Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Olivia's Barn, Heath Road, Coxheath, Maidstone, Kent

Site Code: OLIV-EV-19

NGR Site Centre 575039 150026

Planning Application Number: 17/503367/FULL

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Olivia's Barn, Heath Road, Coxheath, Maidstone in Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Senior Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in October 2019 in accordance with an archaeological specification (SWAT Archaeology 22nd May 2019) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of one trench, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology with no archaeological features.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Olivia's Barn, Heath Road, Coxheath in Kent (**Figure 2**).

1.1.2 In mitigation of the potential impact that the development may have on the buried archaeological resource Kent County Council Heritage & Conservation (KKCHC), who provide an advisory service to Maidstone Borough Council, requested that a programme of archaeological works be undertaken to satisfy the recommended condition (9) of the planning permission 17/503367/FULL.

1.1.3 The archaeological evaluation was carried out in October 2019 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by SWAT Archaeology, prior to commencement of works, and in discussion with Wendy Rogers Senior Archaeological Officer at KCCHC.

1.1 4 Site Description and Topography

The application site is located in the village and civil parish of Coxheath within the Borough of Maidstone and the County of Kent. The village is centered on the Heath Road c.2.5 miles south of Maidstone and close to the villages of Linton, Yalding, East and West Farleigh and Boughton Monchelsea. The area is characterised by rural field systems to the north and a deer park to the east. The village has been developed to both sides of the Heath Road with a mixture of medium and high density housing. The proposed development area (PDA) is bounded to the south by Heath road, to the north by fields and to the west by a new housing development. The NGR location is 575029 150926.

The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the PDA is set on Bedrock Geology of Hythe Formation- Sandstone and Limestone. Superficial deposits are of subaerial slopes formed frpm material accumulated by downslope movement of landslides and debris flow. The PDA is set at an average height of 121.00m AOD.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

Details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record and have been summarised in the Specification produced by SWAT Archaeology (January 2019).

The PDA surrounding landscape is characterised as small regular with straight boundaries (parliamentary type enclosure) and is bounded by post 1810 settlement to the southwest and orchards to the northwest and southeast. There has been little archaeological investigation within the vicinity of the PDA. An archaeological evaluation just to the west was carried out by Wessex Archaeology in 2015 (EKE14982). From eighteen trenches, six produced archaeological features or deposits in the form of a mixture of drainage or boundary ditches, pits and colluvial spread with finds of pottery and an un-socketed axe dating to the post medieval and modern period.

There findings by Wessex Archaeology are identified on the KCCHER as: TQ 75 SE 388: Undated ditch containing Iron Axe/Hatchet Head TQ 75 SW 301: Pits and ditches possibly 18th-19th century TQ 75 SW 300: Undated boundary ditch.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.2 Specific Aims (SWAT 2019)

2.2.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork are set out in the Specification (SWAT 2018) were to:

2.2.2 *6.1 The primary objective of the archaeological evaluation is to establish or otherwise the presence of any potential archaeological features which may be impacted by the proposed development. The aims of this investigation are to determine the potential for archaeological activity and in particular the earlier history of the PDA and also any other Prehistoric and Roman activity.*

2.3 General Aims

2.3.1 The general aims of the archaeological fieldwork were to;

- establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource, both artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest across the area of the development;
- ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit if possible, character, date and quality of any such archaeological remains by limited sample excavation;
- determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource, if present, and to assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of any archaeological deposits.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT 2019 and KCC Manual of Specifications 'B') and carried out in compliance with the standards

outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2017).

3.2 Fieldwork

3.2.1 A total of one evaluation trench was excavated across the Site (Figures 1, 2).

3.2.2 The trench was initially scanned for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360º mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable natural or archaeological horizon, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

3.2.3 Where appropriate, the trench, or specific areas of the trench were subsequently hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and CIfA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.

3.3 Recording

3.3.1 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trench comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights. These are retained in the site project archive.

3.3.2 Photographs were taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated features and deposits, along with images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. The record also includes images of the Site overall. The photographic record comprises digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the site project archive.

3.3.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Appendix 1. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (100), whilst the cut of the feature is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e*. Trench 1, 101+, Trench 2, 201+, Trench 3, 301+ etc.).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 A total of one evaluation trench was mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

4.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

4.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded comprising topsoil sealing an intact subsoil of mid brown sandy silty loam (Plates 1-4).

4.2.2 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for all trenches. Figures 1-2 provide a site plan and trench location plan while Plates 1-4 include selected site photographs.

4.3 Overview

4.3.1 The trench was located across the site to ensure full coverage of potential archaeological remains.

5 FINDS

6.1 No finds of any archaeological merit were recovered from the archaeological evaluation.

6 Discussion

6.1 Archaeological Narrative

The NNW-SSE aligned trench was located in the garden on flat plot of land at altitude of 120m OD. It measured 15m by 1.5m and was excavated to the depth of 0.6m (Figure 3). The NGR coordinates of trench axis are 575030.94E, 150909.44N for N end and 575036.49E, 150895N for S end. There was exposed a sequence of horizontal layers: top soil (101) and subsoil (102) overlaying natural Head deposit (103) truncated by modern trenches [104] and [107]. No archaeological deposits were exposed.

Exposed at the bottom of evaluation trench, Head deposit (103) was of firm compaction, mid reddish brown colour and composed of clay with freq. tabular sandstone (yellowish, reddish, and whitish) and freq. light grey silt lenses. The top of the context was located at altitude of 119.5m

The Head deposit was overlain by 0.2m thick subsoil (102) interpreted as post medieval ploughed layer that was of mid compaction, mid brown colour silty loam with occ. sub angular flint, sandstone and brick small fragments.

The 0.25m thick top soil (101) was the uppermost deposit and described as mid compaction, dark greyish brown clayey loam with occ. stones and small modern inclusions. The layer indicates modern ploughing activity. Context was subdivided into sub layers (101) indicating modern ploughing activity and (101a) that indicate present top soil formation associated with grass vegetation. Two modern trenches [104] and [107] were exposed cutting the ground from top soil strata to the depth of 0.6m. The modern features are related to now demolished 20th C. house and contain building material that originated from the demolished house.

Exposed part of modern trench [104] was L shape in plan, flat base near vertical sides except NW side that had moderate stepped slope. The 2.5m wide featured was backfilled with hardcore (105)

containing up to 1m big lumps of concrete, bricks tiles. Context was sealed by re deposited topsoil (106) of mid compaction, dark greyish brown silty loam with occ. stones

Another modern feature [107] that was exposed during evaluation was WSW-ENE aligned 0.67m wide trench with vertical sides and flat base. Feature was backfilled by (106) mid compaction, dark brown clayey silt with occ. modern inclusions (brick fragments, glass, concrete flecks and plastic). The trench [107] was interpreted as m robbed out modern service trench

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. Development proposals are not likely to impact on archaeological remains.

6.2.2 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work show that the proposed development is not likely to impact on any archaeological remains.

7 ARCHIVE

7.1 General

7.1.1 The Site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; CIfA 2014; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

7.1.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises 1 file/document case of paper records & A4 graphics and will be retained by SWAT Archaeology until a Kent museum archive procedure is in place.

8 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

8.1.1 SWAT would like to thank the developer for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers Senior Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for her advice and assistance.

8.1.2 Bartek Cichy supervised the archaeological evaluation and survey and illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. Paul Wilkinson MCIfA produced the text for this report.

9 REFERENCES

ADS 2013. Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice

Brown, D.H., 2011. Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, Archaeological Archives Forum (revised edition)

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives, Institute for Archaeologists

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, *Standard and guidance: for field evaluation.*

SMA 1993. Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections, Society of Museum Archaeologists

SMA 1995. Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive, Society of Museum Archaeologists

SWAT Archaeology, 2019. Site Specific Requirements: Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Ringshill Farm, Wouldham Road, Borstal, Kent

Compiled by: SWAT Archaeology (PW) and dated 29th August 2019

Kent County Council HER Summary Form

Site Name: Land at Olivia's Barn, Heath Road, Coxheath, Maidstone, Kent
SWAT Site Code: OLIV/EV/19
Site Address: As above

Summary:
Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Evaluation on the development site above. The site has a planning application for the construction of 2 no. detached dwellings whereby Maidstone Borough Council requested that archaeological works be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.
The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of an Archaeological Evaluation which revealed no meaningful archaeology.

District/Unitary: Maidstone Borough Council
Period(s):
NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 575929 150926
Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: October 2019

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

Geology: Underlying geology is Bedrock Geology of Hythe Formation

Title and author of accompanying report: Wilkinson P. (2019) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Olivia's Barn, Coxheath, Maidstone, 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

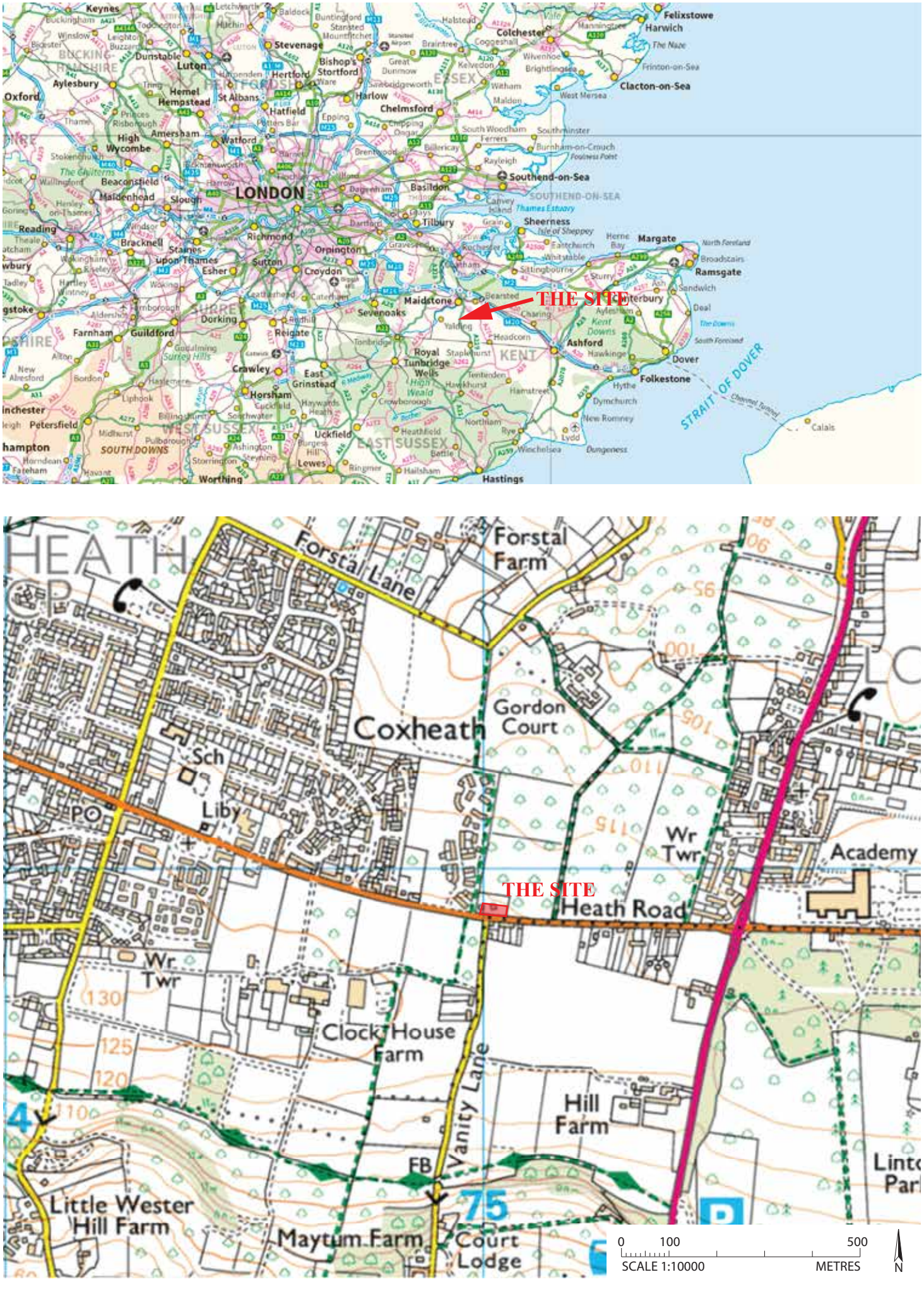


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.

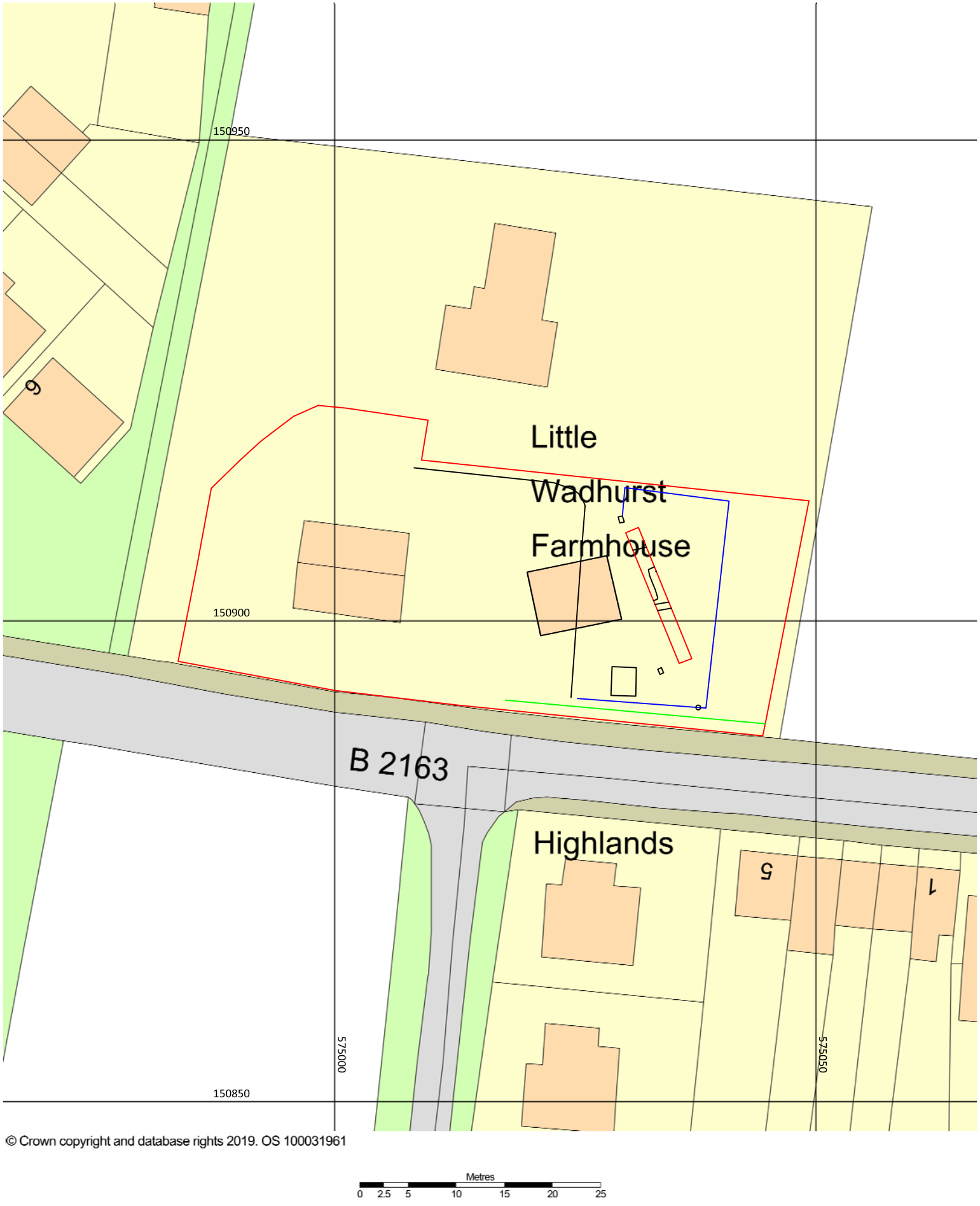


Figure 2: Trench location in relation to OS map

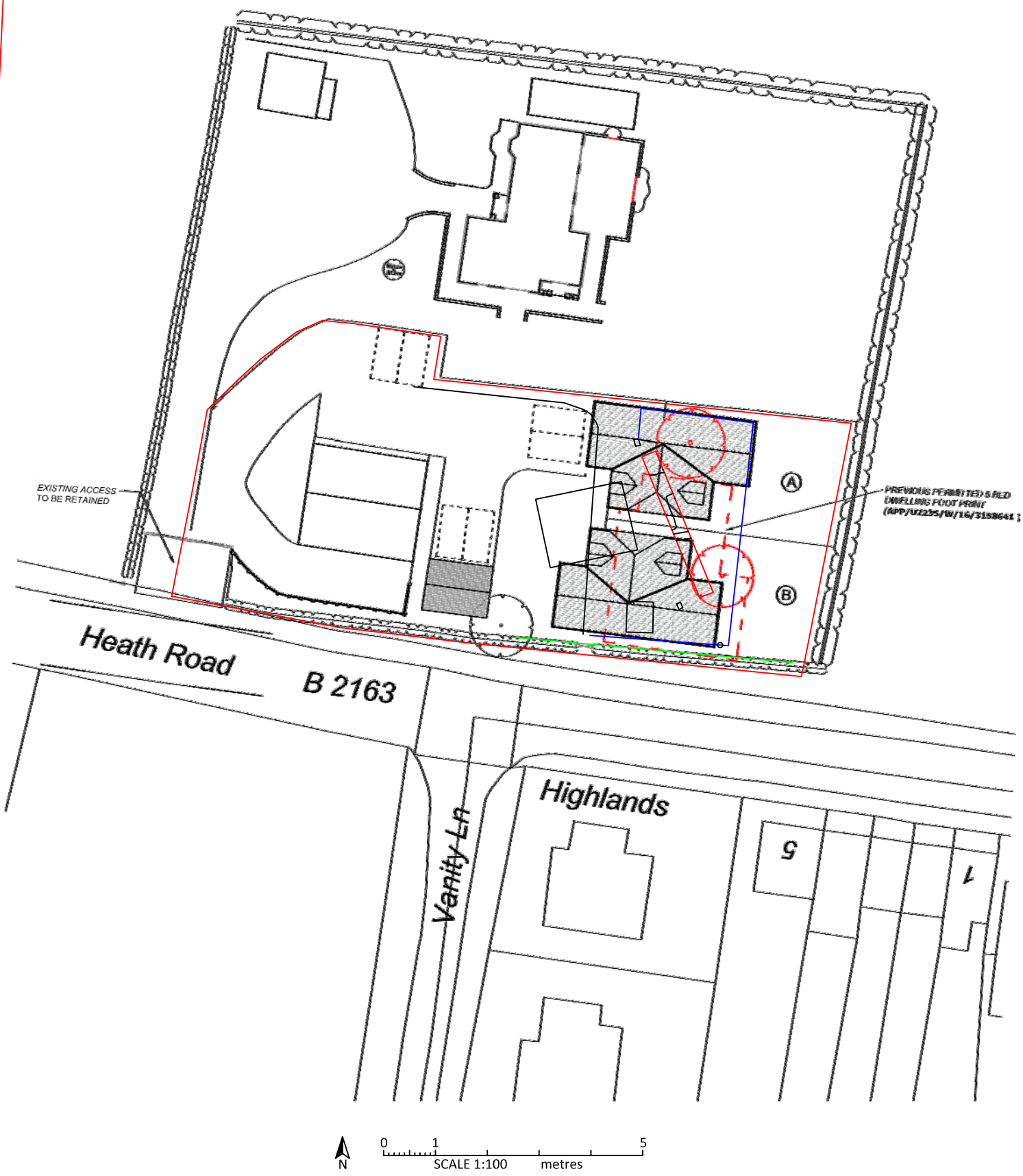


Figure 3: Trench location in relation to development

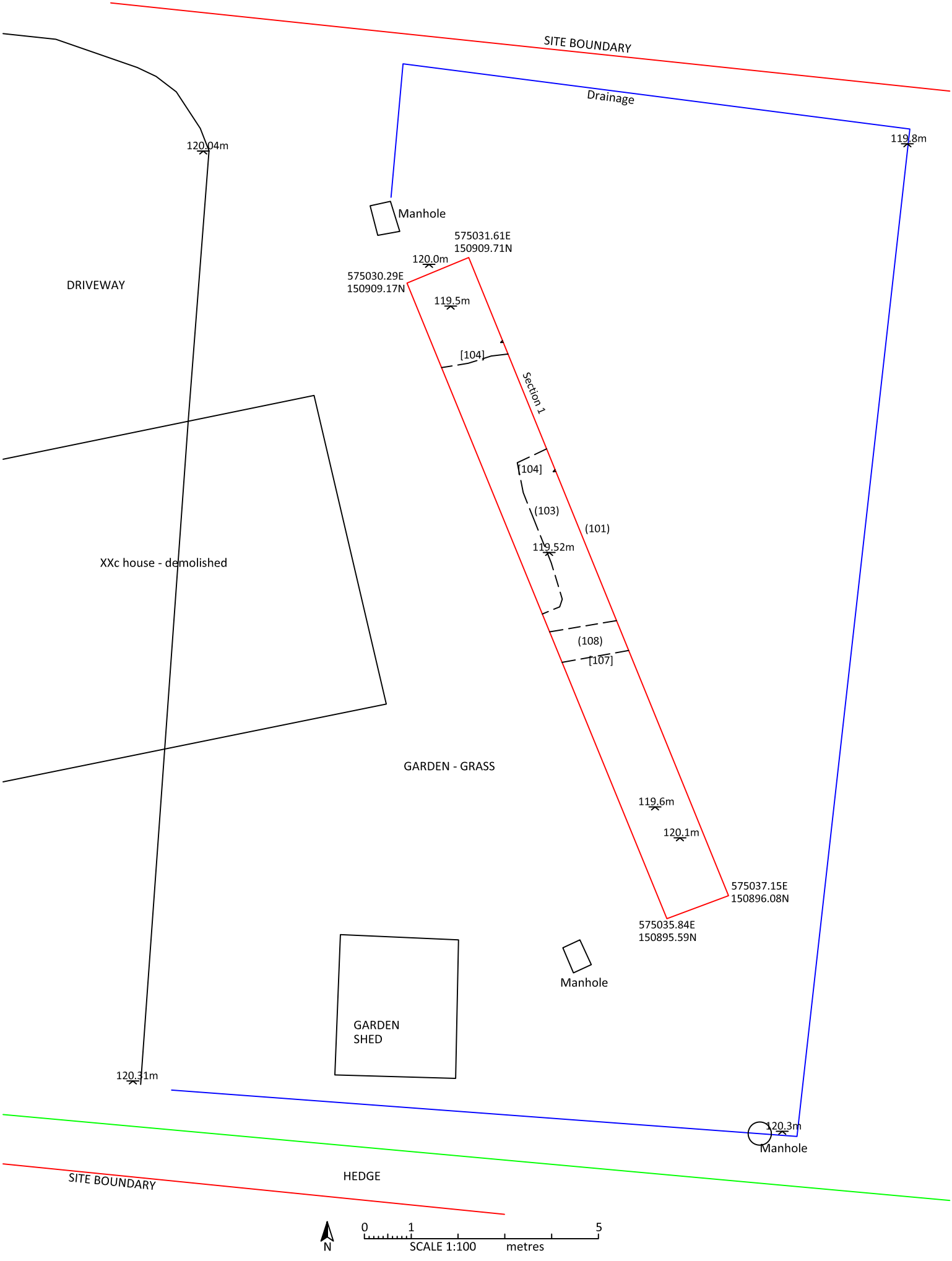
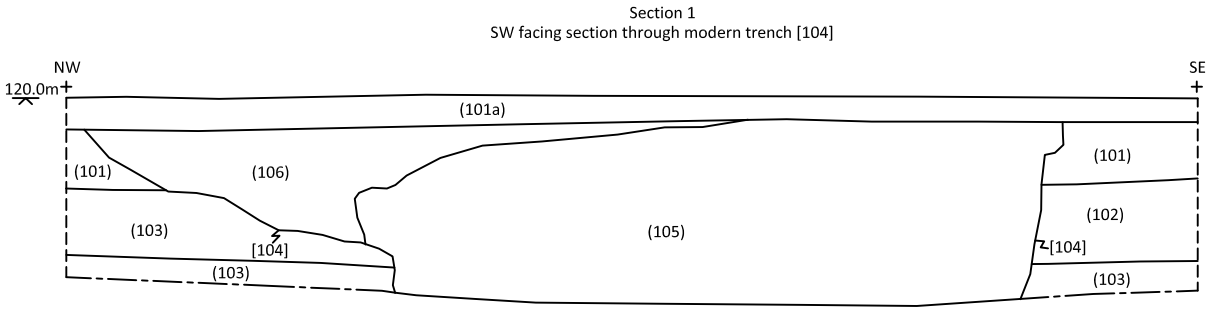


Figure 3: Trench plan



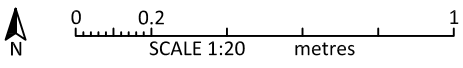


Figure 4: Trench section

Plate 1: Looking SE at the site

Plate 2: Looking SSE at evaluation trench

Plate 3: Looking ENE modern trench [104] backfilled with hardcore (105) and earth (106)

Plate 4: Looking ENE at section through modern trench [107]