

Archaeological Evaluation of Land To the rear of 71-73 High Street, West Malling, Kent



NGR: 568073 157763

Site Code: WM/EV/16

(Planning Application: TM/15/00402)

SWAT Archaeology

The Office, School Farm Oast

Graveney Road Faversham, Kent, ME13 8UP

Email: info@swatarchaeology.co.uk

Tel.: 01795 532548 and 07885 700112

Contents

List of Figures.....	3
List of Plates.....	3
1. Summary.....	4
2. Introduction.....	4
3. Site Description and Topography.....	4
4. Planning Background.....	5
5. Archaeological and Historical Background.....	5
6. Aims and Objectives.....	5
7. Methodology.....	6
8. Monitoring.....	6
9. Results.....	6
10. Discussion.....	8
11. Finds.....	9
12. Conclusion.....	9
13. Acknowledgements.....	9
14. References.....	10
15. KCC Summary Form.....	11

Appendix 1: Pottery Report

List of Figures:

Figure 1 – Location of site

Figure 2 – Plan of evaluation trenches

Figure 3- Plan of site with evaluation trenches

Figure 4- Plan of Trench 1

Figure 5- Plan of Trench 2

Figure 6- Sections 1-3

List of Plates:

Plate 1 – The site looking SW

Plate 2 – The rubbish mounds

Plate 3 – Trench 1. Pit 3

Plate 4 – Trench 1. Pit 3

Plate 5 – Trench 1 looking south

Plate 6 – Trench 2 from the north

Plate 7- Structure 23

Plate 8- Pit 22

Plate 9- Feature 30

Archaeological Evaluation of Land to rear of 71-73 High Street, West Malling, Kent

NGR: 568073 157763

Site Code: WM-EV-16

1. Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 71-73 High Street, West Malling in Kent. A Planning Application (TM/15/00402) to develop this site for residential and associated infrastructure and landscaping was submitted to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC Specification A and Part B) and in discussion with the Senior Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The results of the two evaluation trenches revealed that archaeological features were present within both trenches. The archaeological horizon was reached at an average depth of about 0.75m below the modern ground surface.

The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Archaeological Specification.

2. Introduction

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Ibbett Mosely Surveyors LLP 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 2016) and in discussion with the Senior Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out from the 16th to 18th August 2016.

3. Site Description and Topography

The proposed development site is situated within the historic core of West Malling and lies to the rear of properties fronting the High Street and Swan Lane. The immediate area is a mix of retail and residential units densely packed with small back yards and car parking.

The underlying geology is mapped as Folkestone and Sandgate Beds. The Superficial Geology is not recorded but exposed on site in Trench 1 as yellow grey sandy silt (CRN 6) overlaying dark yellow grey clay rich sandy silt (CRN 7). In Trench 2 brickearth (CRN 28).

4. Planning Background

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council gave planning permission (TM/15/00402) for development of land to the rear of 71-73 High Street, West Malling in Kent for a residential development and associated infrastructure.

On the advice of the Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer (KCC) a programme of archaeological works in the form of an initial archaeological evaluation was attached to the consent:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.

The results from this evaluation will be used to inform KCC Heritage and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

The application site lies within the historic core of West Malling which may be of early medieval origins but certainly flourished in the medieval period with the establishment of the Abbey.

West Malling is one of the medieval market towns covered by the Historic Towns Survey for Kent (KCC/English Heritage) and understanding its historic development is a key issue.

The KCC HER data has records of a Roman coins and a gold ring have been found in the Abbey grounds (TQ 65 NE 10) and the Canterbury Archaeological Trust DBA reports that there may be a Roman road that could pass through the proposed development site (PDA).

Although charter evidence of AD 965 suggests an Anglo-Saxon origin for West Malling (AS Meallingas) no finds are recorded in the vicinity of the PDA.

The PDA is located within an important medieval landscape, and is close to one of the boundary walls of the Abbey (TQ 65 NE 40) and close to other stone buildings associated with the Abbey. The PDA is also located close to the rear of the medieval buildings fronting on to the adjacent High Street (Nos 69, 71, 73, 75 and 77). Immediately adjacent is an early 19th century weatherboarded industrial building (Grade II Listed).

6. Aims and Objectives

According to the KCC Archaeological Specification, the aims and objectives for the archaeological work were to ensure that:

“To clarify the depth, nature, extent, character and significance of archaeology which would be impacted by the proposed development.

The programme of archaeological work should be carried out in a phased approach and will commence with evaluation through trial trenching. This initial phase should determine whether any significant archaeological remains would be affected by the development and if so what mitigation measures are appropriate. Such measures may include preservation in situ of the archaeology and re-designing of foundations; further detailed archaeological excavation, historic buildings recording and/or an archaeological watching brief during construction work. This specification sets out the requirements for trial trenching on the site and any further archaeological work, such as detailed excavation work or a watching brief, would need to be subject to further specifications (KCC 2016).

7. Methodology

The Archaeological Specification called for an evaluation by trial trenching comprising two trenches within the footprint of the proposed development. A 2.5 ton 360° tracked mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed ditching bucket was used to remove the topsoil and subsoil to expose the natural geology and/or the archaeological horizon. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the KCC 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 as (CRN). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC, SWAT and ClfA standards and guidance.

8. Monitoring

Curatorial monitoring was available during the course of the evaluation,

9. The results of the evaluation: analysis, interpretation and discussion

Two trenches (**Figs. 1 & 2**) were excavated within the development area (**Plates 2 & 3**) following the clearance and redistribution of the large amounts of rubbish that now cover the site (**Plate 3**). In Trench 1 archaeological deposits were only exposed in the northern part, the remainder being covered beneath a 0.22m-thick concrete slab overlying hard-core (Context Recording Number 5), the slab extending southward (approximately) for some nine metres up to the wall of the adjacent building. The concrete was covered by two layers, a band of modern demolition debris (CRN 2) of variable thickness (maximum 0.43m), this underlying a layer, also of variable thickness, of very recently dumped rubbish (CRN 1).

The demolition debris and modern rubbish layers appeared to extend across most, if not all, of the site as they were present in the area of the second evaluation trench, some two metres to the west. With the exceptions of CRNs 1 and 2, all other context recording numbers up to 9 were attributed to Trench 1 and numbers from 18 to 28 were attributed to Trench 2.

Trench 1

Part of a pit (CRN 3, **Fig. 3, Plates 3, 4 & 5**) with a depth of 0.9m and exposed width of 0.57m was exposed immediately north of the concrete surface and also cut the demolition layer (CRN 2), indicating that it was recently excavated, almost certainly following the demolition of the modern outbuilding shown to occupy the site of the most recent OS survey. Its fill (CRN 4) of slightly orange-tinged mid brown humic clay-silt contained modern, presumably re-deposited, demolition material, along with modern detritus such as sweet and crisp wrappers, although its upper part also contained several large fragments of stone, some roughly shaped and presumably residual on the site following an earlier demolition event (see discussion below).

Pit 3 exposed an undisturbed stratified sequence of archaeological deposits (**Figs 3 & 4, Plates 3 & 4**) extending northward toward the rear of present building fronting onto the high street and southward beneath the concrete slab. The lowest and earliest deposit in the sequence consisted of yellow-grey sandy silt (CRN 6), which was in excess of 80mm in thickness and contained infrequent small tile fragments. It overlay a 0.39m-thick band of dark yellow-grey clay-rich sandy silt (CRN 7) with occasional inclusions of small roof tile fragments and two Medieval North Kentish Sandy Ware (c.1550-1600/1625 AD) probably from the same vessel. Given their respective thicknesses and homogenous appearance, both of the basal deposits were probably anthropically disturbed natural sediments.

The uppermost deposit was truncated by the hard-core bedding (CRN 5) for the concrete slab floor to the south but was sealed by a 80mm-thick band, almost certainly a floor layer, of pale brown/buff brickearth (CRN 8) with occasional charcoal inclusions. This underlay a 30mm-thick layer of mid yellow-brown sandy clay (CRN 9) containing frequent small roof-tile fragments and one Post-Medieval Western Kentish Sandy Ware with fossil inclusions (c. 1550-1600/1625 AD). Although only minimally exposed, this layer was almost certainly an occupation layer accreted over the probably floor layer (CRN 8), with the roof-tile fragments and with the Post-Medieval Kentish Sandy Ware pottery presumably trodden into it when and after the associated building was demolished. It was sealed by the recent demolition layer (CRN 2) as previously discussed.

Trench 2

The basal deposit exposed in Trench I was brickearth-dominated material (CRN 28, **Fig. 5, Plate 6**), and may have been natural surface geology but its surface contained small tile and red brick

fragments, occasional charcoal flecks and very occasional potsherds dating from c.1525-1600/1650 AD, indicating that it was an exposed surface at some time.

Basal deposit 28 was cut by two features: a partly investigated pit (CRN 25) of unascertained depth and extent on the northern margin of the trench and a partly exposed pit (CRN 22) some 0.9m to the south, the latter partly covered by horizontally laid flagstone-like stones (CRN 23) (**Fig. 5, Plates 7 & 8**). The single fill (CRN 24) of Pit 25 consisted of dark grey clay silt with inclusions of fragmented bone, pot, mortar and tile, and the single fill (CRN 21) of Pit 22 consisted of mid grey clay silt with occasional inclusions of oyster shell and potsherds including one sherd of Early Medieval North Kent shell-tempered ware (c.1175-1225/1250AD) and one Post Medieval sherd of Western Kentish Sandy Ware with fossil shell inclusions (c.1550-1600/1625 AD) and a single sherd of Post Medieval Kentish Red Earthenware (c.1625-1650 AD).

The above-described features were sealed by a 0.48m-thick band of mostly homogenous mid grey-brown humic soil (CRN 20), which was interpreted with confidence as a well-worked garden or agricultural soil (probably the former) that had accumulated following the cessation of activity associated with the underlying features. The presence of frequent large and medium-sized hard sandstone fragments, some seemingly roughly worked, were interpreted as the remains of a superstructure similarly associated with those features. Pottery sherds and clay pipe stems have a date range of 1550-1700 AD.

A large, approximately east-west aligned linear feature (CRN 30, **Fig. 5, Plate 9**) partly exposed in the southern end of Trench 2 cut through soil layer 20. Its exposed fill (CRN 29) contained modern brick and tile fragments and almost certainly represented the upper part of the backfill over a large utility service, probably for a sewage or water main. This fill and the soil that it intersected was sealed by a 0.15m-thick layer of orange clay (CRN 28), which acted as the bedding for a horizontal layer of close-set stone blocks (CRN 27), which in turn underlay *in-situ* yorkstone flagstones (CRN 18), probably part of a garden courtyard, in the northern half of the investigated area. Modern demolition and rubbish deposits as previously discussed overlay the yorkstone flagstones.

The archaeological features and materials exposed during the investigation, particularly in respect of the many stone blocks present in, for example, soil layer 20 suggest that a building previously occupied the site and was probably contemporary with the nearby early medieval building that still stands some ten metres to the east.

10. Discussion

The archaeological evaluation at land to the rear of 71-73 High Street, West Malling has produced evidence of Medieval and Post Medieval activity. However, the sample area although giving us a keyhole insight into the important archaeological remains of this area of West Malling does not inspire

confidence enough to give us an useful understanding of what could be important archaeology. Most of the site seems to be covered in a slab of thick concrete (CRN 05) which presumably will have to be removed for whatever foundation design is postulated. The excavators have stated that the archaeological horizon is to be found at CRN 29 in Trench 2 some 70cm below the postulated ground level at 46.35m OD whilst in Trench 1 the archaeological horizon (CRN 07) is thought to be 75cm below the postulated ground level of 46.89m OD. If a slab design is thought viable then it would need to sit on both CRN 07 and CRN 29. If this is the case then further archaeological mitigation may be required and the excavation of the entire site down to this layer by archaeologists with the opportunity to map and sample any areas of archaeology that are above this postulated archaeological horizon. In addition any exposed archaeology may require protection from compression of the proposed building by either a layer of sand/geotex or needle piling.

11. Finds.

Pottery finds (15 sherds weighing 280gms) have been assessed by the pottery specialist and the report is attached in Appendix 1. No further work is required on the pottery corpus.

12. Conclusion

The evaluation trenches at the proposed development site revealed numerous archaeological features dating from Early Medieval to Post-Medieval date.

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 topsoil **(01)** sealing the subsoil **(02)** which overlay the natural geology of Brickearth **(06, 26)**. Therefore, this evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the aims and objectives as set out in the Archaeological Specification.

13. Acknowledgements

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank the client, Ibbett Mosely Surveyors LLP for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Senior Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. Illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Allen and Peter Cichy and the project was managed and report written by Tim Allen MCIfA and Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA.

Paul Wilkinson

23/09/2016

14. References

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2014). *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*

KCC Heritage (July 2016) *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation of land to rear of 71-73 High Street, West Malling, Kent*

KCC Specification Manual Part B

KCC HER data 2016

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land to the rear of 71-73 High Street, West Malling, Kent

SWAT Site Code: WM/EV/16

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Evaluation on the development site above. The site has planning permission for residential development whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC) requested that Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of an Archaeological Evaluation which revealed archaeology from 1175-1750AD.

District/Unitary: Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Period(s): Early Medieval, Medieval and Post Medieval

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) 569073 157763

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: August 2016

Unit undertaking recording: Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT. Archaeology)

Geology: Underlying geology is Brickearth

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2016) Archaeological Evaluation at Land to rear 71-73 High Street, West Malling, Kent

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) Archaeology found and includes pottery from Early Medieval to Post Medieval

Location of archive/finds: SWAT. Archaeology. Graveney Rd, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8UP

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 23/09/2016

Appendix 1

THE DATING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE CERAMIC ASSEMBLAGE FROM :

71-73 HIGH STREET, WEST MALLING EVALUATION 2016 (WM-EV-16)

ASSESSMENT

Overall, 15 sherds weighing 280gms were recovered during this evaluation. A small and, sadly, rather uninformative assemblage. As recovered, there is nothing earlier than c.1175/1200 AD and nothing obviously later than c.1750 AD. The majority of the assemblage consists of bodysherds of C16-C17 AD Post-Medieval date. There are only three noteworthy pottery elements – a near-fresh early C13 AD North Kent shelly-sandy ware pan rim from *Context 07*, a Kentish red ware jug rim from *Context 28* and a fragment from a polychrome-painted 'Delftware' plate or shallow dish from *Context 29*. In addition, the probably later C14 AD glazed roof-tile fragment from *Context 21* is in a diagnostically very distinctive fabric not previously seen by this analyst.

Other than the above itemised elements, the assemblage is not remarkable – although the 'Delftware' dish fragment hints at better things to come should any further work be undertaken on this site.

No Recommendations for further work are warranted at this stage.

APPENDIX : CONTEXT-BASED POTTERY QUANTIFICATION AND DATING CATALOGUE

Primary quantification : 15 sherds (weight : 280gms)

Period codes employed :

EM = Early Medieval

M = Medieval

PM = Post-Medieval

Context dating :

Context: Trench 1 CRN 07-09 5 sherds (weight : 69gms)

(CRN 07) 2 M North Kent shell-tempered sandy ware (c.1200/1225-1250 AD; **same vessel**)

(CRN 09) 1 PM Western Kentish sandy ware with fossil shell inclusions (c.1525-1575/1600 AD *probable* emphasis)

(CRN 08) 2 PM Western Kentish sandy ware with fossil shell inclusions (c.1550-1600/1625 AD emphasis probably; **same vessel**)

Comment : Moderate-fairly small sized elements. The earliest dated C13 AD sherds are moderate sized and conjoin to form the part-profile of a North Kent sandy-shelly ware pan. These are near-fresh – even though, presumably, residual in-context. Later-dated elements smaller but only slightly worn. Dating really dependant upon stratigraphic position. Post-Medieval contexts, particularly from long-lived town sites, often contain earlier re-deposited material that, technically, should be more worn than the latest elements.

Likely date : Uncertain – possibly C18 AD

Context: Trench 2 – 22-28 - 5 sherds (weight : 153gms)

(CRN 22) 1 EM>M North Kent shell-tempered sandy ware (c.1175-1225/1250 AD emphasis probably)

(CRN 28) 2 PM Wealden-type buff sandy ware with marl inclusions (c.1525-1600/1650 AD emphasis; **same vessel**)

(CRN 22) 1 PM Western Kentish sandy ware with fossil shell inclusions (c.1550-1600/1625 AD *probable* emphasis)

(CRN 22) 1 PM Kentish red earthenware (c.1625/1650-1675 AD emphasis)

Comment : Small-large sized elements. The earliest is highly worn and clearly very residual in-context. The two same vessel elements conjoin to form a large jar base fragment. These are rather chipped and worn – and also residual in-context. The latest redware sherd is small but its iron glaze is typical of seventeenth century products. Its small size again suggests it is residual in a later context.

Likely date : Uncertain –possibly C18 AD broadly

Context: Trench 2 – (CRN 20) - 5 sherds (weight : 36gms)

1 PM ? Wealden-type compact earthenware, slightly sandy, with marl inclusions (c.1550/1575-1625 AD *probable* emphasis)

1 PM ? Wealden sandy ware with marl inclusions (c.1550/1575-1650 AD emphasis probably)

1 PM Kentish fine red earthenware (c.1600/1625-1675 AD emphasis)

1 PM Kentish red earthenware (c.1625/1650-1675 AD emphasis)

1 PM claypipe stem (thick stem, large bore, c.1660-1700 AD range)

and :

1 fragment M>LM roof-tile (weight : 86gms) – fairly large, part one edge remnant, coarse iron-stained quartzsand fabric, buff surfaces, probably Wealden, dull live-green glaze on upper surface, hard but not fused fabric suggests mid-late C14 AD, worn and residual in-context.

1 fragment PM roof-tile (weight : 21gms) – moderate-sized, split, one surface remnant, no moulded edges, fairly hard orange fine silty slightly marly fabric, Kentish, MC16-MC17 AD *probably*.

2 fragments PM roof-tile (weight : 122gms) – 1 moderate-sized, one fairly large, part one edge remnant per tile, hard fine silty pink-red marly fabric, Kentish, C17-MC18 AD. other than chipping only slightly worn.

Comment : All fairly small elements, variable wear-pattern, latest non clay-pipe ceramic more worn than earlier-dated material. Clay-pipe stem moderate-sized but rather 'dirty' suggesting a degree of time in possibly rather disturbed conditions, post-breakage. This would also accommodate the degree of wear on the second half C17 AD dated jug rim.

Likely date : Uncertain – possibly c.1700-1750 AD or slightly later

Context: CRN 28 - 1 sherd (weight : 22gms)

1 PM English tin-glazed earthenware (polychrome painted, c.1650/1675-1725 emphasis)

Comment : Moderate-sized bodysherd, from a polychrome-painted plate or shallow dish with a blue and green painted leaf design around at least two blue lines encircling the centre of the plate. Moderately chipped, otherwise glazed surfaces intact and fairly fresh. A 'best-occasions' plate with a built-in potential heirloom factor to account for during dating.

Likely date : Rather uncertain but possibly between c.1700-1750 AD or slightly earlier.

Analyst : N.Macpherson-Grant 9.2016



Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.



Figure 2: Site location OS map.

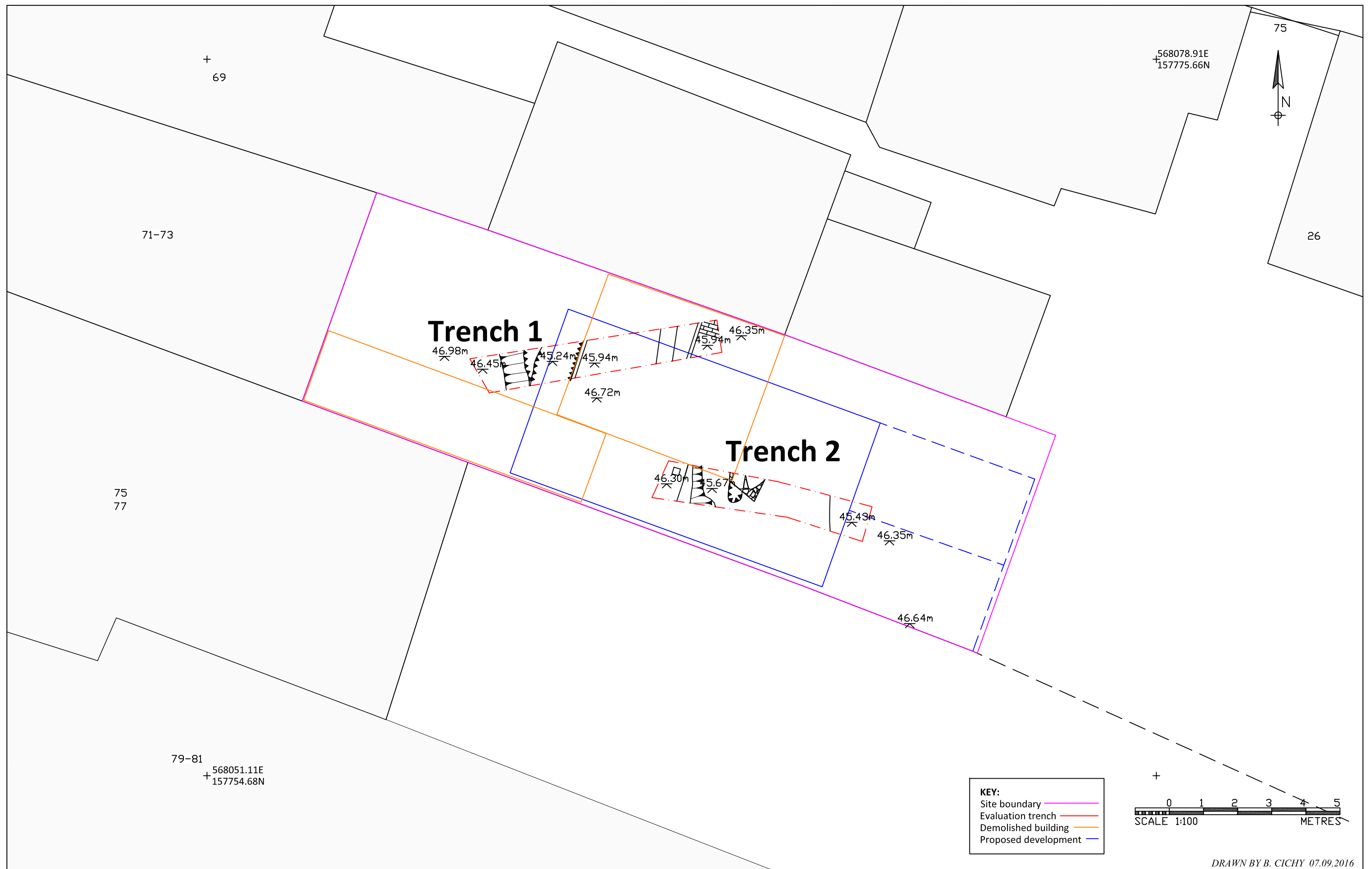


Figure 3: Trench location plan, scale 1:100

DRAWN BY B. CICHY 07.09.2016

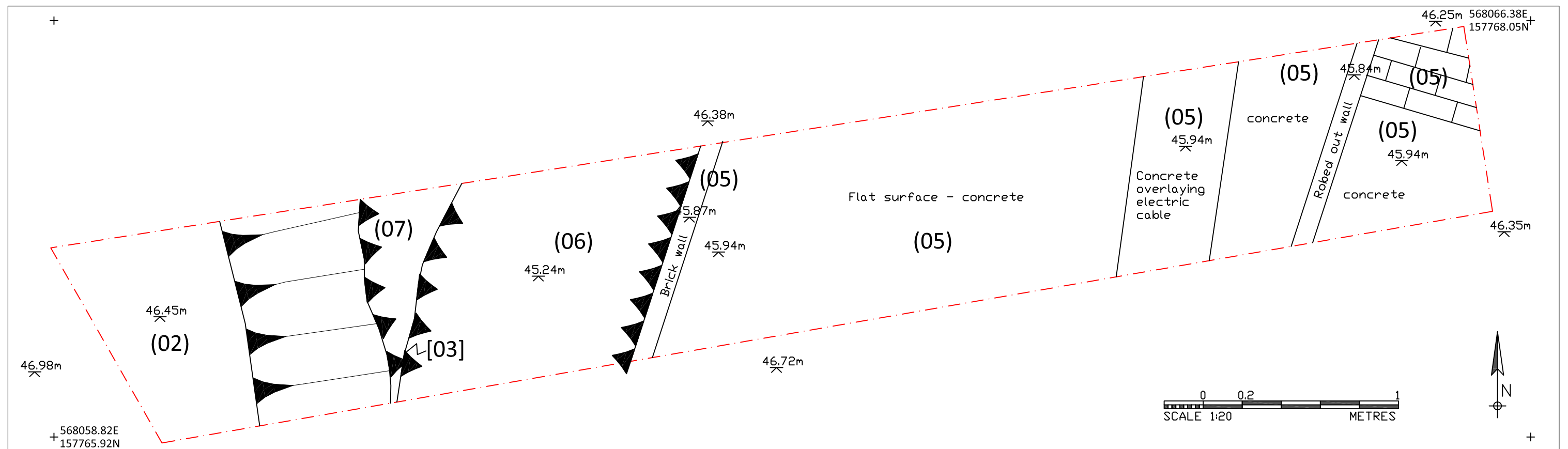


Figure 4: Plan of Trench 1, scale 1:20

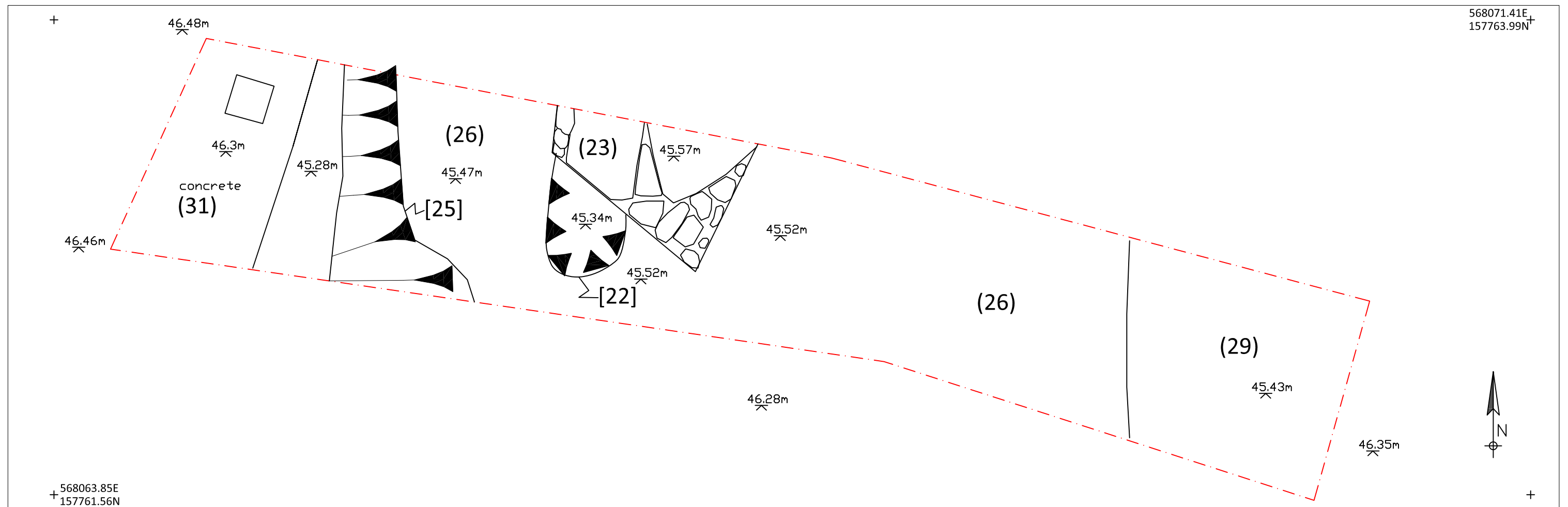


Figure 5: Plan of Trench 2, scale 1:20

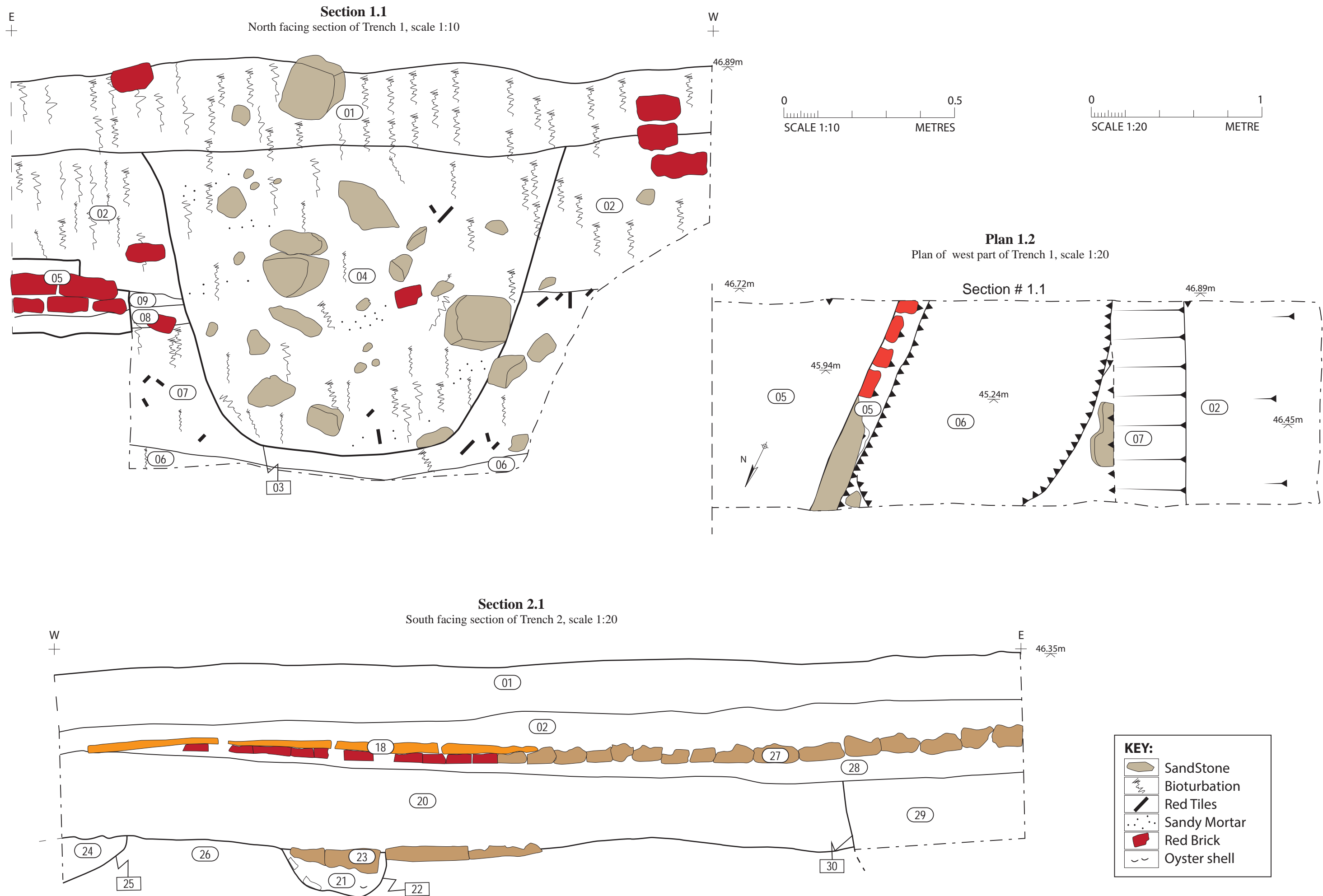


Figure 6: Site drawings



Plate 1. The site looking southwest before evaluation



Plate 2. The redistributed rubbish piled between the two evaluation trenches (looking north)



Plate 3. Looking west, showing modern Pit 3 cutting demolition layer 2, concrete slab 5 to the south (left) and the intact medieval deposit sequence to the north (right), (0.5m and 0.3m scales)



Plate 4. Pit 3 looking north at the medieval deposit sequence (0.5m and 0.3m scales)



Plate 5. Trench I from the north showing Pit 3(foreground) and the exposed concrete slab



Plate 6. Trench 2 from the north showing the probable surface geology (CRN 26), stone structure (CRN 27), adjacent Pit 22 and a modern paving slab and drain in the foreground



Plate 7. Flagstone-like like structure 23 partly overlying Pit 22 with partly investigated pit at the end of Trench 1 (one-metre scale)



Plate 8. Pit 22 partly sealed by horizontally arranged stone structure 23 (0.5m and 0.3m scale)



Plate 9. Modern trench-like feature (CRN 30) partly exposed in the southern (right) end of Trench 2 (0.5m and 0.6m scales)