

# Archaeological Evaluation of Land behind 20 Beach Road, Westgate on Sea, Kent



NGR: 632827 170300

Site Code: BEACH/EV/17

Planning Application: F/TH/16/0423

**SWAT Archaeology**

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# **Archaeological Evaluation of Land behind 20 Beach Road, Westgate on Sea, Kent**

NGR: 632827 170300

Site Code: BEACH-EV-17

## **1. Summary**

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land behind 20 Beach Road, Westgate on Sea in Kent. A Planning Application (F/TH/16/0423) to develop this site for the change of use of the public house to bedsits and flats with a micro pub on the ground floor and the erection of three town houses with associated gardens and parking went to Thanet District 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 (SWAT Specification and KCC Manual Part B) and in discussion with the Principal Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The results of the excavation of 2 evaluation trenches revealed that no archaeological features were present within the trenches (Figure 1 and Plates 1-7). The natural geology of Thanet Upper Chalk bedrock was revealed along with some areas of concrete. The Archaeological Investigations have therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Archaeological Specification.*

## **2. Introduction**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Clague Architects on behalf of clients to carry out an archaeological and evaluation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2017) and in discussion with the Principal Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

## **3. Site Description and Topography**

The proposed development site is located in an urban area some 116m from the beach and is bounded by the road Beach Rise to the north, Beach Road to the west and Old Boundary Road to the east. The main building was a public house and restaurant. The area of development of the town houses seems to be a tarmac car park (Google Earth 2013). The OS location is NGR 632827 170300.

On the basis of current information from BGS, the site lies on Bedrock Geology of Margate Chalk Member- Chalk. The Superficial Deposits are Head Clay and Silt. Ground levels are 8.00m aOD at the centre of the site.

#### **4. Planning Background**

The land has planning permission (F/TH/16/0423) for the change of use of the public house to bedsits and flats with a micro pub on the ground floor and the erection of a first floor extension and the erection of three town houses with associated gardens and parking to the rear and east of the main building. On the basis of the present archaeological information, the Archaeological Officer for Thanet District Council recommended that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological work in order to clarify the historical and archaeological elements within the site. Condition 15 of the planning permission states:

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of archaeological work in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has previously 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..*

#### **5. Archaeological and Historical Background**

The Kent County Council Historic Environment Record (KCCHER) has provided details of any previous investigations and discoveries. The potential of this area has been assessed in relation to the proximity of known archaeological remains and there is an important Roman site some 80m to the west at St Mildred's Court with Roman coins, burial urns, and a Roman

pavement found (TR 37 SW 3). To the south more Roman burials have been found (TR 37 SW 6) and there are prehistoric remains found in the vicinity of the Site.

## **6. Aims and Objectives**

According to the SWAT Archaeology Specification, the aims and objectives for the archaeological work were to ensure that:

“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 further detailed archaeological excavation, or an archaeological watching brief during construction work or an engineering solution to any preservation in situ requirements” (SWAT 2017).

## **7. Methodology**

According to the specification the initial evaluation will comprise 2 machine excavated trenches (c.20m x 1.8m) in a layout agreed with the County Archaeologist. Each trench will be machine excavated down to natural. In addition a RAMS (Risk Assessment and Method Statement) will be produced before the work starts on site and issued to all interested parties. There will also be an allowance of c.10m of contingency trenching which could be used if it would help address the aims set out above. Contingency trenching can be activated following agreement with the County Archaeologist. Further requirements are set out in KCC Spec Manual for Trial Trenching part B.

Care will be taken to ensure that unnecessary additional excavation does not take place where archaeological deposits or structures are exposed; in particular, there is to be no reduction of the underlying soils to further enhance archaeological features.

A soil sampling programme will be put in place to facilitate palaeo-environmental analysis, bulk screening, and soil micromorphology in the case that suitable deposits are identified (within the limits of the objectives of this evaluation), from which data can be recovered.

If required, cultural material will be recovered and subjected to screening (wet or dry) through mesh with a width of 10mm mesh in control samples of between 100 and 200 litres. Any on site screening that may take place will not impede the removal of further bulk soil samples for screening at a separate wash facility off-site (see also KCC Evaluation Specification Part B: 6. Machine and Hand Excavation).

## **8. Monitoring**

Curatorial monitoring was not available during the course of the evaluation.

## **9. Results**

Two evaluation trenches (Figure 2) were mechanically excavated on the present site (Figure 1), which was used until very recently as a car park for The Knot public house and hotel and which has an OD height of 8.00m on the tarmac and an area of 780 m<sup>2</sup>. Trench 1, which measured 16m by 1.5m, was cut on a south-west/north-east alignment and was located in the northeast part of the site. Trench 2 measured 13m by 1.5m and was cut in the southwest part on a south-east/north-west alignment. The evaluated area was therefore 43.5m<sup>2</sup> (5.6 percent of the total site area).

### **Trench 1**

Here, the original surface of bedrock Upper Chalk (Context Recording Number 12) was exposed in part at an average depth of one metre below the present ground surface of 8.00m aOD. In the places where it survived intact (in the central and south-eastern part of the trench) it was covered by a 0.18m-thick layer of mid-light brown colluvial brickearth-like soil (CRN 19) with frequent granular chalk inclusions. This was interpreted as an example of the original subsoil, a view supported by the overlying presence of a band of dark brown humic soil of variable thickness (average 0.12m-thick), also containing granular chalk and which almost certainly represented a remnant of the original topsoil. This in turn was sealed by a 0.3m-thick band of crushed chalk (CRN 17) that was devoid of any other inclusions and was interpreted as a levelling or bedding layer, presumably related to an earlier phase of construction, possibly contemporary with buildings surrounding the development site, which are predominantly of nineteenth-century construction. This layer was overlain by a 0.3m-thick band (CRN 16) of mixed clay, chalk, brick and stone fragments, brick fragments

and humic soil, almost certainly the result of the a phase of demolition and disturbance created during the cutting and filling of the mass of large, modern, intercutting pits exposed in the north-west end of Trench 1 and the north-east end of Trench 2 (see below).

The above-described sequence of horizontal deposits was the only undisturbed archaeological sequence in the trench but was not deemed to be of any great archaeological significance. It had been cut away to the southeast during the construction of a large sewer pipe (CRN 20), the mid grey-brown chalk-rich humic fill of which (CRN 21) was in turn cut during the excavation of trench (CRN 8), cut to accommodate a concrete-capped manhole (CRN 5).

To the northwest the intact stratigraphic sequence was cut away by a massive pit (CRN 10), which was more than 1.5m deep and greater than 7.3m in extent, as it extended beyond the northwest limit of excavation. The many and varied fills of this pit were modern (several unbroken champagne bottles and much modern domestic detritus were recovered from them) and they were recorded generically as CRN 9. Part of the corner of a large, 0.2m-thick rectangular concrete slab (CRN 11), clearly of relatively modern construction, capped this pit, which underlay the 0.15m-thick brick and rubble bedding (CRN 2), over which the present tarmac surface of the car park was laid.

## **Trench 2**

Upper Chalk bedrock (CRN 12) was also exposed in the southwest part of this trench but in this case was truncated, clearly having been higher lying in the southwest rather than the northeast part of the development site. It was cut by a modern pit (CRN 14), the fill of which (CRN 13) was sealed by compacted crushed chalk overlying mixed crushed chalk and dark brown humic silt fill, the latter containing modern glass bottles, small fragments of modern brick and scraps of metal. This pit, which was more than 2m deep, was cut away to the northeast by another large, modern pit (CRN 18), also greater than 2m in depth and extending beyond the northeast limit of excavation. This pit's fill (CRN 17), consisting of laminated layers of mid-to-light brown brickearth-like material with small-to-medium fragments of very hard sandstone. Its modernity was indicated by the presence of complete glass bottles and scrap metal artefacts, in including a crushed zinc watering can. It was cut in turn by another modern pit (CRN 16), the one-metre-thick, dark brown humic, slightly sandy



fill of which (CRN 15) contained a downward slanting lens of mixed crushed chalk and brickearth and large fragments of thick ceramic tile. It was overlain by a 0.78m-thick deposit of crushed chalk (CRN 19), almost certainly a levelling/bedding layer laid down in preparation for the overlying car park surface.

Part of a 0.5m-wide concrete foundation (CRN 20) lying on an approximate north-south alignment overlay natural chalk (CRN 12) and the fill of Pit 14 in the southwest half of this trench. Its position over large and relatively modern pits, as was the case with the concrete platform (CRN 11) exposed in Trench 1, along with the exact alignment of both the foundation's and the platform's eastern edges, indicates that these formed part of a substantial modern structure, which had been built on a site that had suffered massive disturbance, probably during the middle of the twentieth century.

## **10. Discussion**

The only intact and *in-situ* deposits exposed during the evaluation occurred in Trench 1 in the form of an approximately 6m-wide (on a south-east/north-west alignment) sequence of horizontally deposited layers (CRNs 12, 19, 18, 17 & 16), where CRN represented the intact surface of the Upper Chalk, CRN 19, represented the alluvial subsoil, CRN 18, the original topsoil (and probably the original ground surface), CRN 17, a levelling and/or bedding layer probably associated with the first development of the site in the nineteenth century, and the demolition and disturbance associated with the cutting of the large number of modern, intercutting pits, parts of which were exposed between five and ten metres to the north in both trenches.

The proposed development can therefore be judged to pose only a minimal threat to any significant remains, most of which would have been destroyed by previous, deep and relatively recent large-scale groundworks on the site.

## **11. Finds**

No finds were found.

## **12. Conclusion**

The evaluation trenches at the proposed development site revealed no important archaeological features or artefacts.

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 demolition and bedrock of chalk.

Therefore, this evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the aims and objectives as set out in the Planning Condition and the Archaeological Specification.

### **13. Acknowledgements**

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank the client, Clague Architects for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Simon Mason, Principal Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. Site survey and illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Allen MCIfA and the project was managed and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA.

Paul Wilkinson

05/05/2017

### **14. References**

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

SWAT Archaeology (30/03/17) *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

KCC Specification Manual Part B

KCC HER data 2017



Plate 1. The site (looking SE)



Plate 2. The site (looking SW)



Plate 3. Trench 1 (looking NW)





Plate 4. Trench 2 (looking SSW)



Plate 5. Section Trench 1





Plate 6. Trench 1 section



Plate 7. Trench 2 (looking NW)



**Summary:**

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Evaluation on the development site at land behind 20 Beach Road, Westgate on Sea, Thanet, Kent.

The site has planning permission for residential housing 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 Evaluation revealed no archaeology.

**District/Unitary:** Thanet Borough Council

**Period(s):**

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** 632827 170300

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date of recording:** April 2017

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

**Geology:** Underlying geology is Head Chalk

**Title and author of accompanying report:** Wilkinson P. (2017) Archaeological Evaluation of Land behind 20 Beach Road, Westgate on Sea, Thanet, Kent

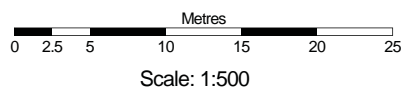
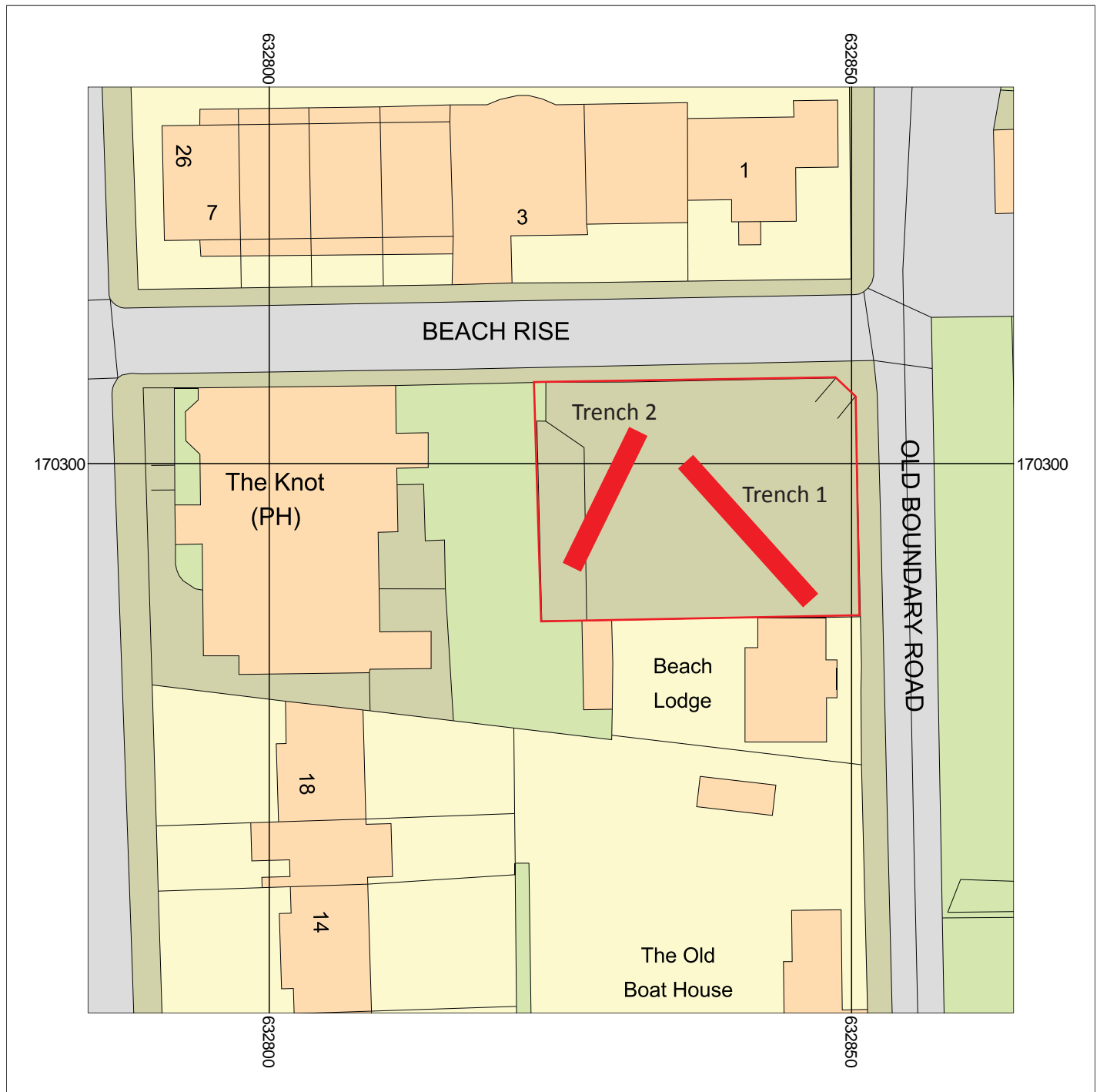
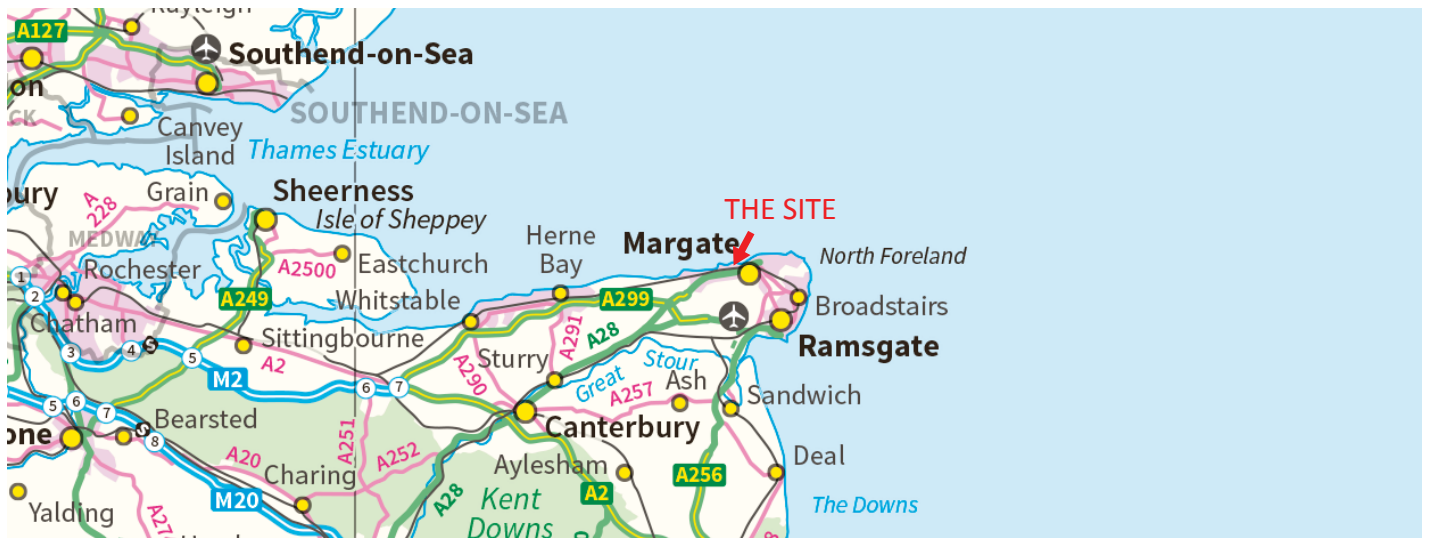
**Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)**

No archaeology found

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

**Contact at Unit:** Paul Wilkinson

**Date:** 05/05/2017



License number: 100031961

Figure 1: Location of evaluation trenches in relation to Ordnance Survey map.

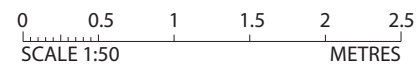
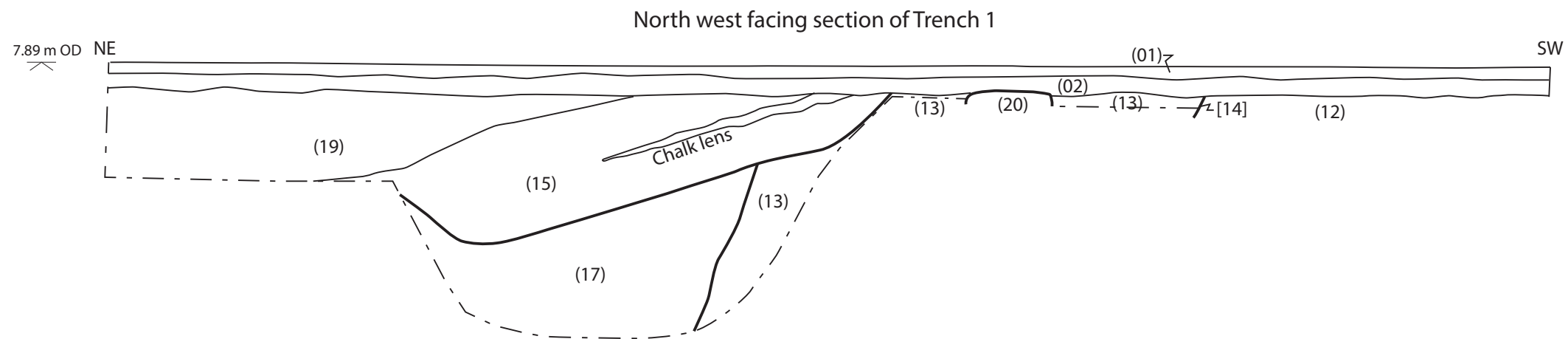
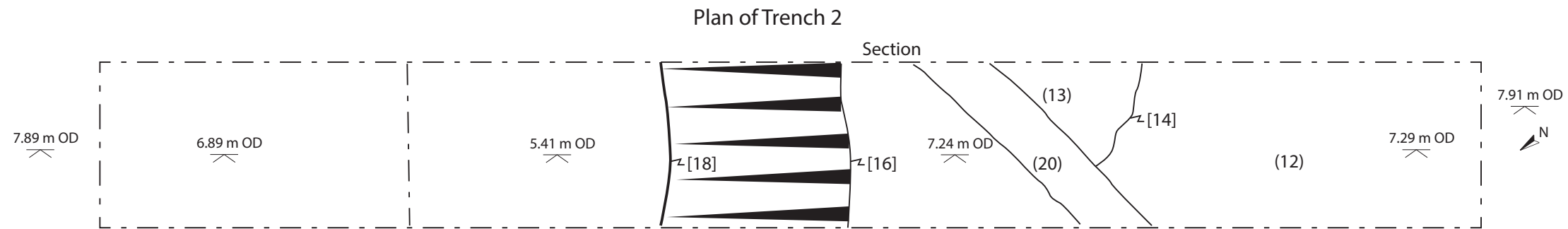
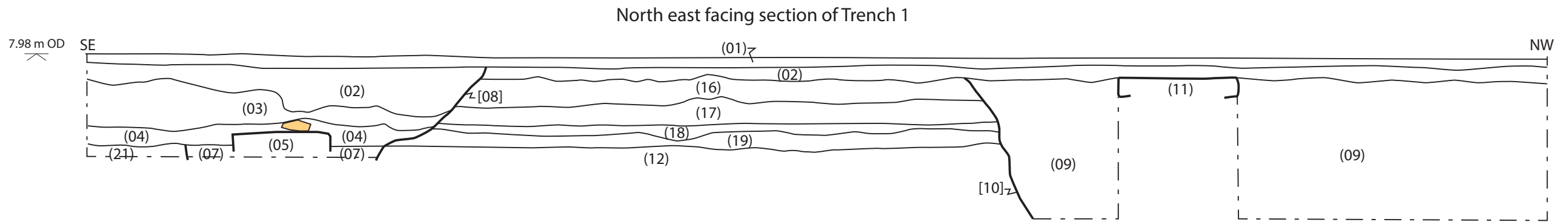
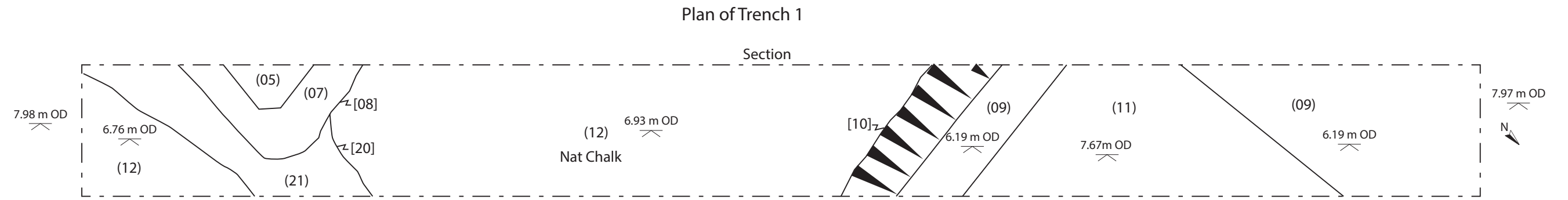


Figure 2: Drawings of Trench 1 and 2