



**Archaeological Assessment at
Clayhanger Hall, Marley Lane, Chislet,
Kent
*April 2011***

SWAT. Archaeology
Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company
School Farm Oast, Graveney Road
Faversham, Kent
ME13 8UP
Tel: 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112
www.swatarchaeology.co.uk

Archaeological Assessment of Land at Clayhanger Hall, Marley Lane, Chislet, Kent

NGR TR 2165 6403
Site Code: CHC 11
Planning Application: CA/10/01508/FUL

Report for
Clague LLP



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School Farm Oast, Graveney Road
Faversham, Kent
ME13 8UP

Tel; 01975 532548 or 07885 700 112
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SUMMARY

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological assessment of land at Clayhanger Hall, Marley Lane, Chislet, Kent. A planning application (CA/10/01508/FUL) for the construction of extensions to the Grade II Listed building was submitted to Canterbury City Council (CCC) whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological Assessment be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the building work on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with consultations with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Canterbury City Council.*

The archaeological investigation consisted of three (3) test pits targeting areas to be impacted upon by the building extensions. Test Pit 1 (TP1) was placed along the western side of the dwelling, south of the timber-clad conservatory. Test Pit 2 (TP2) was placed at the northern end of the building, and Test Pit 3 (TP3) was placed at the far southern end of the house. Originally, only Test Pits 2 and 3 were marked for evaluation, but after consultation with the Heritage Officer, (CCC), it was decided that a third test pit be placed at the back of the property where the conservatory was planned for extension. In addition, the original 1m x 1m Test Pit 2 was extended to take in the whole extension at the northern end of the house.

Test Pit 3 revealed a possible pit [318] which contained pottery dated to LM c.1450-1525AD. Test Pits 1 and 2 contained post Medieval pottery and brick contemporary with the latter occupation of Clayhanger Hall. The Archaeological Assessment has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives set by the Heritage Officer in an Archaeological Memorandum dated 13 October 2010.

INTRODUCTION

Swale and Thanet Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Clague LPP to carry out an archaeological assessment at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with consultation with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Canterbury City Council. The assessment was carried out between the 10th and the 15th of March 2011.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY

Clayhanger Hall, in the hamlet of Chislet Forstal, is situated along Marley Lane which links the villages of Hoath and Chislet, and is roughly 0.45 kilometres southwest of Chislet village. Situated approximately 23m OD on relatively level ground, this Grade II* Listed dwelling with 14th century origins is surrounded by manicured lawns, horse paddocks and bordered at its eastern boundary by a drain leading from a pond at the northeast corner of the property. According to the British Geological Survey, the area lies on London Clay Formation of Clay and Silts with no recorded drift or superficial geology. During the assessment, all three test pits were excavated to the exposed natural drift geology which was composed of mid orange-brown clay silts (brickearth).

PLANNING

Planning application CA/10/01508/FUL, for which permission was given for extensions to the Grade II* Listed property, was granted by Canterbury City Council (CCC) whereby the Heritage Officer requested that an archaeological assessment be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any existing archaeology. In a Memorandum dated 13 October 2010 the Local Authority placed the following recommendation on the planning consent:

“An assessment of the potential impact of the proposed extensions on buried archaeological features and deposits needs to be undertaken. This should include ground investigations to evaluate the presence/absence of archaeological remains and determine their character and date and importance if present. Given the regional importance of the building and its Grade II designation this should be carried out prior to determination of the application. The assessment should consider alternative building and foundation designs such as timber-framing on raft foundations to lessen the potential impact.”*

Notes from the Memorandum also mention:

“The proposed alterations and additions to the new boiler store on the south-east elevation and extension on the north-west elevation will involve new building. This may impact on buried archaeological remains related to the original construction and occupancy of the buildings, and/or relate to earlier occupancy or activity on the site.”

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Hall

Clayhanger Hall, also referred to as Tudor House, was first built between 1370 and 1400 and consisted of a two bay, the storey lower end cross wing originally jettied at the front and rear. This is the southern end of the property as it stands today. The hipped roof survives at the rear of the dwelling, supported by an overhanging plate and tie beam, but the hipped roof has been destroyed at the front. The interior contains a crown post, but any evidence of the original location of the staircase and the hall range has not survived. The second phase of construction, which was added to the northern side of the dwelling, continued from 1450 to

1480 and consisted of an open two bay hall of Wealden type. Internal features included a carved crown post that survives today and is a noted feature of the house, the front door with a four-centred arch head and a dated oriel window from 1637.

HER Data

TR 26 SW 26 / NGR TR 2165 6403

Listed Building – Grade II* Tudor house, hall-house c.1440

Original listed building designation: “Hall-house of Wealden form circa 1440, with chimney and ceiling over open hall inserted circa 1500 and porches and bay added in 1637. Timber-framed building with plaster infilling, the end window bays of the first floor oversailing on the protruding ends of the floor joists and with brackets and curved braces. The recessed centre has curved braces supporting the overhanging eaves. Steeply- pitched hipped tiled roof with C16 link chimneystack. Three casement windows. The centre portion has a two storeyed bay dated 1637 and added then, of which the first floor has decorative black and white scrollwork and the date and the ground floor has been rebuilt in modern red brick. To the south of this is a red brick porch, also added in 1637, with round-headed archway and shaped Dutch gable. Chimneybreast on each end wall. Behind the porch is the original wooden door surround with blank spandrels. The interior contains two inglenook fireplaces and an original stone fireplace with blank spandrels, upright posts with jowls, embattled beam to former open-hall, one square crownpost of circa 1440, an octagonal moulded crownpost of later date, smoke blackened rafters, original doors and some panelling in an upstairs room. Grade II* as a good example of a Wealden hall-house with exceptional interior features.”

TR 26 SW 61 / NGR TR 2142 6399

Curvilinear features – Undated fragments of a track and curvilinear features.

TR 26 SW 62 / NGR TR 2125 6418

Curvilinear enclosure – Undated, possible oval enclosure in two parts and rectilinear features.

TR 26 SW 63 / NGR TR 2146 6443

Ring ditches and linear feature – Large ring ditch with smaller ring ditch to the east and a possible short length of trackway.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the assessment, as set out in the Memorandum is listed above. In addition, in consultation with the Heritage Officer, Canterbury City Council (CCC), the targeting of specific areas impacted upon by the new extensions would include three test pits in an attempt to identify, characterise and date, if possible, any existing archaeological features at risk of destruction during subsequent ground works.

METHODOLOGY

Between the 10th and the 15th of March 2011 three trial pits were hand dug in locations approved by the Heritage Officer (CCC) prior to excavation in the back garden of the property. Due to limited access, machine excavation was impossible, and soil removal was limited to

mattock and shovel for the removal of topsoil and overburden. Upon further consultation with the Heritage Officer it was decided to extend Test Pit 2 (TP2) at the northeast end of the house to include the entire area targeted for extension. All three areas were then hand cleaned and 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. Each trial pit was assigned its own unique numbering system.

MONITORING

Site visits by the Heritage Officer (CCC) were carried out on March 8th and 15th 2011.

RESULTS

The upper layer in all three trial pits consisted of topsoil of varying depths depending on the pit which covered a variety of soils including a possible construction layer **(102)** in TP1, garden soils with tips of ash **(202)** in TP2 and redeposited brickearth **(304)** in TP3. All the test pits were located in the back garden of the property, and access was through narrow garden gates limiting the use of mechanical machinery.

Test Pit 1

(1.20m x 1m x <0.56m)

Test Pit 1 was added to the assessment after consultation with the Heritage Officer on March 8th, as the conservatory extension to the area now covered by paving slabs southeast of a small weather boarded room would possibly impact on surviving archaeology. The paving slabs were removed to expose a thin layer up to 0.05m thick of topsoil **(101)**. Cutting the topsoil was a very modern small pit **[107]** filled by **(106)**. Another modern pit **[104]** sealed by **(101)** measured approximately 0.62m in diameter and up to 0.40m deep, and was filled by a dark humic, possible garden soil **(106)** which contained modern brick and fragments of concrete. Pit **[107]** cut **(102)**, a mid brown grey clay silt up to 0.42m thick that contained frequent small chalk nodules and frequent fragments of ceramic building material (cbm). The excavating archaeologist interpreted this deposit as a possible disturbed construction layer, most likely of post Medieval date. However, pottery analysis by Nigel MacPhearson-Grant has dated (101) as LPM c.1780-1825AD. Below this layer was the natural drift deposit **(105)** consisting of mid orange brown silty clay (brickearth) containing occasional gravel. No other archaeological features were seen in this pit.

Test Pit 2

(1m x 1m x <0.50m, extended to 2.50m x 1.90m x <0.5m)

Test Pit 2 was placed at the extreme northeast end of the dwelling and was originally 1m square. After consultation with the Heritage Officer, it was deemed necessary to extend the test pit to incorporate the entire area targeted for the building extension. In the original pit the topsoil **(201)** was up to 0.30m deep and covered a 0.05m thick lens of dark silvery grey black ash with flecks of coke and other burnt, possible garden debris **(202)**. This burnt lens partially covered a 0.18m thick mid to dark brown sandy silty clay deposit containing rare gravel and

cbm (203), and is most likely a modern subsoil layer. Natural silty clay (204) was exposed below the subsoil. The extended test pit exposed an area containing a concrete base at least 1.60m long and 1.30m wide. A strong smell of hydrocarbons was noticed in this area along with dark staining of the soil, a possible indication of contamination from a fuel pipe for heating oil that was disconnected when demolition work in the boiler room commenced. A small sub-square pit [206] measuring approximately 0.50m sq. was exposed cutting the subsoil and contained modern material including coke. No other features were visible in the extended pit, and no cultural material of significant age was observed. Pottery retrieved dates from c.1825-1900 (N,M, Grant).

Test Pit 3

(1m x 1m x <0.40m, extended to <2.05m x 1m x < 0.50m)

Test Pit 3 was placed in the far southwest corner of the dwelling where a new doorway is to be constructed. The area contained a modern curved brick sub wall for a small garden bed. The pit was extended to the west to incorporate as much of the area within the bed as possible. The original pit exposed topsoil (301) up to 0.25m thick covering a thin lens of modern brick rubble (303), some fragments of which were covered in thick red paint. The main deposit (304) below the topsoil consisted of mid grey brown silty clay, possibly redeposited brickearth, up to 0.15m thick with rare charcoal flecks and cbm. Cutting this deposit in the northern corner of the test pit was a pit [318] or tip of mid brown grey silty clay (305) up to 0.13m thick containing rare carbon flecks, cbm and pottery sherds. These sherds were LM dating about c.1450-1525AD. This layer/deposit was removed to expose two shallow stake holes, (306)[307] and (308)[309] cutting the natural drift deposit (310). Due to the limited area exposed, it is difficult to give a positive interpretation of the possible pit [218] or the stake holes [307] [309], but stratigraphically, the stake holes date from before deposit/fill (305), the only deposit that produced reliable dating material, and deposit (304), the layer cut by [318]. The extended area of Test Pit 3 revealed two postholes or small pits in the southwest end of the test pit, partially covered by the brick stub wall and under the gravel garden path. Posthole/pit [315], in the western corner, cut deposit (304), but was filled with post Medieval brick and roof tile sherds. Pit/posthole [317] was located under a two course row of unbonded placed half-bricks (312) set partially into deposit (314), the fill of posthole [317]. These modern bricks could be residual material from the construction of the stub wall. The stratigraphic sequence places both of these features below the stub wall and their placement along the border of the garden bed could indicate an earlier planting theme of shrubs predating the brick wall, though an accurate date is not forthcoming due to the lack of definitive dating material.

FINDS

Only Test Pit 3 produced cultural material that was not from the modern or post-Medieval period. The pit fill/or deposit (305) contained eight sherds of Late Medieval pottery dating from c.1450-1525AD.

DISCUSSION

Clayhanger Hall, like many dwellings of considerable age, has seen centuries of alterations which are apparent even when viewed externally. These alterations, including landscaping, have possibly impacted on archaeological features at the rear of the premises. Test Pit 1 abutted a small post Medieval weather boarded extension. Test Pit 2 was centred on the demolished modern boiler room, where a concrete base 1.60m x 1.30m survived in situ. The construction of this base and the foundations of the room most likely truncated the natural geology **(105)**. Test Pit 3 provided the only relatively untouched area within the archaeological assessment. Due to its location at the far end of the house, tucked away in the southwest corner, the only disturbance was small scale landscaping in the form of the 20th century curved brick stub wall for the plant bed. This southern end of Clayhanger was the original 14th century range, and it survived relatively unscathed by later alterations and extensions to the northern end of the property. It was this test pit that provided the only artefacts of Medieval date, pottery sherds from the 13th century, found within a pit **[318] (305)**. Only a small area of this feature was exposed during the assessment, as the rest either lies undisturbed under the corner of the house or most likely was destroyed during the construction of the first phase of the hall. Below pit **[318]** and the deposit it cut, **(304)**, were two surviving stake holes **[307]** and **[309]**. Though heavily truncated, surviving to a depth of no more than 0.06m, it is possible that these stake holes could have been part of scaffolding used during the construction for the first floor of the hall.

Small scale assessments and evaluations provide archaeologists with a keyhole view of areas deemed at risk from development, but one must be cautious of misinterpretation of features exposed during these schemes. Two stake holes do not equate to a scaffolding system, (nor do two postholes equate to a dwelling). This assessment at Clayhanger will not progress to a higher level of archaeological mitigation which would possibly clarify the interpretation of the exposed features as is often the case when evaluations preclude strip, map and sample or full excavation. Therefore identification and interpretation of the features in Test Pit 3 will have to remain tentative.

CONCLUSION

The archaeological assessment has been successful in fulfilling the aims and objectives mentioned in the Memorandum and in consultation with the Heritage Officer, Canterbury City Council. A common stratigraphic sequence was identified across the site consisting of topsoil overlaying a variety of silty clays over natural drift deposits of brickearth. Archaeological features of Medieval date were identified in Test Pit 3 which was located in a relatively undisturbed part of the property. No other archaeological features were encountered. This archaeological mitigation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Julie Martin

April 2011

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Maps

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Ordnance Survey 3rd Edition (1907-1923)

Ordnance Survey 4th Edition (1929-1952)

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Kent Landscape Information System <http://extranet7.kent.gov.uk/klis/home.htm>

Exploring Kent's Past <http://www.extranet7.krnt.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/>

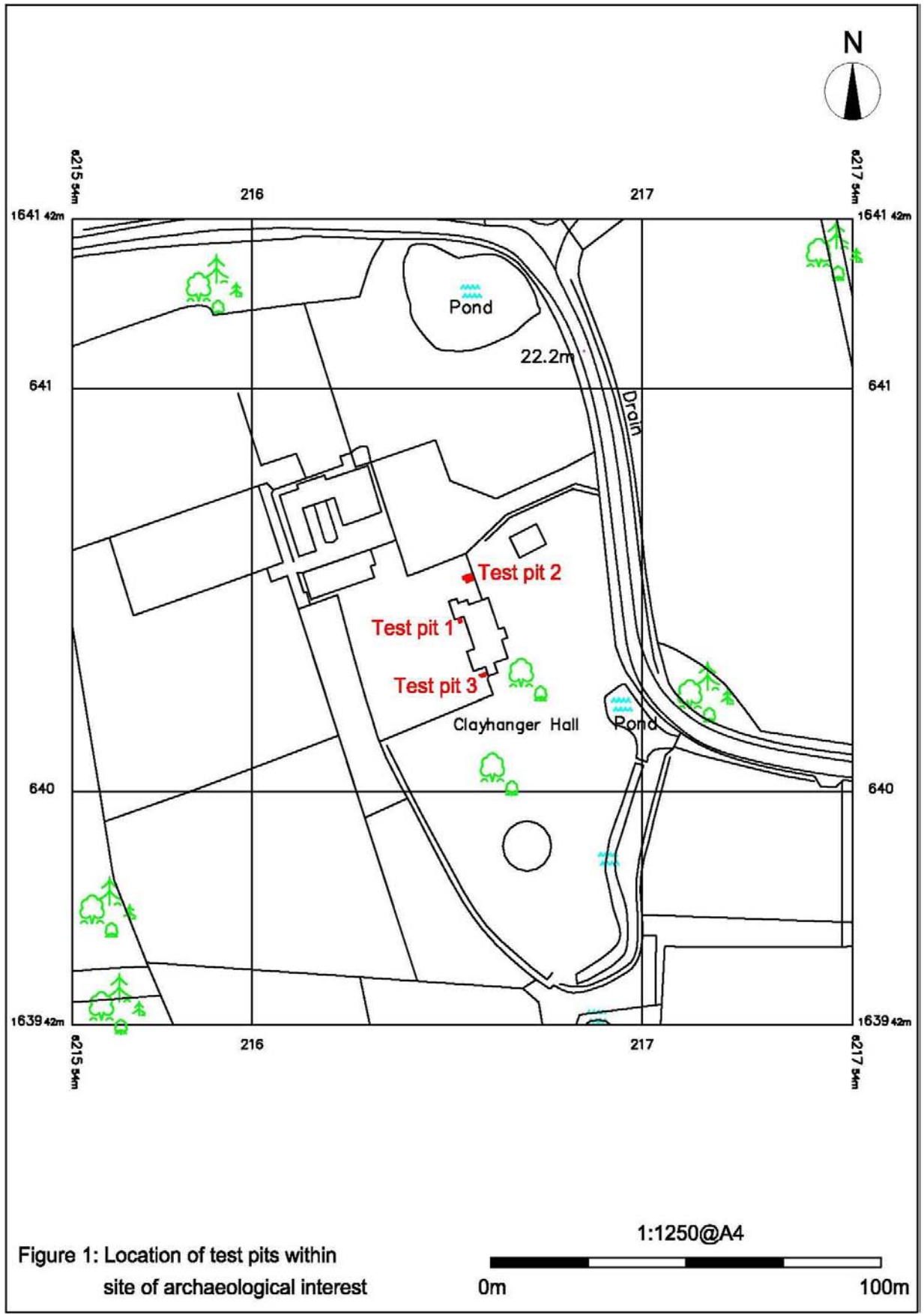


Figure 1: Location of test pits within site of archaeological interest

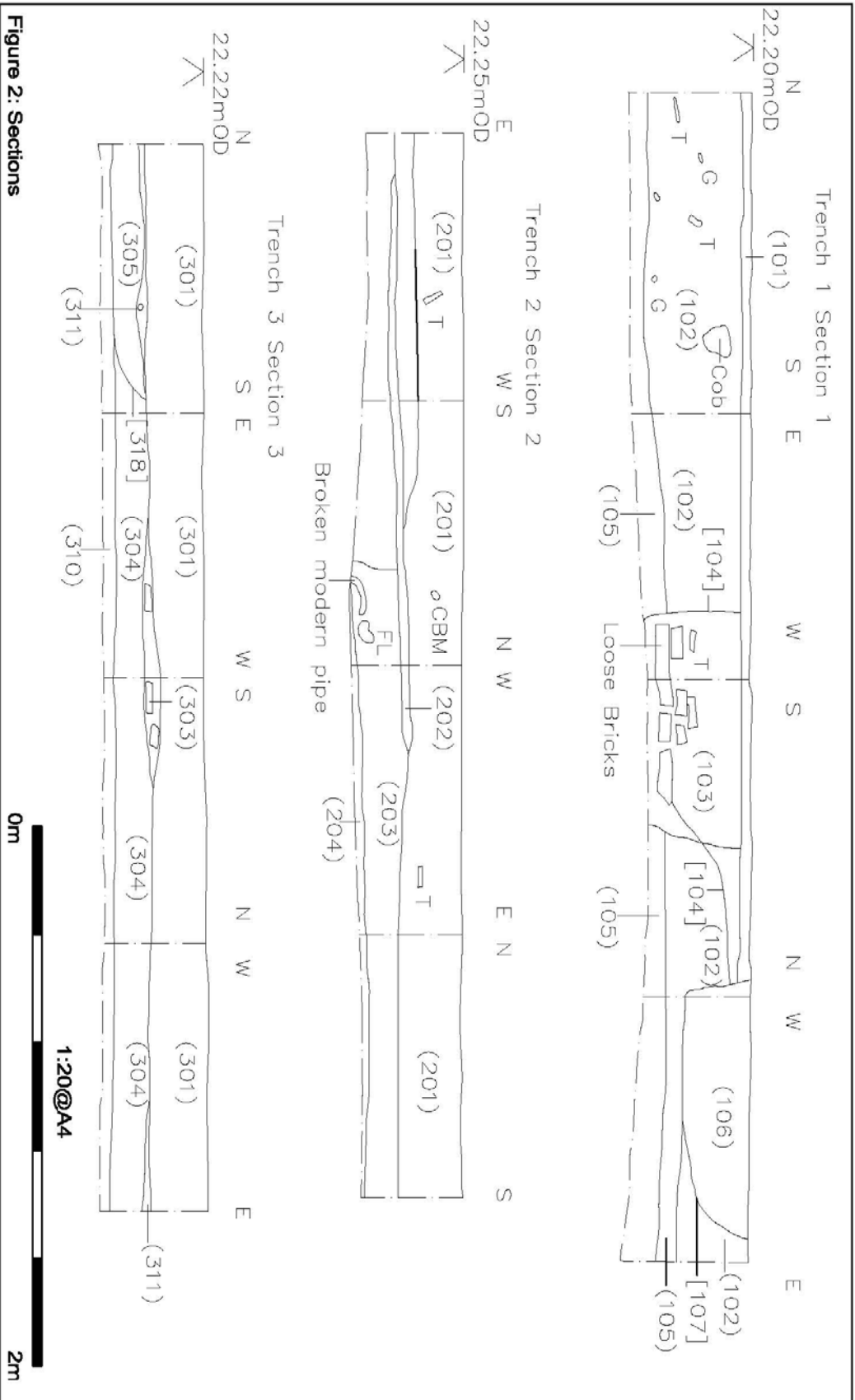


Figure 2: Sections

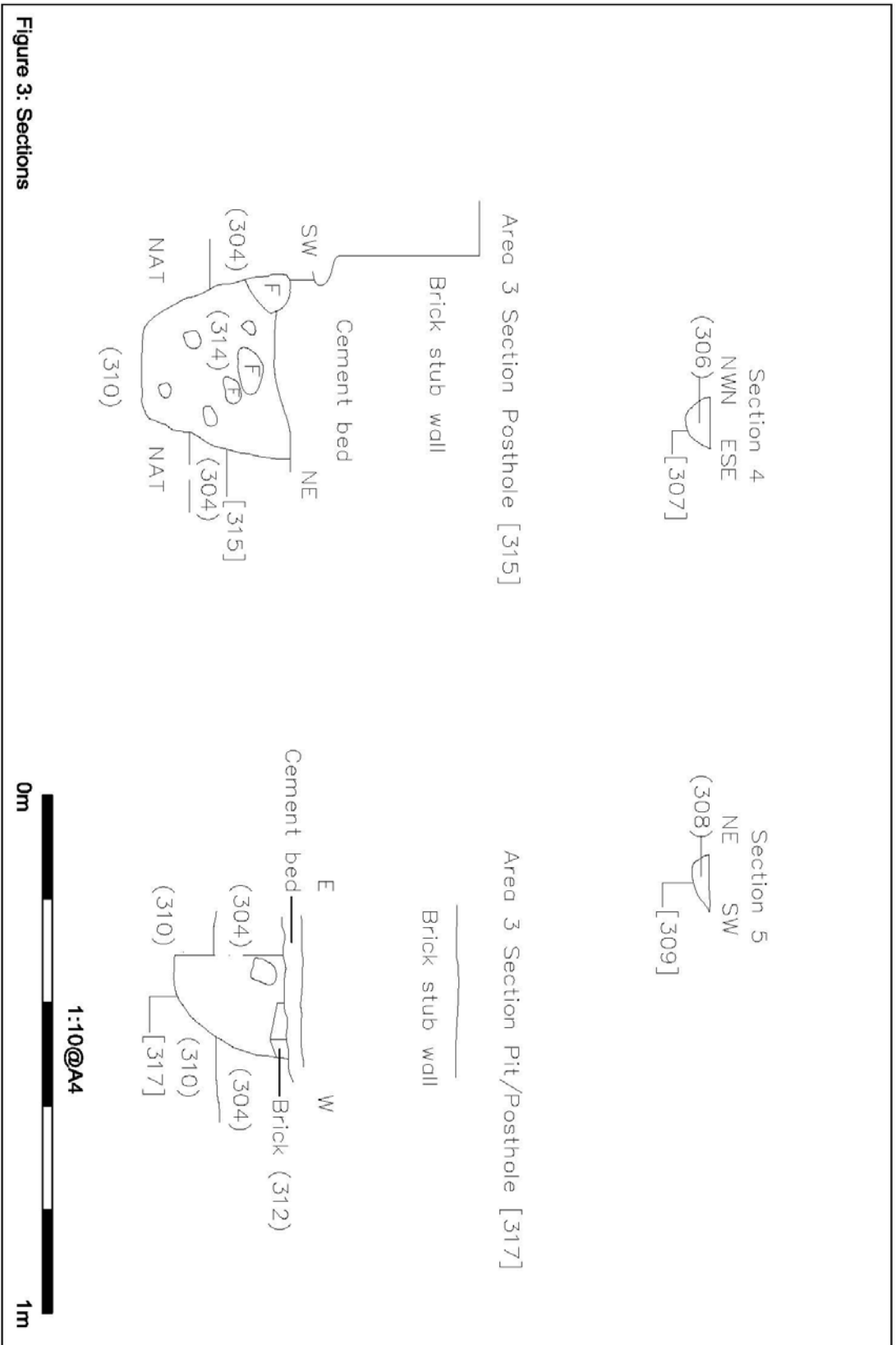


Figure 3: Sections

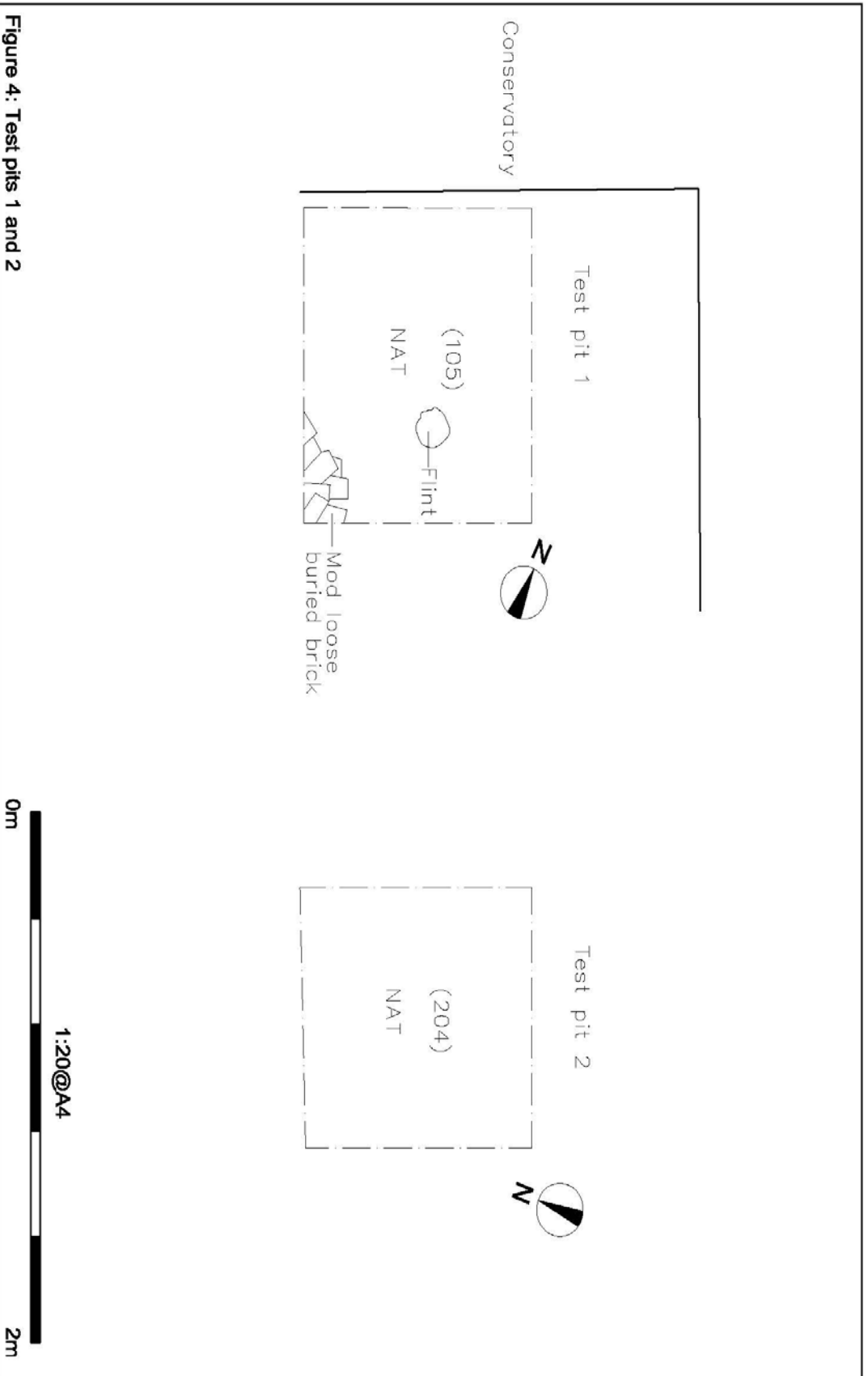


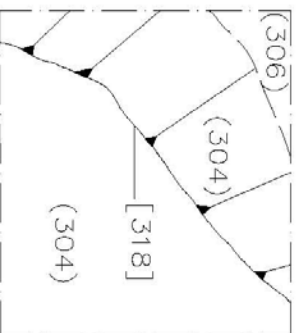
Figure 4: Test pits 1 and 2



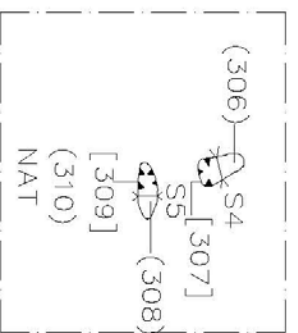
Test pit 3 (Pre Ex)



Test Pit 3 (Mid Ex)



Test Pit 3 (Post Ex)



1:20@A4



Figure 5: Test pit 3

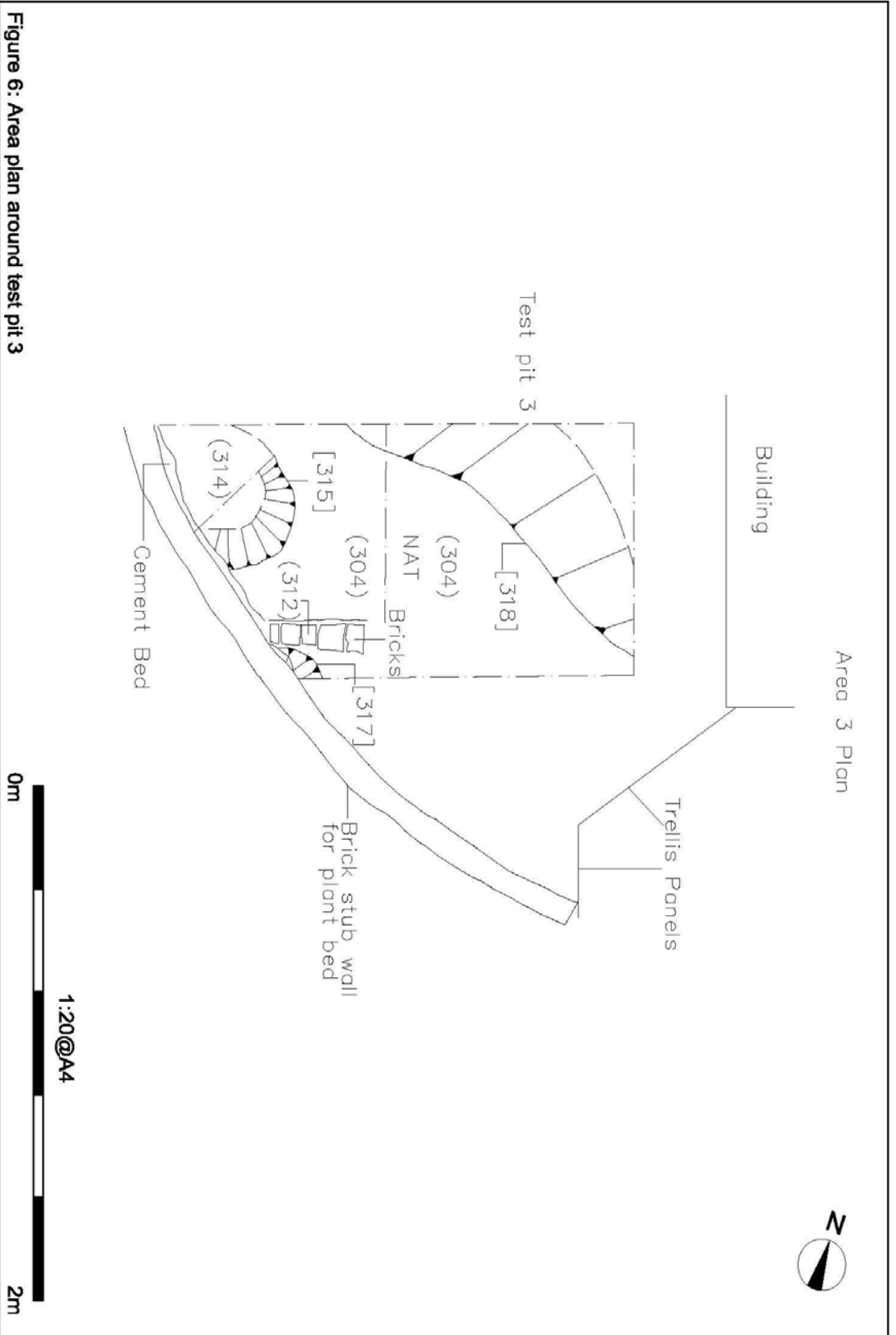


Figure 6: Area plan around test pit 3

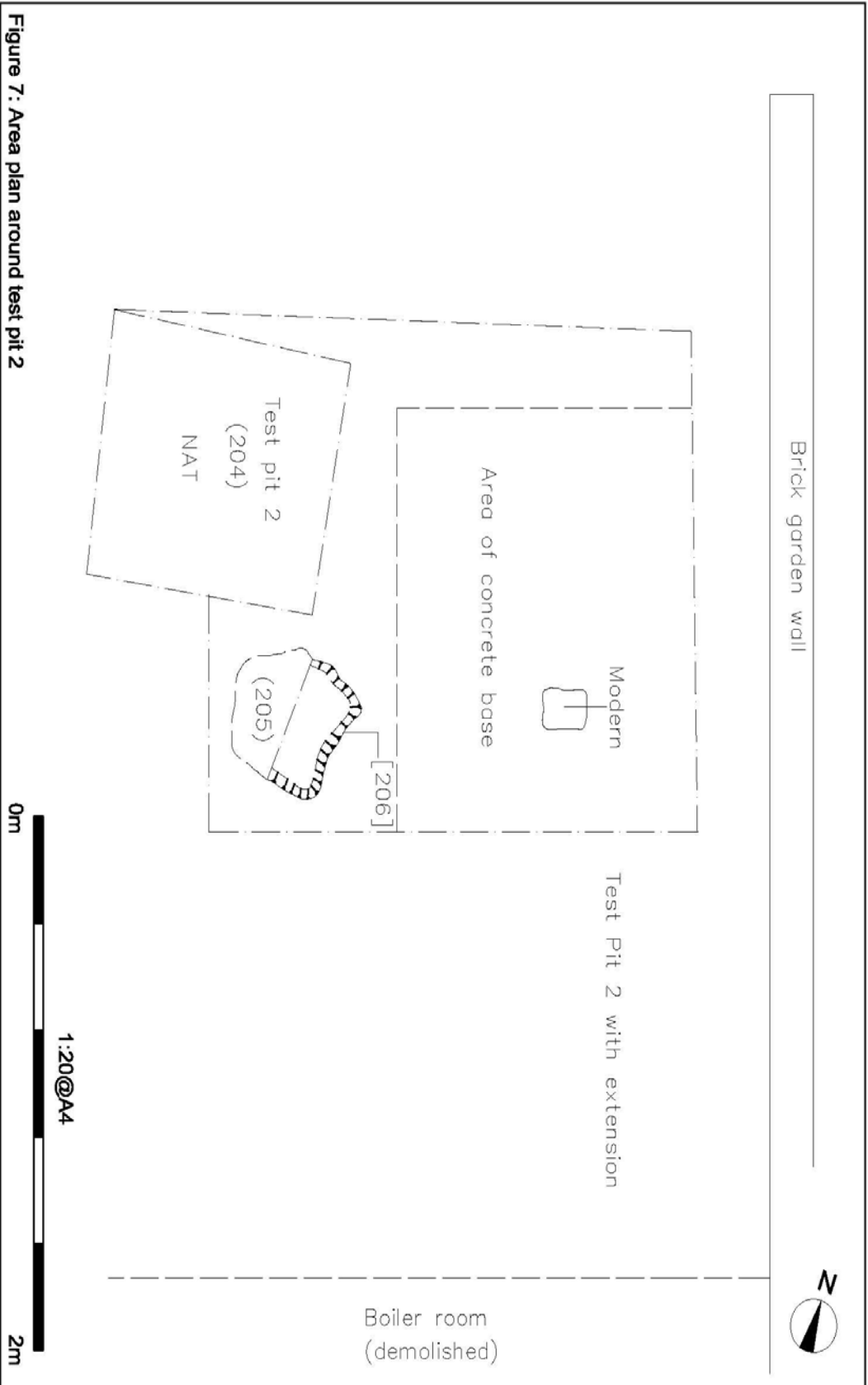
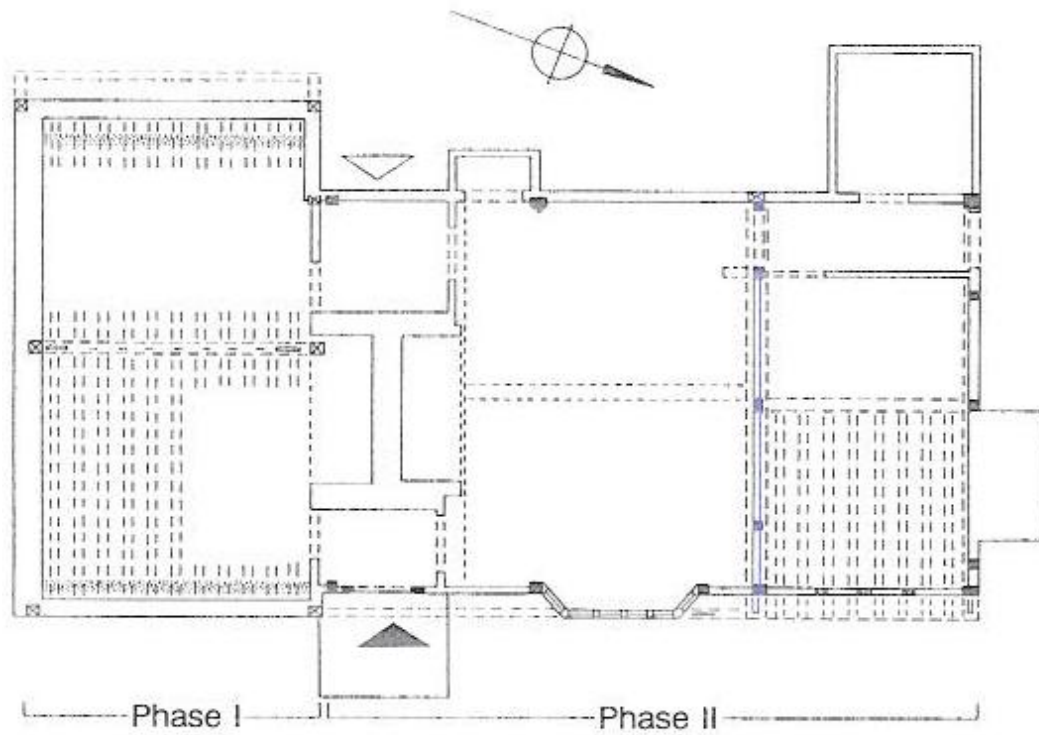


Figure 7: Area plan around test pit 2



**Figure 8: Ground Floor Plan of Clayhanger Hall
Phases I and II**
(from *A Gazetteer of Medieval Houses in Kent*)



Plate 1- Test Pit 1 Location Shot looking ENE - 1m scale



Plate 2 - Test Pit 2 Location Shot looking SSE – 1m scale



Plate 3 – Test Pit 3 Location Shot looking ENE – 0.5m scale



Plate 4 – Test Pit 3, Pit [318] looking ENE – 1m scale