

Archaeological Evaluation of Land to the rear of 19-23 Harold Road and 9-15 Albion Road, Margate, Kent



NGR: 636552 171110

Site Code: HRAR-EV-14

(Planning Application F/TH/11/0540)

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Report for Mr Roger Andrews

SWAT Archaeology

The Office, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road Faversham, Kent, ME13 8UP

Email: info@swatarchaeology.co.uk

Tel.: 01795 532548 and 07885 700112

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1. Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 19-23 Harold Road and 9-15 Albion Road, Cliftonville, Margate in Kent on 30 June and 3 – 4 July 2014. A Planning Application was submitted to Thanet District Council in the first instance for the construction of five 3 bedroomed houses with associated parking and landscaping – (Planning Application F/TH/11/0540), whereby the Archaeological Officer for Thanet District Council requested that an Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken “in order to clarify the historical and archaeological elements within the site” (KCC 2014). The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The results of the excavation of the three evaluation trenches revealed that no archaeological evidence was present or survived within the three trenches. The natural geology of Chalk overlain by superficial geology of brickearth was observed in all of the trenches. The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.

2. Introduction

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Mr Roger Andrews to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2014) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out on 30 June and 3 - 4 July 2014.

3. Site Description and Topography

The site was located in the Cliftonville area of Margate on undeveloped land to the rear of 19-23 Harold Road and 9-15 Albion Road (Plate 1). Rectangular in plan, the plot measured approximately 27.87m long and 16.33m wide. Centred on NGR 636552 171110, the development site was bounded to the north by a derelict bungalow and associated garden, an area of hard standing that once contained garage units to the west, and back gardens to the above mentioned properties to the south and east and an electricity substation east of the entrance. There was a noticeable drop in ground level from roughly 27m aOD at the entrance of the site off of Albion Road to the northern end of the site by over 1m. This could be partially due to the build up of soils, especially in the area of Trench 3 to the rear of 23 Harold Rd. Prior to the archaeological evaluation, the site had been derelict and used for fly tipping rubbish over an extended period of time (Plate 2), including the dumping of soil and building material.

According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on Cretaceous Upper Chalk of the Margate Chalk Member with no recorded superficial geology, but during the excavation of the trenches, brickearth (a reddish brown sandy silty clay with rare small to medium sub angular flints), was seen covering the chalk geology.

4. Planning Background

Thanet District Council granted a planning extension for planning application F/TH/11/0540 consisting of the construction of five 3 bedroomed houses with associated parking and landscaping. On the advice of the Heritage Officer at Thanet District Council, a programme of archaeological works was attached to the consent:

(Condition 16) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written specification of investigation which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Ground: To ensure that the archaeological history of the site is recorded in accordance with the advice contained within the Planning Policy Statement 5.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

Thanet's archaeological resources are rich and diverse, and therefore only findings in the near vicinity of the proposed development area are mentioned below. A more in depth analysis of the island's archaeology up to 1,000AD can be found in Gerald Moody's book *The Isle of Thanet* (2008), which is the most comprehensive work on the archaeology of the island prior to the extensive excavations at Thanet Earth and the East Kent Access Road.

According the Heritage Environment Record (HER) four artefacts were found within a radius of approximately 1km from the site. At 101 Northdown Road a Neolithic polished stone axe (HER TR 37 SE 5) was found in 1940 by ground workers roughly 1.22m below the ground surface during the construction of an air raid shelter. In 2005 at 326 Northdown Road worked flints (HER TR 37 SE 285) dating from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age were found during a Watching Brief by Trust for Thanet Archaeology. Two Roman artefacts were found in the locality of the site. In 1956 a Roman flagon neck (HER TR 37 SE 11) was found on the surface in the back garden of Number 39 Madiera Road, and a Roman inscribed plate with stamp SECVNDVS (HER TR 37 SE 24) found on the Palin (Palm?) Bay Estate during fieldwork in 1963 and is now in the British Museum.

Worth noting outside the 1km radius of the development site was the extensive Iron Age hillfort or settlement located around Trinity Square and Fort Hill. Archaeological mitigation work in a number of areas has exposed defensive ditches, human inhumations and evidence of occupation including an archaeological evaluation by Canterbury Archaeological Trust in 2012 at Capital House which exposed two phases of defensive ditches dating to the late to middle Iron Age (HER TR 37 SE 375). In 2003 and 2004 Swale and Thames Archaeology conducted an excavation at Trinity Square that

revealed part of the extensive Iron Age settlement including inhumations and two concentric ring ditches. Oxford Archaeology conducted a Watching Brief during geotechnical investigations prior to the construction of the Turner Centre in 2008, although the results were inconclusive. Trust for Thanet Archaeology's continuing work in and around this area over the decades has produced evidence of Bronze Age to Romano British occupation (HER TR 37 SE 68).

6. Aims and Objectives

The main aims for the programme of archaeological work, as set out in the Archaeological Specification, consisted of a phased approach commencing with an evaluation through trial trenching. The findings of that phase of mitigation work would determine whether any significant archaeological remains survived and if so, if those remains would be impacted upon by the development. These findings would determine the scale of further archaeological measures in the form of an archaeological excavation, historic building recording or a watching brief during the groundworks phase of the development.

7. Methodology

The Specification called for the mechanical excavation of three trenches measuring 10m long and 1.8m wide. A 1.8 tonne 360° tracked mechanical excavator with a 1m wide flat-bladed ditching bucket was used to remove the extensive deposits of modern overburden **(001)**, topsoil **(002)**, subsoil **(003)** and other modern deposits to expose the natural geology **(004)/(005)** and/or the archaeological horizon. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in **bold**. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with SWAT and IFA standards and guidance.

Due to site constraints such as limited access caused by the amount of dumped soils, building material and felled trees, the trenches varied in length and width. Health and safety concerns associated with spoil heaps and their proximity to the trenches and the depth of Trench 3 further added to the logistical problems of the excavation work.

8. Monitoring

Due to the lack of archaeological evidence, no curatorial monitoring was carried out during the course of the evaluation, but email and telephone contact was maintained throughout the evaluation.

9. Results

Three trenches were excavated during the evaluation. Trenches 1 and 2 were located to the rear of Nos. 19 and 21 Harold Rd and were aligned northeast – southwest. These two trenches were placed within the footprint of the row of 4 houses. Trench 3 was located to the rear of No 23 Harold Road and was placed in the location of the proposed detached dwelling. The natural chalk geology **(005)** was seen in small patches in all three trenches. This eroded upper surface of the solid geology was visible

below the ground surface at approximately 0.60m in Trench 1 and 1.20m in Trench 3. Overlying the chalk was a mid to dark reddish brown sandy silty clay brickearth **(004)** up to 0.15m thick with rare small to medium sub-angular patinated flints. Above the geological strata were differing sequences of soil deposition specific to the area where the trenches were cut, but all trenches contained thick layers of redeposited brickearth **(003)**. This subsoil or ploughsoil consisted of pale to mid reddish brown sandy silty clay with common chalk flecks and was up to 0.41m thick in Trench 3. A topsoil **(002)** of mid to dark brown grey sandy silty clay with common chalk flecks, occasional glazed pottery and plant pot fragments, peg tile and brick and occasional small to medium sub rounded and angular flints attested to the site's history as back gardens before the area was abandoned. Varying types of overburden **(001)** has been incorporated within the site's stratigraphic matrix to illustrate the plot's devolution from back gardens to an area of abandonment where fly tipping and other acts of spoil deposition represented the final acts of the occupation of the development site.

Trench 1 – (Plate 3) Trench 1 was located in the northwest corner of the proposed development site and was aligned northeast-southwest. It measured 10m long, between 1.60 and 1.80m wide and up to 0.91m deep. The upper layers of eroded chalk geology **(005)** were overlain by a layer of brickearth **(004)** up to 0.05m thick. Sealing this superficial geology was a layer of redeposited brickearth **(003)** up to 0.42m thick and may represent a ploughsoil or subsoil. Above this subsoil was a layer of topsoil up to 0.15m thick **(002)**, and although difficult to see due to the amount of overburden above it, this layer was the modern ground surface. A very large dump of imported topsoil/overburden **(001)** was mounded in this corner of the site and had to be cleared before the excavation of the trench could begin.

Trench 1 was completely sterile of archaeology, including struck flints often found in layers of colluvium and the ploughsoils above the natural geology on sites throughout east Kent.

Trench 2 – (Plate 4) Trench 2 ran parallel and to the west of Trench 1 and measured 10m long, 1.80m wide and up to 1.10m deep. The chalk **(005)** was seen in small rounded patches erupting through the brickearth layer **(004)** that was up to 0.15m thick. Above the brickearth was a 0.31m thick layer of what appeared to be redeposited brickearth **(200)** which was a pale reddish brown sandy silty clay with rare small to medium sub angular flints and no artefacts. Above it was a similar deposit of redeposited or 'worked' brickearth **(003)** up to 0.40m thick with occasional chalk flecks that was similar in colour and composition. This context was also present in Trenches 1 and 3 and had the inclusion of chalk flecks and small pieces most likely from the marling process seen in ploughsoils. Cutting this context was a modern chalk filled feature up to 0.40m wide and 0.40m deep. Sealing this feature and the ploughsoil was the topsoil **(002)** which was up to 0.24m thick, but due to the amount of disturbance on this site, it is difficult to ascertain the true depth of this context. A thick layer of topsoil/overburden **(001)** imported from another site covered the northwest corner of the plot and had to be cleared by machine before the excavation of Trenches 1 and 2. This final deposit in the sequence of the trenches represented the time of abandonment of the back gardens and their use as a dumping ground.

Trench 2 was also devoid of archaeological features and cultural material.

Trench 3 – (Plate 5) Trench 3 was located to the rear of Number 23 Harold Rd and was most likely originally part of the Victorian house's rear garden. The 1990 aerial photo on Google Earth showed what appeared to be sheds in and around the locality of the trench, and demolition material consistent with that had to be removed before the excavation of Trench 3. The trench was aligned north-south and measured 10m long, 1.80m wide and to a depth up to 1.39m deep before the top of the chalk was exposed. The soil sequence in this trench varied slightly from the other two trenches, and it appears this may have been because of its proximity to the rear of the house (Plate 6). In addition, this area was noticeably higher than Trenches 1 and 2 which may have been due to a number of reasons including topography and the build up of soils. As mentioned, the top of the degraded upper chalk **(005)** was exposed at a depth of roughly 1.39m and was covered by the brickearth **(004)** that was up to 0.12m thick. A layer up to 0.22m thick of redeposited brickearth **(302)** equivalent to layer **(200)** in Trench 2 sealed the natural superficial geology below. As with Trench 2, a layer of chalk marled subsoil/ploughsoil **(003)** that was up to 0.16m thick overlaid the earlier redeposited brickearth. There appeared to be a buried post Medieval, most likely Victorian, topsoil **(301)** above the subsoil up to 0.24m thick and consisting of a dark brown grey sandy silty clay with occasional glazed pottery, peg tile, ceramic plant pot and brick fragments, rare burnt coal and carbon flecks, rare glass fragments, occasional chalk flecks and occasional small to medium sub angular and rounded flints. Above this buried horizon was a 0.25m thick layer of possibly tipped redeposited brickearth **(300)** with rare peg tile and slate fragments, chalk and carbon flecks and rare small to medium sub rounded and sub angular flints that may have come from the excavation of the footings for the sheds found on the development site or some other building. This context was sealed by the modern topsoil **(002)** up to 0.29m thick and consisting of the same soil type as seen in the other trenches. Similar to the other two trenches, there was a layer of dumped overburden **(001)** up to at least 0.45m thick, but in Trench 3, the inclusion of demolition material from the sheds found in the locality of the trench was mixed in with topsoil and other detritus. An electricity cable spanning the width of the trench was left *in situ* as there was no positive proof that it was not still live. Defunct blue plastic domestic water pipes and severed electricity cables were exposed in the east facing section. Due to the depth of the trench, the close proximity of the spoil heaps and the unstable consolidation of the soil layers, this trench was not hand cleaned, but close observation while the trench was excavated revealed no archaeological features, and scouring the spoil heaps did not expose any artefacts. Therefore Trench 3 was seen to be sterile of archaeology.

10. Finds

All three trenches proved to be sterile of both archaeological features and artefacts.

11. Discussion

The evaluation of three trenches at the proposed development site revealed no archaeological features cutting the natural superficial geology of brickearth **(004)**, and this geology was machined to a depth of 0.16m in Trench 3 in case features were covered by soils moved by wind, water or soil creep as is sometimes the case with superficial drift geology. Cultural material was also noted by its

absence. Struck flints are a common feature in various soil deposits in East Kent, including topsoil where flints have been dragged to the surface through ploughing. The lack of archaeological evidence during initial mitigation work can be difficult to explain. Few discoveries in the surrounding area during other development work may further attest to the lack of occupation prior to the post Medieval period. Rare and scattered findspots of four artefacts as listed in the Historic Environment Record (HER) within a 500m radius of the development site, two prehistoric and two Roman, offer limited evidence of archaeological activity. There appears to be no record of brickearth extraction during the 19th and early 20th century in this area as there had been in many of the dry valleys of Thanet (Moody, 2008, p19). Early Ordnance Survey maps from the late 19th century show Harold Rd and Albion Rd on the eastern periphery of what was called Margate New Town, but landscaping and soil reduction prior to the construction of the Victorian houses would most likely have impacted on the thick deposit of ploughsoil that overlay the natural geology. The fact that this layer of chalk-marled redeposited or worked brickearth still survives indicates that later human activity did not impact greatly on this context and therefore the strata below. For any number of reasons, the area that is now Cliftonville appears to have been rarely occupied in such a way as to impact on the land before the modern period.

12. Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprised of modern overburden including dumped, imported topsoil, demolition material from buildings previously occupying the site and other detritus **(001)** covering the topsoil **(002)**. A subsoil **(003)** of chalk-marled redeposited brickearth was observed in the three trenches, but the stratigraphy in Trench 3 varied from the other two trenches, with other modern layers covering the subsoil. Superficial 'drift' geology of brickearth **(004)** overlay the extreme upper deposits of the eroded chalk geology **(005)**. The evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development.

13. Acknowledgements

SWAT would like to thank Mr Roger Andrews for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Kent County Council Heritage Officer for her advice and assistance. Julie Martin supervised the fieldwork, Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for Digitise This. The project was managed by Paul Wilkinson.

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SWAT Archaeology (2008). *Archaeological Monitoring & Recording at the former Stimson House, 1 – 19 Eastern Esplanade, Margate, Kent.* Unpublished document

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British Geological Survey <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/>

Exploring Kent's Past <http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/>

UK Planning <http://www.ukplanning.com/>

Table of Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

Context	Description	Thickness
001	Overburden – modern dumped deposits	<0.30m
002	Topsoil – mid to dark brown grey sandy silty clay	<0.15m
003	Subsoil/ploughsoil – pale to mid reddish brown sandy silty clay with occasional chalk flecks	<0.42m
004	Brickearth – mid to dark reddish brown sandy silty clay	<0.05m
005	Chalk – natural solid geology	

Trench 2

Context	Description	Thickness
001	Overburden – modern dumped deposits	<0.30m
002	Topsoil – mid to dark brown grey sandy silty clay	<0.24m
003	Subsoil/ploughsoil – pale to mid reddish brown sandy silty clay with occasional chalk flecks	<0.40m
200	Redeposited brickearth – pale to mid reddish brown sandy silty clay	<0.31m
004	Brickearth – mid to dark reddish brown sandy silty clay	<0.15m
005	Chalk – natural solid geology	

Trench 3

Context	Description	Thickness
001	Overburden – modern dumped deposits	<0.45m
002	Topsoil – mid to dark brown grey sandy silty clay	<0.29m
300	Redeposited brickearth – pale to mid reddish brown sandy silty clay with rare peg tile and slate fragments	<0.25m
301	Buried post Medieval topsoil	<0.24m
003	Subsoil/ploughsoil – pale to mid reddish brown sandy silty clay with occasional chalk flecks	<0.16m
302	Redeposited brickearth – pale to mid reddish brown sandy silty clay	<0.22m
004	Brickearth – mid to dark reddish brown sandy silty clay	<0.12m
005	Chalk – natural solid geology	



Plate 1 – Google Earth view of proposed development site



Plate 2 – General shot of Trench 3 area, looking east



Plate 3 – Trench 1, looking northeast



Plate 4 – Trench 2, looking northeast



Plate 5 – Trench 3, looking south



Plate 6 – Trench 3, north facing section, 1m scale

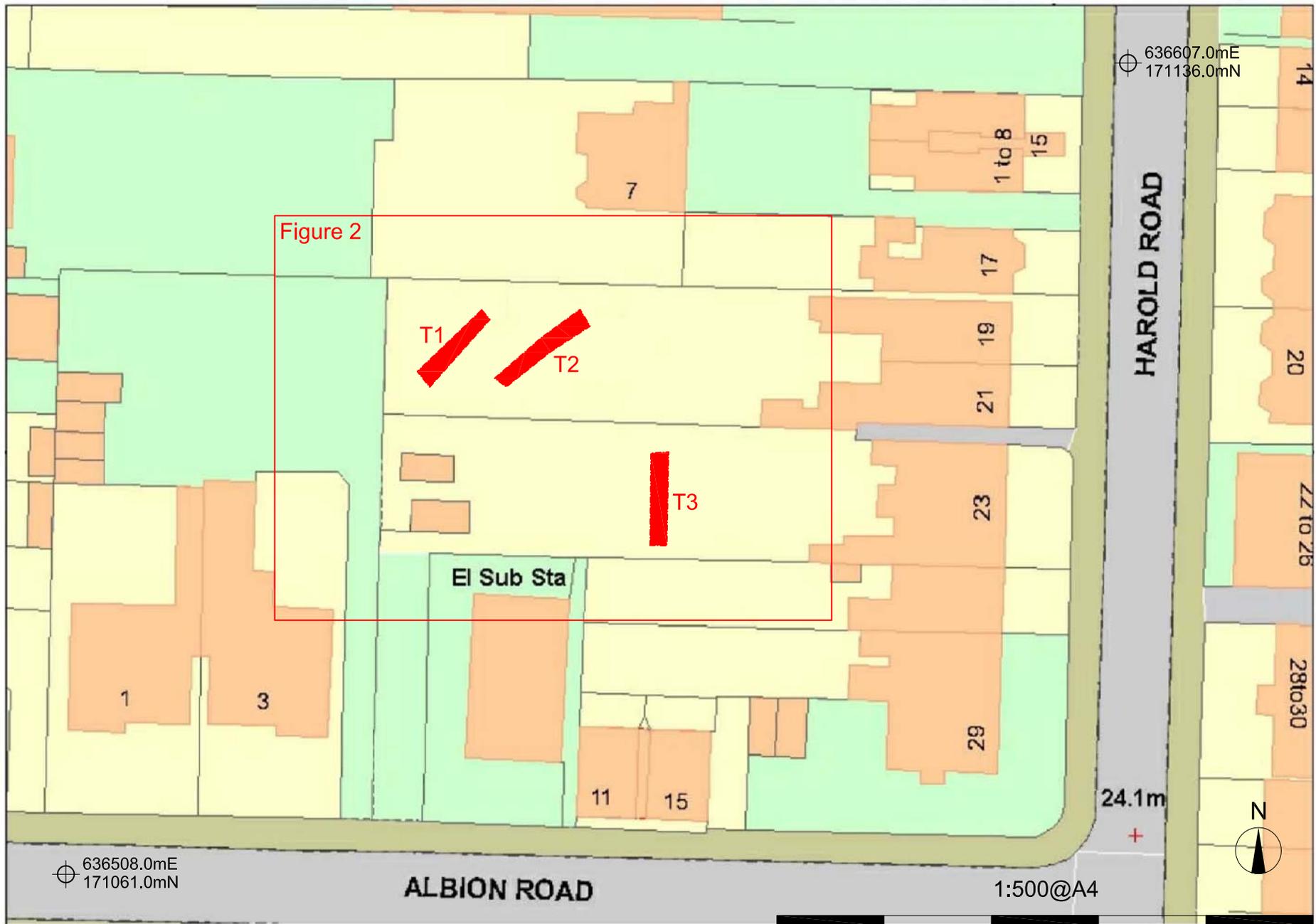


Figure 1: Site Plan

0m

50m

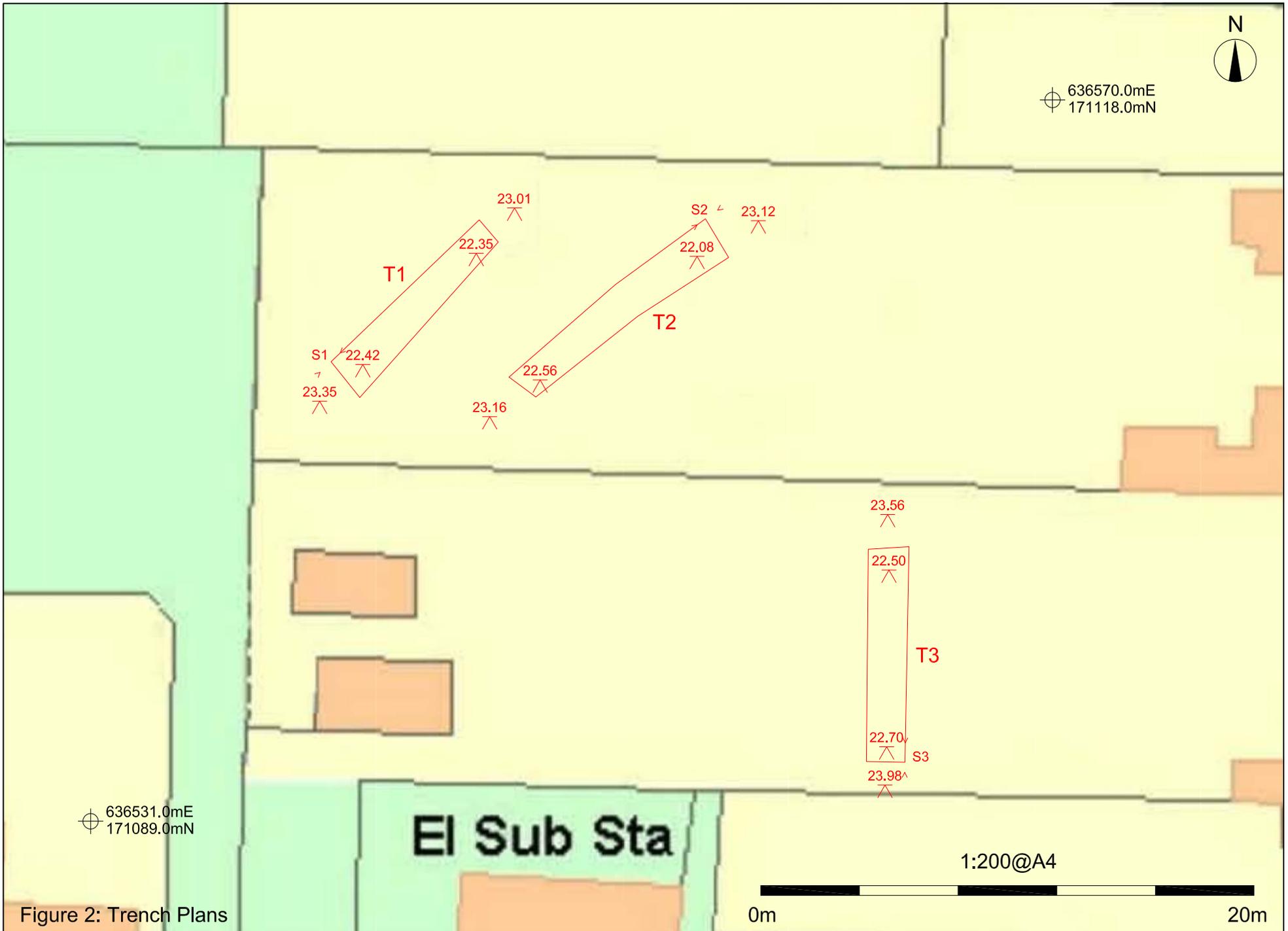
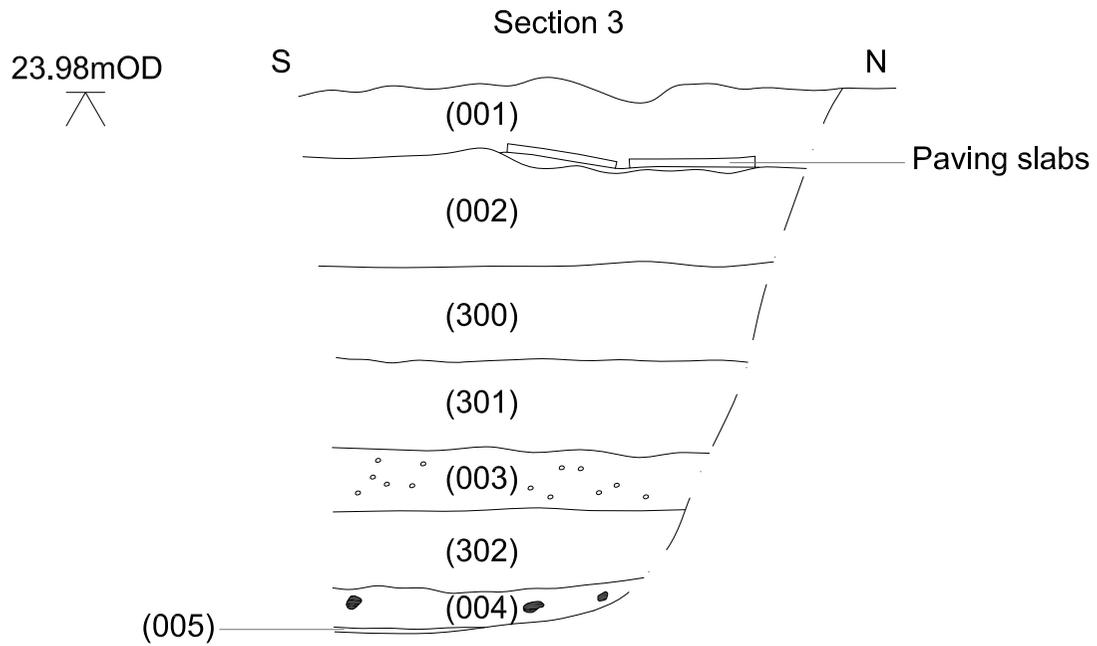
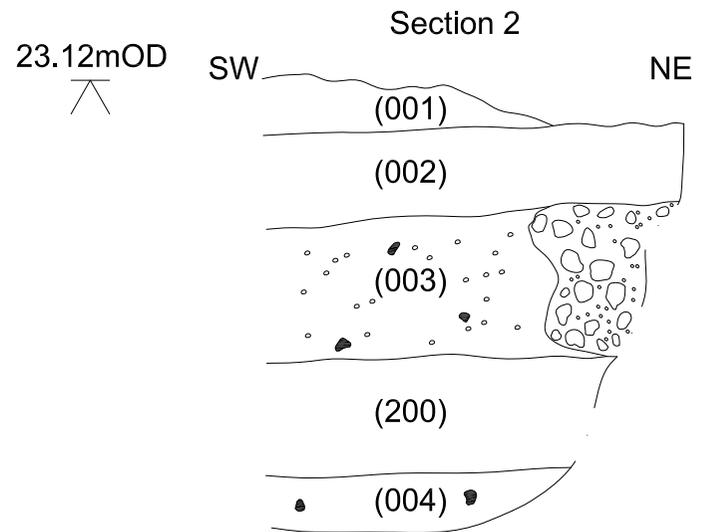
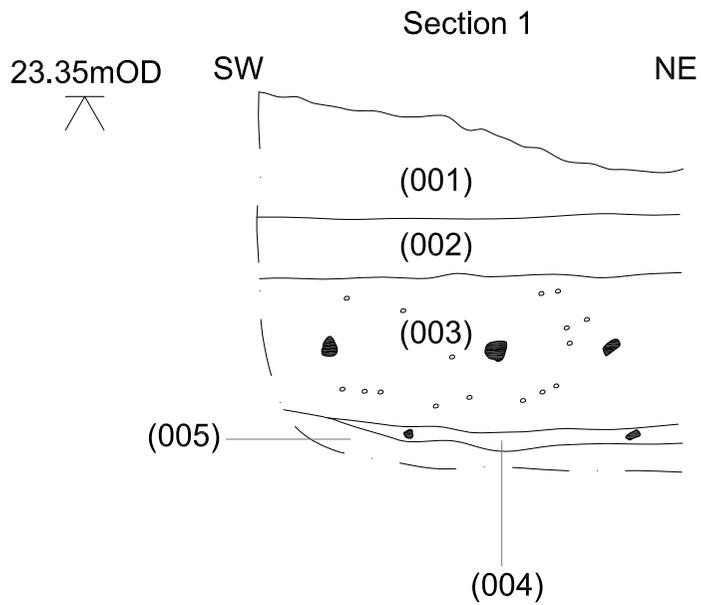


Figure 2: Trench Plans



- Chalk flecks
- Flints
- Chalk

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Figure 3: Sections