

# Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Runhams Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1NH

Site Code: RFH-EV-23

NGR Site Centre: 587325 151329

Planning Application Number: MA/21/500564/FULL



Report for;  
Clarendon Homes  
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SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

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## **Summary**

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by Clarendon Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Runham Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1NH. The works have been carried out as part of a planning condition which required an archaeological evaluation in order to further characterise the potential archaeological impact from any proposed development. The archaeological programme was monitored by the Principal Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council.*

*The archaeological evaluation has been successful in evaluating the proposed development site for the possibility of archaeological remains. Despite the archaeological potential of the surrounding area no archaeological finds or features were present within any of the five trenches excavated. This was largely due to modern truncation associated with the construction of the original farm buildings within the centre of the site, although areas of peripheral land did remain intact.*

*The archaeological evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification and has assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Principal Archaeological Officer of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.*

# Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Runhams Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1NH

NGR Site Centre: 587325 151329

Site Code: RFH-EV-23

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by Clarendon Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at Runhams Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1NH (Figure 1).

1.1.2 A planning application (PAN: MA/21/500564/FULL) for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 4(No.) dwellings, incorporating environmental and visual enhancement scheme, was submitted to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of MBC, requested that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

1.1.3 The following conditions were attached to the planning consent:

*Prior to the commencement of development the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure and implement:*

- i. archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
- ii. following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded, and that due regard is had to the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains. Details are required prior to the commencement of development because ground works are involved.*

(MA/21/500564/FULL, Condition 13, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021)

1.1.4 The archaeological evaluation, which comprised the excavation of five trenches measuring up to 25m in length and 2m in width, was carried out over the course of a single day in December 2023 (see Table 1 below). The evaluation follows the submission of a desk-based assessment produced by RPS in 2020. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by SWAT Archaeology (2023), prior to commencement of works.

## 1.2 Timetable

1.2.1 A timetable for the archaeological programme of works, to date, is provided below;

<b>Task</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Personnel/Company</b>
Desk-Based Assessment	December 2020	RPS
Submission of the Written Scheme of Investigation	August 2023	SWAT Archaeology
Archaeological Evaluation – Fieldwork	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	SWAT Archaeology
Archaeological Evaluation Report	This document	SWAT Archaeology

Table 1 *Timetable for the archaeological programme of works*

## 1.3 Site Description and Topography

1.3.1 The site is centred on NGR 587325 151329 and with the boundary of a former agricultural yard, which included an access trackway, agricultural buildings (now demolished) and areas of hardstanding. The extent of the proposed development site measures approximately 3,605sq.m in area (Figure 1). The site is connected to Runham Lane via a winding concrete track past the farmhouse with the northern, southern, and eastern boundaries of the site being bordered by open pastoral land (Figure 1, Figure 2, and Plate 1).

1.3.2 Ground levels are relatively level within the site have clearly been landscaped and terraced, at a height of approximately 92m Ordnance Datum (OD), with the area surrounding the site ranging from 93m OD in the south sloping to 91m OD within the northern extent of the site.

1.3.3 Prior to the archaeological evaluation the site has been subject to demolition works removing all existing buildings, foundations, and access roads. Conditions were therefore very hazardous within the centre of the site due to the loose saturated overburden (Plate 1 and Plate 2).

1.3.4 The Geological Survey of Great Britain shows that the site is located on Hythe Formation-Sandstone and Limestone interbedded, with no superficial deposits being recorded.

## **1.4 Scope of Report**

- 1.4.1 This report has been produced to provide initial information regarding the results of the archaeological evaluation. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Senior Archaeological Officer (KCC) of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 The proposed development area is located close to a number of archaeological sites which are identified on the KCCHER database. The sole record of possible Palaeolithic origin in the study area is a handaxe retrieved during fieldwalking in 1995, approximately 700m east of the study site. A Neolithic struck flint was also recovered (TQ 85 SE 309/MKE78465 – TQ 8798 5121).
- 2.1.2 Approximately 750m ENE of the study site, a Late Mesolithic site with two large scatters of worked flint, two pits, and a feature of indeterminate function were found. The presence of a few early Neolithic diagnostic tools within the flint assemblage may suggest a degree of continuity between the two periods (TQ 85 SE 132/ MKE17519 – TQ 88010 51500).
- 2.1.3 Bronze Age features including a ditch, pit and hearth are recorded at Sandway Road, Lenham approximately 750m east of the study site (TQ 85 SE 131/ MKE17518 – TQ 88000 51500). The archaeological fieldwork at Sandy Road (750m east of the site) revealed a northwest/southeast aligned Late Iron Age or Early Roman ditch parallel to the Bronze Age ditch (TQ 85 SE 141/MKE17775 – TQ 8796 5155, EKE5151).
- 2.1.4 In 1978 seven vessels, including three Samian, one colour coated and two of glass, were found 400m south of the study site. They were within a sub-rectangular hole and are thought to have been part of a Roman cremation burial, though no trace of human remains were found (TQ 85 SE 57, TQ 87245100). Nearby excavations in 1980 identified further evidence of Roman activity that included a large wooden post-built structure, large quantities of 2nd century domestic refuse and quarried areas with patches of metalling (TQ 85 SE 312, TQ 8711 5104).
- 2.1.5 A probable Saxon/Early Medieval boundary earthwork is recorded approximately 600m south of the study site (TQ 85 SE 11, TQ 8731 5056). The Domesday Survey records Harrietsham as part of the land held by the Bishop Odo of Bayeux. In 1086 it was a large settlement of thirty-nine households, including 7 acres of meadow, woodland, two mills and a church (presumably the extant St John the Baptist church).

2.1.6 The HER records no Medieval findspots on the study site or wider study area.

## **2.2 Archaeological desk-Based Assessment (RPS 2021)**

2.2.1 The archaeological; desk-based assessment carried out by RPS suggested a low to moderate potential for Roman remains and a low potential for all other past periods of human activity.

2.2.2 Any such remains were considered to be most likely of Low/Local significance.

## **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **3.1 Introduction**

3.1.1 The specific objectives of the archaeological fieldwork were set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (SWAT Archaeology 2023; 6.1) as stated below;

- 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 Prehistoric, Roman, Early medieval, and later archaeological activity.

### **3.2 General Aims**

3.2.1 The general aims (or purpose) of the evaluation, in compliance with the ClfA *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), are to:

- provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and
- inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

### **3.3 General Objectives**

3.3.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation are to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;
- establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition, and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;

- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (SWAT Archaeology 2023) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2014).

### **4.2 Fieldwork**

4.2.1 The central area of the site presented a hazardous working environment where former buildings and foundations had previously been removed, it was therefore decided, in consultation with the Senior Archaeological Officer at KCC, that the central area of the site should be avoided as the chance of archaeological features surviving would be very low.

4.2.2 A total of five evaluation trenches were excavated out of an initial 11 trenches planned (Figure 3). Each trench was initially scanned by a metal detector for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 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.

4.2.3 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. 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.

4.2.4 On completion, the trenches were made safe and left open in order to provide the opportunity for a curatorial monitoring visit. Backfilling was carried out once all recording, survey, and monitoring had been completed.

### **4.3 Recording**

- 4.3.1 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 OD heights.
- 4.3.2 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 and drone photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.
- 4.3.3 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.).

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

- 5.1.1 All trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision. Trenches were positioned in order to cover as many areas of the site as possible as set out in the WSI. Relocation and re-orientation of the trenches was required when on-site obstacles were present.
- 5.1.2 The site, as shown on Figures 2 and Figure 3 provides the trench layout with Figure 4 and Figure 5 illustrating the results for each individual archaeological evaluation trench. Plates 1-7 consist of photographs of features and selected trenches that have been provided to supplement the text.
- 5.1.3 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence and contextual information for all trenches, with the location of Representative Sections provided on each Trench plan (Figures 3 and 4).

### **5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence**

- 5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across the majority of the site comprising topsoil sealing an intact subsoil, which overlay the natural geological drift deposits. Truncation of this sequence had occurred within Trench 2, Trench 3, and Trench 4 (see below).
- 5.2.2 The topsoil generally consisted of mid grey brown clay silt, moderate roots, and occasional small rounded stones, topped with grass/scrub, overlying the subsoil which consisted of light orange

brown silt. Natural geology largely comprised stiff mid orange, brown, silty clay (Hythe Formation).

### **5.3 Archaeological Narrative**

#### *Trench 1 (Figure 4, Plate 3)*

5.3.1 Within the western extent of the site (Figure 2), Trench 1 was excavated on an NW-SE alignment and measured approximately 17.86m in length, 2m in width with a maximum depth of 0.85m (Figure 4). Natural geological deposits were recorded at a level ranging between 91.05m OD and 91.98m OD. This trench was slightly relocated due to the presence of an overhead power line which limited the length of the trench.

5.3.2 No archaeological finds or features were present in Trench 1.

#### *Trench 2 (Figure 4, Plate 4)*

5.3.3 Trench 2 was located within the central eastern area of the site (Figure 2) and was excavated on a NW-SE alignment. This trench measured 25m in length, 2m in width and a maximum depth of 0.75m (Figure 3). Natural geological deposits were recorded at a level ranging between 90.97m OD and 92.01m OD.

5.3.4 The northwestern extent of this trench was moderately disturbed with modern crushed material sitting directly above the natural geological level. This trench was within the location of a former access road suggesting that the site had been reduced to at least natural levels during the construction of the existing farm buildings.

5.3.5 No archaeological finds or features were present in Trench 2.

#### *Trench 3 (Figure 4, Plate 5)*

5.3.6 Located within the northeastern corner of the site (Figure 2), Trench 3 measured 25m in length with a maximum depth of 0.45m. Natural geology was recorded at a level of 91.75m OD.

5.3.7 No archaeological finds were retrieved from Trench 3.

#### *Trench 4 (Figure 5, Plate 6)*

5.3.8 Within the northern extent of the site (Figure 2), Trench 4 was excavated on an NW-SE alignment and measured approximately 19m in length with a maximum depth of 0.27m. Natural geological deposits were recorded at a level ranging between 90.05m OD and 91.0m OD.

5.3.9 No archaeological finds or features were present in Trench 4.

### *Trench 5 (Figure 5, Plate 7)*

5.3.10 Trench 5 was located along the western boundary of the site on a NE-SW alignment. This trench measured 25m in length, 2m in width and a maximum depth of 0.63m (Figure 3). Natural geological deposits were recorded at a level ranging between 90.39m OD and 90.60m OD and consisted of a stiff blue clay.

5.3.11 No archaeological finds were retrieved from Trench 5.

## **6 FINDS**

### **6.1 Overview**

6.1.1 No archaeological finds were retrieved during this evaluation.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

### **7.1 Introduction**

7.1.1 The archaeological investigation at Runham Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, in Kent has investigated the extents of the proposed development area using five trenches, measuring up to 25m in length and 2m in width. The natural geology was encountered within all trenches at an average depth of approximately 0.59m below the existing ground surface, directly underlying subsoil and topsoil. Around the northern periphery of the site partial truncation of the upper geological surface had occurred, most likely following the construction of the former farmyard. Within the central area of the site truncation was severe due to the construction of former foundations.

7.1.2 The southeast corner of the site (Trench 1) did show favourable preservation conditions with deeper subsoil, most likely colluvial derived, surviving below the undisturbed topsoil.

### **7.2 Archaeological Narrative**

7.2.1 A total area of the site for evaluation measured 4,058sq.m within a site boundary measuring 8,695sq.m, with the unavailable truncated area measuring approximately 2,090sq.m. The five trenches excavated covered an area of approximately 210sq.m giving an evaluation sample size of 10.6%.

7.2.2 Despite the archaeological potential of the site no archaeological finds or features were recorded within any of the trenches. The recording of an intact subsoil around the periphery of the site suggested that preservation conditions are reasonably favourable beyond the extent of former buildings.

### **7.3 Conclusions**

7.3.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification and has assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Senior Archaeological Officer of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

## **8 ARCHIVE**

### **8.1 General**

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

8.1.2 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 and A4 graphics. The Site Archive will be retained at SWAT Archaeology offices until such time it can be transferred to a Kent Museum.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

9.1.1 SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Mr Phillip Chandler (Technical Coordinator) at Clarendon Homes for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council, for her advice and assistance.

9.1.2 David Britchfield BA (Hons) MCIfA carried out the archaeological fieldwork; illustrations were produced by Ravelin Archaeological Services. David Britchfield produced the draft text for this report. The Project Manager for the project was Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA, FRSA of SWAT Archaeology.

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SWAT Archaeology (2023) *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Runhams Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1NH*

11 APPENDIX 1 – TRENCH TABLES

<b>Trench 1</b> <b>Dimensions: 17.86m x 2m Average Depth: 0.85m</b> <b>Ground Level: 91.90m OD – 92.83m OD</b>			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
(101)	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt, moderate roots and occasional rounded stones topped with grass/scrub.	0.00-0.35
(102)	Subsoil	Light orange brown silt.	0.35-0.85
(103)	Natural	Mid orange brown silt clay with moderate angular stone (Hythe Formation).	0.85+

<b>Trench 2</b> <b>Dimensions: 25m x 2m Average Depth: 0.75m</b> <b>Ground Level: 91.72m OD – 92.76m OD</b>			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
(201)	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt, moderate roots and occasional rounded stones topped with grass/scrub.	0.00-0.45
(202)	Subsoil	Light orange brown silt.	0.45-0.75
(203)	Natural	Mid orange brown silt clay with moderate angular stone (Hythe Formation).	0.75+

<b>Trench 3</b> <b>Dimensions: 19.27m x 2m Average Depth: 0.45m</b> <b>Ground Level: 91.88m OD – 92.10m OD</b>			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
(301)	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt, moderate roots and occasional rounded stones topped with grass/scrub.	0.00-0.20
(302)	Subsoil	Light orange brown silt.	0.20-0.45
(303)	Natural	Mid orange brown silt clay with moderate angular stone (Hythe Formation).	0.45+

<b>Trench 4</b> <b>Dimensions: 19.00m x 2m Average Depth: 0.27m</b> <b>Ground Level: 90.33m OD – 91.16m OD</b>			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
(401)	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt, moderate roots and occasional rounded stones topped with grass/scrub.	0.00-0.10
(402)	Subsoil	Light orange brown silt.	0.10-0.27
(403)	Natural	Mid orange brown silt clay with moderate angular stone (Hythe Formation).e	0.27+

<b>Trench 5</b>			
<b>Dimensions:</b> 25m x 2m <b>Depth:</b> 0.63m			
<b>Ground Level:</b> 90.70m OD – 91.02m OD			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
(501)	Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt, moderate roots and occasional rounded stones topped with grass/scrub.	0.00-0.23
(502)	Subsoil	Light orange brown silt.	0.23-0.63
(503)	Natural	Stiff clean blue grey clay.	0.63+

**12 APPENDIX 2 – HER FORM**

**Site Name:** Land at Runham Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1NH

**SWAT Site Code:** RFH-EV-223

**Site Address:** As above

**Summary.** *Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by Clarendon Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Runham Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1NH. The works have been carried out as part of a planning condition which required an archaeological evaluation in order to further characterise the potential archaeological impact from any proposed development.*

*The archaeological evaluation has been successful in evaluating the proposed development site for the possibility of archaeological remains. Despite the archaeological potential of the surrounding area no archaeological finds or features were present within any of the five trenches excavated. This was largely due to modern truncation associated with the construction of the original farm buildings within the centre of the site. Areas of periphery land did remain intact.*

**District/Unitary:** Maidstone City Council & Kent County Council

**Period(s):** prehistoric, modern

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** NGR **587325 151329**

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date of recording:** December 2023

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

**Geology:** Hythe Formation

**Title and author of accompanying report:** D Britchfield (2023) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Runham Farm, Runham Lane, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1NH. SWAT Archaeology Ref. RFH-EV-2023

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

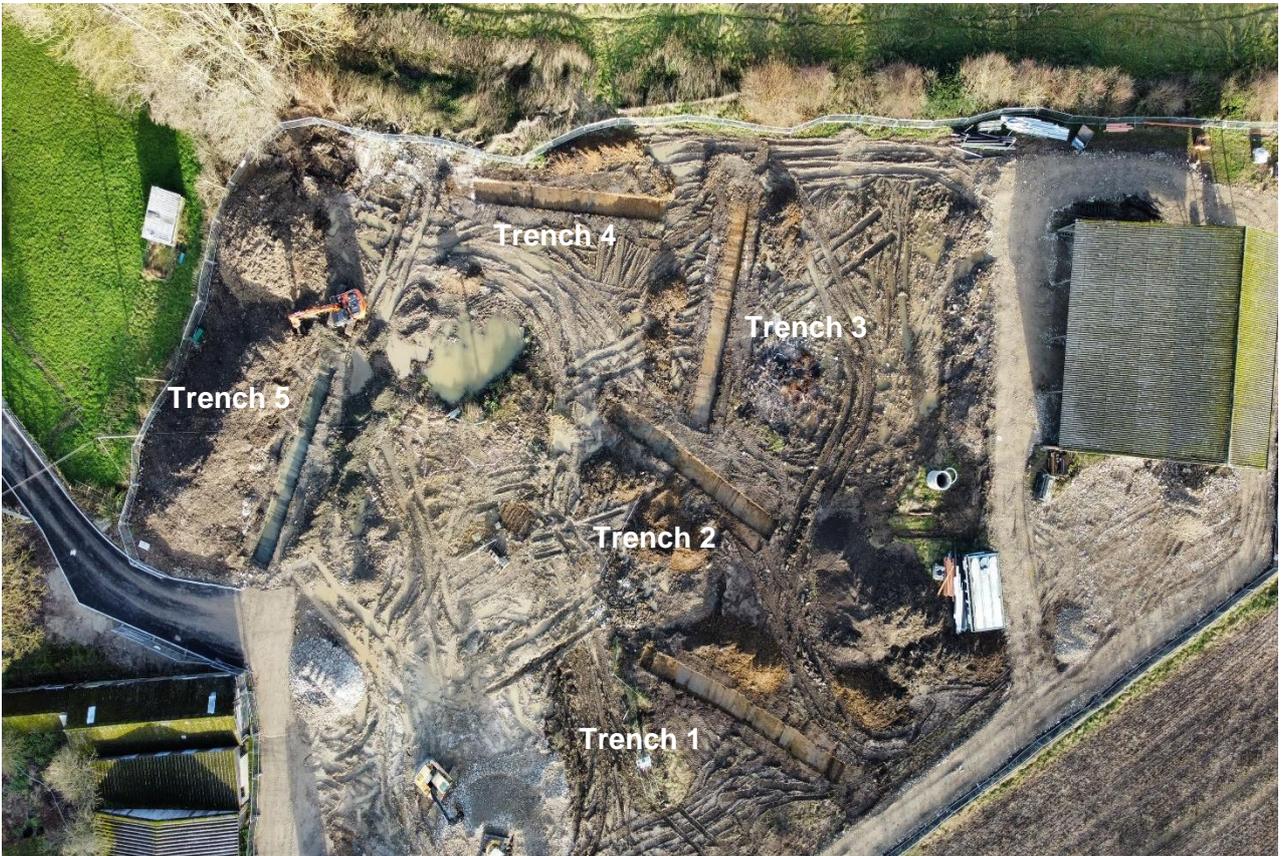
**Contact at Unit:** Paul Wilkinson

**Date:** 21/12/2023

## PLATES



*Plate 1 Aerial view of the development site, taken obliquely*



*Plate 2 Aerial view of the development area*



Plate 3 Trench 1, viewed from the southeast (left) and northwest (right)



Plate 4 Trench 2, viewed from the southeast (left) and northwest (right) NOTE: access meant northwest view taken obliquely.



*Plate 5 Trench 3, viewed from the south (left) and north (right)*



*Plate 6 Trench 4, viewed from the northeast*



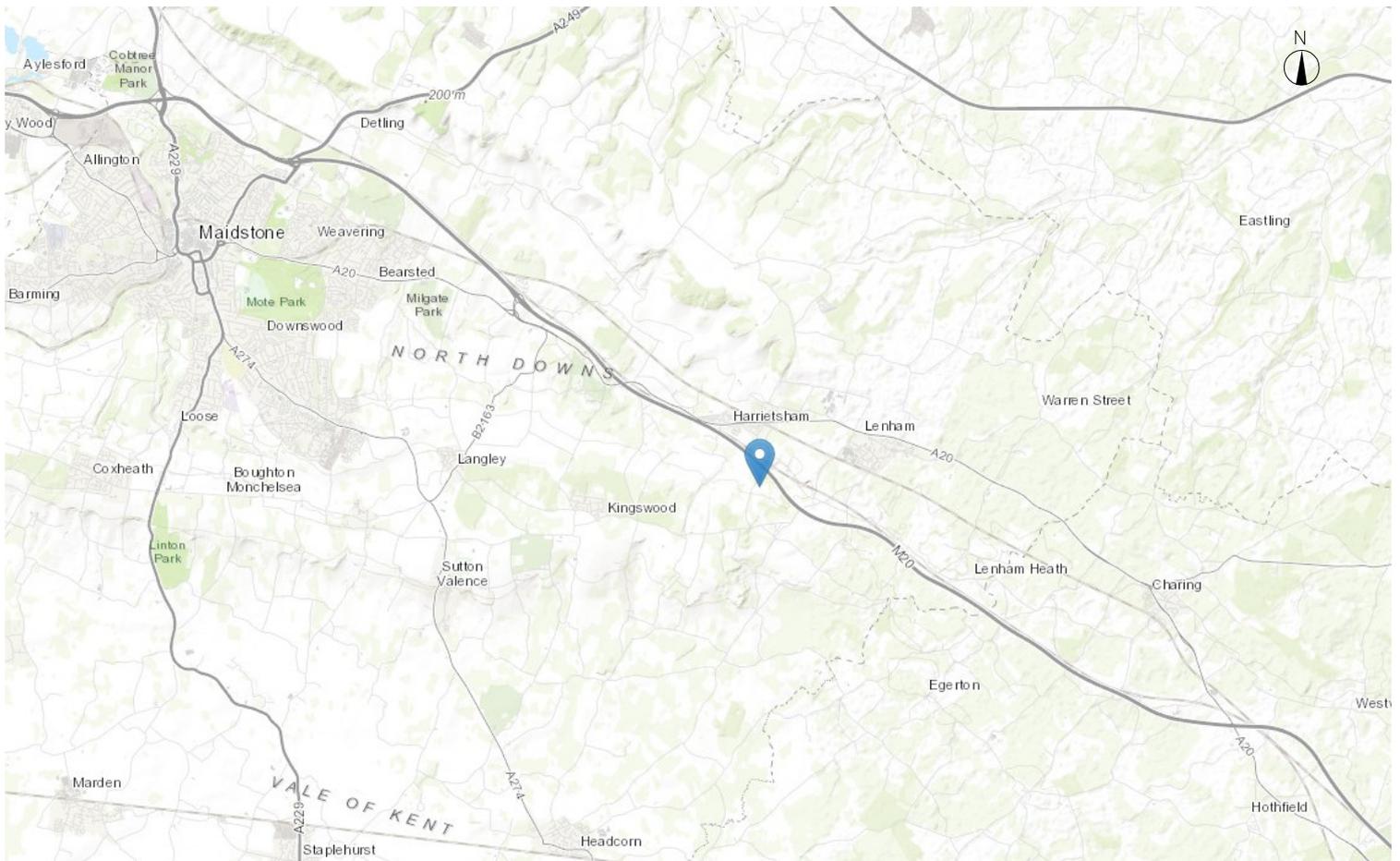
*Plate 7 Trench 5, viewed from the southwest. Note the disturbed, lower ground immediately to the east*



Map of UK (NTS)



Map of Kent (NTS)



Courtesy of National Library of Scotland

Figure 1 Site Location Plan

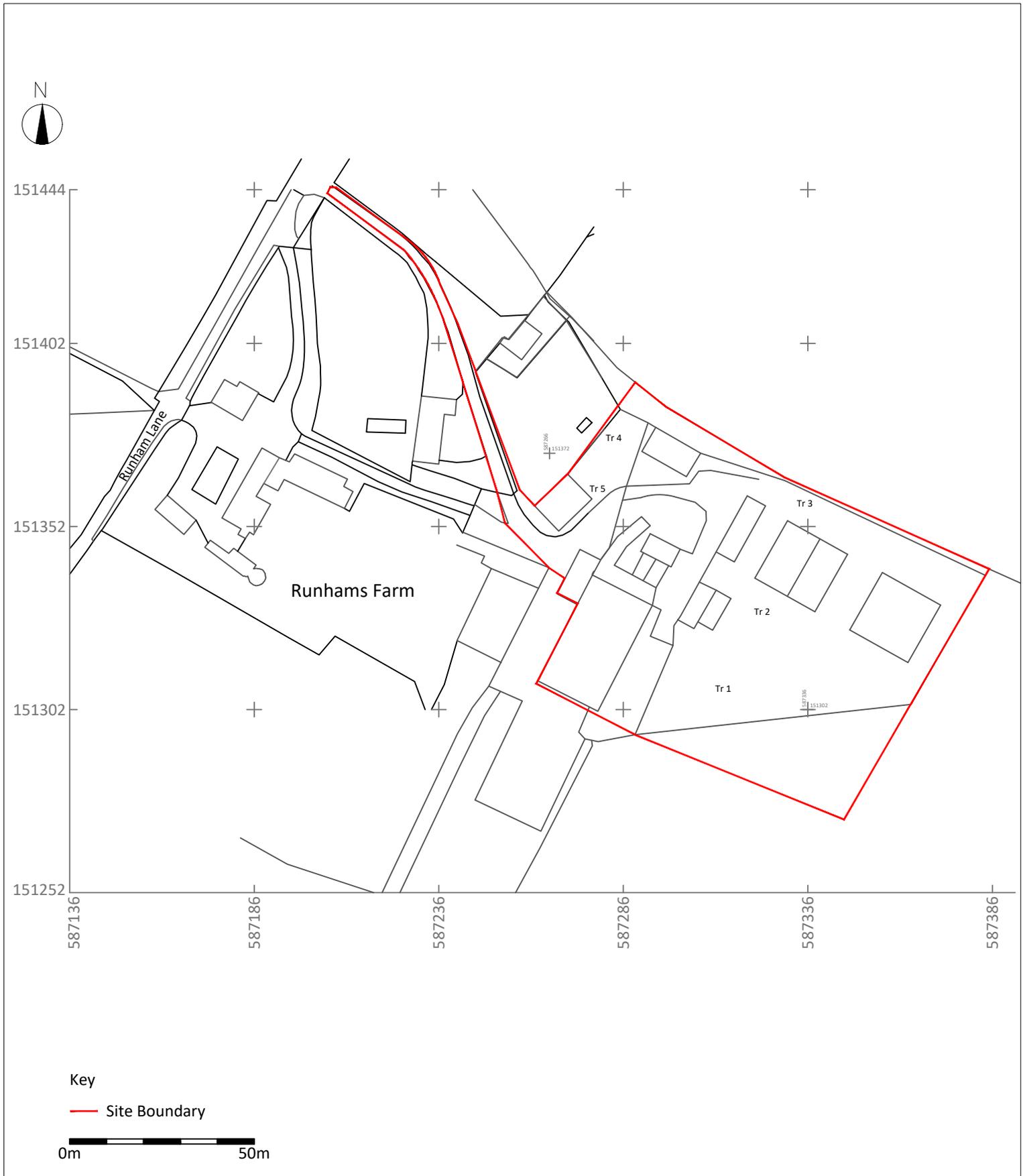


Figure 2 Site plan

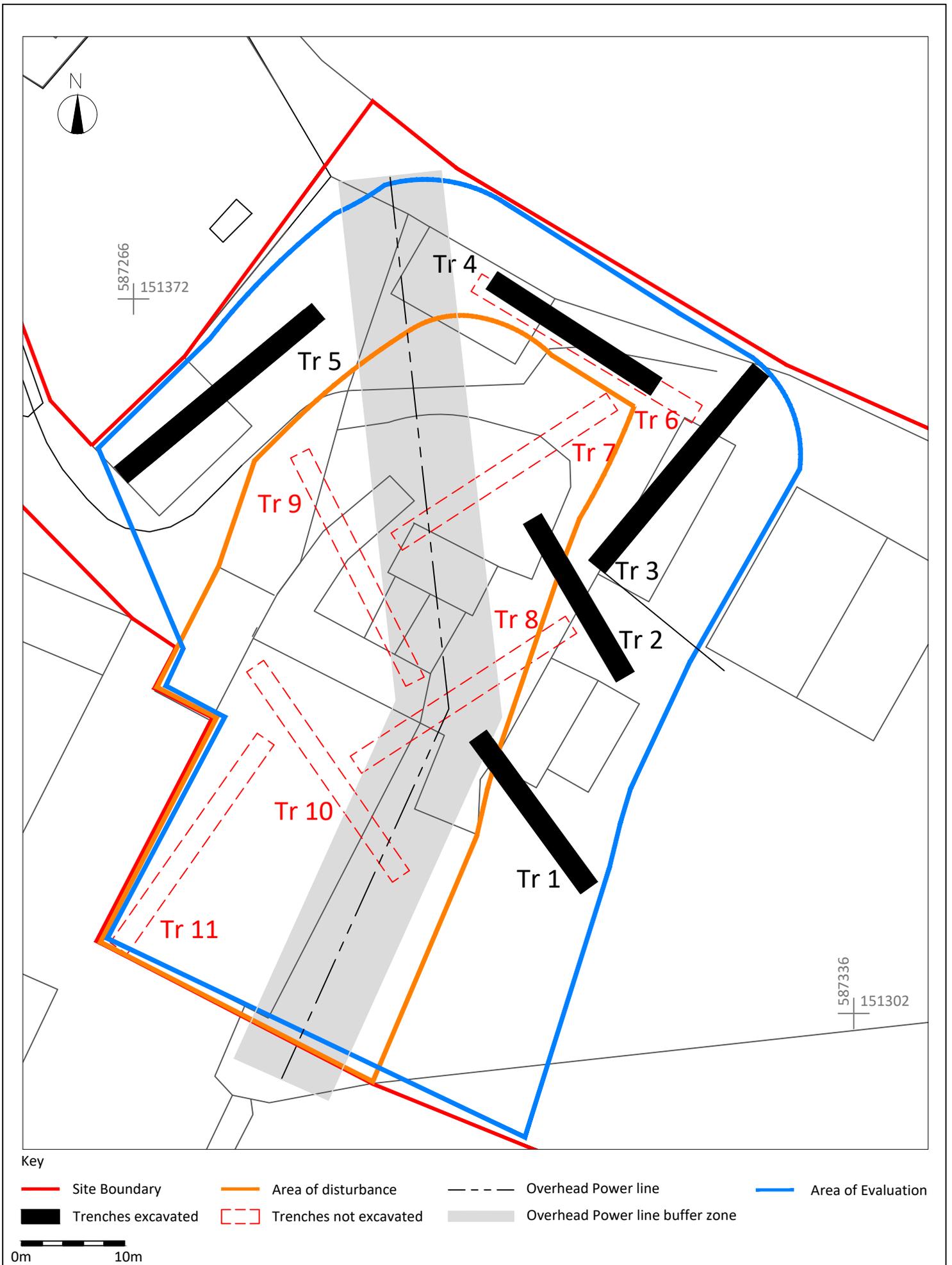


Figure 3 Trench Location Plan

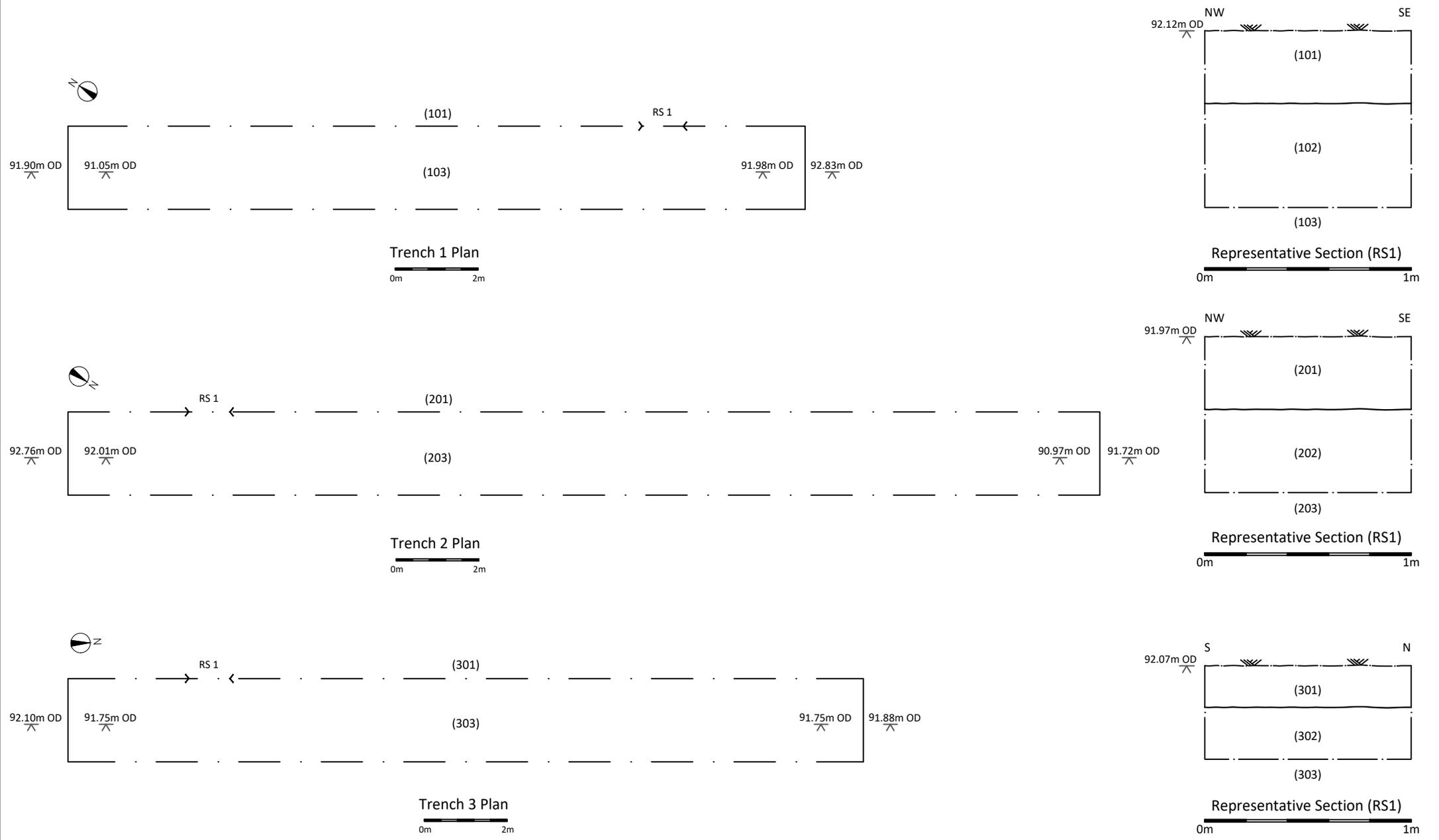


Figure 4 Trench 1 to 3 Details

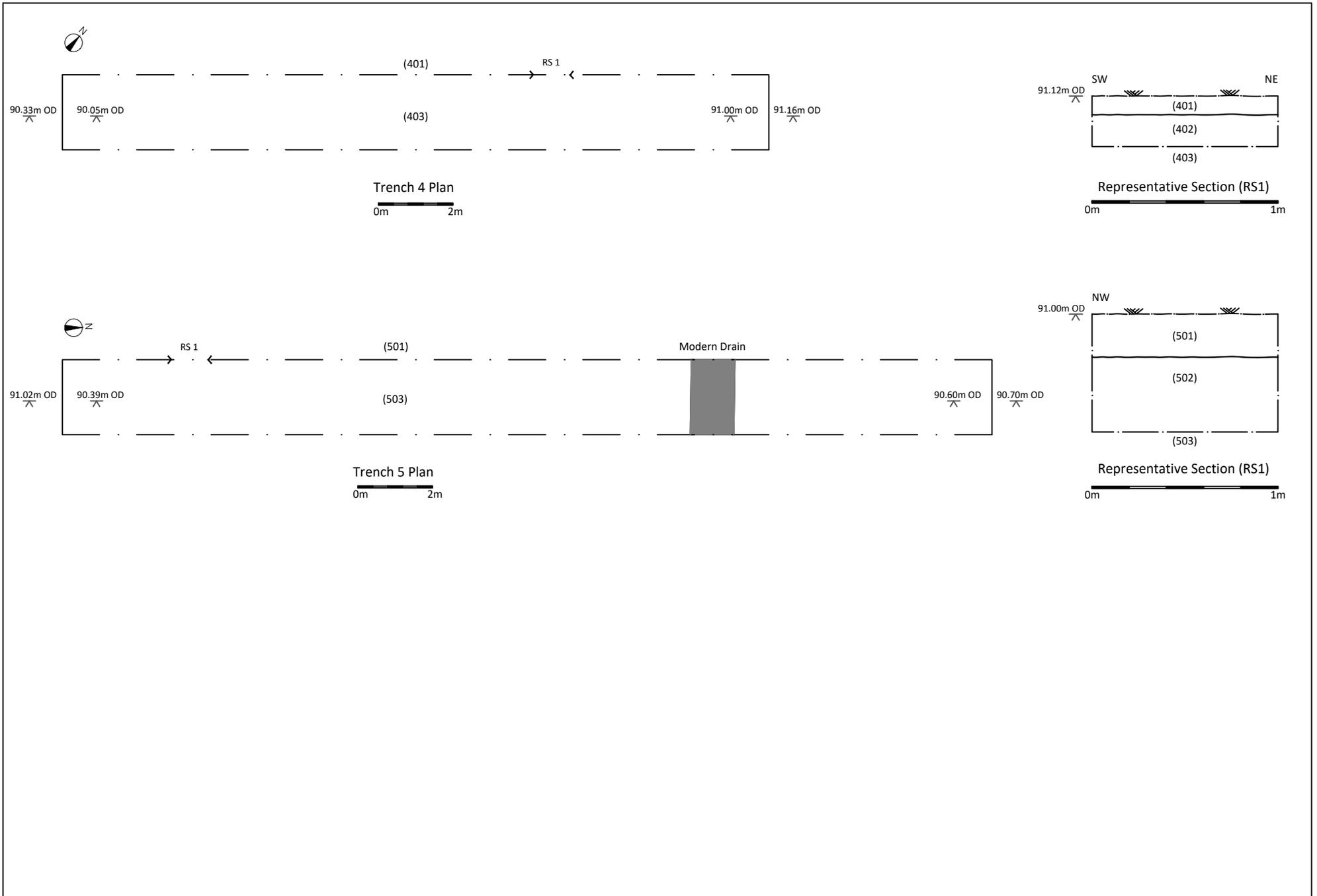


Figure 5 Trench 4 to 5 Details