

# Archaeological Investigation in advance of Development at 2 Palace Cottages, Charing Palace, Charing, Kent

Site Code CHAR-EV-14

NGR 95412 49439



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## Contents

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

## List of Figures

Fig. 1 Location of site

Fig.2 Location of Test Pits 1 & 2

Fig.3 Section and plan of Test Pits 1 & 2

## List of Plates

Aerial view of the site

Pl 1. Looking east Trench 1

Pl. 2. Looking east at section Trench 1

Pl. 3. Looking south Trench 2



Aerial view of site. (Google Earth, 7/9/2013 eye altitude 279m)

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## **SUMMARY**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an archaeological investigation on land at 2 Palace Cottages, Charing Palace, Charing in Kent (Fig.1). The proposed development is in the process of obtaining Scheduled Monument Consent.

The specification for the archaeological works was provided by Paul Wilkinson of SWAT Archaeology and in consultation with Paul Roberts, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Sussex & Kent. The proposed evaluation works (Test Pits 1 & 2) were based on the assumption that any archaeology exposed within the footprint of the proposed kitchen foundation would be preserved in situ with no impact from the ground works of the proposed kitchen extension to the Palace Cottages.

Archaeological investigation took place on 10<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014 with both test pits (Figs. 2 & 3) being dug by hand to a depth of about 450cm. At this level, some archaeological features, probably palace demolition layers were revealed and recorded.

The archaeological investigation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by the Spitalfields Trust to carry out an archaeological investigation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2014) and in discussion with Paul Roberts, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Sussex & Kent. The investigation was carried out on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2014.

## **2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site lies within the Scheduled Monument of the Archbishop's Palace at Charing and is therefore extremely sensitive, with high potential for important remains to survive. Part of the Scheduled Monument includes structural remains and buildings which have been incorporated into the existing farmhouse and adjacent barn as well as further upstanding wall remnants around the site. In addition, structural and cultural remains, including possible burials, may survive anywhere within and adjacent to the Scheduled area. The site itself is about 102mOD. The National Grid Reference is NGR 95412 49439.

According to the Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) the underlying surface is anticipated to be Zig Zag Chalk, however there may be deposits of garden soil and demolition material (BGS 1:50,000 digital).

Archaeological investigation revealed a moderate compact dark gray black humic topsoil (**101, 201**) about 0.20m deep overlaying compact subsoil (**102, 202**) mid gray brown silty soil mixed with large quantities of Victorian 'blue & white' pottery about 0.18m thick which in turn overlaid the compact demolition horizon (**104, 203**) with a matrix of light to mid sandy yellow brown sandy soil with very frequent chalk flecks and frequent fragments of unfrosted brick and Kentish ragstone lumps.

## **3. PLANNING BACKGROUND**

A planning application is in the process of being reviewed by the local planning authority.

#### **4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The archaeological potential is based on the proximity of archaeological remains presently recorded in the Kent HER.

The Archbishops Palace is a Scheduled Monument (DesigUID: DKE 19062). The Assessment of Importance says:

‘Bishops’ palaces were high status domestic residences providing luxury accommodation for the bishops and lodgings for their large retinues; although some were little more than country houses, others were the setting for great works of architecture and displays of decoration. Bishops’ palaces were usually set within an enclosure, sometimes moated, containing a range of buildings, often of stone, including a hall or halls, chapels, lodgings and a gatehouse, often arranged around a courtyard or courtyards.

The earliest recorded examples date to the seventh century. Many were occupied throughout the medieval period and some continued in use into the post medieval period; a few remain occupied today. Only some 150 bishops’ palaces have been identified and documentary sources confirm that they were widely dispersed throughout England. All positively identified examples are considered to be nationally important. Further information is contained in the ‘Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of 2 Palace Cottages, Charing, Kent’ (SWAT 2014)

#### **5. AIMS and OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the evaluation, as set out within the Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2014) is to:

- Clarify the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed kitchen;
- Provide sufficient information for the SMC process;
- Provide sufficient information to guide foundation design and further mitigation measures.

This scheme of archaeological works is based on the assumption that any archaeology within the footprint of the proposed kitchen will be preserved in situ through design. The kitchen foundations will avoid disturbance of the archaeology. Provisional foundation

details will need to be agreed with English Heritage and the County Archaeologist prior to works commencing on site. Following assessment of the investigation results, amendments to the foundation designs may need to be undertaken to ensure no impact on archaeology. If archaeology is encountered there will need to be further discussions with English Heritage, the County Archaeologist and the developer regarding further mitigation.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

Two trial test-pits on the proposed foundation footprint of the kitchen were carried out on 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014 with the excavation by hand of the topsoil. All excavation work was carried out by hand using a mattock and trowel and removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, **(105, 204)**, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification issued by SWAT Archaeology. 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 KCC and IFA standards and guidance.

## 7. MONITORING

Due to the lack of extensive archaeological remains, curatorial monitoring was not carried out during the course of the evaluation. A site visit by the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Sussex and Kent followed on from the investigation when the on-site work was discussed.

## 8. RESULTS

The archaeological investigation stopped at the archaeological horizon **(105, 204)** which was agreed to be the formation level for the proposed concrete foundations. At this level the

archaeological horizon consisted of general demolition debris, lime mortar lumps, post-medieval roof tile fragments, charcoal flecks and the occasional modern brick fragments.

## **9. FINDS**

No finds were retrieved from the investigation apart from large amounts of Victorian 'blue and white' pottery sherds.

## **10. DISCUSSION**

The investigation at 2 Palace Cottages, Charing Palace, Charing in Kent has revealed limited archaeology. The archaeological investigation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specifications. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site of consisting of the archaeological horizon **(105, 204)** which in turn was sealed by layers of subsoil and demolition **(102, 103, 104, 202, 203)** under topsoil **(101, 201)**.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

The investigation has assessed the archaeological potential of the area of the proposed kitchen extension and revealed demolition layers dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The results of this report should aid English Heritage and Ashford Borough Council in their decisions on development works at Charing Palace.

## **12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Oliver Leigh Wood for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Paul Roberts, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Sussex & Kent for his advice and assistance. Paul Wilkinson undertook the fieldwork. Site survey and illustrations were produced by Peter Cichy, SWAT Archaeology. The project was managed and report written by Paul Wilkinson.

*Paul Wilkinson*

Dated 18/12/2014



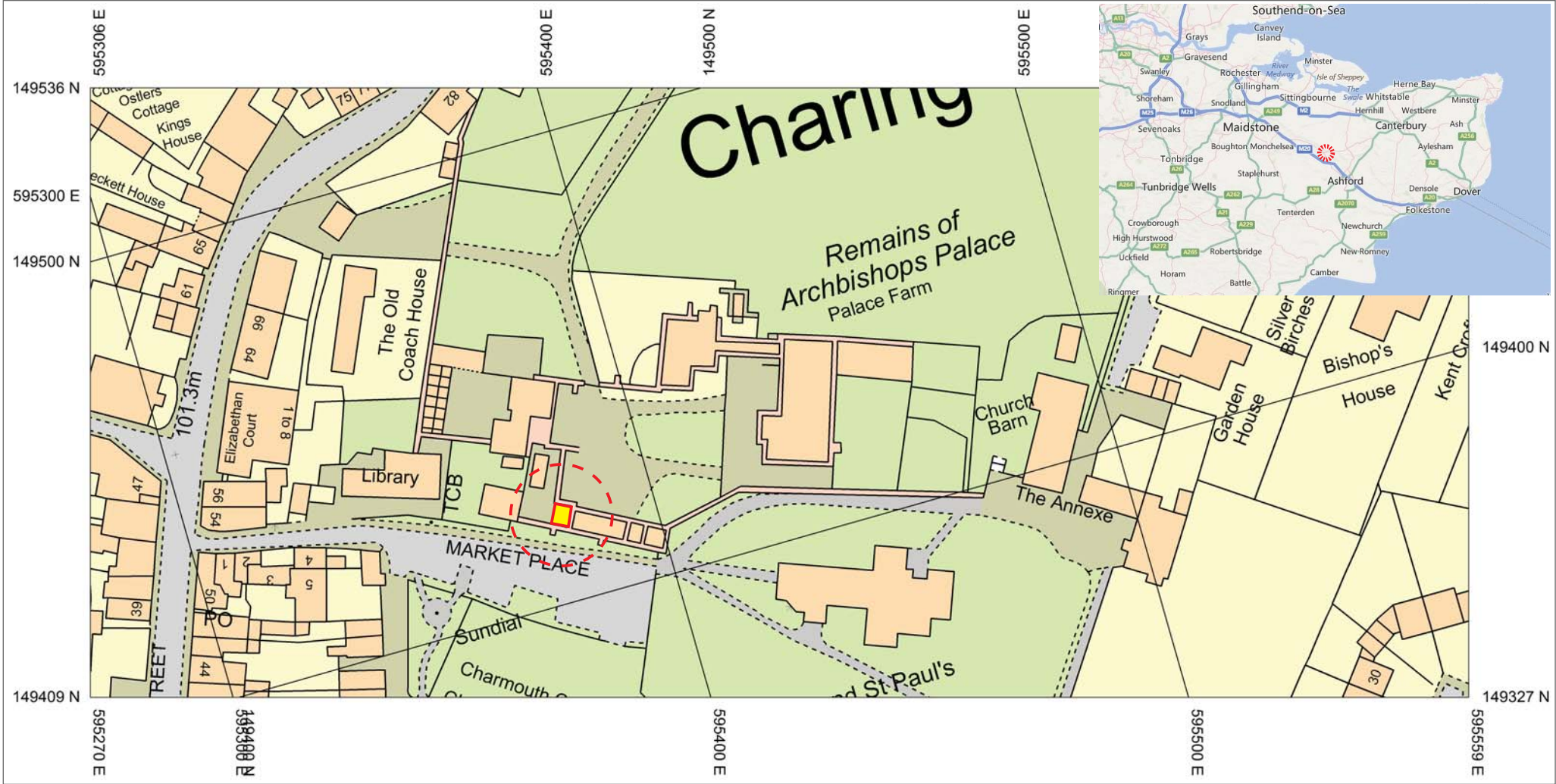
### **13. REFERENCES**

Specification for an Archaeological Investigation at 2 Palace Cottages, Charing Palace, Charing in Kent (SWAT Archaeology 2014)

STANDARD AND GUIDANCE for archaeological field evaluation (IFA 14 October 1994. Revised September 2001 and October 2008)



Location Map



Produced 11/19/2014 from the Ordnance Survey National Geographic Database and incorporating surveyed revision available at this date. © Crown Copyright 2014

Charing Palace



Scale 1:1250

Figure 1: Site location map

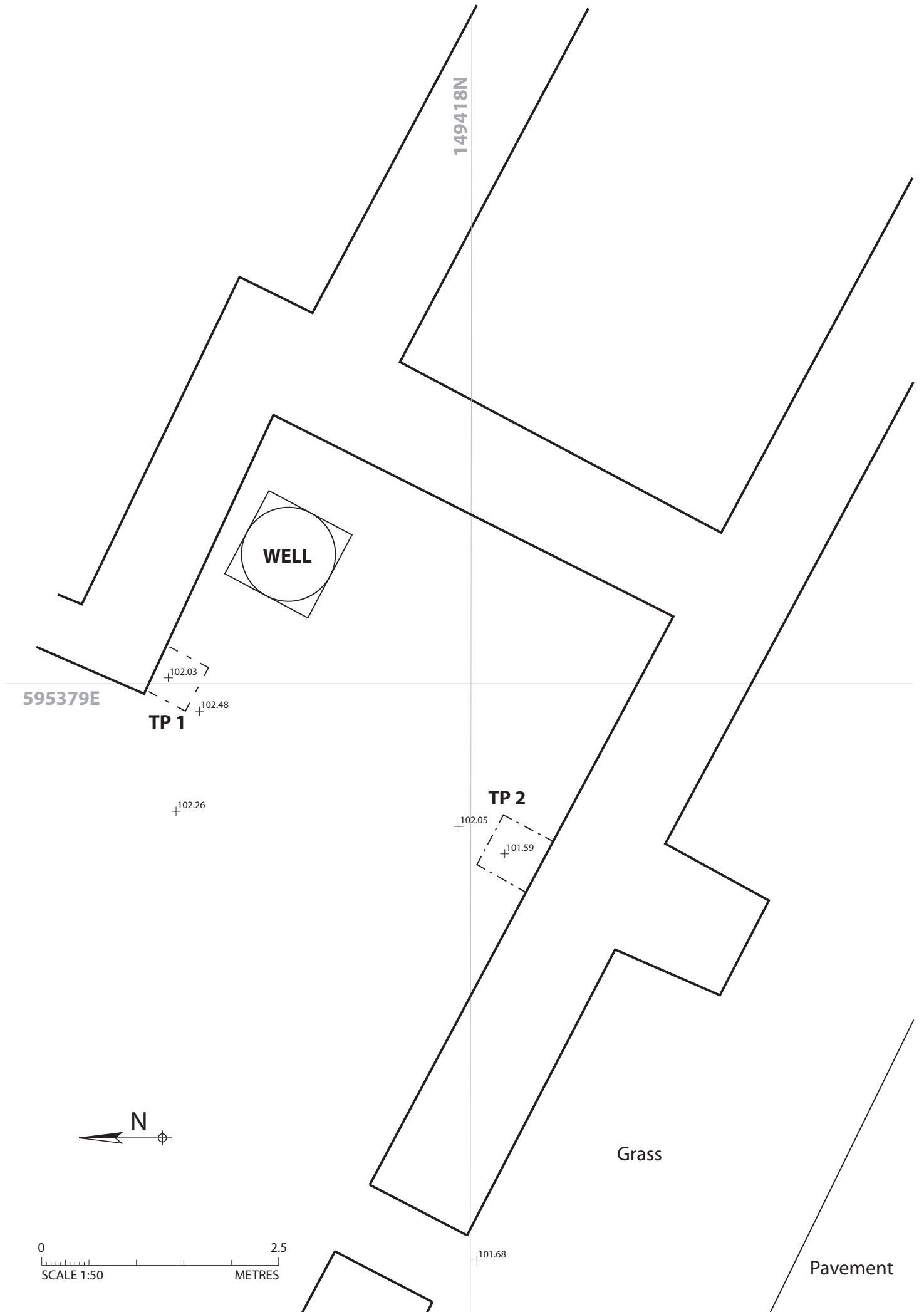


Figure 2: Site plan

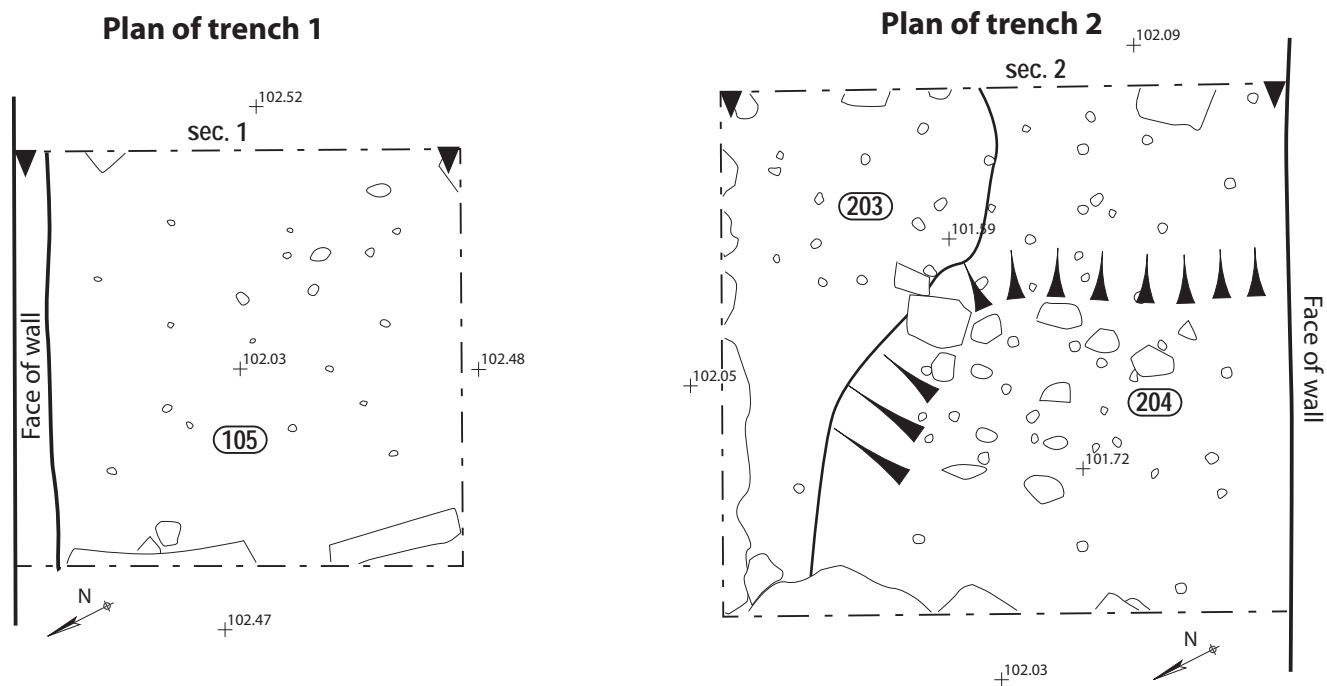
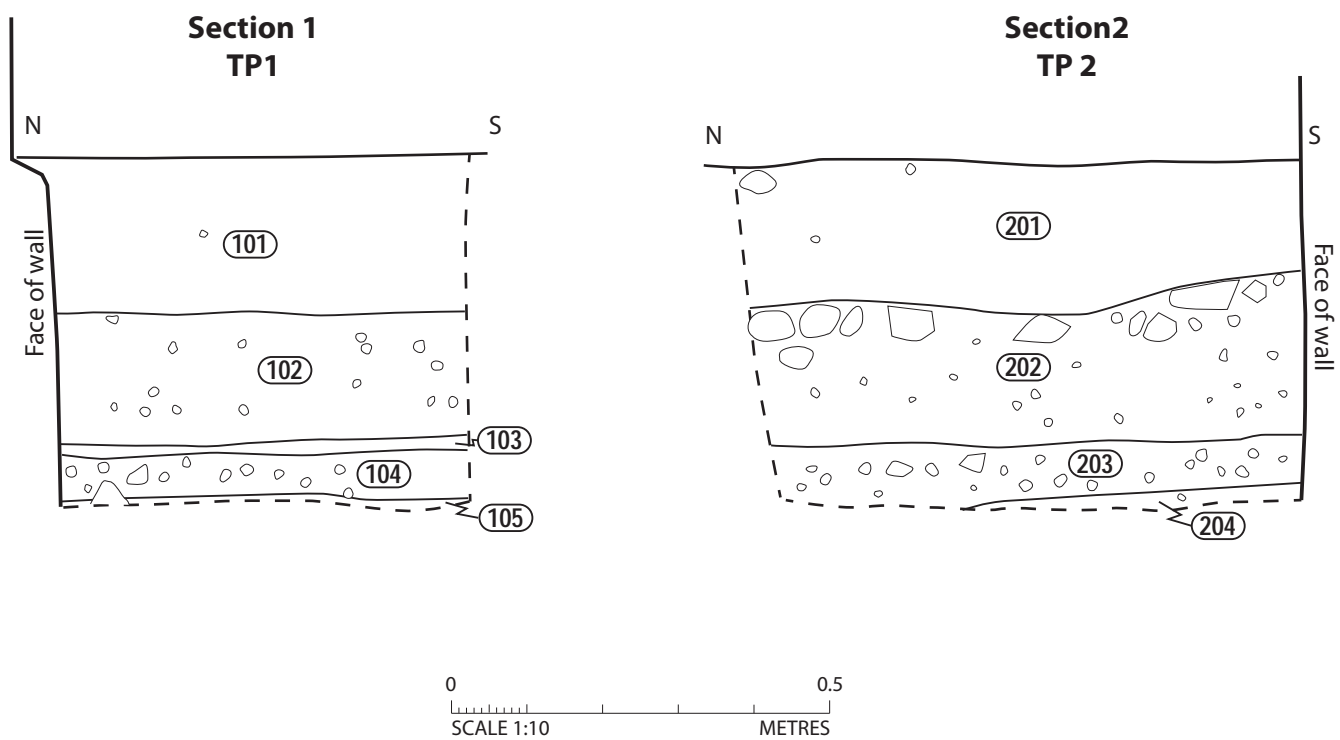


Figure 3: Section and plan of trench 1 and trench 2









Plate 3: Looking south - east at trench 2