

Archaeological Evaluation of Land at 60A Priory Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2AW

Site Code: PST-EV-24

NGR Site Centre: 558909 145788

Planning Application Number: TM/22/00571/FL



Report date: 08 September 2024

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1	INTRODUCTION	2
1.1	Project Background	2
1.2	Timetable	3
1.3	Site Description, Topography and Geology.....	3
1.4	Scope of Report.....	3
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	4
2.1	Introduction	4
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	4
3.1	General Aims	4
3.2	General Objectives	5
4	METHODOLOGY.....	5
4.1	Introduction	5
4.2	Fieldwork.....	5
4.3	Recording	6
5	RESULTS	6
5.1	Introduction	6
5.2	Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence	6
5.3	Archaeological Narrative.....	7
	<i>Trench 1 (Figures)</i>	7
	<i>Trench 2 (Figures)</i>	7
	<i>Trench 3 (Figures)</i>	7
	<i>Trench 4 (Figures)</i>	7
6	FINDS	8
6.1	Overview	8
7	ENVIRONMENTAL	8
7.1	Overview	8
8	DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION	8
8.1	Introduction	8
8.2	Discussion.....	8
8.3	Conclusion.....	8
8.4	Recommendation.....	8
9	ARCHIVE	8
9.1	General.....	8

10 **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** 9

11 **REFERENCES** 9

12 **APPENDIX 1 – HER FORM** 11

PLATES

FIGURES

Tables

Table 1 Timetable for the archaeological programme of works 3

Abstract

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land at 60A Priory Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2AW. The archaeological programme was monitored by the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council.

The archaeological works have investigated the extents of the proposed development area using 4 trenches measuring 8-20m in length.

Archaeological evaluation has confirmed the absence of archaeological remains on this site.

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.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land at 60A Priory Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2AW (Figures).

1.1.2 A planning application was granted by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TM/22/00571/FL) for the redevelopment of the site to provide eleven dwellings and associated parking, landscaping and amenity.

1.1.3 A Condition of archaeological works in the Schedule of Conditions were attached to the Planning Decision Notice (TM/22/00571/FL) and were:

(15) Prior to the commencement of ground works 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;

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;

III) programme of post excavation assessment and publication.

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

1.1.4 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by SWAT Archaeology (2024), prior to the commencement of works.

- 1.1.5 The evaluation is the first stage of the programme of archaeological works and addresses part I) of the planning condition only. Its main aim is to clarify the presence/absence of archaeology and its significance. On the basis of the results of the evaluation, further archaeological works may be needed and could include excavation and/or watching brief and post excavation and publication.

1.2 Timetable

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

Task	Dates	Personnel/Company
Archaeological Evaluation: Fieldwork	May 2024	SWAT Archaeology
Archaeological Evaluation Report	This document August 2024	SWAT Archaeology

Table 1 *Timetable for the archaeological programme of works*

1.3 Site Description, Topography and Geology

- 1.3.1 The PDA (Proposed Development Area) is situated close to Tonbridge town centre and approximately 0.25 miles from the railway station on the southern side of town. The proposed development area is currently a hard landscaped area used as a commuter car park having previously been a Jewson's Depot. The Site is accessed from an entrance on the western side of Priory Street (AP 3). Within the PDA there were a number of buildings, all of 20th century date except for one that was built by 1897. The PDA is primarily surrounded by residential housing located along Priory Street to the east. Pembury Road to the south west and Priory Walk to the north. The OS location to the centre of the PDA (Proposed Development Area) is NGR 558909 145788. (Figures).
- 1.3.2 The Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) shows that the PDA (Proposed Development Area) that the local geology at the Application Site consists of Wadhurst Clay Formation – Mudstone. Immediately to the north is Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation - Sandstone and Siltstone, Interbedded. There are no superficial deposits at the PDA, although just to the north are River Terrace Deposits (Undifferentiated) - Clay and Silt and Alluvium associated with the River Medway. However, the resolution of the BGS mapping can sometimes means that boundaries between different deposits can vary and are not always completely accurate.
- ## 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 Principal 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 have been identified on the KCCHER database.

2.1.2 There are a number of archaeological sites located in the vicinity of the PDA (Proposed Development Area) and include about 100m to the East is the railway line where was found Mesolithic microliths (TQ 54 NE 15) and almost adjacent a Category 'A' WWII nodal point (TQ 54 NE 175). On the north side of the PDA is the former Methodist Free Church built in 1868 and converted to commercial use in 1919 (TQ 54 NE 373).

2.1.3 Historic mapping shows that in 1907 the PDA was a Timber Yard with an orchard to the west (MAP 1). By 1897 the east frontage of the site had been developed with terraced housing (MAP 2) and by 1929 additional commercial buildings had been built in the area of orchard (MAP 3). The 2008 aerial photograph shows the PDA as concrete with a number of commercial buildings and car parking (AP 1) and by 2021 little had changed (AP 2). The entrance can be seen on Google mapping as a parking lot and to the west the former Methodist Free Church (AP 3).

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 2024) as stated below;

- *6.1 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 period and also any Roman, medieval and later archaeological activity.*
- *6.2 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.*

3.2 General Objectives

3.2.1 The general objectives of the archaeological fieldwork were therefore:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts, or ecofacts within the specified area;
- To establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition, and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
- To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- To 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 2024) 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 4 evaluation trenches were excavated (Figures) across the proposed development area (PDA). 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.

4.2.2 Where appropriate, 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.

4.2.3 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, surveying, 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. 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. 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 The Trenches were mechanically excavated under constant archaeological supervision and positioned to cover the entire proposed development area.
- 5.1.2 The site, as shown on Figures, provides the trench layout while further Figures illustrates the results for each individual archaeological evaluation trench along with representative soil sequence sections. Plates consist of photographs of features and selected trenches that have been provided to supplement the text.
- 5.1.3 Trench results are discussed below.

5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

- 5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across the majority of the Site comprising hardcore crush with concrete surface, which overlay the natural geological deposits. The subsoil/ colluvium which consisted of light to mid brown-orange clay sand silt with moderate small rounded stones and occasional broken bricks, glass and tiles. Natural geology comprised superficial clay and silts comprising orange-brown clay-silt. In most of the areas the natural geology (xx03) was sealed-off by subsoil/ colluvium (xx02).

5.3 Archaeological Narrative

Trench 1 (Figures)

- 5.3.1 Trench 1 was placed in north-eastern part of the site in E-W alignment and measured 8metres in length by 1.8metres in width and 0.97metres in depth. It exposed natural geology context (103) comprising firmly compacted yellow-grey to orange-grey clay-silt with infrequent angular stones. No archaeological cuts, artefacts or deposits were revealed in this trench which exposed live electricity cable along its length. The services were found running in brick-build duct and were left undisturbed.

Trench 2 (Figures)

- 5.3.2 Trench 2 was placed in northern-central part of the site in E-W alignment and measured 12.5metres in length by 1.8metres in width and 0.62metres in depth. It exposed natural geology context (203) comprising firmly compacted yellow-grey to orange-grey clay-silt with infrequent angular stones. No archaeological cuts, artefacts or deposits were revealed in this trench which exposed modern land drain.

Trench 3 (Figures)

- 5.3.3 Trench 3 was placed in western part of the site in NW-SE alignment and measured 20metres in length by 1.8metres in width and 0.6metres in depth. It exposed natural geology context (303) comprising firmly compacted yellow-grey to orange-grey sand-silt with infrequent angular stones. No archaeological cuts, artefacts or deposits were revealed in this trench which exposed several modern cuts associated with construction of a car park. Immediately to the southwest a concrete platform was exposed. It was dug-out as an extension to this trench. It contained service duct running to a manhole roughly in the middle of the platform.

Trench 4 (Figures)

- 5.3.4 Trench 4 was placed in central part of the site in N-S alignment and measured 15metres in length by 1.8metres in width and 0.47metres in depth. It exposed natural geology context (403) comprising firmly compacted yellow-grey to orange-grey clay-silt with infrequent angular stones. No archaeological cuts, artefacts or deposits were revealed in this trench which exposed several modern cuts associated with construction of a car park and a modern land drain.

6 FINDS

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 No finds were retrieved during the course of archaeological evaluation

7 ENVIRONMENTAL

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 No bulk soil samples were acquired during the course of evaluation.

8 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The archaeological evaluation on Land at 60A Priory Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2AW, has investigated the extents of the proposed development area using 4 trenches measuring 8-20m in length.

8.2 Discussion

8.2.1 The investigation has confirmed the absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.

8.3 Conclusion

8.3.1 The archaeological investigation 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.

8.4 Recommendation

8.4.1 No further work is proposed to take place on this site in relation to the proposed development.

9 ARCHIVE

9.1 General

9.1.1 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).

9.1.2 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.

10 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 10.1.1 SWAT would like to thank the Client for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council, for her advice and assistance.
- 10.1.2 Peter Cichy from SWAT Archaeology carried out the archaeological fieldwork; illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. The report was written by Peter Cichy. On behalf of the client project was directed by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA, FRSA of SWAT Archaeology.

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SWAT Archaeology 2024 Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation of Land at 60A Priory Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2AW

Site Name: Land at 60A Priory Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2AW

SWAT Site Code: PST-EV-24

Site Address: As above

Summary. *Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land at 60A Priory Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2AW. The archaeological programme was monitored by the Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council.*

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No further work is recommended

District/Unitary: Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Period(s): modern

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 558909 145788

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: May 2024

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

Geology: Wadhurst Clay Formation – Mudstone. Immediately to the north is Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation - Sandstone and Siltstone, Interbedded. There are no superficial deposits at the PDA, although just to the north are River Terrace Deposits (Undifferentiated) - Clay and Silt and Alluvium associated with the River Medway

Title and author of accompanying report: Peter Cichy (2024) Archaeological Evaluation of Land at 60A Priory Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2AW

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

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 08/09/2024

Plates



Plate 1: The site viewed from the south.



Plate 2: The site viewed from the east.



Plate 3: Showing Evaluation Trench 1. Looking southwest with one metre scale.



Plate 4: Showing Evaluation Trench 2. Looking west with one metre scale.



Plate 5: Showing Evaluation Trench 3. Looking southeast with one metre scale. Concrete platform visible to the right.



Plate 6: Showing Evaluation Trench 4. Looking north with one metre scale.



Figure 1: Site location (red)

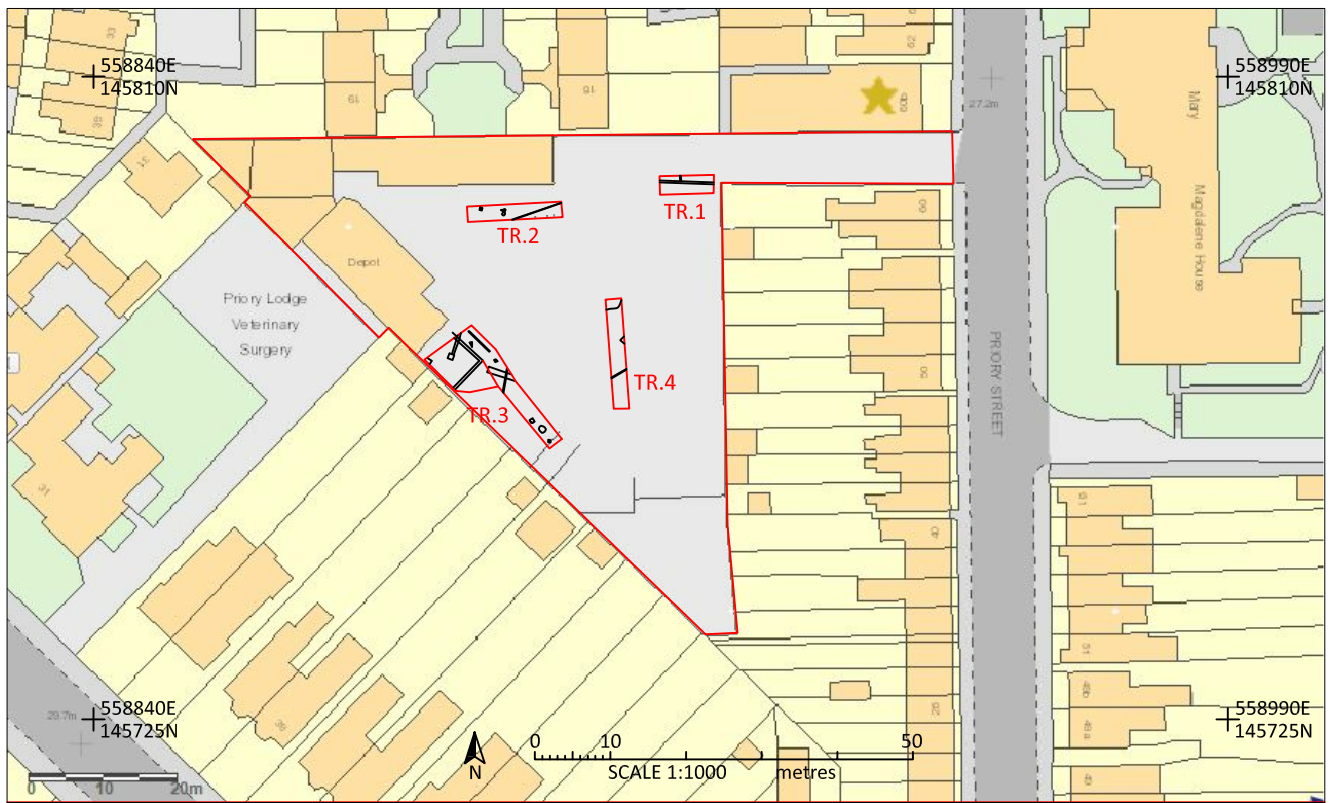


Figure 2: Trench location in relation to OS map

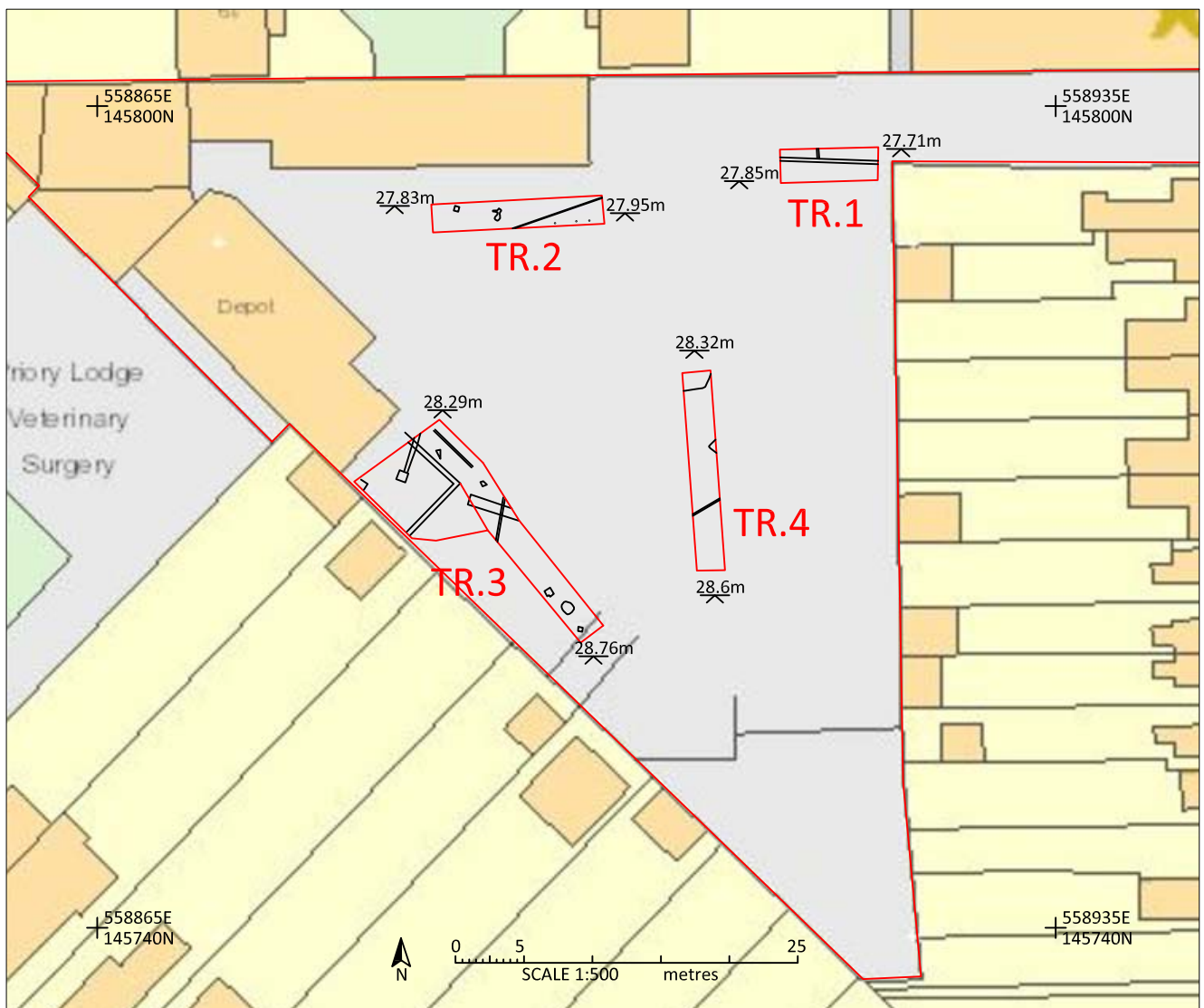
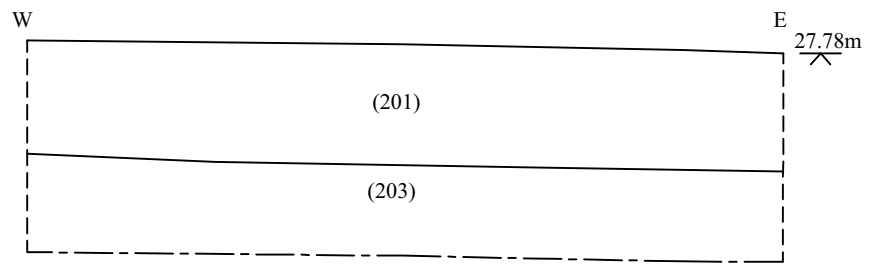
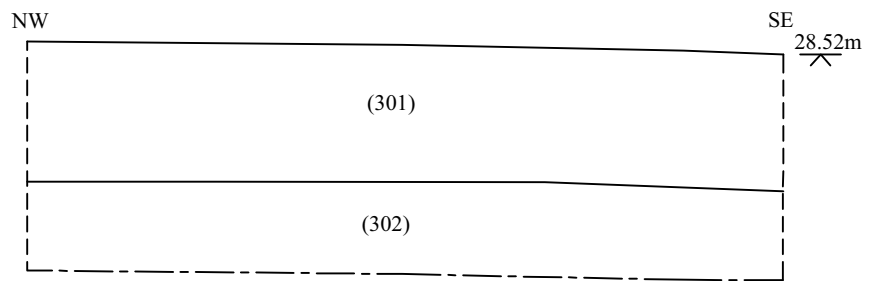


Figure 3: Trench plan

Section A of trench 2



Section B of trench 3



Section C of trench 4

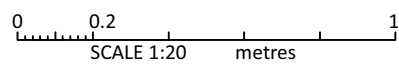
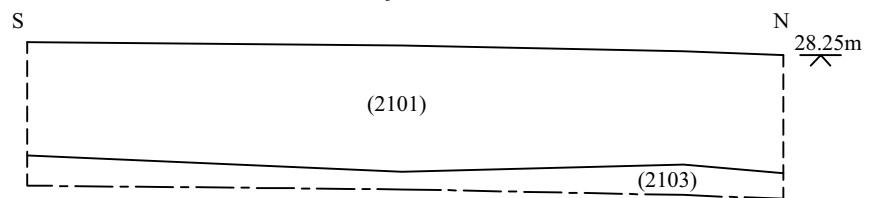


Figure 4: Representative sections