



## **Archaeological Evaluation of land to the side of Mill Haven, Mill Row, Birchington, Kent**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

### **1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 SWAT Archaeology was commissioned by the Client to carry out archaeological evaluation in preparations for the development of land to the side of Mill Haven, Mill Row, Birchington, Kent.

1.1.2 Archaeological evaluation commenced on 22th June 2021 and was completed by 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Remote monitoring visit from Senior Archaeological Officer was carried out on 25th June 2021. Works were carried out within Area of PDA where 3 trenches were dug. Evaluation exposed common stratigraphic sequence comprising top-soil concealing natural geology and in some places directly capping floors, foundations and underground compartment belonging to former Windmill (Smock mill) subsequently converted into motorized flour mill and demolished by 1900.

1.1.3 A shallow modern cut was exposed in Trench 3 feature was filled with mixture comprising loam with glass shards.

1.1.4 No earlier archaeological cuts, structures or deposits were found in any of the trenches.

1.2 Planning background

1.2.1 A planning application was granted on the 22nd February 2019 (Application F/TH/18/0576) for the erection of 1no. two storey 3-bed dwelling and associated parking and a variation of condition application attached to planning permission F/TH/18/0576 for the erection of 1no. two storey 3-bed dwelling and associated parking to allow for the replacement of 2no. rooflights to 2no. dormer windows to side elevation (dated 1st April 2021).

1.2.2 A Condition of archaeological works were attached to Planning Decision Notice and it was:  
*(4) 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 specification 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 in accordance with Policy HE01 of the Thanet Local Plan and the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.*

1.2.3 On the basis of the present archaeological information KCC Heritage advising Thanet District Council recommended that the proposed development should be subject to a programme of archaeological works in order to clarify the archaeological elements within the site:

1.2.4 The methodology of the archaeological evaluation phase of investigation was identified within specification based on KCC site specific specifications and in the KCC Evaluation Manual Part B.

### 1.3 Site description, Geology and Topography

1.3.1 The application site is located in the SW area of Birchington, west of the A28 and south of Essex Gardens and is accessed from Mill Row. The PDA was the site of Hudson's Mill a smock mill shown with clarity on the OS Historical Mapping of 1872, 1896 and 1905.

1.3.2 The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the site is set on bedrock geology of Margate Chalk Member- Chalk. Superficial Deposits are not recorded. The NGR to centre of site is NGR 629709 168682 and the OD height is about 21m aOD.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Proposed Development Area (PDA) is located close to a number of archaeological sites and include on the site itself the site of the former Hudson's Mill a former smock mill (TR 26 NE 1265) dating from about 1850 and disused by 1896 and demolished by 1900. About 375m to the west there are numerous cropmarks of ring ditches (TR 26 NE 1039) and to the south a cropmark of a medieval windmill (TR 26 NE 1188).

## 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT 2021) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2014).

### 3.2 Fieldwork

3.2.1 A total of 3 evaluation trenches were excavated within the extents of the Site. Approved specification requested two trenches although obstacles and confine space in the garden required to split trench 2 into two separate but shorter ones.

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

- 3.2.3 Where appropriate, trenches, or specific areas of trenches, 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.
- 3.2.4 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with LPA and ClfA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included 6 working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.
- 3.2.5 On completion, the trenches were made safe and left open in order to provide the opportunity for a curatorial monitoring visit. Once all recording, survey and monitoring had been completed the trenches were left open following a request from the client.
- 3.3 Recording
- 3.3.1 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches 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.
- 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 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 as [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 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 4.1.1 The principle objective of the archaeological evaluation is 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.
- 4.1.2 To 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.
- 4.1.3 To 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.
- 4.1.4 The opportunity will also be taken during the course of the evaluation to place and assess any archaeology revealed within the context of other recent archaeological investigations in the immediate area and within the setting of the local landscape and topography. In general the work is to ensure compliance with the archaeological requirements from the Senior Archaeologist at Kent County Council that an archaeological evaluation to take place as a post-planning requirement, and to publish the results either on line, or through OASIS and/or in a local journal.

## **5 RESULTS**

- 5.1 Introduction and Summary Results
  - 5.1.1 Archaeological evaluation of land to the side of Mill Haven, Mill Row, Birchington, Kent has exposed natural geology comprising orange-brown clay-sand-silt (Brickearth) with infrequent black pebbles capped by flour mill remains and most recent overburden.
  - 5.1.2 A soil retention wall observed in the garden which can be entirely or partially associated with the Windmill structure (Smock Mill) which was at later stage motorized prior to its out of use and subsequent demolition by 1900.
  - 5.1.3 No earlier archaeological cuts, deposits or artefacts were revealed during the course of evaluation.

## 5.2 Trench Narratives

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3 and 5) was placed in eastern part of the site in NE-SW alignment and measured 6 metres in length by 1.4metre in width and down to 1.05 metre in depth. It exposed natural geology context (103) comprising yellow mottled orange-brown silty loam with infrequent pebbles and occasional small roots. The exposed surface was relatively patchy (bioturbated) and truncated by the remains (foundations) of demolished windmill. At north-eastern end of this trench a two-course brick wall 107 was exposed and found perpendicular to concrete wall 106 revealed in northwest-southeast alignment.
- 5.2.2 South-western end of this trench exposed a 'corner' 105 comprising two walls one in NW-SE alignment. Small rectangular underground compartment was revealed abutted to the part of wall 105 in NE-SW alignment. Half of its backfill (111) was carefully removed and excavated slot revealed concrete surface at its base. This compartment could serve as 'service bay' allowing maintenance workers to access some parts of mill's mechanism or the mill was converted into motor-powered at some stage and this small rectangular basement could play a role in this conversion. It's worth mentioning that a very distinctive smell of hydro-carbons was noticed following its excavation.
- 5.2.3 Most of revealed surface in this evaluation trench consisted of concrete (104) which contained two shallow rectangular hollows of unknown functions (Pit 2 and Pit 3) of which Pit 2 revealed concrete surface at its base and Pit 3 contained highly compacted backfill (108) comprising concrete fragments and other demolition debris. No earlier archaeological cuts or deposits were revealed in this trench.
- 5.2.4 Trench 2 (Figure 7) was placed in central part of the site in NE-SW alignment and measured 5.4metre long by 1.4metre in width and 0.4metre in depth. It exposed natural geology context (203) comprising orange-brown clay-sand-silt with infrequent small pebbles. A chalk hard-standing platform (204) was exposed in south-western and central part of this trench. North western portion was subsequently scraped-off to check for potential earlier archaeology but nothing was found.
- 5.2.5 Trench 3 (Figure 8) was placed in western part of the site in NE-SW alignment and measured 3.1metre in length by 1.4metre in width and 0.47metre in maximum depth. Trench exposed natural geology (303) comprising yellow-orange clay-sand-silt with infrequent pebbles. A modern pit [304] was exposed at south-western end of this trench. No earlier archaeological cuts or deposits were exposed here.



## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification and exposed common stratigraphic sequence comprising top-soil with made-up ground concealing natural geology.
- 6.1.2 A remains of formed Windmill (Smock Mill) converted into motorized flour mill were exposed in Trenches 1 and 2. Structure is dating from about 1850 and was disused by 1896 and subsequently demolished by 1900.
- 6.1.3 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results of this work show that the proposed development will be having limited impact on buried archaeological resource of Late Post Medieval Date.

## **7 FINDS**

7.1.1 No archaeological finds were revealed during the course of evaluation.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER WORK**

8.1.1 An archaeological watching brief is recommended to take place in the course of any ground excavation below existing ground level during construction works related to the proposed development.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

9.1.1 SWAT Archaeology would like to thank to the client for commissioning the project and thanks are extended to Simon Mason, Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council for his support and assistance during the fieldwork.

9.1.2 On behalf of the client project was directed by Dr Paul Wilkinson, MCIFA and fieldwork was carried out by Peter Cichy. Text and illustrations for this report were prepared by Bartek Cichy.

## **10 ARCHIVE**

10.1 General

10.1.1 The Site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; CifA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

10.1.2 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. The Site Archive will be retained at SWAT Archaeology offices until such time it can be transferred to a Kent Museum.

## **APPENDIX 1 – HER FORM**

**Site Name:** Archaeological Evaluation of land to the side of Mill Haven, Mill Row, Birchington, Kent

**SWAT Site Code:** MRB-EV-21

**Site Address:** As above

**Summary:** *Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by The Client to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land to the side of Mill Haven, Mill Row, Birchington, Kent. The archaeological programme was monitored by the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council. The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of 3 trenches, which recorded a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil and recent overburden concealing natural geology.*

*Late Post Medieval remains of Windmill converted into motorized flour mill were exposed.*

***Further watching brief is required during construction works.***

**District/Unitary:** Thanet District Council & Kent County Council

**Period(s):** Late Post Medieval

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** NGR 629709 168682

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date of recording:** June 2021

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

**Geology:** Chalk capped by Head Deposits

**Title and author of accompanying report:** SWAT Archaeology (P. Cichy 2021) Archaeological Evaluation of land to the side of Mill Haven, Mill Row, Birchington, Kent

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

**Contact at Unit:** Paul Wilkinson

## 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)*

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*Department of the Environment, 2010, Planning for the Historic Environment, Planning (PPS 5) HMSO.*

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## Figures and Plates

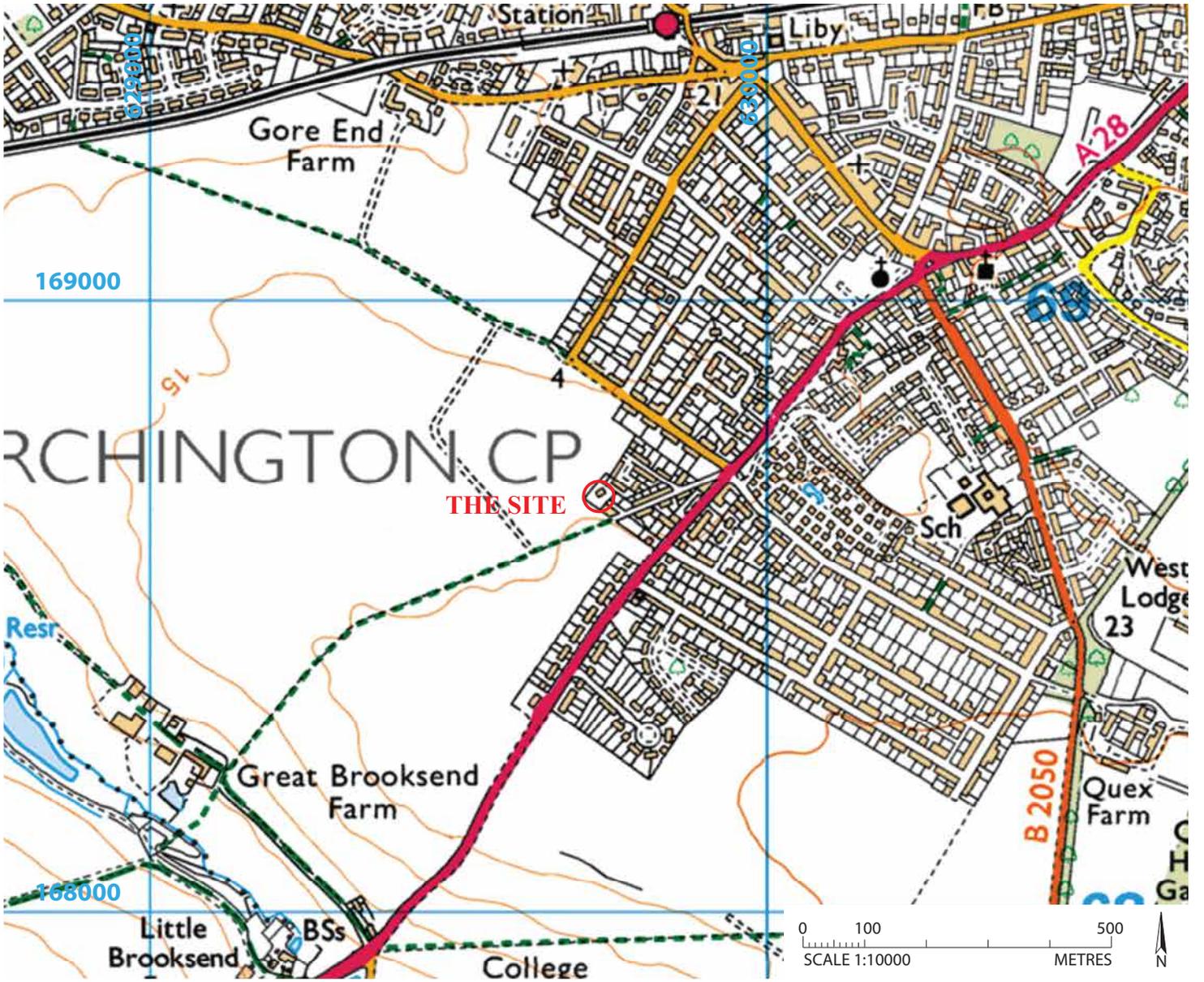
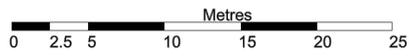


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.



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KEY:  
 — Trench  
 - - - Mill outline from 1930 OS map



Scale: 1: 500

Figure 2: Trench location in relation to OS map

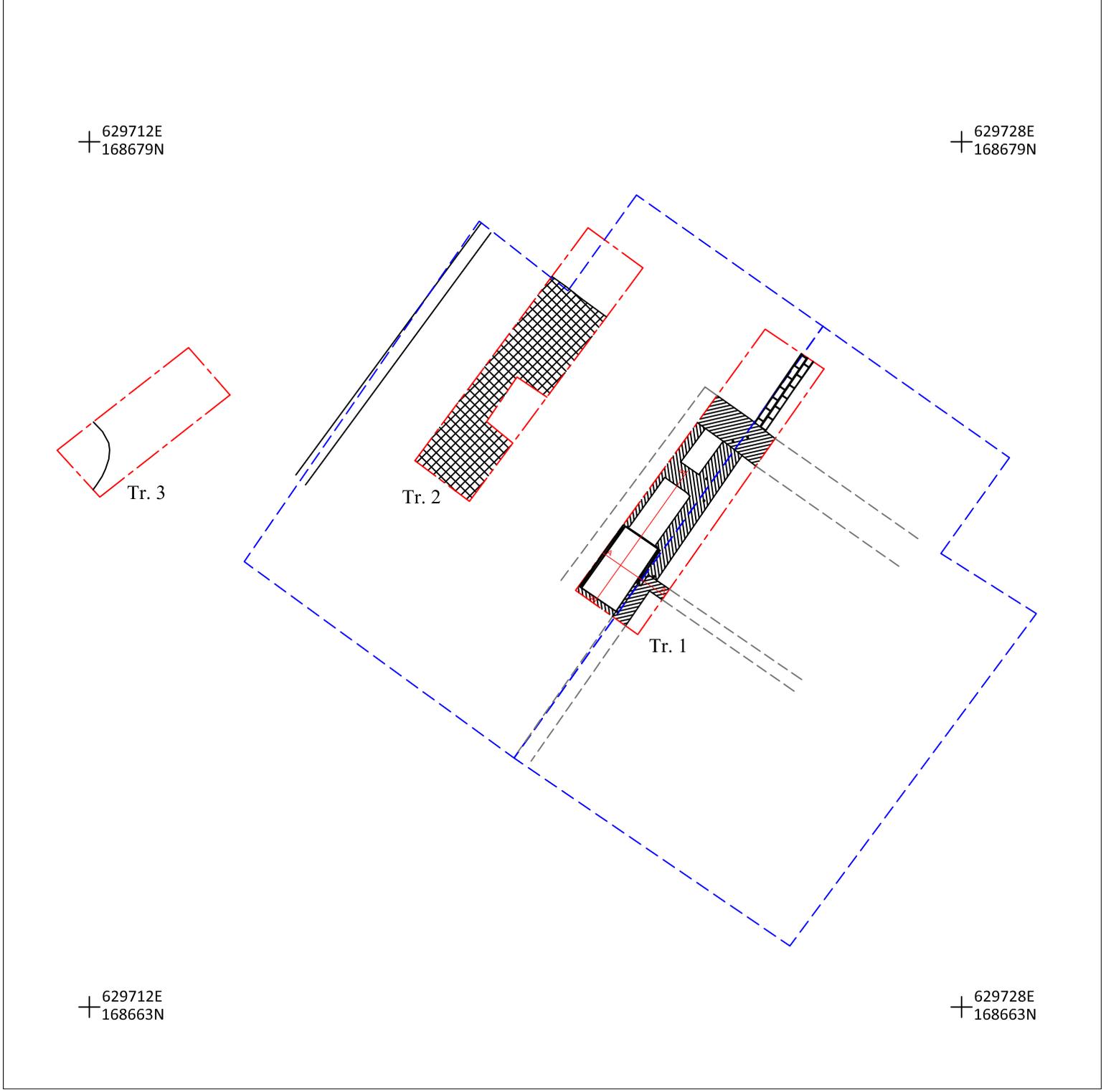


KEY:  
 — Trench  
 - - Mill outline from 1930 OS map  
 - - Extrapolated wall

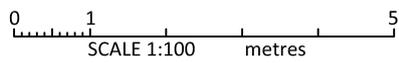


0 2 10  
 SCALE 1:200 metres

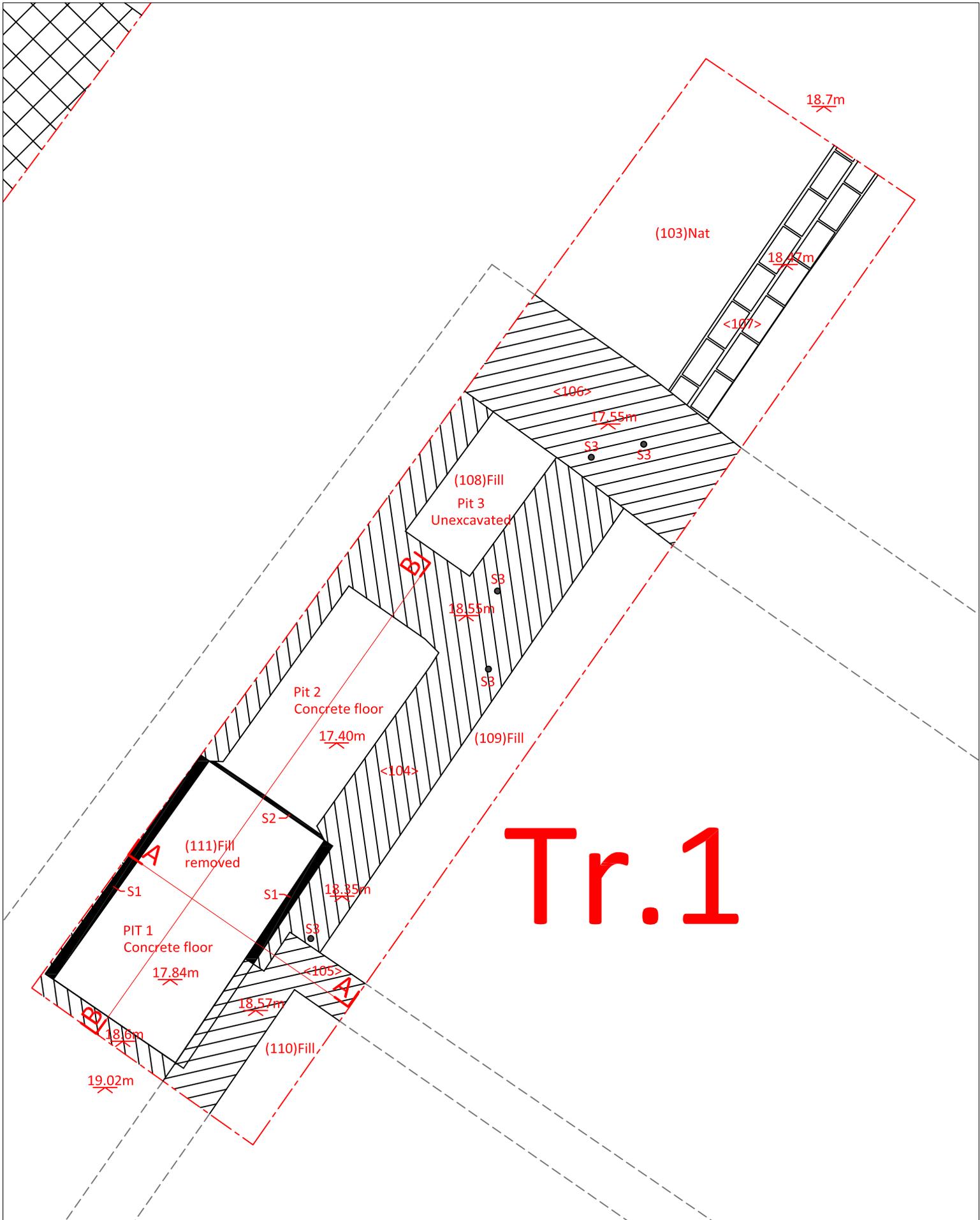
Figure 3: Trench location in relation to development



KEY:  
 — Trench  
 - - Mill outline from 1930 OS map  
 - - Extrapolated wall



*Figure 4: Trench plan*



**Tr.1**

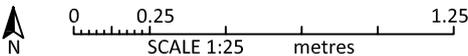


Figure 5: Trench location in relation to development

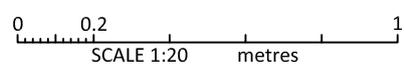
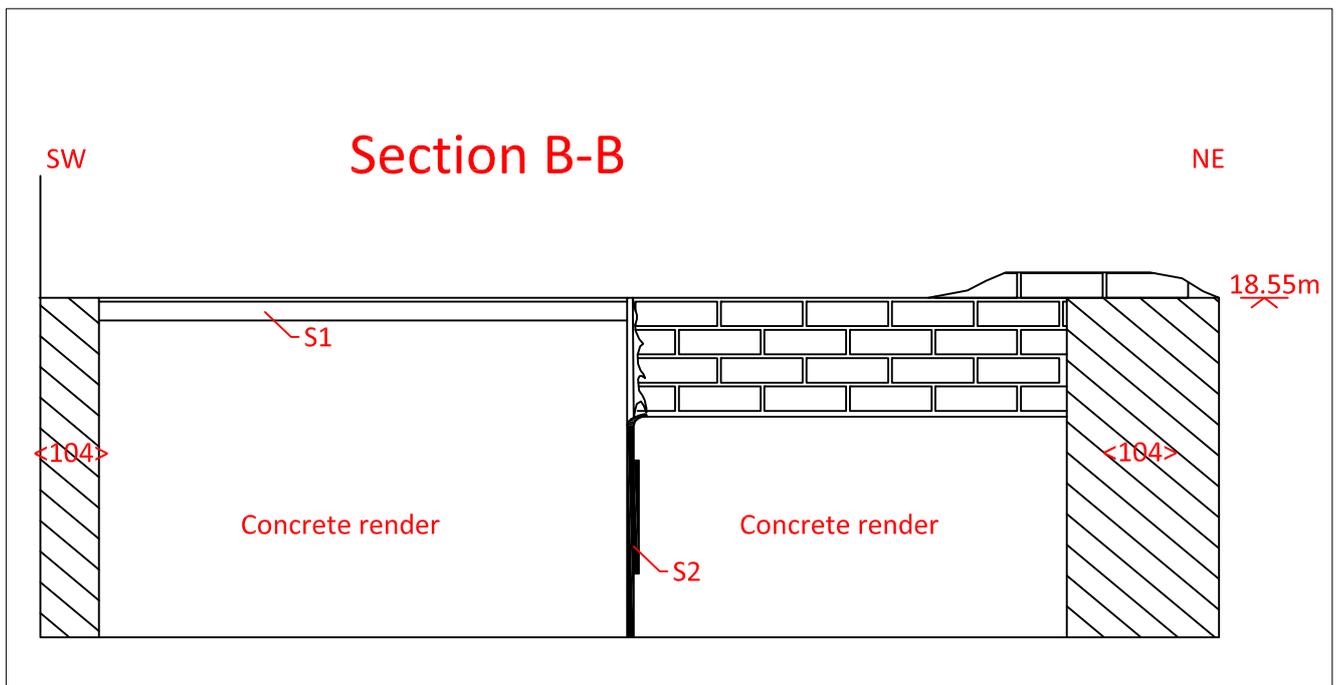
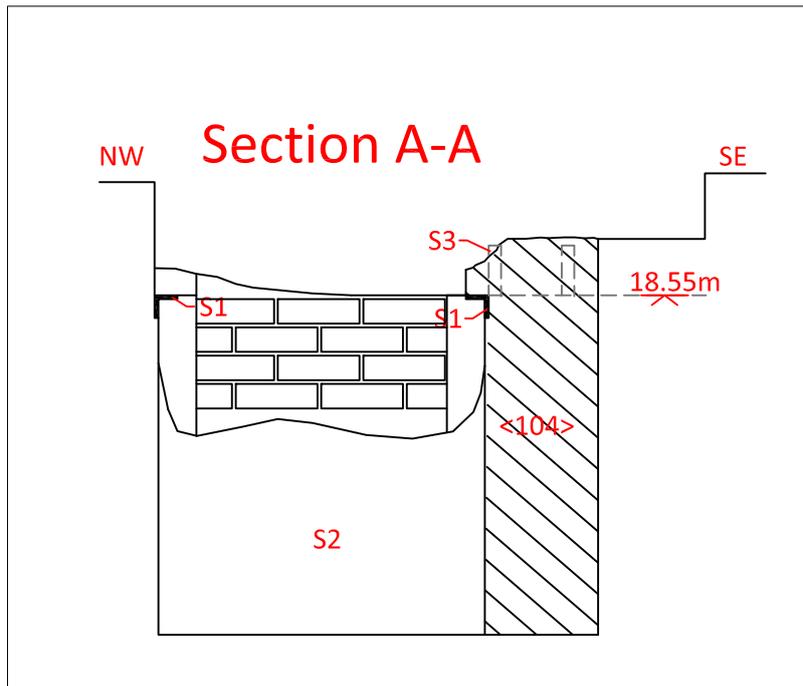


Figure 6: Sections exposed in Trench 1

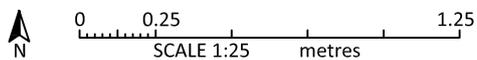
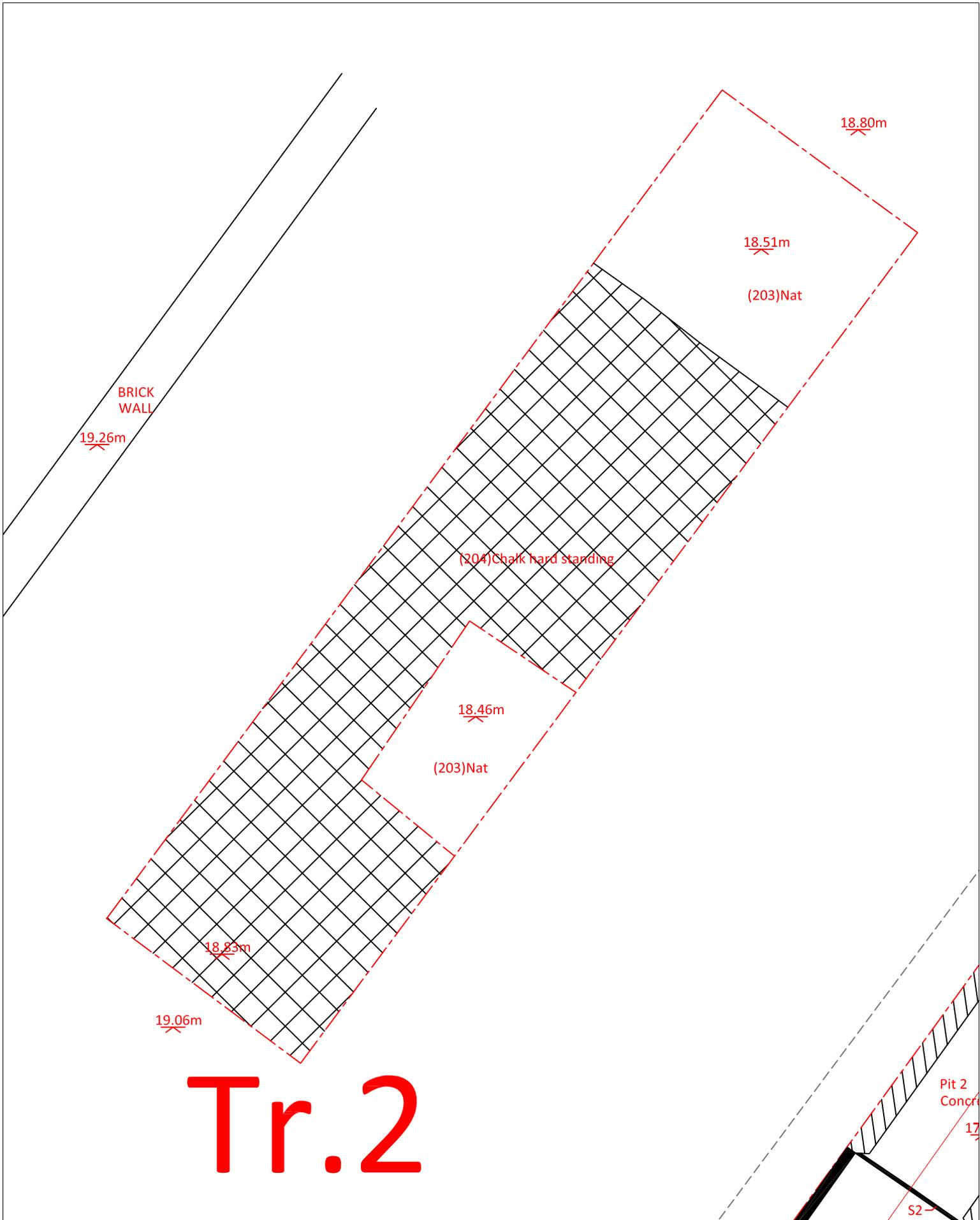


Figure 7: Trench 2

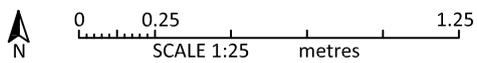
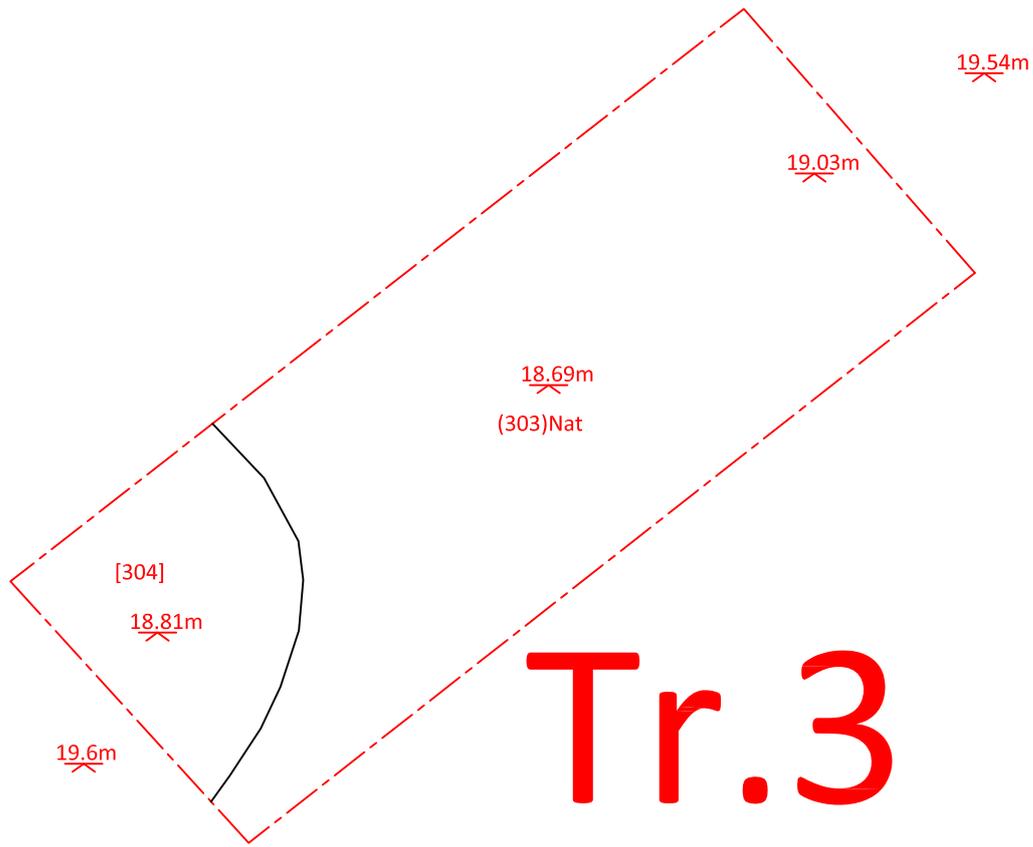


Figure 8: Trench 3



Plate 1: Showing the site, looking west with two- and one- metre scales.



Plate 2: Showing evaluation Trench 1. Looking southwest with one- and two-metres scales.



Plate 3: Showing evaluation Trench 1. Looking northeast with 0.5, one- and two-metres scales.



Plate 4: Showing details of underground compartment revealed in Trench 1. Looking northeast with half and one metre scales.



Plate 5: Showing details of underground compartment revealed in Trench 1. Looking northeast with half and one metre scales.



Plate 6: Showing evaluation Trench 2. Looking southwest with one and two metres scales.



Plate 7: A sondage excavated through platform composed of compacted chalk and demolition debris (204). Looking southeast, red and white segments on scales equals 0.1 and 0.2m.



Plate 8: Showing evaluation Trench 3. Looking southwest with half, one and two-metres scales.



Plate 9: Showing removed hard-standing revealed in Trench 2. Looking southwest with one metre scale.