

Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Builder's Yard, Badsell Road, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6QR

Site Code: BRT-EV-23

NGR Site Centre: 565611 144627

Planning Application Number: 22/00261/FULL



Report for;

Mr Andy Halford

11/08/2023

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SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company

The Office, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road

Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP

Tel; 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112

info@swatarchaeology.co.uk www.swatarchaeology.co.uk

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Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Builder's Yard, Badsell Road, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent. 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 investigation investigated the extents of the proposed development area using two trenches, measuring between 6.6m and 11.2m in length and up to 2m in width. The natural geology, which had been drastically reduced during the construction of the former builder's yard buildings survived at an average depth of approximately 1.05m below the existing ground surface. Truncation of the upper geological surface means that any archaeological features, should they have been present, would have been removed during the construction of the former buildings.

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 Senior Archaeological Officer of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

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NGR Site Centre: 565611 144627

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by Mr Andy Halford to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Builder's Yard, Badsell Road, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6QR (Figure 1).

1.1.2 A planning application (PAN: 22/00261/FULL) for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a detached dwelling for residential purposes with associated hard and soft landscaping and the creation of biodiversity enhancement areas, and removal of the northern boundary wall was submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of KCC, 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:

- 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. further archaeological investigation, recording and reporting, determined by the results of the evaluation, in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and a*
- iii. programme of post excavation assessment and publication.*

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined, recorded, reported and disseminated.

(22/00261/FULL, Condition 9, 16th June 2022)

1.1.4 The archaeological evaluation comprised the excavation of two trenches measuring between approximately 6.6m and 11.2m in length and up to 2m in width. The location and length of each trench is described below in Section 5.3.

1.1.5 The archaeological works were carried out over the course of a single day in August 2023 (See Table 1 below). 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:

Task	Dates	Personnel/Company
Submission of the Written Scheme of Investigation	21 st July 2023	SWAT Archaeology
Archaeological Evaluation – Fieldwork	3 rd August 2023	SWAT Archaeology David Britchfield BA MCIfA
Archaeological Evaluation Report	This document	SWAT Archaeology David Britchfield BA MCIfA

Table 1 Timetable for the archaeological programme of works

1.3 Site Description and Topography

1.3.1 The site is centred on NGR 565611 144627 within the former builder’s yard, and measured approximately 2,447sq.m in area (Figure 1). The site is located to the south of Badsell Road (B2017) and east of the A228 and Capel Grange Farm. To the south is Spring Farm and the springs flow to the north into ponds and lakes, and Tudeley Brook. Just to the north-east is Badsell Manor Farm with its moat (Figures 1-2).

1.3.2 Ground levels were relatively level at a height of approximately 23m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), although the former units had clearly been constructed within an area of reduced ground. The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the site is located on Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation- Sandstone & Siltstone interbedded. Superficial deposits are recorded as River Terrace Deposits- Clay & Silt.

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 (PDA) is located close to a number of archaeological sites which are identified on the KCCHER database. Approximately 200m NE is a medieval moated Manor House (TQ 64 SE 5) and 180m NE is Badsell Manor Farm (MKE 81824) including the boundary wall (TQ 64 SE 178) and Oast House (TQ 64 SE 190) and circa 180m NW is Mill House (TQ 64 SE 174).

2.1.2 In a consultation with the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council the following response was provided:

The site of proposed work is south of the mill pond associated with a post medieval or earlier Corn Mill. Badsell Manor, a medieval moated complex, lies to the north and landscape features may survive around the main complex. Remains associated with the medieval and post medieval activity may survive on site.

(Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer, Ref: 22/00261, dated 30th March 2022)

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General Aims

3.1.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork were set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (SWAT Archaeology 2023; 6.1-6.3) which stated that;

- *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.*
- *The programme of archaeological work should be carried out in a phased approach and will commence with evaluation through trial trenching. This initial phase should determine whether any significant archaeological remains would be affected by the development and if so, what mitigation measures are appropriate. Such measures may include further detailed*

archaeological excavation, or an archaeological watching brief during construction work or an engineering solution to any preservation in situ requirements.

- *This specification sets out the requirements for trial trenching on the site and any further archaeological work, such as detailed excavation work or a watching brief, would need to be subject to further specifications.*

3.1.2 The general aims (or purpose) of the evaluation, in compliance with the *CIfA Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a), are therefore 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.

3.2 General Objectives

3.2.1 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 fieldwork commenced with an initial walkover site photographic survey (see Plates 3-11) when it was evident following demolition of the previous buildings that site had been reduced. Demolition works had exposed the degree of truncation (detailed further below in Section 5).
- 4.2.2 Despite the disturbance, attempts were made to cut evaluation trenches, located within areas where clean natural clay was located (Figure 3). Excavation was carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under the constant supervision of an experienced Archaeologist.
- 4.2.3 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and ClfA 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 aOD 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 (001), whilst the cut of the feature is shown as [001]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 All trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

5.1.2 Demolition works recently carried out on the site exposed original soil sequences around the periphery of the development area which itself had been previously reduced most likely during the construction of the former builder’s yard. Figure 2, shows the layout of the site and the location of Trench 1 (and Trench 2, which are described further below. Plates 1-11 consist of photographs that have been provided to supplement the text.

5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded around the periphery of the site where undisturbed sequences were visible. Representative sections were recorded at the eastern extent of the site (RS1, Plate 4) and along the northern extent of the site (RS2, Plate 7) which show topsoil (001) overlying an intact subsoil (002) which seals the natural clay geology (003).

Site	Dimensions: Site Depth: 1.05m+ Original Ground Level: 23.73m OD – 24.16m OD		
Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth (m)
(001)	Surface	Topsoil -	0.00-0.11
(002)	Layer	Subsoil -	0.11-0.44
(003)	Natural	Very compact Type 1 hardcore	0.44-1.05+
(004)	Former floor surface	Concrete	-
(005)	Disturbance	Dark brown black silt clay with moderate modern inclusions including building debris	0.00-0.34
(006)	Natural	Stiff blue clay	0.29+
(007)	Natural	Light grey silt clay	0.00-0.08

Table 2 Stratigraphic sequence

5.2.2 Within the development area the reduced area natural clay is shown on Plates 1-3 present at a level of approximately 22.98m aOD. Areas of deeper disturbance were also recorded and investigated using machine dug test slots (see 5.3 below). The original surface level was at a height of approximately 24.16m aOD.

5.3 Archaeological Narrative

Trench 1 (Figure 3, Plate 8)

5.3.1 Trench 1 was located adjacent to the eastern extent of the site and was located within the reduced clay (003) targeting a variation in the natural geology (007). The trench was orientated NW-SE and measured 6.6m with a maximum depth of 0.38m.

- 5.3.2 Examination of deposit (007) confirmed that it was indeed natural and was present within (003) both of which were a bright blue grey stiff clay (006). No archaeological finds or features were present in Trench 1.

Trench 2 (Figure 3, Plate 9)

- 5.3.3 Within the northern extent of the site (Figure 3), Trench 2 was excavated on an E-W alignment and measured approximately 11.2m in length, 2m in width with a maximum depth of 0.34m (Figure 3). This trench targeted modern disturbance (005) in order to confirm the degree of truncation to the site. Natural geological deposits within Trench 2 were recorded at a level of 22.64m aOD.

- 5.3.4 No archaeological finds or features were present in Trench 2.

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 on land formally used as a builder's yard on Badsell Road, Five Oak Green in Tonbridge, Kent has investigated the extents of the proposed development area using two trenches, measuring between 6.6m and 11.2m in length and up to 2m in width. The natural geology, which had been drastically reduced during the construction of the former builder's yard buildings survived at an average depth of approximately 1.05m below the existing ground surface. Truncation of the upper geological surface means that any archaeological features, should they have been present, would have been removed during the construction of the former buildings.

7.2 Conclusions

- 7.2.1 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 Andy Halford 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.

10 REFERENCES

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SWAT Archaeology (2023) *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Builder's Yard, Badsell Road, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent.*

11 APPENDIX 1 – HER FORM

Site Name: Builder's Yard, Badsell Road, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent.

SWAT Site Code: BRT-EV-23

Site Address: As above

Summary. *Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Builder's Yard, Badsell Road, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent. 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 investigation investigated the extents of the proposed development area using two trenches, measuring between 6.6m and 11.2m in length and up to 2m in width. The natural geology, which had been drastically reduced during the construction of the former builder's yard buildings survived at an average depth of approximately 1.05m below the existing ground surface. Truncation of the upper geological surface means that any archaeological features, should they have been present, would have been removed during the construction of the former buildings.

District/Unitary: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council & Kent County Council

Period(s): NA

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 565611 144627

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: August 2023

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

Geology: Clay

Title and author of accompanying report: D Britchfield (2023) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Builder's Yard, Badsell Road, Five Oak Green, Tonbridge, Kent. SWAT Archaeology Ref. BRT-EV-2023

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 11/08/2023

PLATES



Plate 1 Aerial photograph of the development site following demolition.



Plate 2 Aerial photograph of the development area following demolition.



Plate 3 Concrete slab (004) within the reduced site



Plate 4 Representative Section RS1



Plate 5 A panoramic view of the site through 180 degrees from (004) in the centre of the site.



Plate 6 The northern extent of the site where deeper truncation was still visible cutting into the reduced natural clay.



Plate 7 Representative Section RS2



Plate 8 Trench 1, viewed from the southwest



Plate 9 Trench 2, viewed from the east



Plate 10 Trench 2, viewed from the north



Plate 11 Clearance of southern side extent of the site reinforcing the depth of impact from former development



- KEY**
- Site Boundary
 - - - Excavation Area

Figure 2 Site Plan

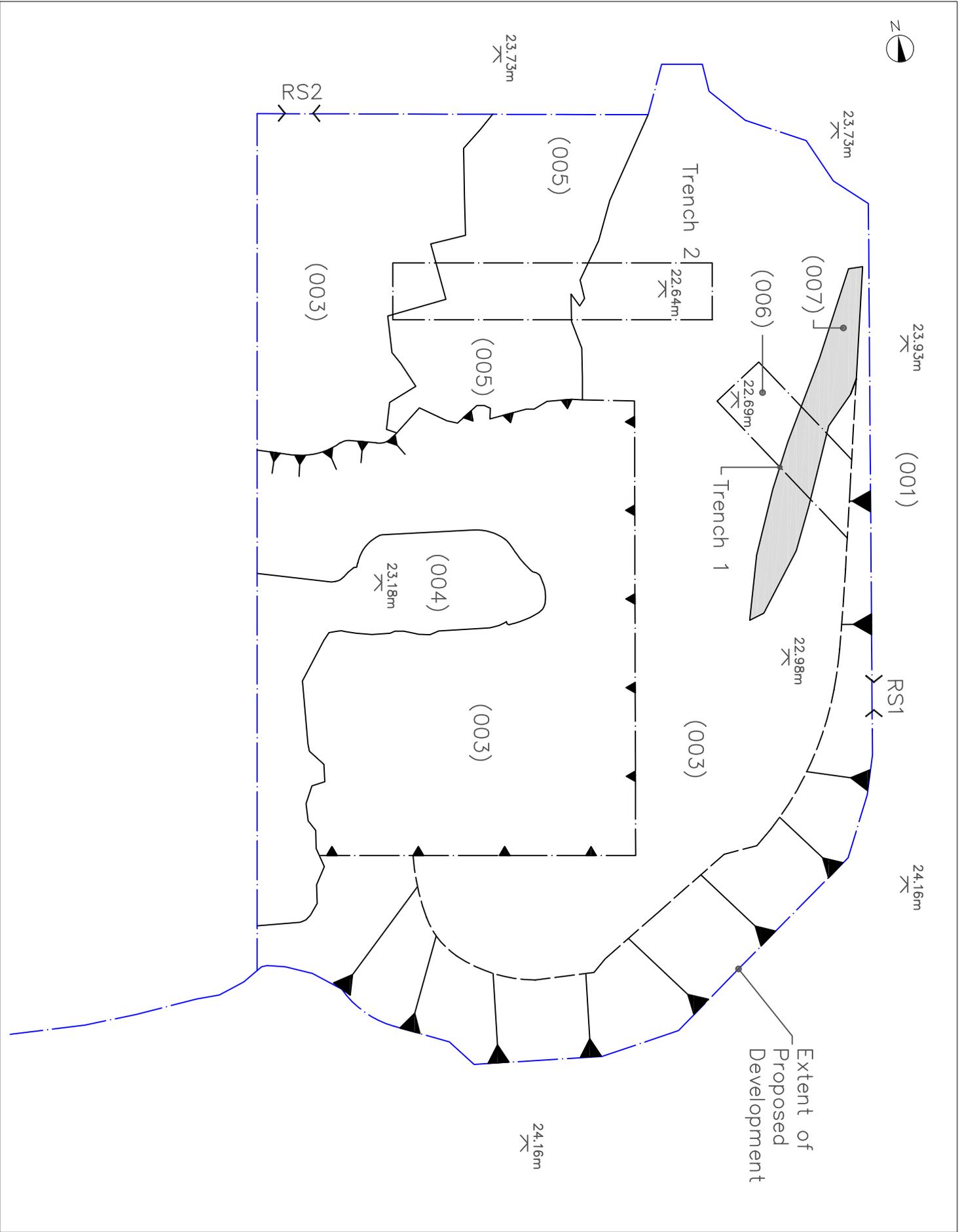


Figure 3 Detailed Site Plan