

Archaeological Evaluation of Land North of Barnhorn Road and West of Willow Drive, Bexhill, East Sussex



NGR: TQ 70840 08130

Site Code: BEX/EV/17

(Planning Application: RR/2012/1978/P)

Date of Report: 09/10/2017

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Archaeological Evaluation of Land at land North of Barnhorn Road and West of Willow Drive, East Sussex

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1. Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land north of Barnhorn Road and west of Willow Drive, Bexhill in East Sussex. A Planning Application by BDW Kent (RR/2012/1978/P) to develop this site for residential use was submitted to Rother District Council, whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT Archaeology 2017) and in discussion with the County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council. The results of the excavation of 10 evaluation trenches revealed that no archaeological features were present within the trenches located in the north-west corner of the Proposed Development Site (PDA).

The natural geology of Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation was reached at an average depth of between 0.60m and 1.00m below the modern ground surface with no archaeological features cutting into the natural geology.

The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Archaeological Specification (SWAT Archaeology 2017).

2. Introduction

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Barratt David Wilson Homes Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT Archaeology) and in discussion with the County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council. The evaluation was carried out on 25th September 2017. Ten rather than twelve evaluation trenches were dug of varying lengths due to site restraints such as overhead power cables and public footpaths.

3. Site Description and Topography

The proposed development site is centred on TQ 70840 08130 and is located in the northern area of the PDA. Kites Nest Wood is located to the north and Fontwell Avenue to the north-east. The British Geological Survey (Sheet E319/334) identifies the underlying solid geology as Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation. The geology exposed on site was the Tunbridge Wells Formation. The site is set on sloping ground rising from c.10.00m AOD in the south (Trench 5) to c.5.00 m AOD in the north (Trench 10).

4. Planning Background

Rother District Council gave planning permission (RR/2012/1978/P) for development of land North of Barnhorn Road and land west of Willow Drive, Bexhill for the erection of up to 275 houses, 3500 sqm of employment floor space, doctors surgery, nursing home, primary school, vehicular and pedestrian access, associated car parking, landscaping and open space.

On the advice of the County Archaeologist for East Sussex County Council, a programme of archaeological works was attached to the consent:

(Condition 15) No development shall take place on a phase until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in relation to that phase, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation which has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the archaeological and historical interest of the site is safeguarded and recorded to comply with the Rother District Local Plan- Core Strategy Policy EN2 (vi) and Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological The archaeological potential is highlighted in the July 2012 work by CgMs who commissioned Headland Archaeology to evaluate part of the site with 22 evaluation trenches (Figure 2A). Following on from this work CgMs subsequently commissioned

Archaeology South East to complete the archaeological evaluation of the site with 126 evaluation trenches. The Headland Archaeology investigation revealed a range of archaeological remains including a scatter of flints in the northern part of the site, Romano-British pottery, daub and iron working slag- possibly associated with a building in the south-east area of the site and medieval activity in the south-west area of the site, along with evidence of post-medieval field boundaries (CgMs 2012).

The Archaeology South East work found that 77 of their trenches failed to reveal any archaeological features although a number produced finds ranging from lithics to prehistoric pottery. However, 49 trenches did reveal archaeological features with the vast majority interpreted as relict field boundaries plus several pits with evidence of burning. The evidence on the ground suggested that agricultural activity may have destroyed many archaeological features leaving only artefactual evidence behind.

To the north-west of the site there is evidence of prehistoric and medieval activity and it seems on the evidence that from the medieval period onwards that the site was farmland.

The South East Research Framework (SERF) sets out a draft research agenda for improving the understanding of the Prehistoric period in the region (Booth 2013).

Further details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the various CgMs reports and the Historical Environment Record (HER) data maintained by ESCC has been summarised in a the 2012 report by Headland Archaeology and the archaeological evaluation report commissioned by the client from Archaeology South East dated August 2014.

6. Aims and Objectives

According the Archaeological Specification, the aims and objectives for the archaeological work were to ensure that:

- 2.5 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.

- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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 requirement from the East Sussex County Archaeologist that an archaeological evaluation to take place as a planning requirement, and to publish the results either on line, or through OASIS and/or in a local journal.

(SWAT WSI 2017)

7. Methodology

The Archaeological Specification called for an evaluation by trial trenching comprising 12 trenches within the footprint of the proposed development. Some 10 trenches had to be re-aligned due to the restrictions of the site and to avoid impacting on overhead power cables and standing trees but others were extended to make up the % shortfall. Despite this no archaeological activity was uncovered within the trenches located on the site.

A 7.5 ton 360° tracked mechanical excavator with a flat-bladed ditching bucket was used to remove the topsoil and subsoil to expose the natural geology and/or the archaeological horizon. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with SWAT, Sussex Standards and IFA standards and guidance.

8. Monitoring

Curatorial monitoring was available during the course of the evaluation.

9. Results

The archaeological evaluation has identified no archaeological remains or features.

Trenches 1-10

Trench 1:

Trench orientation: east to west. Depth: 0.1m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 31m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (101) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted and 95cm thick overlaying subsoil (102) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 1).

Trench 2:

Trench orientation: north to south. Depth: 0.60m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 29m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (201) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted and 16cm thick overlaying subsoil (202) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 2).

Trench 3:

Trench orientation: SW-NE. Depth: 0.60m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 33m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (301) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted and 30cm thick overlaying subsoil (302) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 3).

Trench 4:

Trench orientation: SW-NE. Depth: 1.00m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 26.5m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (401) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted and 25cm thick overlaying subsoil (402) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 4).

Trench 5:

Trench orientation: NNW-SSE. Depth: 1.00m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 31m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (501) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted and 30cm thick overlaying subsoil (502) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 5).

Trench 6:

Trench orientation: north to south. Depth: 1.00m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 30m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (601) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted and 30cm thick overlaying subsoil (602) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 6).

Trench 7:

Trench orientation: ESE- WNW. Depth: 1.00m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 28.40m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (701) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted and 30cm thick overlaying subsoil (702) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 7).

Trench 8:

Trench orientation: north to south. Depth: 1.00m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 23.70m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (801) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted and 20cm thick overlaying subsoil (802) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 8).

Trench 9:

Trench orientation: NNE- SSW. Depth: 1.00m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 27.50m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (901) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted and 28cm thick overlaying subsoil (902) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 9).

Trench 10:

Trench orientation: north to south. Depth: 1.00m. Width: 1.8m. Length: 23.50m. No archaeology was detected. Topsoil (1001) was light grey brown silty clay loosely compacted

and 30cm thick overlaying subsoil (1002) mottled light yellow-pale grey with slight orange hue firm silty clay (Plate 10).

12. Conclusion

The evaluation trenches at the proposed development site have revealed no archaeological features. No pottery was retrieved from any of the evaluation trenches.

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprised of topsoil (**100**) sealing the natural subsoil (**101**). All features were planned in relation to the trenches, and the excavated features were drawn in section at a scale of 1:10. Therefore, this evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the aims and objectives as set out in the planning condition and the Archaeological Specification.

13. Acknowledgements

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank the client, BDW Kent for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Greg Chuter County Archaeologist, East Sussex County Council. Illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. The fieldwork was supervised by Scott Skinner, and the project was managed and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCifA.

Paul Wilkinson 10/10/2017

14. References

Institute for Field Archaeologists (CIfA), Rev (2015). *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*

Sussex Archaeological Standards (2015)

SWAT Archaeology (2017) *Specification for the evaluation of Land north of Barnhorn Road and west of Willow Drive, Bexhill, East Sussex*



Plate 1. Trench 1 (looking east)



Plate 2. Trench 2 (looking north)



Plate 3. Trench 3 (looking south-west)



Plate 4. Trench 4 (looking south-west)



Plate 5. Trench 5 (looking north-west)



Plate 6. Trench 6 (looking south)



Plate 7. Trench 7 (looking south-east)



Plate 8. Trench 8 (looking north)



Plate 9. Trench 9 (looking north-east)



Plate 10. Trench 10 (looking south)

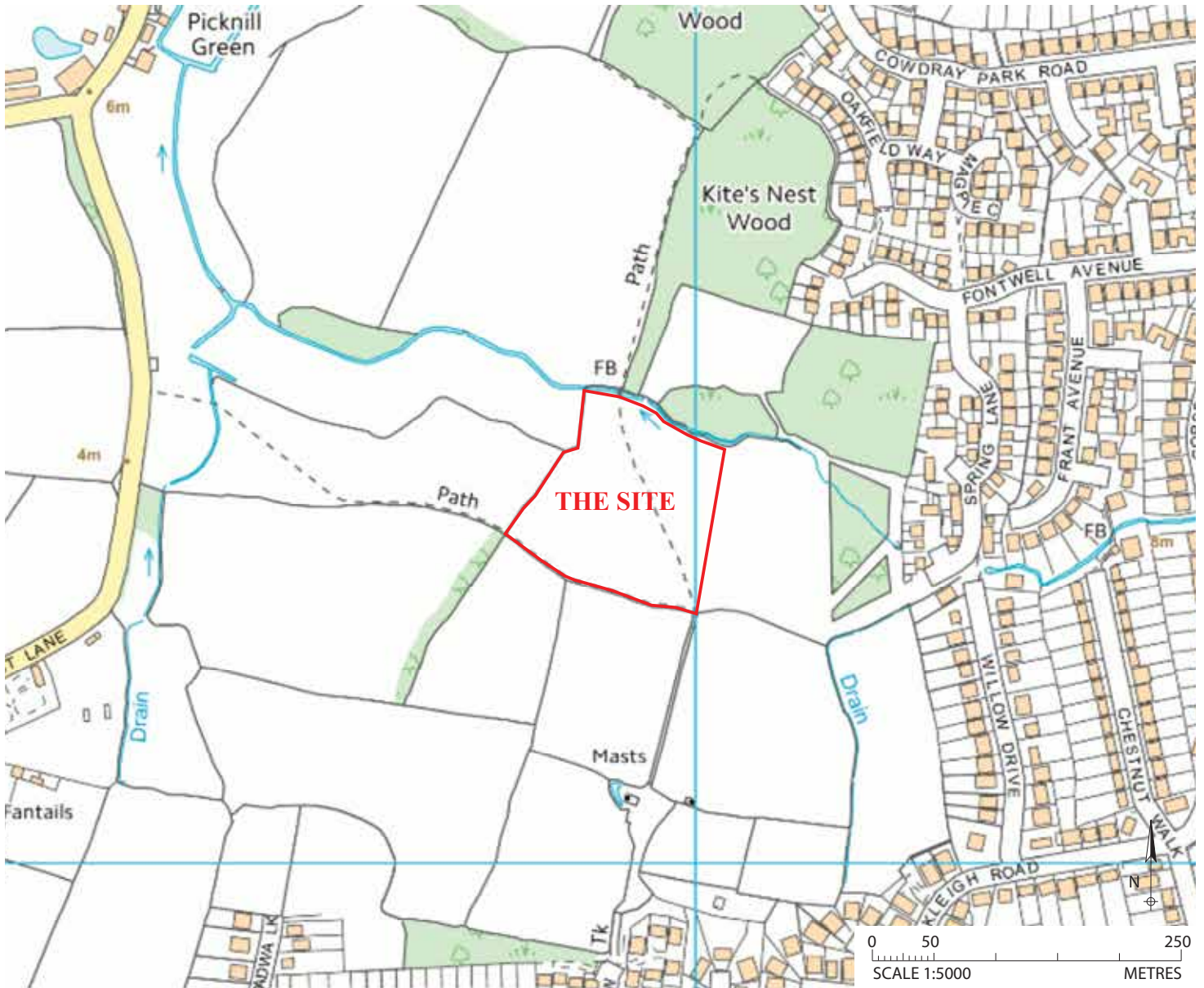
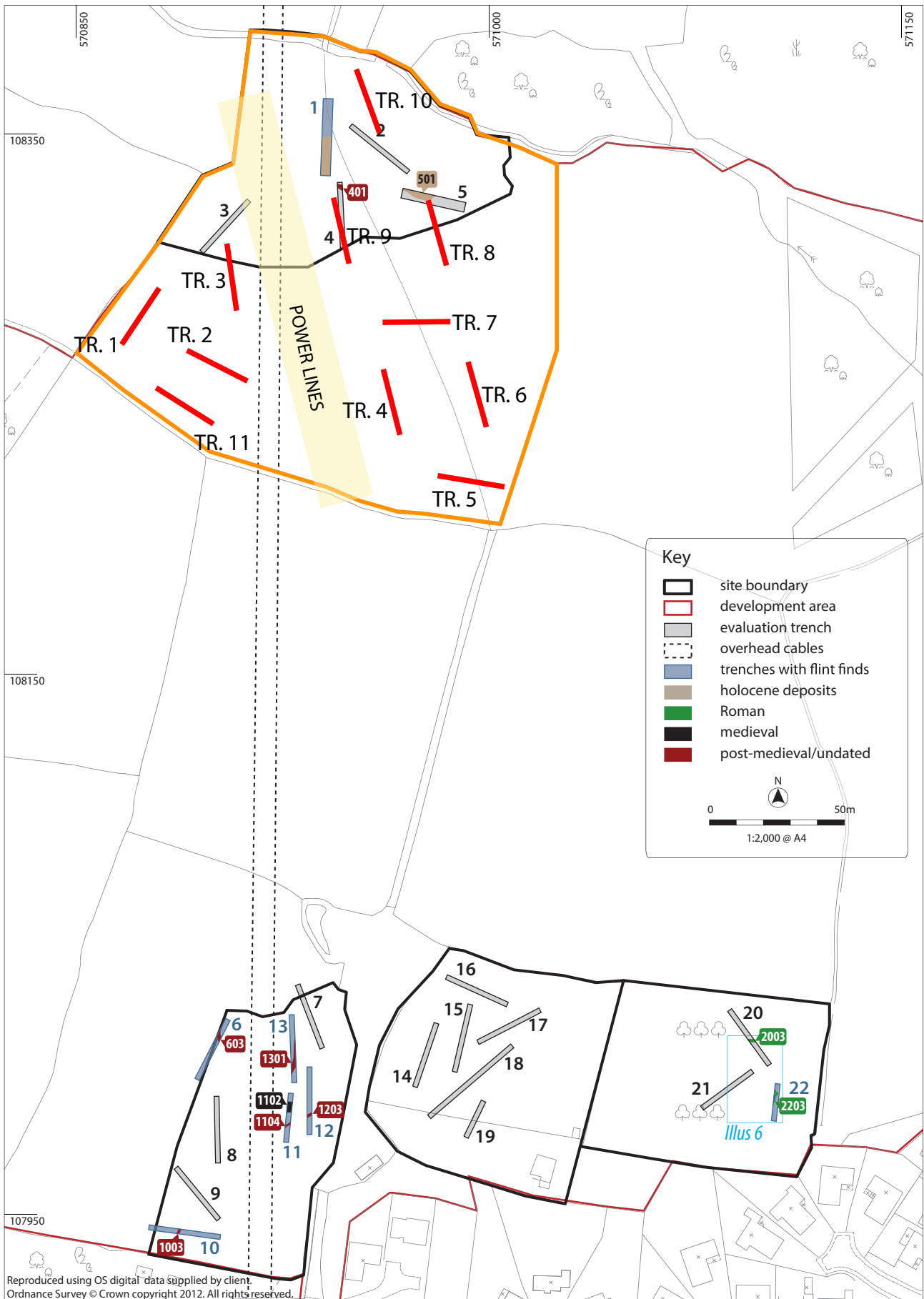


Figure 1: Site location map



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Figure 2: Trench location

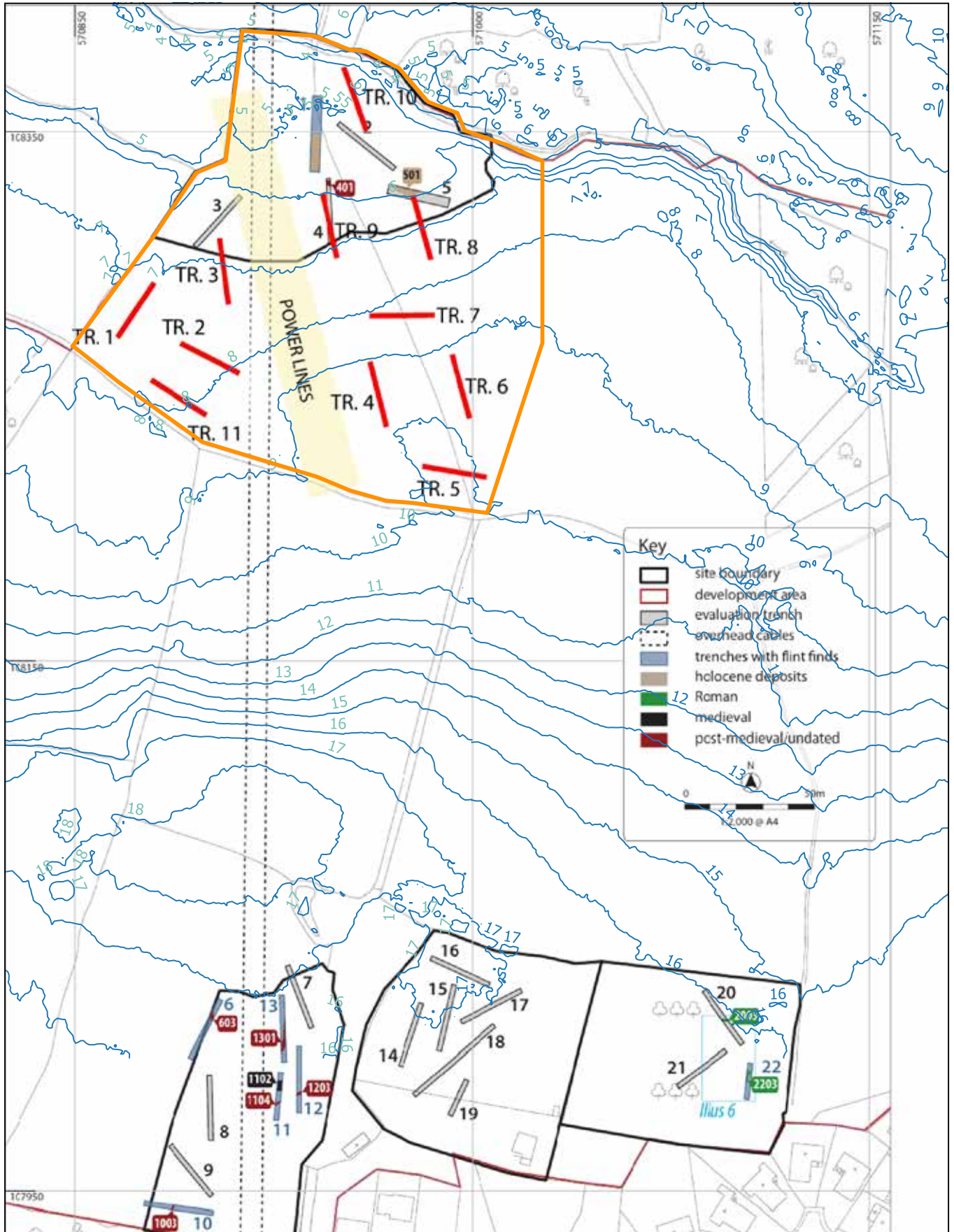


Figure 2a: Trench location with 1m contour heights