

Archaeological Evaluation at Hall Lane, Ridgewell, Essex



Archaeological Evaluation Report



January 2015

Client: Anglian Water

OA East Report No: 1740

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NGR: TL 739 408

Archaeological Evaluation at Hall Lane, Ridgewell, Essex

Archaeological Evaluation

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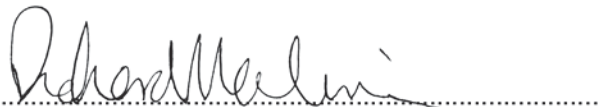
Report Date: January 2015

Report Number: 1740
Site Name: Hall Lane, Ridgewell, Essex
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Date of Works: January 2015
Client Name: Anglian Water
Client Ref: SEW 10245
Planning Ref: n/a
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Date: 2/3/15
Signed:



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Summary

On the 26th and 27th of January 2015, an archaeological evaluation was carried out on an undeveloped area of land between Ridgewell Church and Ridgewell Hall Farm, Essex, in advance of a new sewer pipeline. The evaluation consisted of two test pits and one trial trench. Only a single linear feature was identified. Although no datable material was found within the ditch, its alignment and position in the sequence indicates that it may be Roman or prehistoric.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at an area of undeveloped land between Ridgewell Church and Ridgewell Hall Farm, Ridgewell, Essex.
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Teresa O'Connor of the Essex Historic Environment Team (XEX RIHL 15), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The underlying bedrock of the site is Cretaceous Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation which is overlain by a superficial deposit of Lowestoft Formation Diamicton (bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html). To the west of the site is a spring with an underlying head deposit of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel. The land is flat at an average height of c.78m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 A Late Mesolithic to Neolithic flint assemblage (MEX23125) has been recovered from a field c. 600m to the east of the development area.
- 1.3.2 Pits containing bone and Iron Age pottery were excavated on a site c. 600m to the south-west (MEX22773) of the development area.
- 1.3.3 The remains of a Roman villa which would have overlooked a proposed road from Colchester to Cambridge are recorded c. 800m to the south-west of the proposed evaluation (MEX22879).
- 1.3.4 The 14th century St. Laurence's Church lies immediately to the north of the site and the late 17th century manor house of Ridgewell Hall to its south. Earthworks which may represent the remains of a pond are situated in a field immediately to the east of the site.
- 1.3.5 There are late medieval farmhouses, Hills Farmhouse c. 700m to the east and Bowles Farm, c. 600m to the north of the development area. The Mill house is a 15th century farmhouse with moat and is c. 1km to the west of the site.
- 1.3.6 Medieval pottery has been found at Poplar Farm, c. 100m to the north of the site.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA East would like to thank Anglian water who commissioned and funded the work. The site was managed by Richard Mortimer. The field work was carried out by Steve Graham and Rebecca Jarosz. The brief was written by Teresa O'Connor who also monitored the work. Thanks are also extended to the illustrator and the editor.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.
- 2.1.2 This was in advance of a new sewer pipeline across an undeveloped area. The proposed route was approximately 95m long over open land. The route was crossed by two high voltage electricity cables which limited the area open to mechanical excavation.
- 2.1.3 As a consequence of the power lines, it was decided to excavate a single trench between the lines and two test pits, one at either end of the field. Both the pits and the trench were to be a minimum of 9m away from the power lines for safety.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Both test pits were to be 1m x 1m and hand excavated to the level of the underlying natural. The single trial trench would be 2m wide x 40m long and machine excavated.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled 360 excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was manually carried out by Steve Graham using the permanent bench mark (PBM) located at Saint Laurence Church, Ridgewell as the datum point.
- 2.2.4 Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.6 No archaeological samples were taken as the single feature was undated.
- 2.2.7 The test pits were both dry, there was minimal surface water seepage in the trial trench. The surface conditions were dry and the light overcast.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two hand excavated test pits (Test Pits One and Two) and a single trial trench which was machine excavated.

3.2 Detail of layers

3.2.1 The underlying natural (3) was a mid reddish brown deposit of Lowestoft Formation Diamicton. This was sealed by a subsoil (2) of dark reddish brown sandy clay on average between 0.40m and 0.60m thick. This was in turn sealed by a mid grey brown topsoil of clayey silt (1), containing small amounts of angular stones distributed throughout, the thickness of this layer ranged from 0.20m to 0.40m.

3.3 Test Pit One

3.3.1 This (1m x 1m) test pit was excavated in the north-west corner of the field. It contained a single feature (4), this was a linear ditch, aligned approximately east to west. The ditch was 0.50m wide and 0.26m deep. It contained a single fill (5) of light reddish brown sandy clay with very few inclusions and no finds. This was sealed by the subsoil (2) 0.30m thick and the topsoil (1) 0.20m thick.

3.4 Test Pit Two

3.4.1 This test pit was located towards the south-eastern corner of the field: it contained no archaeological finds or features. The natural here was sealed by subsoil (2) which was 0.32m thick and topsoil (1) which was 0.18m thick.

3.5 The Trial Trench

3.5.1 The trial trench was excavated on the same north-west to south-east alignment as the proposed route of the pipeline to a length of 40m. Located between the two power lines, it was parallel to and 6m away from the western edge of the field. The trench was archaeologically sterile throughout its entire length with no finds or features recorded. The natural (3) was sealed by subsoil (2) which was on average 0.60m thick and topsoil (1) which was on average 0.50m thick.

3.6 Environmental Summary

3.6.1 Due to the absence of datable archaeology no environmental sampling was undertaken.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Although the proposed route of the pipe line runs through an area of high archaeological potential only the one, slight linear feature was identified, in the north western corner of the field (Test Pit One). This shallow and narrow ditch (**4**) contained no finds and was unable to be conclusively dated. The ditch was sealed by the, presumably earlier Medieval, subsoil/ploughsoil and was neither aligned to the road (Hall Lane) nor to the field boundary which runs on a west-southwest to east-northeast alignment to the north. The feature is likely to be pre-Medieval in date, possibly earlier Anglo-Saxon, Roman or prehistoric.
- 4.1.2 The absence of any archaeological finds or features in either the trial trench or the second test pit strongly suggests that there is no further archaeological activity to the south east of Test Pit One along the pipe's proposed route.

4.2 Recommendations

- 4.2.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Test Pit 1						
General description					Orientation	n/a
Pit contains a single linear feature 4 on a north-east to south-west alignment, sealed over by the sub soil 2 and the top soil 1.					Avg. depth (m)	0.56
					Width (m)	1.00
					Length (m)	1.00
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil	-	-
002	Layer	-	0.34	Subsoil	-	-
003	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
004	Cut	0.52	0.26	Ditch Cut	-	pre-Medieval
005	Fill	-	0.26	Ditch Fill	-	pre-Medieval
Test Pit 2						
General description					Orientation	n/a
Archaeologically sterile. Natural (diamicton)soil sealed over by subsoil 2 and topsoil 1.					Avg. depth (m)	0.55
					Width (m)	1.00
					Length (m)	1.00
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer		0.19	Topsoil	-	-
002	Layer		0.38	Subsoil	-	-
003	Layer		-	Natural	-	-
Trench						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Archaeologically sterile. Natural (diamicton) soil sealed over by a layer of subsoil 2 and a layer of topsoil 1.					Avg. depth (m)	1.00
					Width (m)	40.0
					Length (m)	2.00
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer		0.50	Topsoil	-	-
002	Layer		0.50	Subsoil	-	-
003	Layer		-	Natural	-	-

..

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Morgan S and Mortimer R.,. 2015. *Written Scheme of Investigation, Evaluation at Hall Lane, Ridgewell*. O A East.

APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-202887			
Project Name	Land off Hall Lane, Ridgewell, Essex			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	26-01-2015	Finish	27-01-2015
Previous Work (by OA East)	No		Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	XEX RHL 15	Planning App. No.	n/a
HER No.	XEX RIHL 15	Related HER/OASIS No.	n/a

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Service Infrastructure

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
ditch	Roman 43 to 410		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Essex	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Braintree	Land off Hall Lane, Ridgewell, Essex.
Parish	Ridgewell	
HER	Essex	
Study Area		National Grid Reference TL 739 408

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Teresa O'Connor
Project Design Originator	Richard Mortimer
Project Manager	Richard Mortimer
Supervisor	Steve Graham

Project Archives

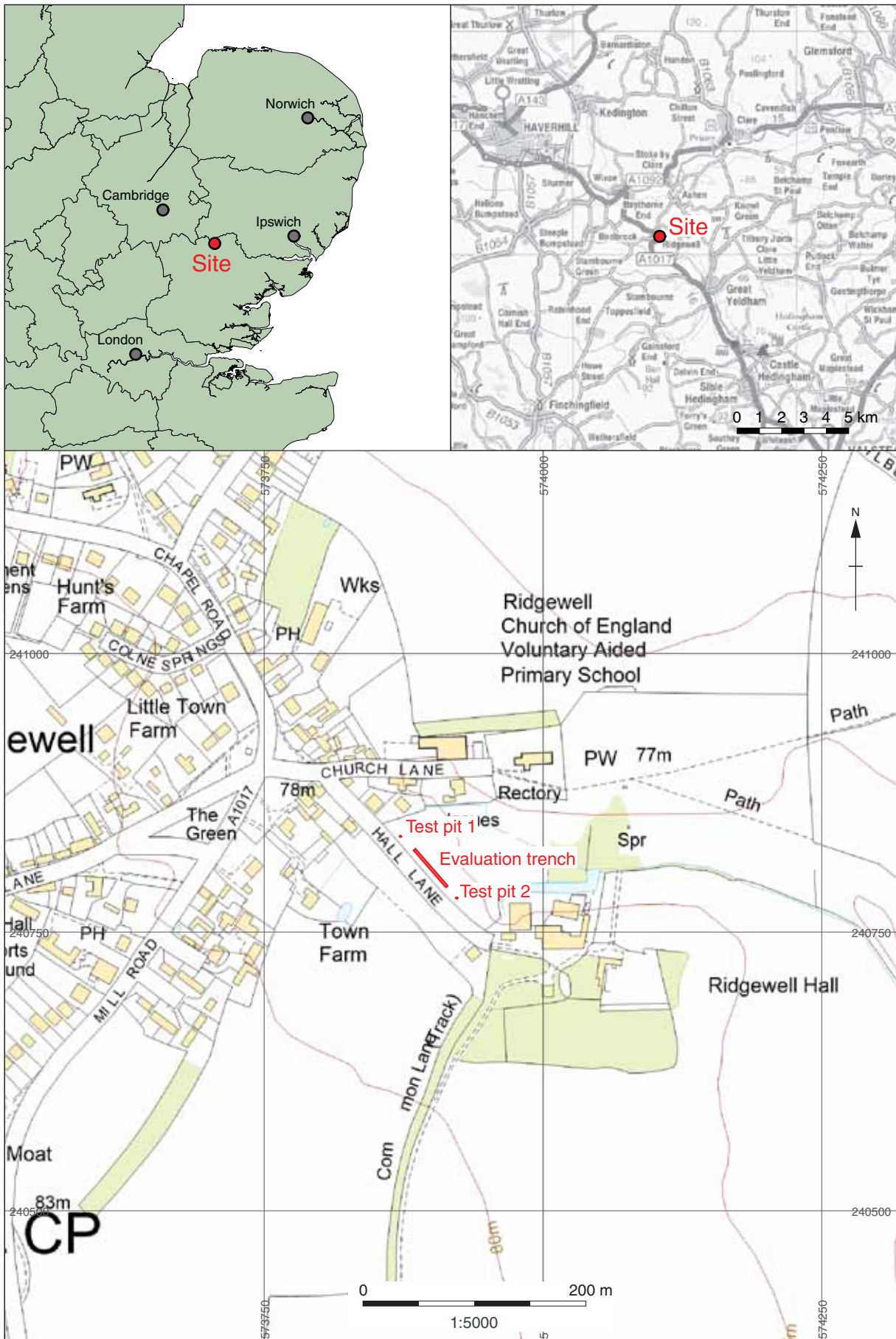
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Essex Historic Environment Team	O A East	Essex Historic Environment Team
XEX RIHL 15	XEX RHL 15	XEX RIHL 15

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
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<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological trench and test pits (red)

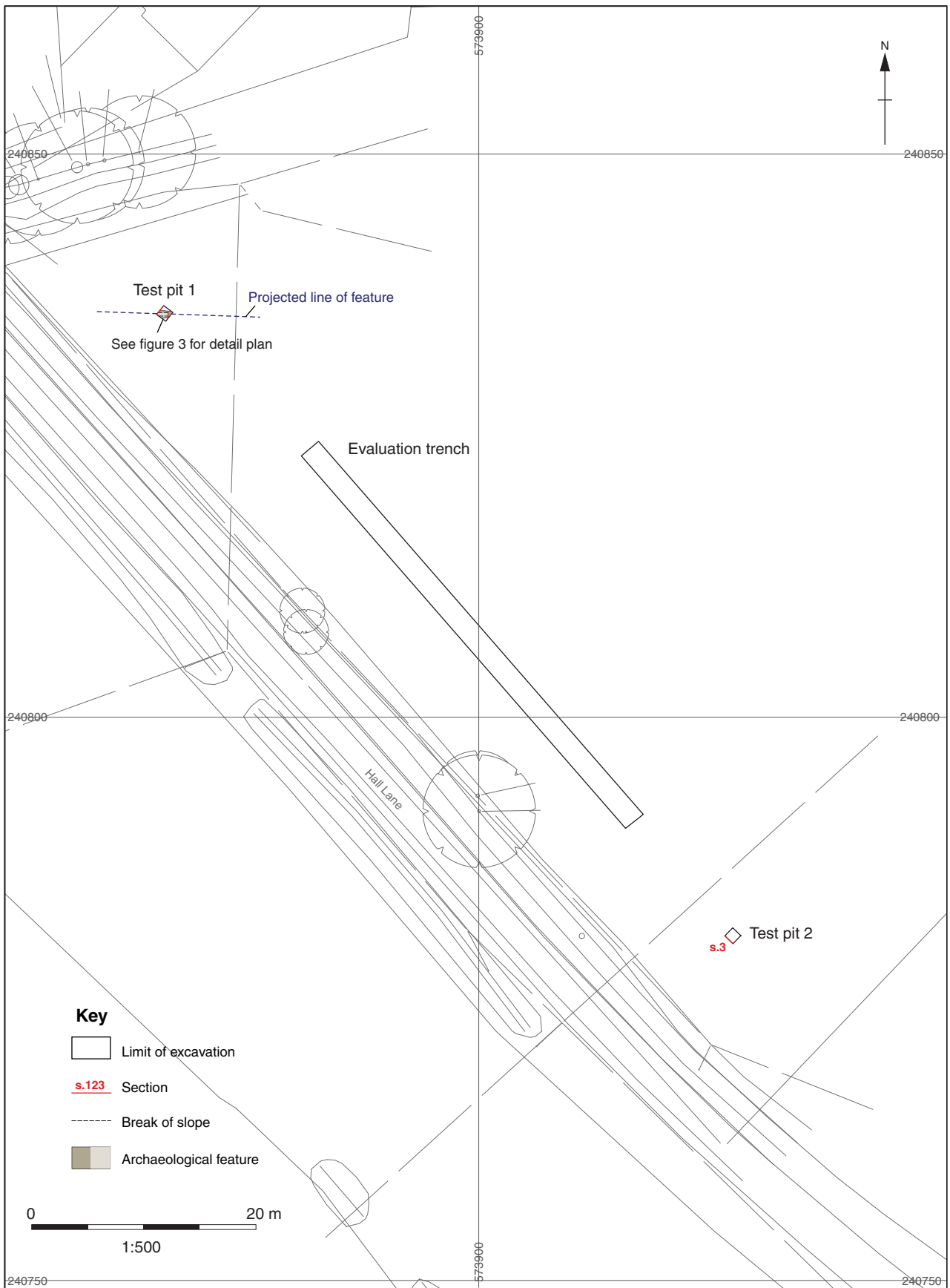


Figure 2: Evaluation trench and test pit location plan

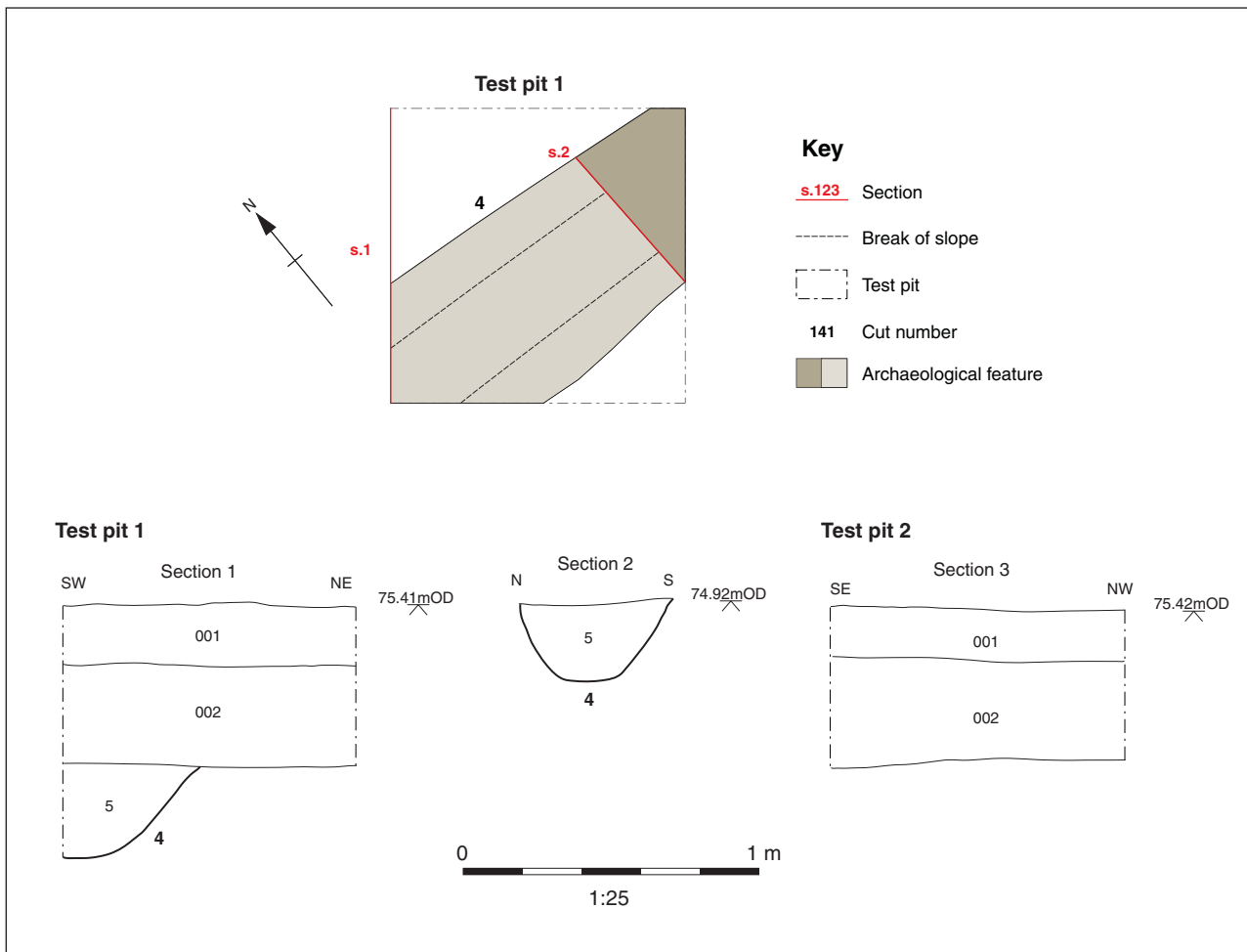


Figure 3: Plan of Test pit 1 including ditch 4 and sections



Plate 1: Evaluation trench from the north-west



Plate 2: Test pit 1 and ditch 4 from the south-east



Plate 3: Test pit 1 and ditch 4 from the north-west



Plate 4: Test pit 2 from the north-east



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