

**An Archaeological Evaluation at Nought, Church Hill,
Ringmer, East Sussex**

Planning Ref:LW/10/0229

**NGR 544528 112537
(TQ 445 125)**

**Project No:3985
Site Code: NCH10**

ASE Report No. 2010037

OASIS id: 75161

**Sarah Porteus
With contributions by
Karine Le Hegarat, Gemma Ayton,
Luke Barber and Elke Raemen**

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Lodstone Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development at Nought, Church Hill, Ringmer. A possible clay quarry pit was identified. The upper parts of the feature were backfilled with post-medieval debris, however, the base of the pit was not reached and the pit may be medieval or older in origin. No other archaeological features were identified.

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SMR Summary Sheet
OASIS Form

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by Lodstone Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Nought, Church Hill, Ringmer, East Sussex hereafter called 'the site' (NGR 544528, 112537; Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site occupies a gentle slope with a steep slope to the west of the site forming a stream valley feeding into a pond to the north west of the site. The underlying geology is Gault Clay.

1.3 Planning Background

- 1.3.1 The evaluation took place in advance of redevelopment of the site as a condition of planning application LW/10/0229 which states:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with written scheme of investigation, including the timetable for the investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The aim of the archaeological work is:

To assess with a greater degree of certainty the presence or absence of any archaeological features within the site, but with particular reference to medieval pottery manufacture.

To assess whether archaeological remains extend across the development site.

To assess the character, extent, preservation, significance, date and quality of remains and deposits

To assess how they might be affected by development of the site.

To assess what options, if any, should be considered for mitigation.

1.5 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 This report represents the findings of the archaeological evaluation undertaken by Sarah Porteus (archaeologist) on the 31st March 2010. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (fieldwork) and Jim Stevenson (post excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 An archaeological desk based assessment was undertaken of the site and the area within a 1km radius of the site (ASE 2009). The information from that document is summarised below with due acknowledgement.

2.2 Prehistoric (750 000BC – AD43)

2.2.1 Little archaeological evidence for prehistoric activity within the 1km radius of site has been found. A few residual Iron Age pottery sherds were recovered from an evaluation nearby, suggesting some activity in the area.

2.3 Romano-British (AD43 – AD410)

2.3.1 Some evidence of Romano-British activity was uncovered in Saddlers way along with tiles of probable Roman date recovered from the excavation of medieval kilns in 1894.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon (AD410 – AD1066)

2.4.1 No archaeological sites of Anglo-Saxon date are known within the surrounding area.

2.5 Medieval (AD1066 – AD1485)

2.5.1 Ringmer is known for its pottery production in the medieval period. St Andrew's church was constructed in the 13th century. Archaeological investigations have revealed a medieval occupation site near Saddlers way, and a medieval farmstead at Ham Farm was identified during research for the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation survey. A total of eight sites relating to the pottery industry including pottery kilns and clay extraction pits have been identified in the area.

2.6 Post-Medieval (AD1468 to present)

2.6.1 The pottery industry declined after the 16th century but was replaced to some extent by brick and tile works.

2.6.2 A post-medieval ditch or gully was identified during a watching brief in 2007 and numerous listed post-medieval buildings remain within Ringmer.

2.6.3 The pond still present to the north west of the site is visible on the 1704 Francis Hill map.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 A total of 22m of 'T' shaped evaluation trench (Figs 2 and 3) was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket. Excavation was undertaken in spits of no more than 100mm until archaeological deposits were identified or the undisturbed 'natural' substrate where no archaeological features were identified.
- 3.2 Any exposed features were cleaned and sampled by hand excavation to assess the nature and date of archaeological deposits.
- 3.3 A photographic record was kept of the excavations and a full record of archaeological features was made on standard pro forma record sheets.
- 3.4 The location and level in relation to ordinance datum were recorded using GPS.
- 3.5 Plans and sections of exposed archaeological features and stratigraphy were made on plastic draughting film at a scale of 1:20.
- 3.6 Following inspection by Greg Chuter, assistant county archaeologist (East Sussex County Council) it was recommended that a deeper test pit be dug by machine to assess the full depth of the archaeological features exposed, the test pit was excavated to the maximum reach of the machine and recorded as above.
- 3.7 With the approval of Greg Chuter the site was backfilled by machine.

Number of Contexts	6
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	2
Bulk Samples	1
Photographs	1 digital CD
Bulk finds	1 small box
Registered finds	0
Environmental flots/residue	1

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS (fig. 2, 3)

4.1 List of recorded contexts

Number	Type	Description	Max. Length	Max. Width	Deposit Depth	Height m.AOD
001	Deposit	Topsoil	Tr.	Tr.	0.20m	28.036 - 29.449
002	Deposit	Natural Clay	N/A	N/A	N/A	27.489+ - 28.999
003	Deposit	Clay quarry pit upper fill	Tr.	Tr.	0.60m	27.379 - 27.828
004	Deposit	Made ground	Tr.	Tr.	0.60m	29.249 - 26.223+
005	Cut	Clay quarry pit cut	Tr.	Tr.	2.50m	28.473
006	Deposit	Clay quarry pit lower fill	Tr.	Tr.	0.30m	26.573

4.2 Summary

- 4.2.1 The natural blue grey Gault Clay [002] was encountered at a depth of 29mAOD at the southern most end of the site, reducing to 27.49mAOD at the northern and south-eastern parts of the trench, the natural subsoil was not encountered to the north east of the trench, a test pit showed the depth of natural to be lower than 26.57m at this point.
- 4.2.2 Cutting through the natural clay was a near vertical sided feature [005] of 2.50m+ depth, with length and width continuing beyond the limit of excavation to the north and west. The highest recorded part of the cut was at 28.47mAOD. A machine-dug test pit was excavated into the backfill [003] of this cut to try and establish the full depth of the feature. However, backfill [003], a yellowish brown silty clay deposit up to 1.5m thick contained occasional post-medieval CBM, iron, pottery and animal bone was shown to overlie a lower fill which was a greenish yellow clay deposit [006] of at least 0.30m thickness containing very occasional fragments of CBM. The feature [005] was mechanically excavated to the maximum possible depth of 2.5 metres but was not bottomed. It is most probably a large clay quarry pit.
- 4.2.3 Overlying the pit [005] and covering much of the rest of the trench was a loose greyish brown silty clay layer [004]. This was recorded as up to 0.60m thick and contained occasional pottery and CBM. The deposit most likely represents external dumping within top of the largely backfilled quarry pit [005].
- 4.2.6 Layer [004] was in turn overlain by [001], a loose blackish brown humic topsoil containing brick and other modern detritus. The topsoil occurred at between 28.03 and 29.45mAOD.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 A small assemblage of finds, mainly consisting of ceramic building material (CBM) and pottery, was recovered during the evaluation. An overview can be found in table 2.

Context	Pot	Wt (g)	CBM	Wt (g)	Bone	Wt (g)	Stone	Wt (g)	Fe	Wt (g)
1	1	12	3	1410						
3	25	2888	7	322	2	12	3	50	1	6
4	6	210	1	160					1	18
6			2	24						
Total	32	3110	13	1916	2	12	3	50	2	24

Table 2: Quantification of the finds

5.2 The Pottery by Luke Barber

5.2.1 A relatively small assemblage of pottery was recovered from the site. All of the material is of the late post-medieval period, spanning the later 18th to early 20th century. Although sherd sizes are generally small (< 20mm across) there are some very large sherds in the assemblage too (> 70mm across).

5.2.2 The earliest pottery was recovered from context [3]. This group is totally dominated by 20 sherds (2,855g) from a very large bowl with heavy horizontal handles in local glazed redware. The full profile of the vessel survives and its finish suggests a date in the later 18th or very early 19th centuries. There are also two stoneware bodysherds from [3] – one from London, the other a Nottingham vessel. Finewares include a chip (1g) of hand-painted pearlware and part of the base of an early transfer-printed pearlware saucer with blue Chinese landscape decoration. Taken as a group a late 18th- century deposition date is probable.

5.2.3 Context [4] produced six sherds which can be placed between 1800 and 1900. A typical spread of domestic wares is represented. These include a rim chip (1g) from a late creamware saucer, two sherds (21g) of transfer-printed ware (a willow patterned plate and a possible tureen base), a sherd from a yellow ware baking dish (29g) and two local glazed redware jar fragments. Context [1] contained a single sherd from the rim of an English porcelain plate decorated with a pink-red bordered rim and concentric gilt line. A mid 19th- to mid 20th- century date is probable.

5.3 The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

5.3.1 A small quantity of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered from site. A single fragment of possible late medieval peg tile from context [006] in a reduced fabric with moderate coarse quartz inclusions and sparse coarse quartz inclusions may be of Medieval date, however a second fragment of peg tile from the same context is of probable 17th to 19th century date. The second fragment from [006] was in a pale cream silt fabric with sparse red iron rich silt inclusions. The remainder of the material is of post-

medieval date. Brick fragments in a red sandy fabric with fine to medium black iron rich inclusions were recovered from contexts [001] and [003] and are of probable 17th to 19th century date. Context [003] contained fragments of peg tile in an orange silty fabric with fine cream silt streaks and a fragment of curved ridge or pantile in a marbled orange and cream silty fabric, both of probable 17th to 19th century date. Also from context [003] was a fragment of fine sandy orange peg tile with moderate fine quartz inclusions of 18th or 19th century date, peg tile in this fabric also occurred in contexts [004] and [003].

5.4 The Ironwork by Elke Raemen

- 5.4.1 Two pieces of ironwork were recovered during the archaeological work. Included is a sheet fragment from [3] and a tapering strip fragment from [4], the latter probably representing the hinge ie of a box or cupboard door.

5.5 The Geological Material by Luke Barber

- 5.5.1 Three pieces of chalk were recovered from context [3]. With the exception of a piece with one partially smoothed face, the material is totally irregular with no signs of modifications. It is possible the material was brought in for soil dressing.

5.6 The Animal Bone by Gemma Ayton

- 5.6.1 One small fragment of animal bone and one tooth were recovered from context [003]. The fragment of bone has been identified as cattle sized rib. There is no evidence of burning, gnawing or pathology on the bone though the surface shows some sign of erosion. The tooth has been identified as deer (*Cervus*) and is a lower second molar in an early stage of wear.
- 5.6.2 The assemblage is too small to have any further potential for statistical analysis.

6.0 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES by Karine Le Hegarat

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A single sample (<1>) of 20 litres was taken from a greenish yellow alluvial silt deposit [006]. It is unclear if the deposit represents the basal layer of the feature [005] or if it was extracted from the natural below the quarry pit. Therefore, sampling aimed to establish evidence for environmental and artefactual remains and to assess the potential of these remains in obtaining datable material that could help clarify the depositional conditions contributing to the formation of the pit as well as its post depositional history. It also aimed to retrieve environmental remains that could be used to provide evidence for past vegetation and to obtain information regarding previous activities taking place at the site.

6.2 Methods

- 6.2.2 Samples were processed in their entirety in a flotation tank, the flots and

residues were captured on 500µm and 250µm meshes respectively and were air dried prior to sorting. Residues were sieved at 4 and 2mm and were sorted for environmental and artefact remains (Table 1). Flots were measured, weighed and scanned under a stereozoom microscope at magnifications of x7-45. Table 2 documents the contents of each flot. Preliminary identifications were made for the macrobotanical remains by comparing them with specimens documented in reference manuals (Cappers *et al.* 2006, Jacomet 2006). Nomenclature used follows Stace (1997).

6.3 Results

- 6.3.1 The small flot (10ml) is dominated by uncharred vegetation including modern roots (70%) as well as uncharred seeds such as bramble (*Rubus* sp.), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*) and knotgrass/dock (*Polygonum/Rumex* sp.) Although the sample is described as originating from a well sealed context, the presence of uncharred vegetation could indicate a small degree of stratigraphic movements and modern post-depositional disturbances.
- 6.3.2 Both the flot and the residue produced a small quantity of wood charcoal fragments, a single charred macroplant, some land snail shells as well as a small quantity of industrial debris (coal) and two artefactual remains (an amorphous lump of iron and an iron nail).
- 6.3.3 Wood charcoal fragments in the flot and residue were predominantly small (<4mm) with some occasional fragments >4mm. Many of the charcoal fragments were vitrified. This might be the result of burning at high temperature or it might also be some natural coal. Some of non-vitrified charcoal fragments are relatively well preserved.
- 6.3.4 The flot contains no macroplants apart from one charred cereal grain wheat (cf. *Triticum* sp.) and although moderately preserved, the grain could be submitted for dating.

6.4 Significance and Potential

- 6.4.1 Sampling has confirmed the presence of a small range of environmental plant remains including wood charcoal fragments and one single charred crop as well as other environmental materials (land snail shells, industrial debris) and artefactual remains (two iron objects). This sample was taken from a greenish yellow alluvial silt deposit of a possible quarry pit and the presence of an iron nail in the residue together with the ceramic building material (CBM) recovered from this context confirm that this deposit was of archaeological, rather than natural origin and that the full depth of the feature may not have been reached. Although charcoal fragments are best represented they are too limited to enable any interpretation relating to past vegetation. Some are well preserved enough for identification and may be suitable for dating along with the single charred crop if this is considered of value for understanding the feature. It should be noted however that sampling highlighted small levels of modern disturbances and this potential contamination might lessen their value for dating. Furthermore unless the

taphonomic process is well understood, the value of undertaking such analysis is also minimal. Finally, the results would only provide dating information regarding the backfilling of the pit and if this took place over an extended period of time further analyses would not yield any useful results.

6.5 Recommendations for Further Work

6.5.1 No further work is recommended for this sample.

7.0 DISCUSSION

7.1 The steep sided cut feature [005] was probably a clay quarry extraction pit. Observations of local topography reveal a steep sided slope to the immediate west of the site. This may define the western limit of the feature. The exact date of the pit is unknown as it was not bottomed; however it must have been out of use by the 17th to 19th century as the lower fill contained 17th to 19th century material. The feature may be older than this possibly medieval, or even older.

7.2 Pottery and brick and tile manufacture are known to have taken place at an as yet unknown location in Ringmer during the medieval period and brick manufacture is also documented in Ringmer from the 1530's with an expansion in works in the 17th century (Beswick 1993). The quarry may relate to either or both industries.

7.3 A pond visible in the 1704 map still survives today could be the remains of a 'settling pond' used to soften the clay as part of the refining and processing of the clay. Alternatively the pond may have formed naturally within part of the clay extraction pit.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The excavation of a 'T' shaped evaluation trench across the proposed development site have revealed a probable clay quarry with post-medieval back fill deposits of up to 2.5metres depth (AOD). The feature has not been bottomed and probably represents an older feature.

8.2 However, where proposed ground works are to above 28.47mAOD it is anticipated that only later post-medieval made ground deposits which probably extend across the remainder of the site will be affected by the development.

8.3 The evaluation has therefore effectively tested the archaeology of the proposed development site above this depth but the exact provenance of the quarry pit remains unknown.

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SMR Summary Form

Site Code	NCH10					
Identification Name and Address	Nought, Church Hill, Ringmer					
County, District &/or Borough	East Sussex					
OS Grid Refs.	544528 112537					
Geology	Gault Clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	3985					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval. ✓	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field ✓	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval. 31.3.10	Excav.	WB.	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Lodstone Properties Ltd					
Project Manager	Neil Griffin					
Project Supervisor	Sarah Porteus					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM ✓	Other Modern		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Lodstone Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development at Nought, Church Hill, Ringmer. A possible clay quarry pit was identified. The upper parts of the feature were backfilled with post-medieval debris, however, the base of the pit was not reached and the pit may be medieval or older in origin. No other archaeological features were identified.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeo16-75161

Project details

Project name An archaeological Evaluation at Nought, Ringmer, East Sussex

Short description of the project Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Lodstone Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of development at Nought, Church Hill, Ringmer. A possible clay quarry pit was identified. The upper parts of the feature were backfilled with post-medieval debris, however, the base of the pit was not reached and the pit may be medieval or older in origin. No other archaeological features were identified.

Project dates Start: 31-03-2010 End: 31-03-2010

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Type of project Field evaluation

Methods & techniques 'Sample Trenches'

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the planning process Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country England

Site location EAST SUSSEX LEWES RINGMER Nought, Church Hill

Postcode BN8 5

Study area 40.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 44528 12537 50.8936330854 0.05528870026830 50 53 37
N 000 03 19 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator Archaeology South-East

Project design originator Archaeology South-East

Project director/manager Neil Griffin

Project supervisor Sarah Porteus

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding Lodstone Properties Ltd

body

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Lewes Museum

Physical Contents 'Animal Bones','Ceramics'

Digital Archive recipient Lewes Museum

Digital Contents 'none'

Digital Media available 'Images raster / digital photography'

Paper Archive recipient Lewes Museum

Paper Contents 'none'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Drawing','Plan','Report','Survey ','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

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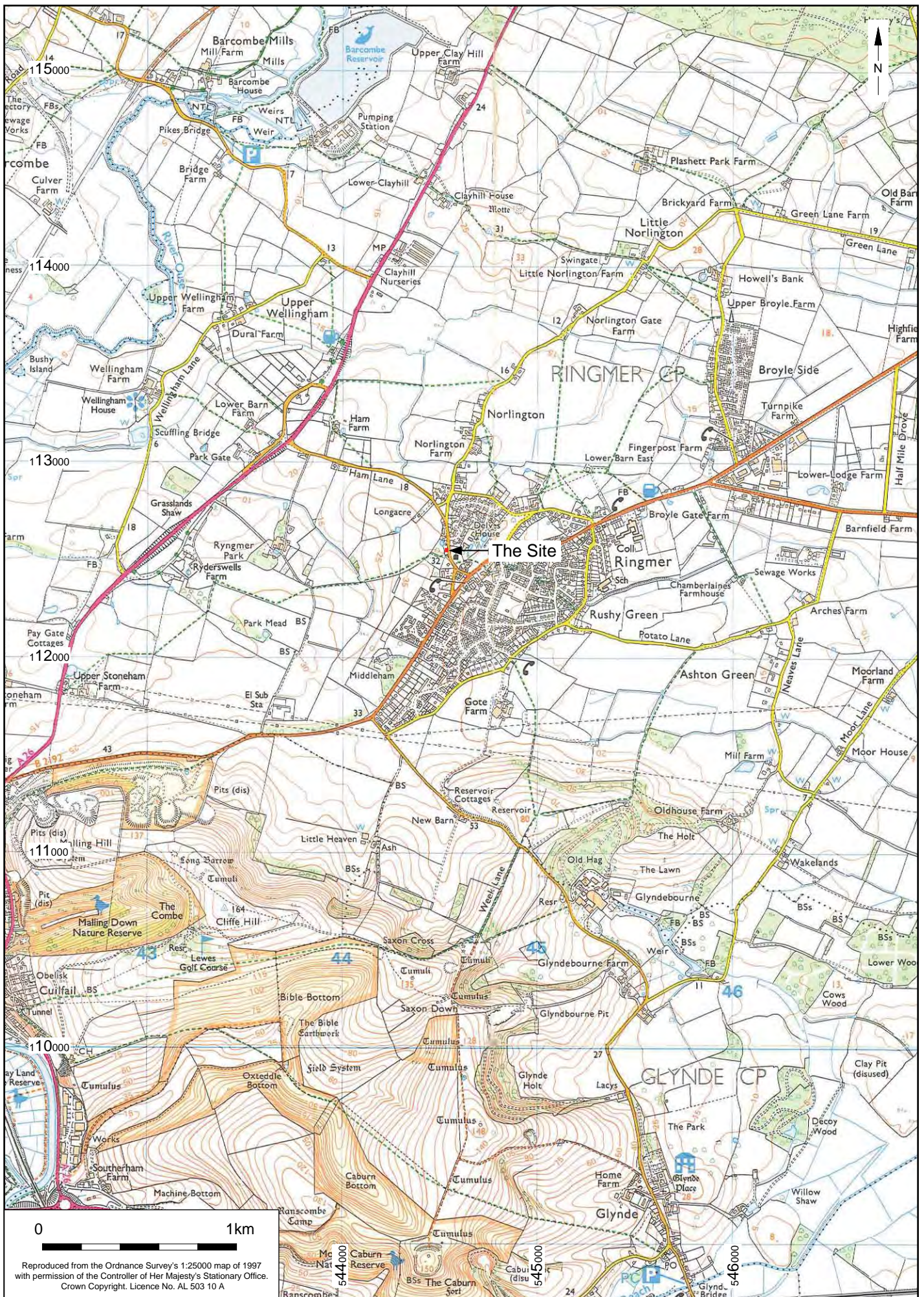
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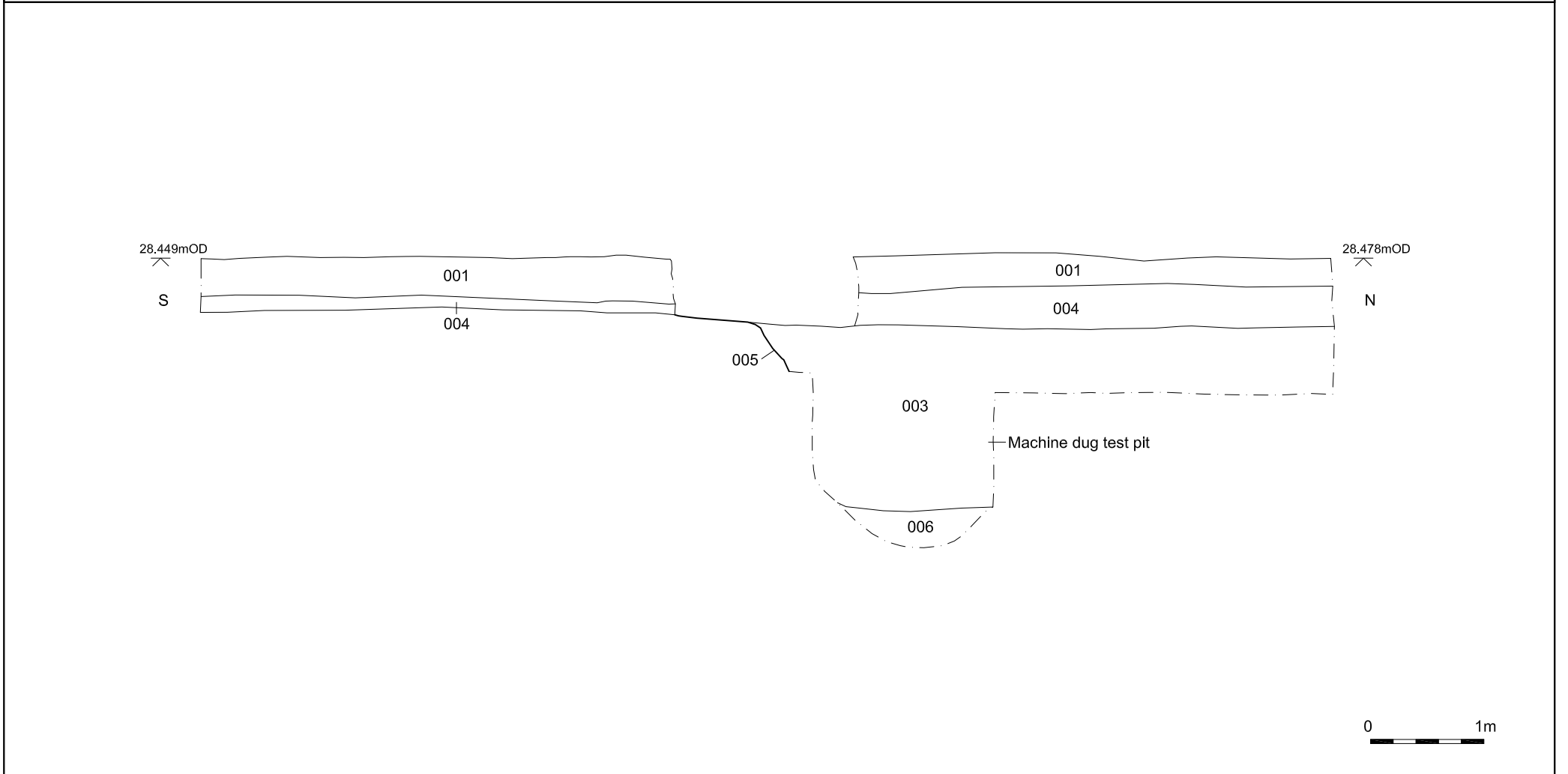
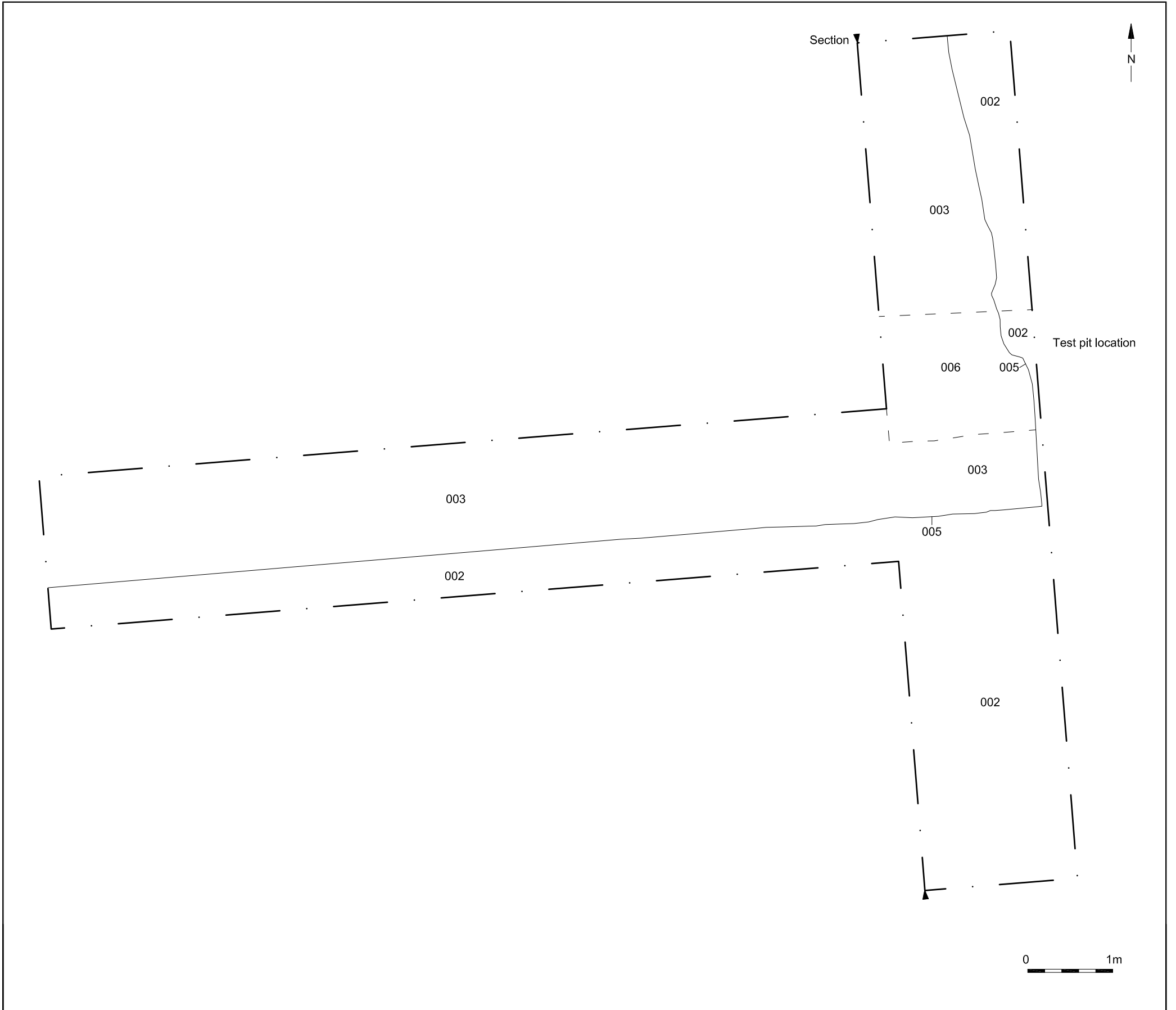
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Project Ref: 3985	April 2010	Site location		
Report Ref: 2010037	Drawn by: HLF			



© Archaeology South-East		Nought, Church Hill, Ringmer		Fig. 2
Project Ref: 3985	April 2010	Trench location		
Report Ref: 2010037	Drawn by: HLF			



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