



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LEICESTER**

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Evaluation on Land to the rear of 36-42 High Street, Braunston-in-Rutland,  
Rutland**

**NGR: SK 83394 06989**

**Marco Aloï**



**ULAS Report No: 2023-021**  
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**Site Name:** Land to the rear of 36-42 High Street, Braunston-in-Rutland, Rutland

**Grid Ref:** SK 83394 06989

**Author:** Marco Aloï

**Client:** Wheatcroft Land (Braunston) Ltd

**Planning Authority:** Rutland County Council

**Planning Ref.** 2022/0447/FUL

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*Cover photo: Trench 1 opening looking north*

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## OASIS RECORD

PROJECT DETAILS	Oasis No	universi1-513809		
	Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation on Land to the rear of 36-42 High Street, Braunston-in-Rutland, Rutland		
	Start/end dates	22/02/2023 - 27/02/2023		
	Previous/Future Work	None/ unknown		
	Project Type	Evaluation		
	Site Status			
	Current Land Use	Storage of agricultural vehicles on a tarmacked yard		
	Monument Type/Period	Ditch		
	Significant Finds/Period	Late medieval and post medieval pottery		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
	Position in the Planning Process	Conditional		
Planning Ref.	2022/0447/FUL			
PROJECT LOCATION	County	Rutland		
	Site Address/Postcode	Land to the rear of 36-42 High Street, Braunston-in-Rutland, Rutland LE15 8QU		
	Study Area	0.31 hectares		
	Site Coordinates	SK 83394 06989		
	Height OD	74m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS	Organisation	ULAS		
	Project Brief Originator	Local Planning Authority: Rutland County Council		
	Project Design Originator	ULAS		
	Project Manager	Vicki Score		
	Project Director/Supervisor	Richard Philip Huxley		
	Sponsor/Funding Body	Wheatcroft Land (Braunston) Ltd		
PROJECT ARCHIVE		Physical	Digital	Paper
	Recipient	Rutland Museum service	Rutland Museum service	Rutland Museum service
	ID (Acc. No.)	OAKRM: 2023.8	OAKRM: 2023.8	OAKRM: 2023.8
	Contents	Pottery Animal bone Environmental Samples	Photographs	Report / Trench & context sheets, photo, context, sample & drawing indices.
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	Type	Grey Literature (unpublished)		
	Description	Developer Report A4 pdf		
	Title	Land to the rear of 36-42 High Street, Braunston-in-Rutland, Rutland		
	Author	M.Aloi		
	Other bibliographic details	ULAS Report No 2023-021		
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## **An Archaeological Evaluation Land to the rear of 36-42 High Street, Braunston-in-Rutland, Rutland**

**Marco Aloï**

### **Summary**

*This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on Land to the rear of 36-42 High Street, Braunston-in-Rutland, Rutland (SK 83394 06989). The work was undertaken between 22th – 27th February 2023 in advance of residential development.*

*Five evaluation trenches, were excavated across the site. Four trenches measured approximately 17 m long and their location was adjusted due to site constraints. The fifth trench measured 5 m long due to constraints between the buildings. Ditches, post holes and gullies were found in the centre, north-east and south-eastern parts of the site. The concentration of activity was in the south-east and although most of the features were undated, one ditch contained pottery dated 1100-1300.*

*Layers of clay which resembled waterlogged deposits and smelled of decaying organic matter sealed the archaeology and appeared to extend across the southern part of the site. Later post-medieval domestic waste was found within these layers. Underlying the clay layer in Trench 4 was a series of ditches and possible pits, dated by a small assemblage of pottery to the medieval period.*

*The archive for the work will be deposited with Rutland Museum Services under accession number OAKRM\_20238.*

### **Introduction**

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 16 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* (MHCLG 2021) this document forms the report for an archaeological evaluation on Land to the rear of 36-42 High Street, Braunston-in-Rutland, Rutland. It has been drafted to assist in discharging planning condition 10 of 2022/0447/FUL and to support a further pending application for the house at No. 38, High Street, Braunston.

The work was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Wheatcroft Land (Braunston) Ltd.

Planning permission has been granted for the erection of four detached dwellings with associated infrastructure around a parking area (Planning Ref: 2022/0447/FUL) and includes a condition for archaeological work. Due to the potential for medieval remains the Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire as advisor to Rutland County Council requested trial trench evaluation to determine the impact of the proposed scheme on any buried archaeology and if necessary, provide a mitigation strategy for the site.

### **Site Location, Geology and Topography**

Braunston-in-Rutland is located approximately 3 miles (4.8 km) south-west of Oakham, the county town. The River Gwash flows through the village to the south of the site. Leicestershire lies on the parish's western boundary. (see Figure 1 and Figure 2)

The site is located on the northern side of High Street and to the rear of the properties that lie along the street frontage (36-42 High Street). It is accessed via a track leading from the High Street as the road turns eastwards.

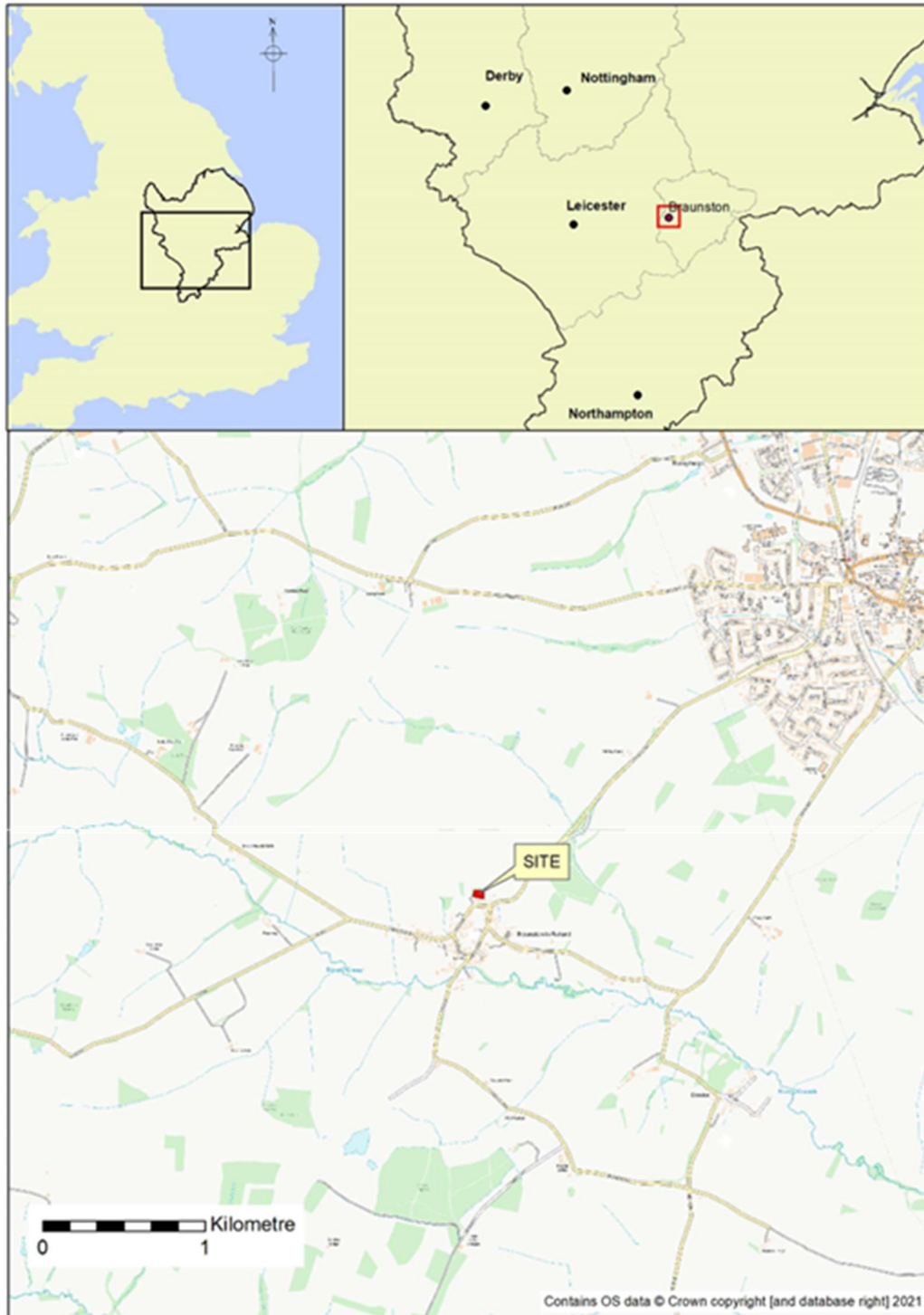


Figure 1: Location of site  
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The British Geological Survey website indicates that the underlying geology of the assessment area is likely to be Whitby Mudstone Formation overlain by Oadby Member Diamicton.

The Soilscape website indicates that the soils are likely to be lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Soil Type 9).



Figure 2: Proposed site plan (provided by client)

## Historical and Archaeological Background

The village place-name is derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'farm/settlement of Brant'. Alternatively, the personal name could be 'Brandr', a Scandinavian name (KEPN 2022). The suffix 'in-Rutland' is to differentiate the village from Braunston in Northamptonshire and Braunstone in Leicestershire.

In 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales described Braunston as:

*BRAUNSTON, or Branston, a parish in Oakham district, Rutland; on the river Gwash, 2½ miles SW of Oakham r. station. It has a post office under Oakham. Acres, 3,250. Real property, £2,710. Pop., 398. Houses, 104. Braunston Lodge is a chief residence. The living is a p. curacy, annexed to the vicarage of Hambleton, in the diocese of Peterborough. There are a Baptist chapel. and charities £59*

The manor of Braunston is not mentioned by name in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The land was presumably included as a berewick (a detached portion of farmland) dependent on the



manor of Hambleton, as the chapelry of Braunston was later dependent on the church of Hambleton. The manor, however, was afterwards transferred to the Soke of Oakham, which consisted of the Rutland Manors and townships held of the barony of Oakham. Walchelin de Ferrers was holding it in 1167 (Page 1935).

Braunston parish was formerly within the bounds of Leighfield Forest and gave its name to one of the forest bailiwicks (an area controlled by a bailiff). The parish was enclosed in 1801 by private Act of Parliament. The Whisp, a piece of land on the western boundary, is mentioned in 1299 and contained, in 1584, 14 acres of wood and pasture (Page 1935).

The Grade II\* All Saints' Church has an unusual circular churchyard. A sculpted stone stands in the churchyard, at the west end of the church, close to the tower. Known as the Braunston 'Goddess', it was found in the 1920s when the church doorstep needed to be replaced; when the slab was lifted, the carving was revealed on the underside. There has been considerable speculation as to its age and meaning, and its original position as part of the church building, or whether it may even predate the church. It is not a gargoyle as it has no drainage channel. There is some speculation that it is a kind of Sheela Na Gig, although it lacks the genitalia normally associated with these figures (sheelanagig.org). The nearby Hall Farmhouse is a large house dating from the 16th century and is also Grade II\* listed.

A limited amount of archaeological work has carried out in the vicinity of the assessment area.

During construction work in 1995, a watching brief and historic building survey were carried out in the grounds of Braunston Manor, 320m south of the assessment area. The watching brief produced evidence of a Romano-British building dated by the pottery to the late 3rd and 4th centuries AD with some Saxon and medieval material also present (ELE5482).

A watching brief carried out at Snowdrop Cottage, 430m south-west of the assessment area in 2004 produced medieval and post-medieval pottery, and a small flint flake but none associated with archaeological features or deposits (ELE6092).

## **Aims and Objectives**

The main aims of the archaeological work were defined as follows:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits.
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features encountered.
- To provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to assess the impact of the proposed development on cultural heritage and to help formulate a mitigation strategy
- To record any archaeological deposits and produce an archive and report of any results

The results of the evaluation will provide information for the local planning authority to make informed recommendations concerning condition 10 of planning application 2022/0447/FUL and an appropriate mitigation strategy for the proposed development. Additionally, as agreed with the local planning archaeologist, trench 5 was positioned and excavated within this scheme of work to support a pending planning application associated with 38 High Street, Braunston.

## Research Aims

Initial aims were derived from *The East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework* (<https://researchframeworks.org/emherf/>).

There was moderate potential for Anglo-Saxon, medieval, & post-medieval archaeology due to the site's location within the historic village core. Potential for prehistoric to Roman remains was low due to few sites recorded by the HER. The evaluation therefore had the potential to contribute to the following research aims:

### *Early Medieval*

- 6J Update and expand East Midlands Anglo-Saxon Pottery Project. (6.6.6)
- 6G Investigate evolution of Germanic & Scandinavian settlement through place name evidence (6.4.1)

### *High-Medieval*

- 7I Investigate development of the open-field system & woodland management (7.2.1)
- 7F Clarify further the processes of settlement desertion & shrinkage (7.2.4)



Figure 3: Photograph of the site pre-groundwork

## Methodology

The work followed the procedures set out in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the project (ULAS 2022). Fieldwork was carried out by ULAS between 22nd and 27th February 2023.

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (updated 2020a) and adhered to their *Code of Conduct* (updated 2021). The Accession Number (OAKRM\_20238) has been issued by Rutland Museum where the archive will be deposited.

Three 16.5m long trenches and a 17m and 5m long trench were excavated across the development area using a JCB with a 1.6m ditching bucket. The infilling was carried out by a tracked machine.

The proposed trenching plan (Figure 4) was not feasible due to a number of constraints, which included the proximity of buildings and farm machinery. The locations of the trenches were then adjusted accordingly (Figure 5).

Trench 1 (16.5m) was moved to a north to south orientation to allow the landowner the space to move vehicles around the yard.

The western end of Trench 2 (16.5m) was also moved to the north to allow the landowner the space to move vehicles.

Trench 3 (16.5m) was moved slightly to the west to allow landowner access to the north-east corner.

Trench 4 (17m) was moved slightly to the west to allow spoil to be placed either side of the trench.

Trench 5 (5m) was orientated north-east to south-west to avoid allow room for spoil.

A sixth trench located between buildings 42 and 38 was not excavated due to problems with access. (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Proposed Trench plan as set out in the WSI

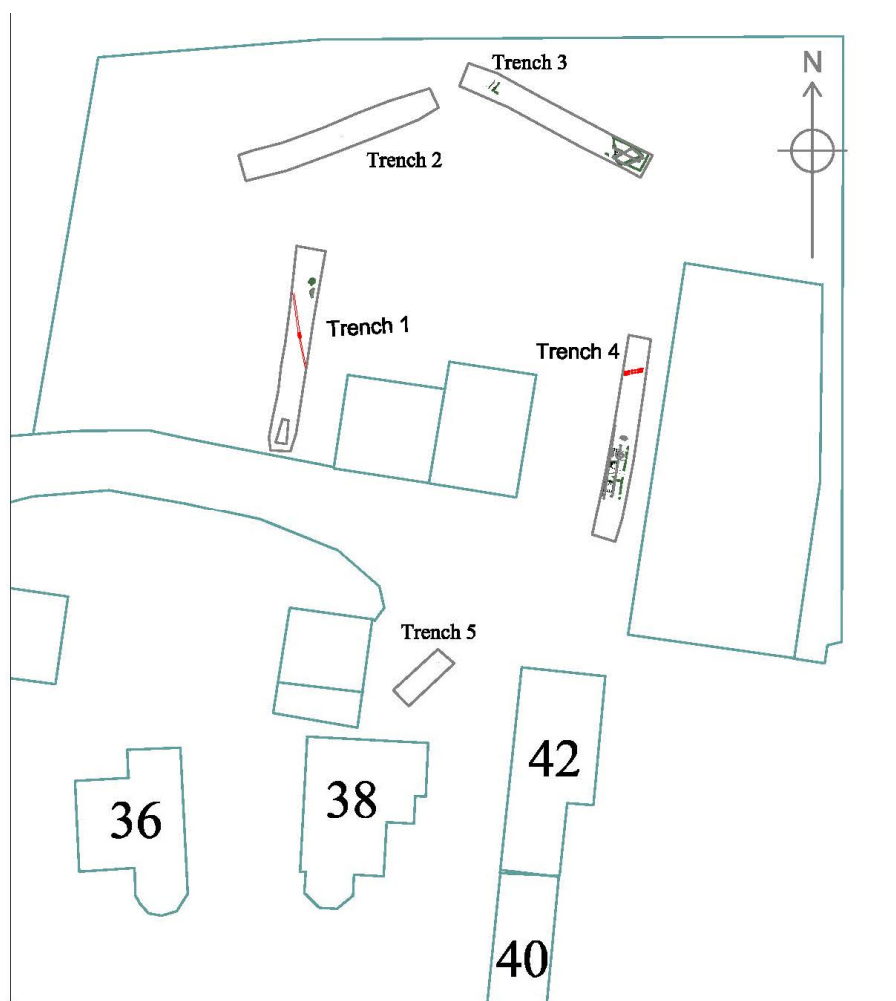


Figure 5: Revised trench locations

### ***Monitoring***

Internal monitoring procedures were undertaken with the project manager, to ensure that project targets were met and professional standards maintained. No monitoring visits were undertaken, but photos and descriptions of the results were shared with Planning Archaeologist during the work. Regular meetings were also undertaken with the landowner and developer.

### **Results**

The site was covered by a tarmac surface and once removed it was clear that the area had been landscaped with most of the topsoil/subsoil having been removed during previous levelling of the area.

The natural substratum consisted of light yellowish clay, with inclusions of chalk and small stones/pebbles.

### ***Trench 1***

Trench 1, orientated north-northeast to south-southwest was 16.5m long and 1.6m wide. Beneath the tarmac and hardcore rubble, a thin layer of dark brownish silty clay (**28**) was found which contained a tile. Two layers of clay which smelled of decaying organic matter extended

across 70% of the southern part of the trench. The upper layer **(15)** measured approximately 0.2m thick and was composed of a yellowish-green silty clay. A single small sherd of medieval pottery dated 1200-1400 was found in it (Figure 8). Beneath it was a layer of light greyish green silty clay **(27)** which measured 0.45m thick and also contained a single sherd of medieval pottery dated 1250-1300 and animal bone fragments.

Where the clay deposits **(27)** and **(15)** were located the base of the trench contained a yellowy green silty clay. It was unclear whether this was the natural substratum so a sondage measuring 2m long and 0.5m deep was excavated through it (Figure 9). A light yellowish natural clay was found in the base. It is possible the yellowy green clay is the result of discolouration by the overlaying deposits.

A modern land drain was located towards the centre of the trench and to the north of it were two post holes **[12]** and **[14]** (Figure 7). Post hole **[12]** was sub-circular in shape, measuring 0.46m wide and 0.10m deep. (Figure 10). Post hole **[14]** was also sub-circular, 0.58m wide and 0.12m deep. (Figure 11). Both post holes were filled with a bluish-grey clay with chalk inclusions fills **(22)** and **(23)** (

Figure 11).

Table 1 Detailing the thickness of each deposit encountered along the trench. The organic clay layers have been measured as a single deposit.

Interval (m) from NE	0	5	10	15	16.50
Landscaping/Made ground	-	-	-	0.10(tarmac)	0.10(tarmac)
Bedding	0.30m	0.30m	0.20m	0.40m	0.40m
Layer <b>(28)</b>	0.10m	0.10m	0.10m	0.10m	
Clay layers <b>(15) +(27)</b>	0.66m	0.65m	0.65m		
Top of Natural	-	-	-	0.60m	0.50m
Base of trench	1.16m	1.09m	0.95m	0.70m	0.50m

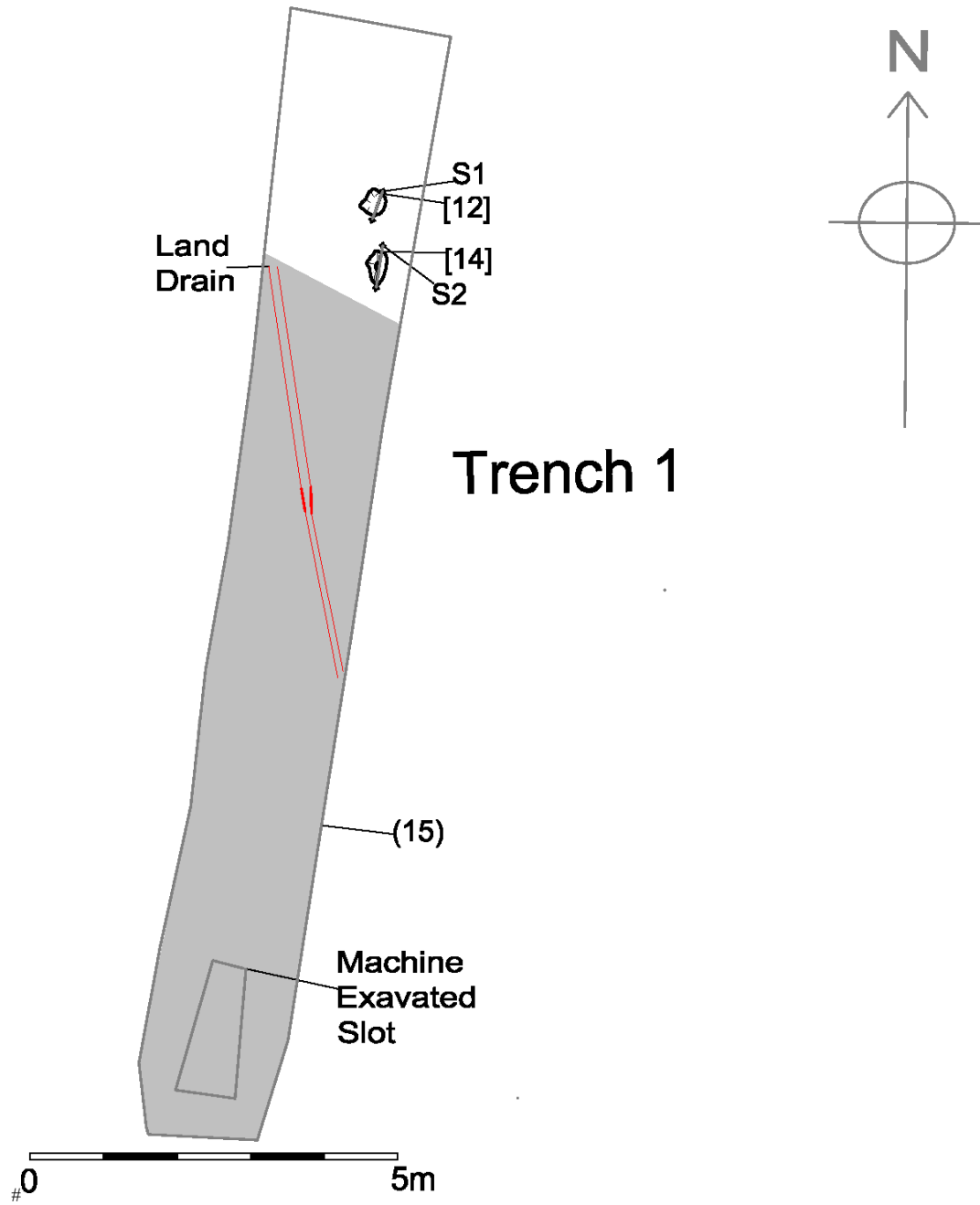


Figure 6: Overall plan of Trench 1

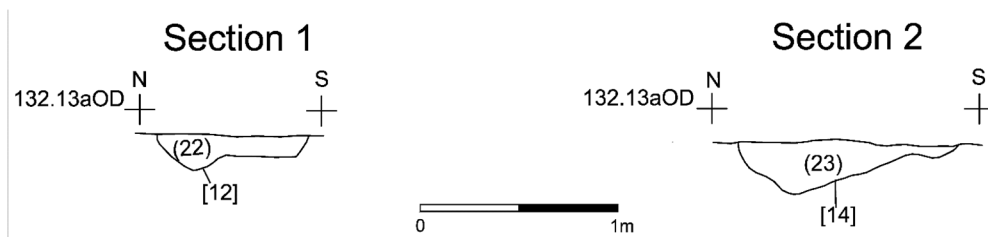


Figure 7: Trench 1 sections



Figure 8: Trench 1 looking north





Figure 9: East facing section of layer (15) and (27) covered by modern rubble (machine excavated slot)



Figure 10: East facing section of Post hole [12]



Figure 11: East facing section of Post hole [14]

### ***Trench 2***

The trench was orientated north-east to south-west and as with Trench 1 the topsoil and subsoil had previously been removed. The modern hardcore rubble bedding layer and tarmac sat directly on top of the natural clay. The trench was absent of archaeological features.

Table 2 Detailing the depths of the deposits seen along the length of the trench. In this case only the tarmac and rubble indicate a thickness, the other two are depths.

Interval (m) from NE	0	5	10	15	16.50
<b>Tarmac and Rubble</b>	0.40m	0.25m	0.35m	0.38m	0.30m
<b>Top of natural</b>	0.40m	0.25m	0.35m	0.38m	0.30m
<b>Base of trench</b>	0.60m	0.40m	0.40m	0.48m	0.45m



Figure 12: Trench 2 facing south-west

### ***Trench 3***

North-west to south-east oriented trench 3 contained a similar stratigraphy to trench 2 with the modern hardcore rubble bedding layer and tarmac sitting directly on top of the natural clay. A feature at the eastern end of the trench was investigated by a small machine slot and hand-excavation. The feature [16] was either a ditch or a big pit and extended across the width of the trench. It measured 2.5 m wide, almost 0.5 m deep and was filled with a mid-brown grey silty clay (17), which occasionally contained cobbles (Figure 16).

At the western end of the trench a small gully [18] was recorded. This measured 0.30 m wide, 0.08m deep and had sloping sides with a flat base. The fill (19) was a greyish blue silty clay (Figure 17). No finds were recovered from gully [18] or feature [16].

Table 3: Detailing the depths of the deposits seen along the length of the trench. In this case only the tarmac and rubble indicate a thickness, the other two are depths

Interval (m) from E	0	5	10	15	16.50
<b>Tarmac+Bedding</b>	0.50m	0.60m	0.45m	0.45m	0.30m
<b>Top of natural</b>	0.60m	0.60m	0.45m	0.45m	0.30m
<b>Base of trench</b>	0.60m	0.66m	0.50 m	0.50m	0.35m

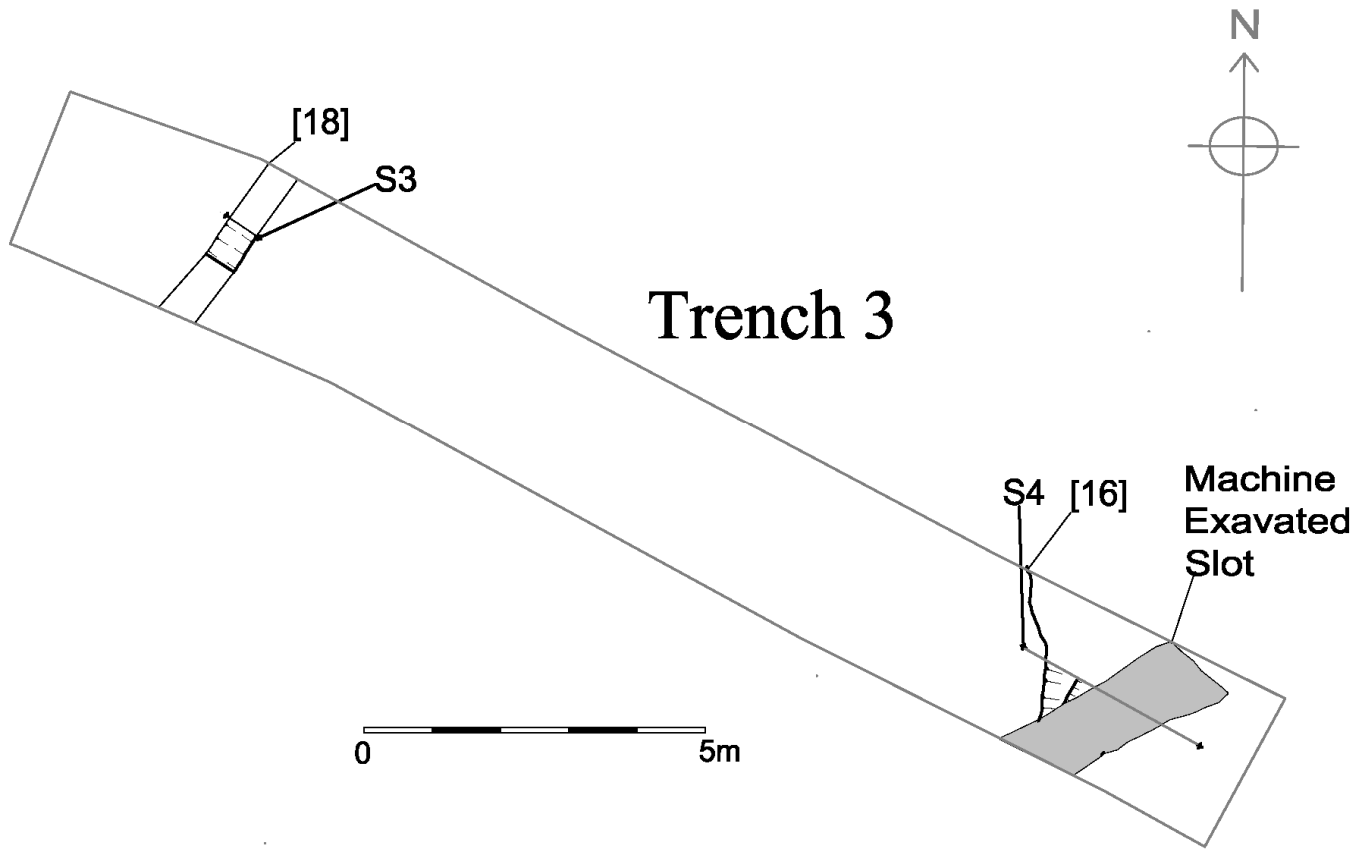


Figure 13: Trench 3 overview

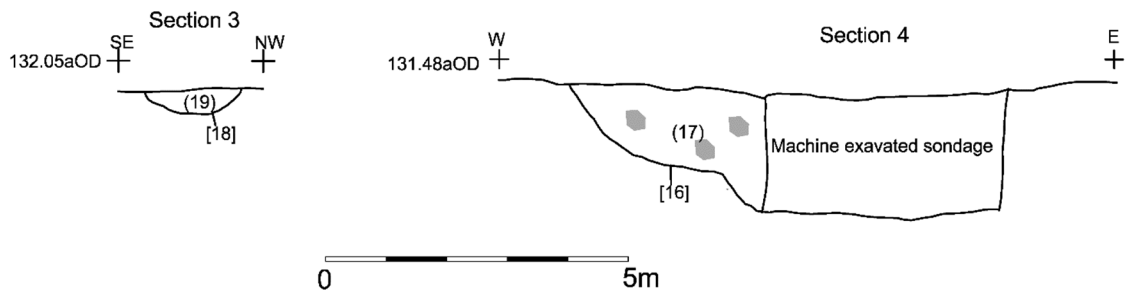


Figure 14: Trench 3 sections