases (Areas 1-4) due to on site constraints associated with the lack of available space for the storage of spoil. The excavation commenced with Area 1 followed by 2, 4 and 3. Only one archaeological feature was exposed in Area 3; a linear ditch. The excavation was directed by Dr Paul Wilkinson and supervised by Julie Martin in Areas 1, 2 and 4. The mechanical removal of overburden and subsequent investigation of Area 3 was carried out by Eliot Wragg.

The site had previously been subject to Archaeological Evaluation commissioned by Gillcrest Homes and carried out by Canterbury Archaeological Trust between the 5th and 20th September 2005 (Helm 2005). The evaluation consisted of twelve evaluation trenches, sampling approximately 3.6 percent of the site. The evaluation established the presence of later prehistoric pits and a scatter of prehistoric worked flint; a possible Romano-British ditch and a possible Anglo Saxon kiln or oven base. Early Medieval features included pits and ditches and similar features were also represented in the late Medieval period. Post Medieval features were present as refuse pits, and metalled surfaces contemporary with buildings shown on the 1870 Ordnance Survey maps. This was commensurate with the results of the excavation.

2. Site Description

The site is located immediately to the north and east of the Church of St Werburgh at the southern end of Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester on sloping ground where the elevation varies between approximately 10.5 and 14 m above Ordnance Datum. A dry valley transects the site from east to west. The geology of the site is recorded as Head Brickearth sealing London Clay over Thanet Beds, with 1st Terrace River Gravels to the south (British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Sheet 272).

To the north of the site are the rear gardens and yards of properties which front Everest Drive and to the east of the site open agricultural land. Prior to the commencement of excavation, a residential building fronting Church Street and twelve lean to garage units were demolished on the site. The western area of the site had been used as an orchard.

3. Methodology

Following demolition of existing buildings on site, the site was stripped in four separate phases under archaeological supervision using a large tracked 360° excavator with a wide toothless ditching bucket (Areas 1-4). Spoil from each phase was stored on adjacent areas. Following the mechanical stripping of overburden from the site, each area was hand cleaned and in Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4, the archaeological features exposed were rapidly mapped using a TC600 Leica Total Station to enable a sampling strategy to be developed. All archaeological features were cleaned and excavated by hand. Archaeological features were then recorded on pro forma context and skeleton sheets and hand planned on drafting film according to standard recording practices. All features were photographed using digital and 35mm format.

Levels were related to the Ordnance Survey datum using a Temporary Bench Mark with the value of 14.06 metres Above Ordnance Datum.

4. The Results (Figure 2)

The archaeological features recorded on site are mainly associated with settlement activity; pits, linear and curvilinear ditches and postholes. A single burial was also recovered from the site. The features have been initially assigned to 11 phases of activity ranging from the Later Prehistoric (Middle Iron Age) to the Post Medieval era based on interim pottery dating. It is expected that these phases will be adjusted as the site stratigraphy and context dating is refined. Late 19th Century and Modern period quarry pits and other features were also recorded on the site; these have not been assigned a phase at this stage.

Phase 1 and 2 are of similar dates (Figure 3).

Phase 1: Later Prehistoric MIA c. 300/250 – 150 BC

The earliest features are represented by two possibly inter cut pits filled with similar deposits (cut 416, fill 415 and cut 386, fill 385). Both pits had already been partially excavated during evaluation (Helm 2006; CAT Trench 1 cuts 107 and 109, fill 106). The fill of pit 386 was cut by Linear I (cut 396) below.

Phase 2: Later Prehistoric: Pre-MIA c. 1500/1000 – 300 BC

This phase is represented by three contemporary linear ditches located in the south west corner of the site in Area 3. The ditches intersect and may represent boundary ditches and or part of an enclosure (Linear I: cuts 405, 447, 388, 464, 376; Linear F: cuts 368, 399, 371, 357,

379; Linear G: cuts 383, 381, 401). Linear I is aligned approximately east west, Linear F, approximately north south and Linear G which is curvilinear in plan approximately east west.

Phase 3: Roman (Figure 4)

The Roman period is represented by a single large rectangular pit located in the northern part of Area 2 (Cut 211, filled by 210, 267, 271, 284, 309 and 319). The northern extremity of the pit continued under the limit of excavation.

Phase 4: Mid – Late Saxon c. 650/750 – 850 AD (Figure 4)

Two linear intersecting ditches of contemporary date located within Area 2 and a linear ditch in Area 3 represent this phase. The ditches within Area 2; Linear D (Cuts 297, 273, 262, 260, 257, 209, 311, 308) and Linear E (Cuts 275, 286, 301, 281) are aligned approximately west north west - east south east. The western end of the two converging ditches continued under the limit of the excavation; the eastern end of Linear D could not be traced; the eastern end of Linear E ended in a terminal.

In Area 3, Linear W, (Cuts 602, 604, 606) was the only archaeological feature exposed. The ditch finished at both ends with rounded terminals and was of a similar alignment to Linear D.

Phase 5: Late Saxon c. 950/975 – 1050 AD (Figure 4 and 5)

Features allocated to this phase are located within Areas 1, 2 and 4 and consist of linear features, pits and postholes.

A single square cut posthole (cut 24) and a rectangular pit (cut 264); that cut Linear ditches D and E, were located in Areas 1 and 2 respectively.

Five features of Late Saxon date were located within Area 4. The four pits (Cuts 355, 350, 361, 348) were located in the eastern part of Area 4. Cut 355 was a large circular pit, Cut 361 was a rectangular pit cut by another contemporary pit (348) and Cut 350 a rectangular pit. Also within this area and dating to this phase was a linear ditch (Linear H; Cuts 346, 344, 342) of which one of the excavated segments (Cut 342) produced pottery dating to this phase.

Phase 6: Late Saxon – Early Medieval c. 1000-1125 AD (Figure 6)

Features allocated to this phase were located within Areas 1 and 2. In Area 1, a square posthole (Cut 37) and a square pit (Cut 47) and, in Area 2, a single posthole (Cut 253) and a sub rectangular pit (Cut 299) were assigned to this phase.

Phase 7: Medieval c. 1175-1350/1375 AD (Figure 6)

Features allocated to this phase were located within Areas 1 and 2. In Area 1 the features comprised pits and postholes; a shallow pit (cut 170), a sub rectangular pit (Cut 21), a rectangular posthole (Cut 110), and a circular posthole (Cut 116). In Area 2 this phase was

represented by a Linear ditch (Linear B) aligned approximately north east south west (Cuts 249, 292, 243, 290, 241, 245). The ditch cut Linear C which has not yet been assigned to a dateable phase. Based on interim dating, Cut 21 appears to be a multiphase pit spanning Phases 7, 8 and 9.

Phase 8: Medieval-Late Medieval c. 1350-1450/1475 AD (Figure 6)

Two features were assigned to this phase and were located in Area 1; Cut 21, a sub rectangular pit (see also Phase 7 and 9) and Cut 112, a circular pit or posthole.

Phase 9: Late Medieval c. 1475-1525/1550 AD (Figure 6)

This phase has the highest concentration of archaeological features associated with it, are all pits, with the exception of two possible square postholes (Cut 97 and 79) and they are all located in Area 1. Cut 97 may represent a late (? Modern) fence line that contains residual Medieval material.

In the north western corner of Area 1, Cut 166, a north south aligned sub rectangular pit extends under the limit of excavation. Other similar pits located in the south western, central and eastern parts of Area 1 are Cuts 146, Cut 43, Cut 81, Cut 21 and Cut 10. A number of smaller rectangular and sub circular pits, Cuts 164, 148, 154, 89, 59, 71 and 26 are dispersed throughout. Some of these may represent small rubbish pits; with others their function is unclear.

In the Northern part of Area 1 was a large, deep circular pit interpreted as a quarry pit in filled with rubbish (Cut 85) This was previously investigated during the evaluation phase by CAT (Helm 2006, Cut 1104). Other sub circular and irregular shaped pits (Cuts 120, 168 and 206) are also present; their functions are unclear.

Phase 10: Post Medieval c. 1550/1575 – 1750 AD (Figure 5 and 7)

Four features have been dated to this phase, three pits (Cut 359, 170 and 55) and a posthole (Cut 93). Cut 359, a circular pit is located in Area 4.

Phase 11: Late Post Medieval c. 1750/1775 AD plus (Figure 7)

All features from this phase are located in Area 1. Cut 68 represents a post medieval rubbish pit which cuts the back fill of a robber pit (Cut 87) for an earlier Rag stone lined well (86). Cut 8 represents a large rectangular rubbish pit and Cuts 174, 162 and 180 are also pits. Cuts 57 and 95 are interpreted as postholes.

The Grave (Figure 6)

A single grave was exposed within Area 1 and is likely to date to the Medieval period. The grave (Cut 192) was orientated approximately east west and rectangular in plan with a recess

cut in the southern side at the western end. The skeletal remains suggest that the body had been laid in the grave supine, with arms and legs extended, the arms either side of the body. The skull was detached and was located 0.3 metres to the side of the body in the recess of the cut. No artefacts were buried within the grave and there was no evidence for a coffin. The skeleton appears to be that of a male.

5. Further Work

A post excavation assessment report can be prepared in the format required by the archaeological specification for this excavation. The report will include a full description of the archaeological features and their spatial and stratigraphic relationships and, specialist assessment of the pottery, human remains and other artefacts. It will also contain a description of the context of the site in its landscape and its archaeological significance to the area. Following the implementation of specialist recommendations a final analysis report containing a description of all the archaeological material can be prepared followed by publication of the results in an appropriate format.

8. Acknowledgements

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Simon Wright Homes for commissioning the excavation. The excavation was directed by Dr Paul Wilkinson and supervised by Julie Martin. The excavation team consisted of Cornelius Halliday-Garrett, James Madden, Daniel Quintain and Eliot Wragg, assisted briefly by Oliver Gardner, Paul Hart, Gerald Moody and Emma Boast. The site survey for Areas 1, 2, and 4 was carried out by Ges Moody of the Trust for Thanet Archaeology. Metal detector support was provided by Dave Tremaine.

Report compiled by Emma Boast

9. References

- Helm, R. 2005. *Archaeological evaluation at No. 28 Church Street, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester*. Unpublished report Canterbury Archaeological Trust.
- Kent County Council. 2006. *Specification for Archaeological Excavation at 28 Church Street, Hoo St Werburgh, Rochester*.

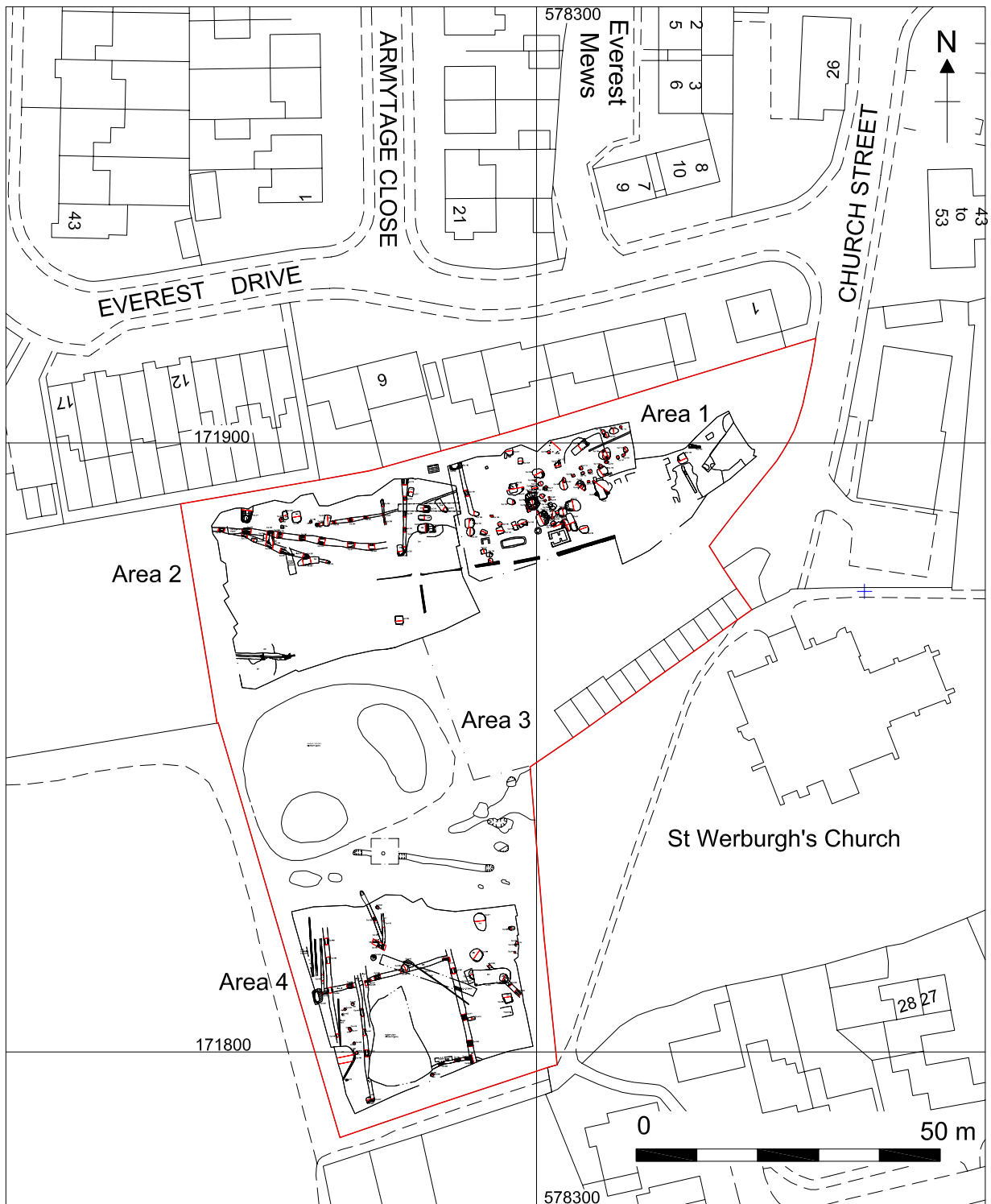


Figure 1. Area of excavation. 1:1000

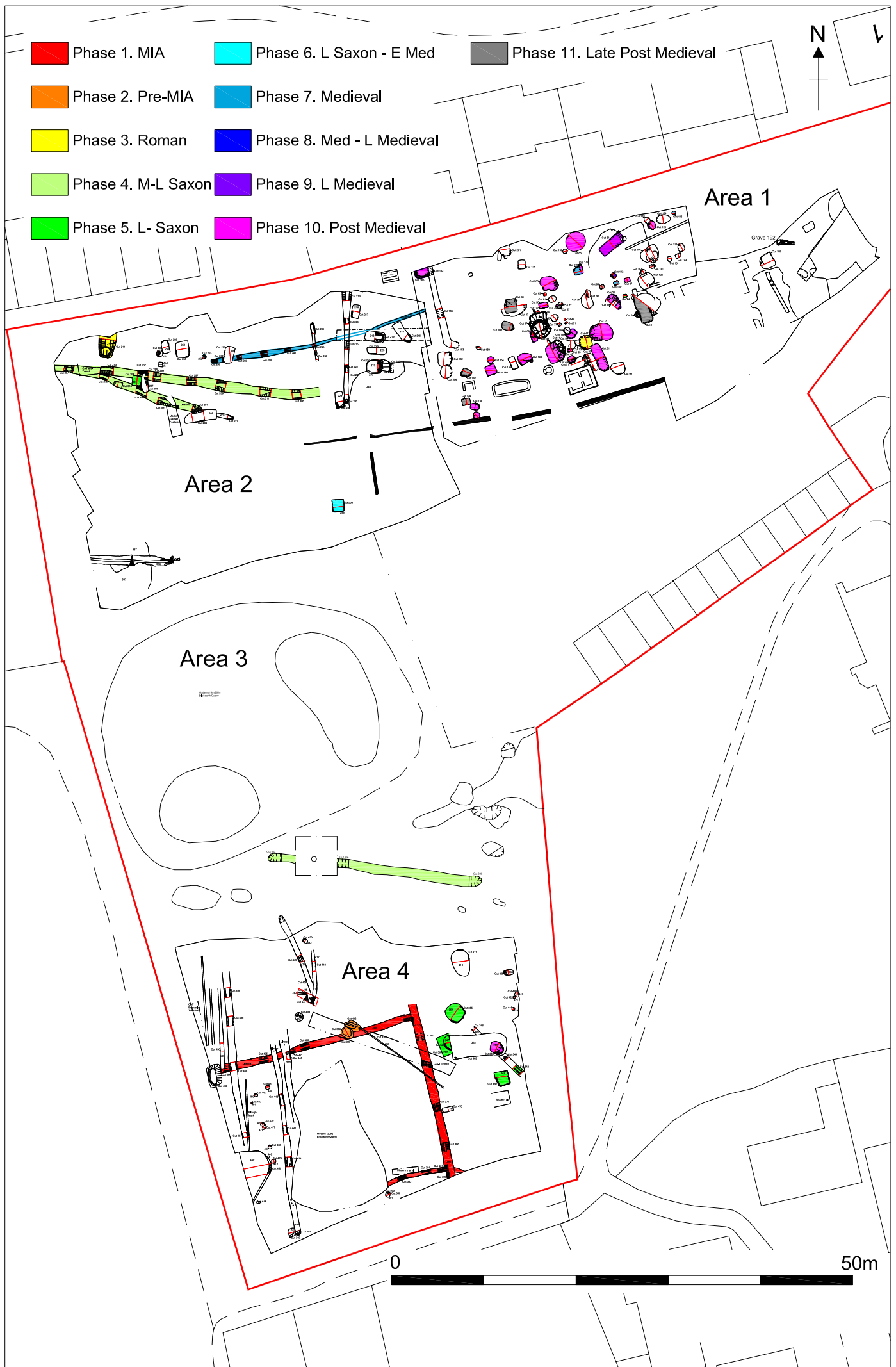


Figure 2. Site phase plan. Scale as shown

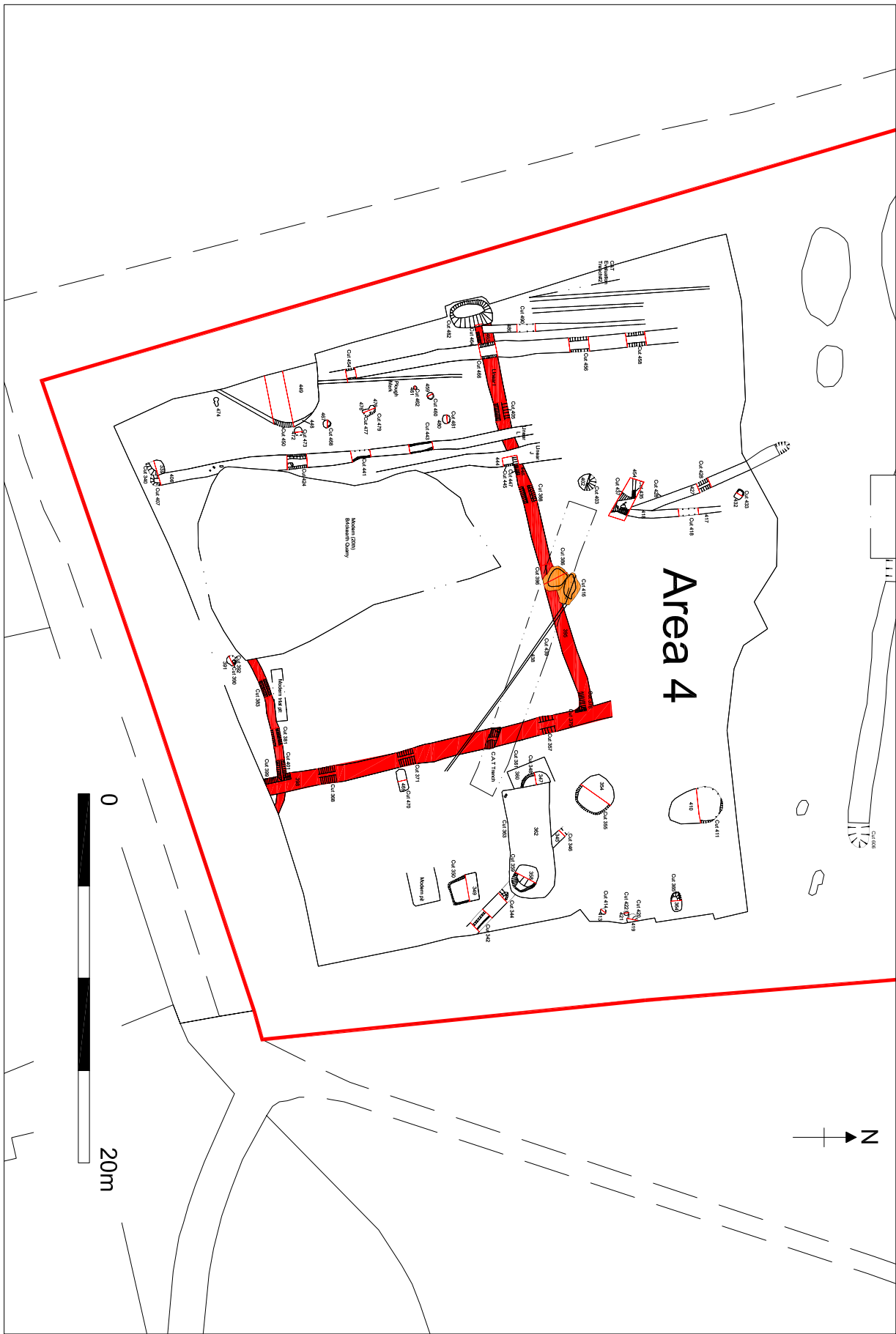


Figure 3. Area 3 and 4. Plan of phases 1 and 2. 1:300



Figure 4. Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4. Phase 3, 4 and 5. 1:400

Figure 5. Area 3 and 4. Plan of phases 5 and 10.



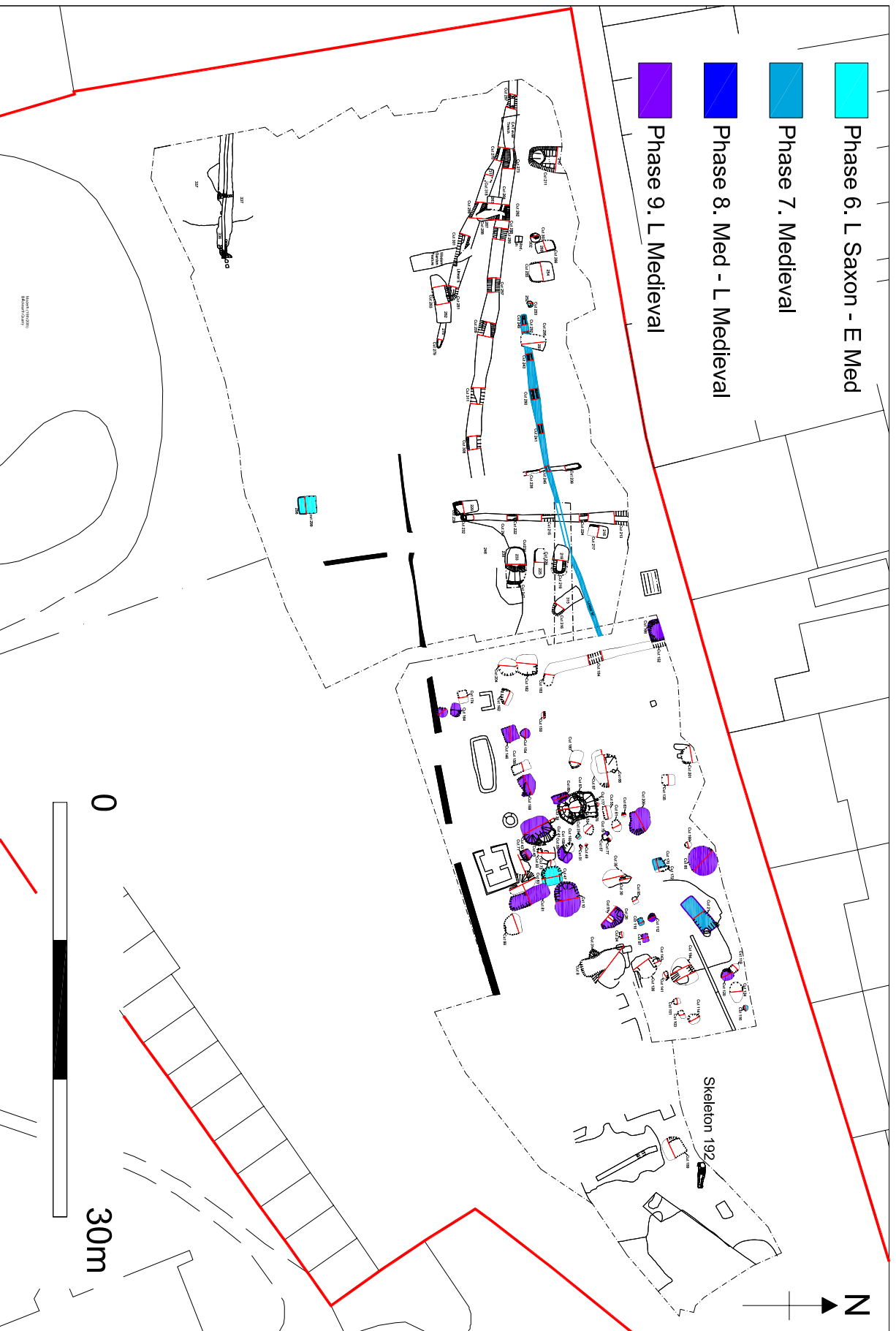


Figure 6. Area 1 and 2. Phase 6, 7, 8 and 9.



Figure 7. Area 1 and 2. Phase 10 and 11.