

**Land to the rear of 6 St Peter's Road,
Petersfield, Hampshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Merlin Danesmount

by Danielle Milbank
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code SPP06/107

February 2006

Summary

Site name: Land to the rear of 6 St Peter's Road, Petersfield, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 7472 2319

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 14th February 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Danielle Milbank

Site code: SPP 06/107

Area of site: c.860 sq m

Summary of results: One probable pit or scoop containing a single 13th century pottery sherd

Monuments identified: Medieval scoop

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 28.02.07
	Steve Preston ✓ 28.02.07

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Report 06/107b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land to the rear of 6 St Peter's Road, Petersfield, Hampshire (SU 7472 2319) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Carole M Stellman of JKL Architects and Town Planners Ltd, The Studio, Hoddington, Upton Grey, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG25 2RT on behalf of Merlin Danesmount, Lutidine House, Newark Lane, Ripley, Surrey, GU23 6BS. Planning permission (app. F.49488/FUL) has been gained from East Hampshire District Council for the construction of new housing on the site following demolition of existing structures. The consent is subject to a condition (3) requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work; this was to take the form, initially, of field evaluation to provide information on which to base a mitigation strategy. The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential, as documented in a desk-based assessment (Preston 2006).

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Stephen Appleby, Archaeological Officer for Hampshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Danielle Milbank and David Platt on the 14th February 2007 and the site code is SPP06/107. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in Petersfield, town centre. The site is located close to the centre of the historic (medieval) town, with the parish church and town square to the west and High Street to the north (Figs. 1 and 2). The underlying geology is Folkestone Beds (BGS 1990) which was observed in the trenches, and the site lies at approximately 60m above Ordnance Datum. The site is flat and has been recently cleared of all extant structures.

Archaeological background

A desk-based assessment (Preston 2006) highlighted the archaeological potential of the site. In summary, Petersfield Heath, to the south-east of the town, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument consisting of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery. Several Roman villas have also been recorded in the surrounding area. Petersfield is not

mentioned in Domesday Book (1086), and may have been a deliberate planned town dating from the 12th century. Although many buildings in the town centre date back to the 17th and 18th centuries, medieval burgage plots, possibly as early as the 12th century in origin, have been preserved in the layout of the town centre. St Peter's Road is relatively modern but is located at approximately the position one might expect a back lane for properties along High Street (one of the original medieval streets). Investigations along High Street have demonstrated that medieval features do survive amidst more recent developments.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. In addition, specific research aims were to determine if archaeological finds and deposits representing Iron Age, Roman or medieval occupation have survived on the site. This was to be carried out by means of three machine-excavated trenches, each 6m long and 1.6m wide, targeting the footprint of the proposed building, and comprising a 3.3% sample of the area of the site.

The trenches were excavated using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision (Fig. 3). All spoilheaps were monitored for finds and trenches were hand-cleaned where necessary.

Results

Access restrictions resulted in slight adjustments to trench shapes in that they were widened to compensate for shortening in order to maintain the sample fraction. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was orientated NW–SE, was 4.5m long, 2m wide and 0.91m deep overall. Car park surface material (brick rubble and chalk) 0.10m thick overlay a layer of dark black brown sandy silt, with occasional brick and 19th/20th century china fragments, 0.75m deep. This overlay the mottled yellow/brown sand with occasional flints which forms the underlying geology. No archaeological finds or deposits were encountered.

Trench 2 (Plate 1)

Trench 2 was orientated roughly south-north, was 5.3m long, 2m wide and 1.05m deep. Car park surface material (brick rubble and scalpins) 0.10m thick overlay a dark blackish brown sandy silt, with occasional

modern brick fragments and sherds of 19th/20th century china, which was 0.86m thick. This overlay mottled yellow/brown sand natural.

At 3m from the south end, a small, roughly circular pit or scoop (1) was observed (Figs. 3 and 4). This was 0.48m long (north-south) and 0.39m wide (east-west). It was excavated by hand and was found to be only 0.07m deep and infilled with a brown silty sand (52) with very occasional small subangular flint inclusions. This deposit also contained a single sherd of 13th century pottery.

Trench 3 (Plate 2)

Trench 3 was orientated SW–NE, was 2m wide, 5.55m long and 1.15m deep overall. Car park surface (brick rubble and scalping) 0.10m thick, overlay dark brown sandy silt with brick and 19th/20th century china 0.95m thick. This in turn overlay the mottled yellow/brown sand. No archaeological deposits or find were encountered in this trench.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

A single sherd of pottery (5g) was noted in context 52. It is a fragment of a jug of Laverstock type (Musty 1969), and has a glossy green glaze and vertical incised combing on the outer surface. It is most likely of 13th century date.

Conclusion

Although a site in such a central location in a town of Petersfield's character could be expected to be archaeologically rich, the results were disappointing. The stratigraphy showed that 19th/20th century deposits overlie the natural geology consistently across the excavated areas. This layer may be a buried soil associated with the plot gardens and its homogenous presence indicates the absence of the stratigraphic build up typical of the historic cores of larger medieval towns. It is possible that this absence is due to landscaping and truncation in post-medieval times. However, even if this argument is accepted, there is no evidence to suggest that the underlying natural geology has been truncated. Apart from the single shallow pit (scoop) none of the trenches revealed any cut features such as pits or ditches and which would have survived if originally present. The evidence suggests therefore that the site lies away from the densely occupied areas of the medieval town and, in

terms of below ground archaeology, is only lightly used. The evaluation has shown therefore that the archaeological potential of the site is low.

References

- BGS, 1990, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 300, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Musty, M A, Algar, D J, Ewence, P F, 1969, 'The Medieval Pottery Kilns at Laverstock, near Salisbury, Wiltshire' *Archaeologia* **102**, 83-150
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Preston, S, 2006, Land to the rear of 6 St Peter's Road, Petersfield, Hampshire, an archaeological desk-based assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 06/107, Reading

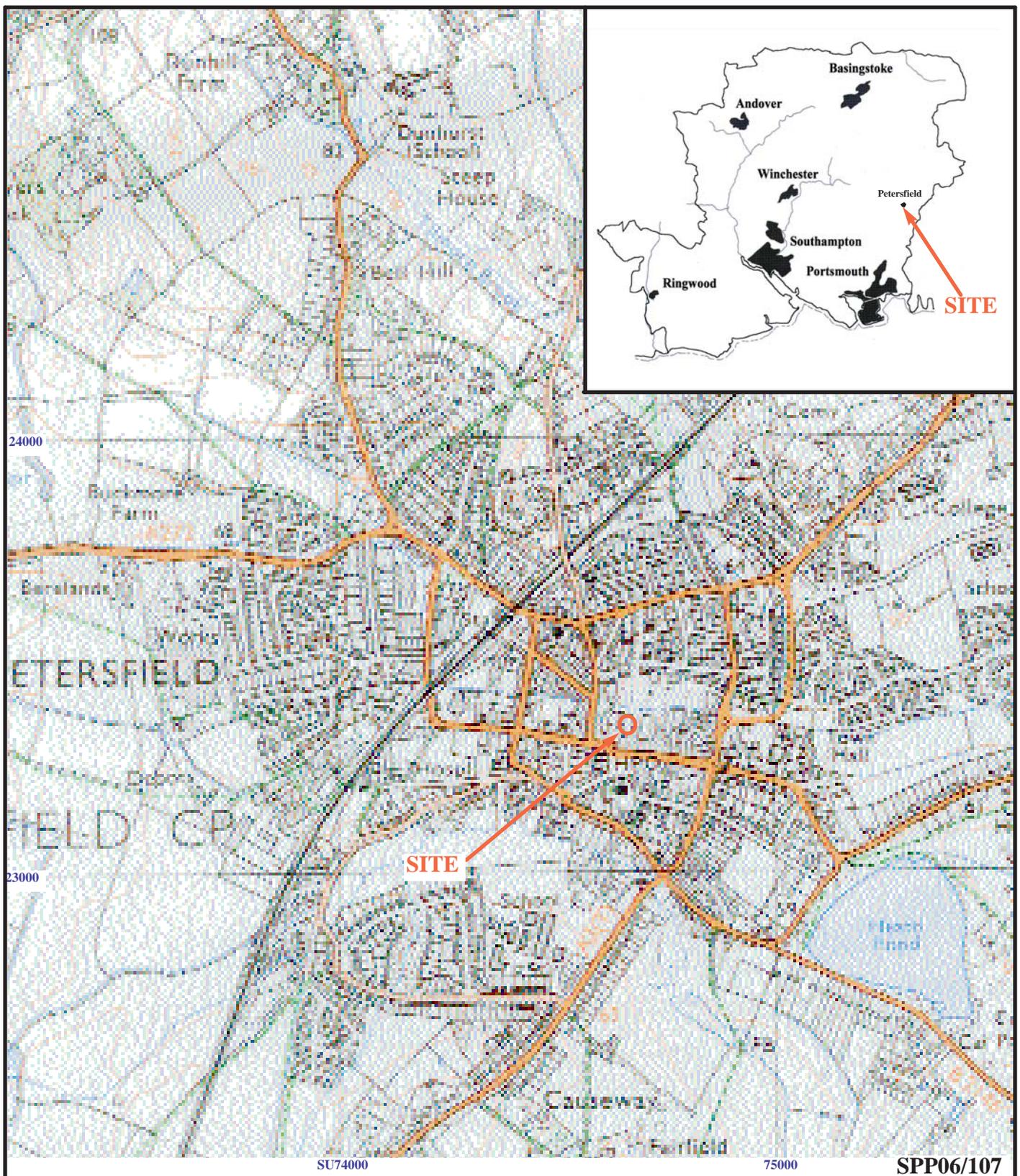
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at SE, S or W end respectively.

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	4.5	2.00	0.91	Car park surface material 0.00-0.10m; dark brown sandy silt, with occasional brick and 19th/20th century china fragments; 0.10-0.75m;. mottled yellow/brown sand (natural geology) 0.75m+.
2	5.3	2.00	1.05	Car park surface material 0.00-0.10m ; dark brown sandy silt, with occasional modern brick fragments and sherds of 19th/20th century 0.10-0.96m; mottled yellow/brown sand (natural geology) 0.96m+ . Pit 1 (Plate 1)
3	5.55	2.00	1.15	Car park surface material 0.00-0.10m; dark brown sandy silt with brick and 19th/20th century china 0.10-1.05m; mottled yellow/brown sand (natural geology) 1.05m+. (Plate 2)

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
2	1	52	Pit	13 th century	Pottery

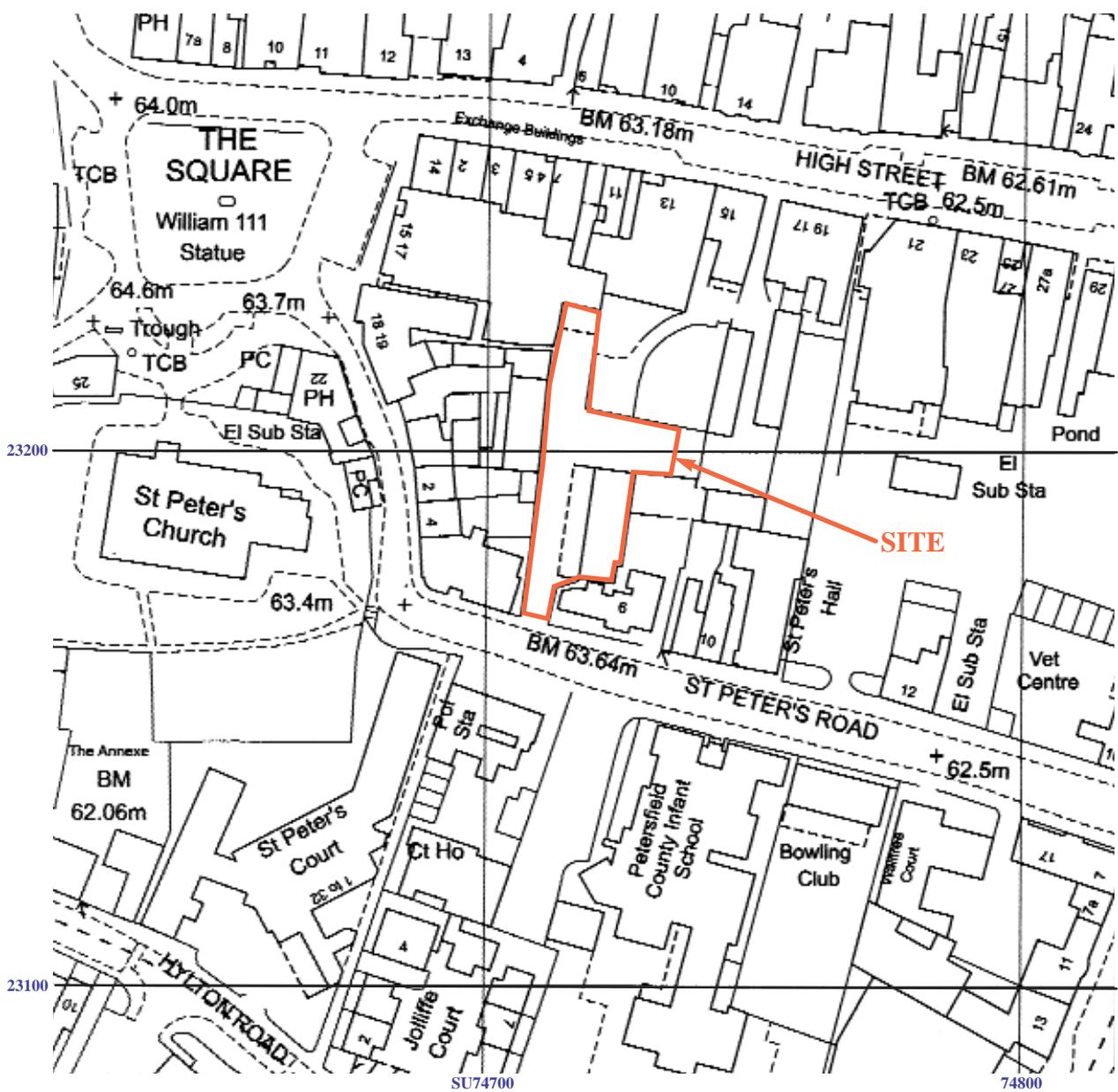


**Land to the rear of 6 St. Peters Road,
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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Petersfield and Hampshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on St. Peters Road.

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Land at rear of 6 St. Peters Road, Petersfield, Hampshire, 2007

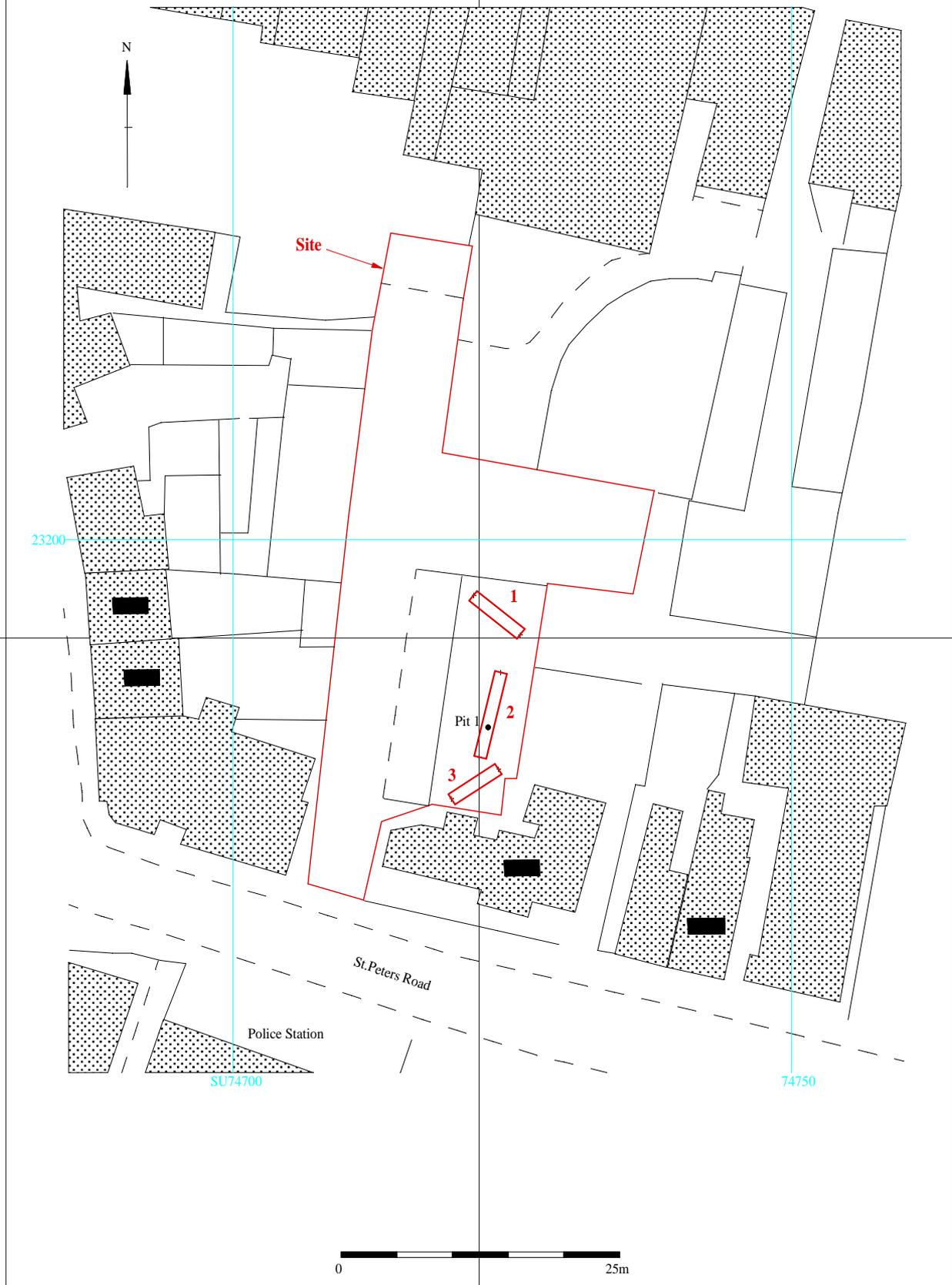


Figure 3. Location of trenches

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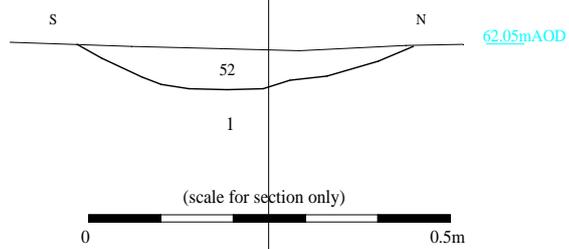
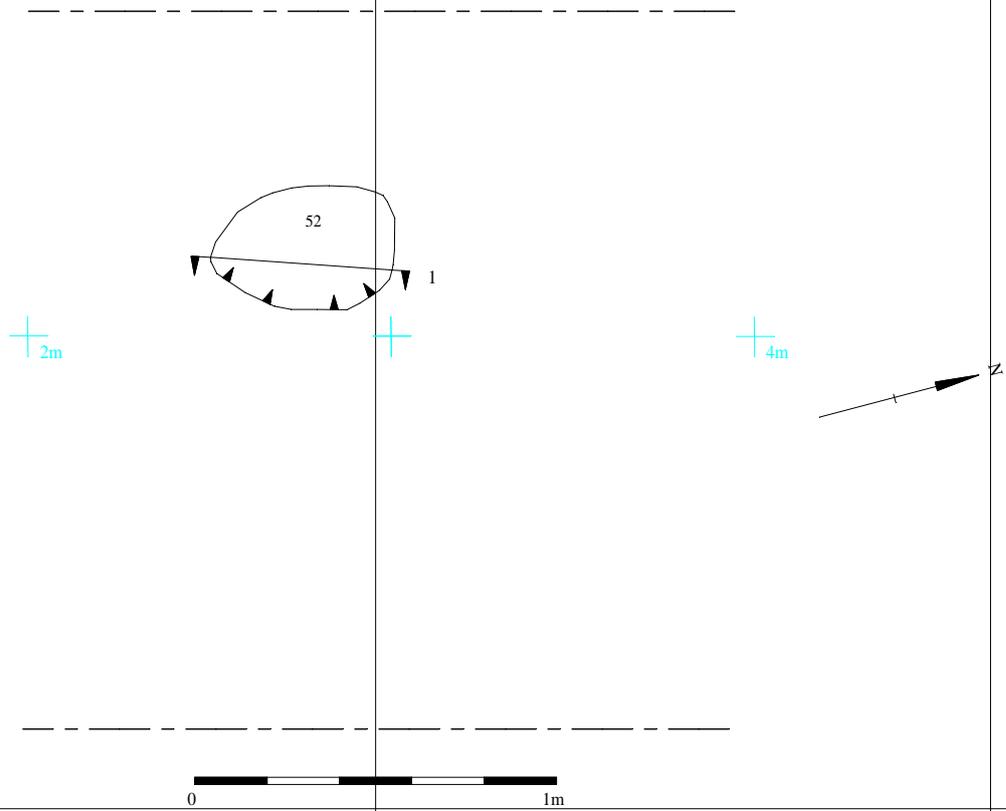


Figure 4. Plan and section of feature 1 in from Trench 2.

Pit 1

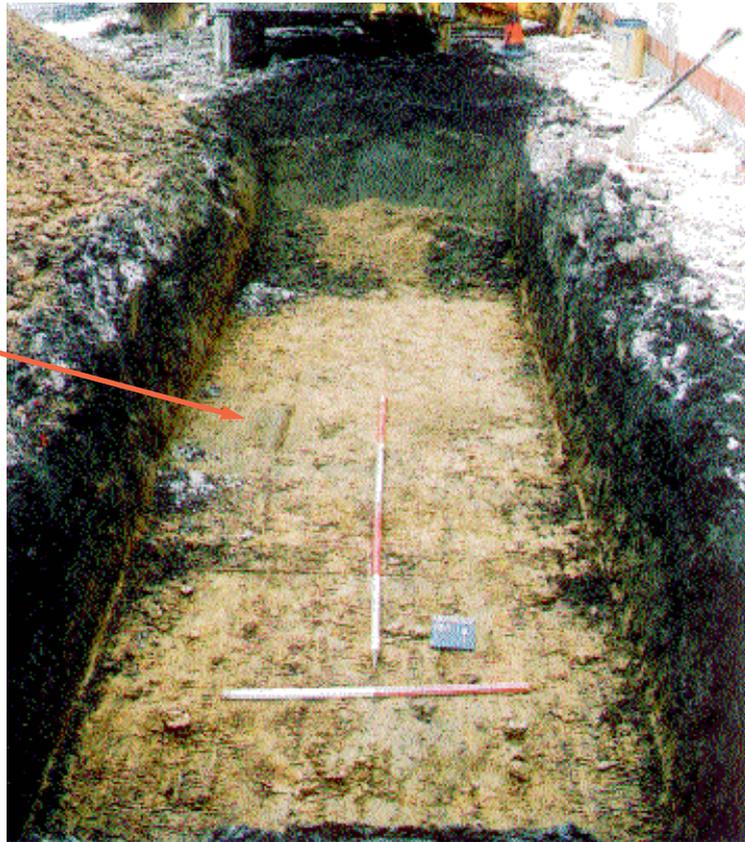


Plate 1. Trench 2 looking north, showing pit 1, Scales 1m, 2m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking south west, Scales 1m, 2m.