

60 Sturry Hill,
Sturry,
Kent,
CT2 8AY


Archaeological evaluation

Project Code: 60 SH-EV-16
Planning Ref: CA/16/00920
NGR: 617566 160834 centred
Report No: 2016/91
Archive No: 3765

July 2016

Document Record

This report has been issued and amended as follows:

Version	Prepared by	Position	Date	Approved by
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Summary

Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at 60 Sturry Hill, Sturry, Kent, CT2 8AY (NGR 617566 160834), on June 24, 2016. The work was conducted in response to a planning application for the construction of two detached dwellings (planning ref: CA/16/00920). The programme comprised the excavation of two evaluation trenches (Trenches 1 and 2).

The natural geological subsoil was located at a depth of c 0.75m below present ground level (about 30m OD or just over). The evaluation identified the presence of a single pit of uncertain date, which almost certainly forms an extension of similar poorly dated activity recorded during previous archaeological work close by to the north. The evidence suggests that the pit is more likely to be of prehistoric in date than later. The pit was sealed by a sequence of deposits, comprising a possible colluvial layer, ploughsoil and then modern topsoil.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 A programme of archaeological work was undertaken by Canterbury Archaeological Trust on land at 60 Sturry Hill, Sturry, Kent CT2 8AY. The work was commissioned by Mr Patrick Butler (2 High Street, Bridge, Canterbury CT4 5JY) in response to the proposed construction of two new dwellings on the site.

1.1.2 The site had previously been granted planning permission for two substantial dwellings (CA/15/00427) forming part of a larger scheme that included the adjacent site at 62 Sturry Hill. The present development, of two smaller detached dwellings, is covered by a separate planning application (CA/16/00920), not yet granted permission. Included within planning application CA/15/00427 were the following conditions (12 and 13), that also relate to the present development.

12 *No development shall take place until the applicant or the developer, or their successor(s) in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological mitigation measures, including further archaeological work that may be required, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. REASON: Pursuant to Articles 35 (1) and (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(England) Order 2015, the local planning authority is satisfied that the requirements of this condition (including the timing of compliance) are so fundamental to the development permitted that, if not imposed, it would have been necessary to refuse permission for the development. This is because, at the time of granting permission, full details of the archaeological implications for developing the site were not yet available but this information is necessary to ensure the development complies with para. 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy BE10 of the Canterbury District Local Plan First Review 2006 and Policies HE11 and HE12 Canterbury District Local Plan Draft Publication 2014 and otherwise to protect the archaeological features of the site and its locality.*

13 *Within six months of the completion of archaeological site works, an assessment report detailing the proposals for post-excavation analysis, publication of any matters of archaeological interest and preparation of the archive shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the works detailed in this assessment report shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with any such approval given.*

REASON: In order that the archaeological interests of the site are secured and to ensure the preservation of archaeological remains by record.

1.1.3 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was submitted by Canterbury Archaeological Trust (dated June 2016) and approved by the City Council Archaeological Officer (CAT 2016). The WSI indicated the excavation of two evaluation trenches, one 12m in length, the other 16m in length (subject to site constraints), located within the site under the footprint of the proposed new dwellings, with a third 15m long trench in the area of a proposed driveway included as a contingency (if archaeological deposits were found to be at a shallow depth likely to be affected by the driveway).

1.1.4 The recommended archaeological works were undertaken by Jon Rady (Project Manager), Dale Robertson (senior archaeologist) and Isobel Curwen (archaeologist) of Canterbury Archaeological Trust on 24 June 2016.

- 1.1.5 Canterbury Archaeological Trust is a registered organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and conforms to their by-laws, standards and policy statements.

1.2 *Location, geology and topography*

- 1.2.1 The proposed development area (PDA) comprises a plot located to the rear of 60 Sturry Hill, which fronts the north-eastern side of the road (NGR 617566 160834 centred; Fig. 1, Plate 1). The site is bounded to the west by the existing property, to the north by a recent development at 62 Sturry Hill and to the east by the rear gardens of properties on Broadlands. To the south is woodland within an old quarry.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology within the PDA is shown to be Lambeth Group - Sand overlain by a superficial deposit of Head - Clay and Silt (Brickearth). However, overlying River Terrace Deposits, 3 - Sand and Gravel are also shown immediately south of the site.¹
- 1.2.2 The PDA, which covers an area of about 55m by 21m lies below the crest of Sturry Hill, on the north side of the Stour valley, but was relatively flat, at a height of c. 32m OD, sloping gently towards the south-east to c. 31m OD. The area was laid down to grass at the time of evaluation.

1.3 *Archaeological potential and historical background*

- 1.3.1 The site is located within an area of known archaeological potential, based on the proximity of archaeological remains recorded in the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 1.3.2 Archaeological investigations at 62 Sturry Hill immediately north of the PDA identified a number of archaeological features thought variously to be prehistoric to medieval in date (SWAT 2013, 9–10). The artefacts recovered, dating from the early Neolithic to early Bronze Age, included heavily worn pottery and a single flint tool.
- 1.3.3 Significant quantities of artefactual material dating to the Lower or Middle Palaeolithic period have been found close to the PDA during quarrying of river terrace gravels since the early twentieth century. These included c 200 handaxes from land immediately to the west (the School Pit; TR 16 SE 241) and many to the south (TR 16 SE 9; TR 16 SE 245), from Homersham's West Pit and East Pit. However, no such finds of this date were encountered during the archaeological investigations at 62 Sturry Hill, the report concluding that such remains were unlikely to be disturbed at a depth of less than 2m (SWAT 2013, 10). Mesolithic and Neolithic material has been found in nearby gravel pits (TR 16 SE 53; TR 16 SE 75), together with the early Neolithic to early Bronze Age flint tool from the 62 Sturry Hill site.
- 1.3.4 The earliest archaeological features so far excavated in the area appear date to the Bronze Age, and include a burial found on land c 200m to the south-west (TR 16 SE 18). An Iron Age settlement with cremation burials is recorded within 200m east of the PDA (TR 16 SE 4) and Romano-British burials within 500m (TR 16 SE 8). Numerous features of medieval and post-medieval date are also recorded to the south in Sturry village itself.
- 1.3.5 Further information on the sites mentioned above are available from the County Historic Environment Record for Kent, which is located at Kent County Council Strategic Planning, County Hall, Maidstone.

¹ (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, accessed 14.07.16)

2 Project aims and methodology

Aims

- 2.1 The aim of the evaluation work was to determine whether any significant archaeological remains survived on site.

Methodology

- 2.2 The methodology for the archaeological works was set out in Parts A and B of the Specification for archaeological evaluation (CAT 2016 and Canterbury City Council).
- 2.3 The evaluation, which was confined to the footprint of the proposed new dwellings and parking areas, consisted of the excavation of two archaeological trenches measuring approximately 15m and 12m in length. The WSI contained provision for a third 15m trench to be cut as a contingency (dependent on the results from the first two trenches). After consultation with the City Archaeologist, this was not excavated.
- 2.4 The evaluation trenches were backfilled on completion of the archaeological works and the ground reinstated.
- 2.5 *Archive methodology*
- 2.5.1 Following completion of the fieldwork a project archive was prepared in accordance with Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991, 30–31). The project archive conforms with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990), *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission 1992) and the *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections: guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (The Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993).
- 2.5.2 No artefactual material of archaeological interest was recovered during the evaluation.
- 2.5.3 No environmental samples were taken from the evaluation.
- 2.5.4 The project archive is presently held in the offices of Canterbury Archaeological Trust (92a Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2LU).

2.6 *Assessment methodology*

- 2.6.1 Post-excavation assessment was carried out immediately following documentation of the site archive. The assessment has been prepared in accordance with Canterbury Archaeological Trust's *Guide to post-excavation methodology* (2010) and follows national guidelines in accordance with the principles of *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MORPHE Project Managers' Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

3 Fieldwork results

3.1 *Trench 1 (Fig. 2, Plate 2)*

- 3.1.1 Trench 1 was located toward the west of the PDA aligned approximately north-east to south-west and was approximately 13m long by 1.5m wide. The trench was machine excavated to a depth of between 0.75m and 0.87m below the existing ground level.

- 3.1.2 The earliest deposit encountered was a layer of coarse yellow sandy gravel (104) revealed at the north-eastern end of the trench. This was encountered at a depth of 0.60m below the existing ground surface at its highest (30.24m OD) and sloped down towards the south-west. A maximum thickness of 0.27m was observed, however this deposit extended deeper than the base of the trench. It was sealed by a layer of a pale orange brown sandy clay (105) containing rare small flints, also considered to represent the natural geology. This was generally present at a depth of about 0.8m (c. 30m OD).
- 3.1.3 Contexts (104) and (105) were sealed by a layer of sterile pale-orange brown sandy clay with lenses of redeposited natural material (103). This extended across the entire trench area at a depth of between 0.38m and 0.32m from the existing ground surface (30.46m to 30.32m OD), with a maximum thickness of 0.40m recorded where it overlay (104).
- 3.1.4 Deposit (103) was sealed by a layer of pale brown-grey firm silty clay with occasional flint (102). Extending across the entire trench area, this deposit had a maximum recorded thickness of 0.26m. Layer (102) was encountered at a depth of 0.25m to 0.37m below the present ground surface (30.59m to 30.47m OD).
- 3.1.5 Overlaying (102) was a layer of dark grey-brown loose silty clay with common small flints, representing the present garden soil horizon (101). This extended across the entire trench area with a maximum thickness of 0.35m and formed the existing ground surface.
- 3.1.6 No archaeological features or significant deposits were encountered in Trench 1.
- 3.2 *Trench 2 (Fig. 3, Plates 3 to 4)*
- 3.2.1 Trench 2 was located toward the east of the PDA aligned approximately north-east to south-west and was approximately 15m long by 1.5m wide. The trench was machine excavated to a depth of between 0.75m and 0.90m below the existing ground level.
- 3.2.2 The underlying geological subsoil (203) was encountered across the trench base, comprising a pale orange brown sandy clay containing rare small flints, the top of which was encountered at a depth of 0.75m (30.06m OD). At the eastern end of the trench an exposure of natural gravel (207) was also recorded at a similar depth (30.06m OD).
- 3.2.3 A single feature [206] was identified cutting the natural soil horizon. This was only partially exposed within the limit of the evaluation trench but appeared to be part of a subcircular feature or pit. It was located along the south-eastern edge of the trench, measuring 0.8m in length and extended 0.66m north-west into the trench with a maximum excavated depth of 0.8m. At the base of this was a fill comprised of dark brown soft sandy clay, containing moderate flints and charcoal (205), with a maximum thickness of 0.16m. This was overlain by a light brown-grey soft silty sandy clay that contained rare charcoal flecks (204) and measured a maximum 0.64m in thickness.
- 3.2.4 Sealing cut feature [206] and the natural geological subsoil was a layer of mid brown firm silty clay that contained moderate small to medium flints and lenses of redeposited natural material (202). This extended across the entire excavated trench area with a maximum thickness of 0.26m, and was encountered at depth of c. 0.50m below the present ground surface (30.31m OD).
- 3.2.5 Overlying (202) was a layer of pale brown-grey firm silty clay with moderate small flints (201). This extended across the trench, with a maximum recorded thickness of 0.22m. Layer (201) was encountered at depth of c 0.3m below the present ground surface (30.51m OD).

- 3.2.6 Sealing deposit (201) was a thick layer of dark grey-brown loose silty clay with common small flints, representing the present garden soil horizon (200). This extended across the entire trench area with a maximum thickness of 0.31m and formed the existing ground surface.

4 Interpretation, conclusion and impact assessment

4.1 Interpretation

- 4.1.1 The sequence of deposits exposed within the trenches was generally similar to those previously encountered in the archaeological work just to the north (62 Sturry Hill; SWAT 2013). What was considered the natural horizon was exposed at about 0.75-0.80m below modern ground level (at 62 Sturry Hill it varied from between 0.62 and 0.79m below modern level) or just over 30m OD (rising slightly at the far eastern end of Trench 1). The natural layers encountered (104 and 203) are consistent with the underlying geology, recorded as Head - Clay and Silt, or Brickearth. There was some exposure of what may have been underlying River Terrace 3 gravels (contexts 105 and 207, from which the Palaeolithic finds were made in the gravel quarry just to the south of the site and which may be slightly inaccurately mapped). However, some of the gravel recorded at 62 Sturry Hill was in thin units within the Head, and suggested to be 'downslope displacement of gravel from a higher level' (SWAT 2013, 7) and that might be the case here.
- 4.1.2 A single archaeological feature was located, feature [206] in Trench 2, but this contained no datable material. However it was sealed beneath later soil layers of some potential antiquity and so clearly not of recent origin. It seems likely that this represents an extension of the pit digging activity recorded at 62 Sturry Hill, and is potentially of prehistoric date. These pits were similar in morphology, but were again only loosely dated (SWAT 2013, 9). Most of the prehistoric pottery from the adjacent site was described as being residual in later deposits.
- 4.1.3 This feature was sealed by layer (202), probably equivalent to (103) in Trench 1. This seems to represent a disturbed soil deposit, containing lenses of redeposited natural clay and quite possibly represents colluvium, perhaps accumulating on a more level area of the hillside (there was little evidence for recent landscaping). The equivalent level at 62 Sturry Hill (layer 103; SWAT 2013, 9) produced a few less worn pottery fragments than otherwise recovered 'with productional traits that suggest a date for most or all of this material within the Late Bronze Age or Earliest Iron Age'.
- 4.1.4 Extending across the evaluated area was a subsoil layer represented by contexts (102) and (201). This probably represents the bioturbated surface of the underlying deposit (103/202), or was perhaps engendered by agricultural activity such as ploughing. This in turn was sealed beneath contexts (101) and (200) which form the existing garden soil and turf horizon.

4.2 Conclusion and impact assessment

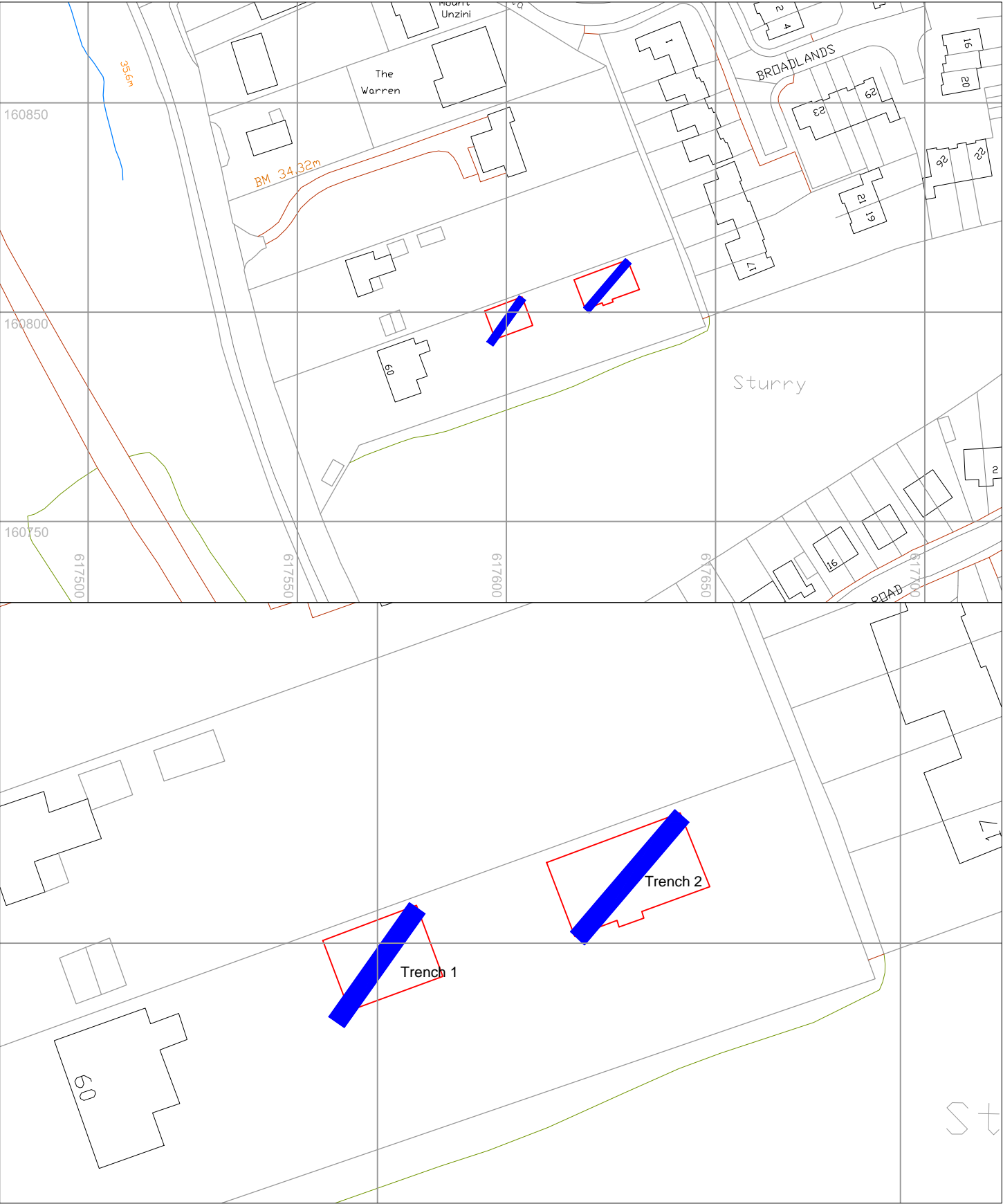
- 4.2.1 The evaluation has indicated that the natural subsoil, compatible with the mapped superficial geology of Head - Clay and Silt was situated at about 0.75-0.8m below the present ground surface with one slightly higher outcrop of gravel (between 30.06m and 30.24m OD), with a gradual slope towards the south-eastern side of the site. The small outcrops of gravel might represent Third River Terrace gravels, extensively quarried in the area, and which have been known to produce significant Palaeolithic and later artefacts. However, work to the north at 62 Sturry Hill has indicated that these might be lenses of redeposited Head gravel from upslope.

- 4.2.2 The evaluation also identified the presence of an archaeological feature within the boundary of the proposed development, but this only comprised a single pit of uncertain date. This almost certainly forms an extension of the activity recorded close by to the north, particularly the cut pits, which were morphologically similar. However, the remains on both sites suggest that the concentration of features is relatively low in the immediate area (see Fig. 4). Unfortunately, the disposition of these features overall does not clearly suggest where any focus of activity might be, although the concentration might be considered slightly higher to the north-west.
- 4.2.3 In addition, very little of this activity can be closely dated, and although a prehistoric date certainly seems possible, some of the ceramic evidence to the north has been interpreted as potentially indicating a medieval date (SWAT 2013, 9). However, these sherds were very worn, suggesting redeposition from elsewhere. It is perhaps significant that the pit on the present site appeared to be sealed by a layer of colluvium, which is more likely to be of prehistoric provenance and therefore suggests that these previously identified pits pre-dated the medieval period at least, but the dating of this colluvium is also uncertain. If the pits are prehistoric, they could represent outlying activity relating to the Iron Age settlement (TR 16 SE 4) not far away to the east.
- 4.2.4 Details of the proposed foundation design for the development are not known, although it has been indicated that the foundations will be trench-built footings about 1m deep. The evaluation has indicated that the archaeological horizon lies at a depth of about 0.75m, so the foundations could have some impact on the upper parts of any archaeological features within the building footprints. However, the density of features appears to be quite low, so this impact is likely to be minimal. The overlying deposits are of considerably less archaeological significance, and any further finds from the colluvial layer in particular, unlikely to be conclusive in terms of its date of deposition, so the impact on these can be considered minimal. The depth of the significant horizon also indicates that there will be little or no impact from the proposed driveway.

References

CAT 2016, *Specification for archaeological evaluation of to the rear of 60 Sturry Hill, Sturry, Kent, CT2 8AY*, June 2016

SWAT 2013, *Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Land at 62 Sturry Hill, Canterbury, Kent*. Unpublished SWAT client report



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	PROJECT CODE 60SHS-EV-16	DATE 10/08/16	LAST REVISION ---	
	SITE ADDRESS Land at 60 Sturry Hill Sturry Canterbury	CHECKED ---		
	REF/DRG NO. N:\Projects Active\Project Managers\Jon Rady\Canterbury District\60 Sturry Hill\60SHS-EV-16\Fig 1			

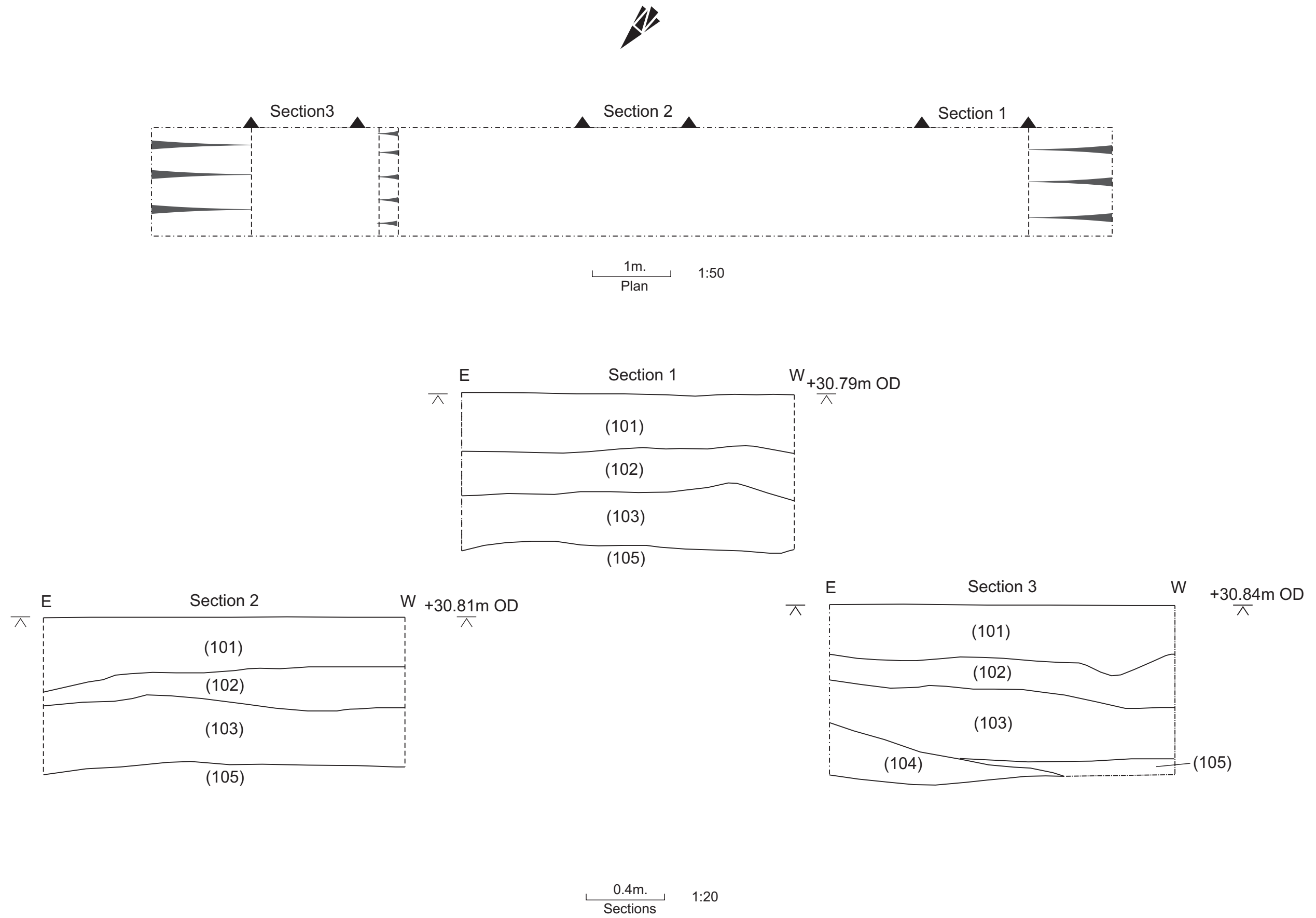


Fig. 2. Plans and sections of Trench 1

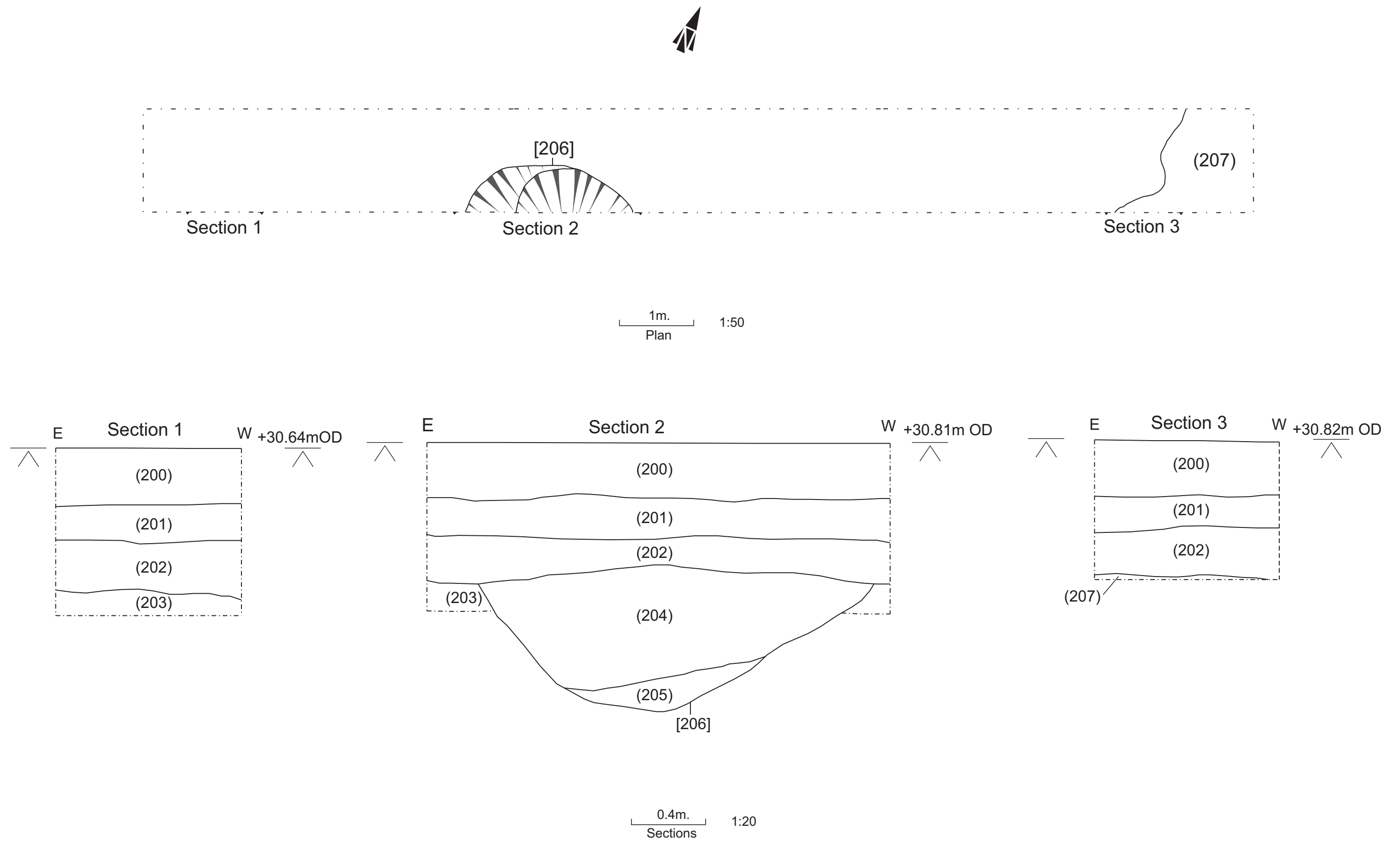
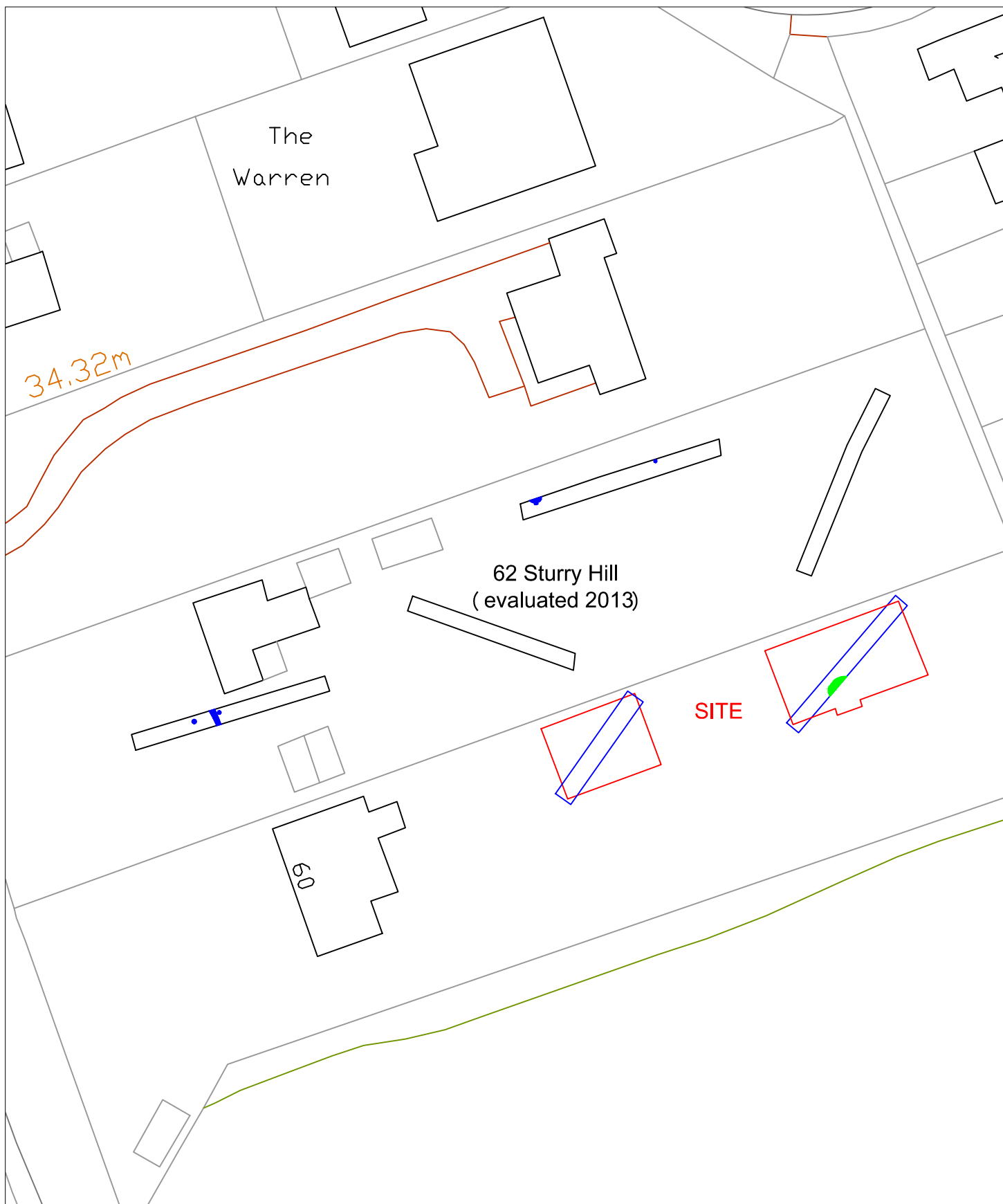


Fig 3. Plan and sections of Trench 2



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	PROJECT CODE 60SHS-EV-16	DATE 10/08/16	LAST REVISION ---
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		REF/DRG NO. N:\Projects Active\Project Managers\Jon Rady\Canterbury District\60 Sturry Hill\60SHS-EV-16\Fig 4	

Figure 4: Site investigation showing trenches cut at 62 Sturry in 2016



Plate 1: The site looking east



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking south-west
Scale 1m. Gravel exposed in foreground



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking west



Plate 4: Trench 2 - Pit [206] looking south-east. Scale 1m