

Archaeological Evaluation Report

At:

81/81a Whinbush Rd,
Hitchin,
Hertfordshire,
SG5 1PZ

For:

Viva Property Group Ltd,

Private and Confidential

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Association of Geotechnical &
Geoenvironmental Specialists



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Summary

Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological evaluation between 13 and 14 December 2023 at 81 and 81a Whinbush Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1PZ (NGR 518850 229640 centred).

The work was commissioned by Sevenoaks Environmental Consultancy Ltd (the Client) as part of preparatory works for the erection of an apartment building with associated parking and amenity space following demolition of the existing car workshop building, and alterations to the existing dwelling of 81a Whinbush Road, including a rear extension following demolition of the existing attached rear office building (Planning Ref. 22/02953/FP).

The archaeological evaluation comprised the machine excavation of two trenches, conducted to assess the archaeological potential of the site and the character, condition, date and extent of any buried archaeological remains present.

A natural superficial deposit of clay with chalk was recorded. It is considered to have low archaeological potential and may have been truncated to a degree by the laying of a series of Late Post-medieval and modern levelling deposits, sealed by tarmac hardstanding. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were recorded.

Project contributors

Project Manager: Caroline Russell

Fieldwork: George Carstairs and Heather Hanson

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Sevenoaks Environmental Consultancy Ltd. The archaeological evaluation was monitored by Greer Dewdney, Historic Environment Advisor at Hertfordshire County Council.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological evaluation between 13 and 14 December 2023 at 81 and 81a Whinbush Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1PZ (NGR 518850 229640 centred; Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Sevenoaks Environmental Consultancy Ltd (the Client) as part of preparatory works for the erection of an apartment building with associated parking and amenity space following demolition of the existing car workshop building, and alterations to the existing dwelling of 81a Whinbush Road, including a rear extension following demolition of the existing attached rear office building (Planning Ref. 22/02953/FP).

1.1.2 The Proposed Development Area (PDA) lies within an area that has seen little archaeological investigation. However, current records indicate the presence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site. In mitigation of the potential developmental impact upon any buried archaeological resource present, and in accordance with the provisions of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2023), North Hertfordshire District Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), placed an archaeological condition on planning consent (dated 30 March 2023) requiring the applicant to maintain a scheme of archaeological works during demolition / development works. This states that:

(A) No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:

- i. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording*
- ii. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording as required by the evaluation.*
- iii. The programme for post investigation assessment*
- iv. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording*
- v. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
- vi. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
- vii. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.*

(B) The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under part (A)

(C) The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under part (A) and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

1.1.3 The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of two archaeological trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development. This report sets out the results of the evaluation.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The PDA is located within an urban area of commercial and residential development and is situated on the eastern side of Whinbush Road (Figure 1). The site covers an area of approximately 0.06 hectares (0.15 acres) and forms a rectangular shaped parcel of land.

1.2.2 The site is a former builder's yard and has most recently been utilised as a vehicle repair garage. The existing ground surface is level and is located at an approximate height of 59m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

- 1.2.3 The solid bedrock geology is mapped by the British Geological Survey (BGS on-line) as West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation (a Cretaceous sedimentary chalk and limestone), with an overlying superficial deposit of Lowestoft Formation (a Quaternary sedimentary chalky till deposit, with an outwash of sands and gravels, silts and clays). A ribbon of Quaternary Alluvium, of clay, silt, sand and gravel, is mapped overlying the Chalk Formation c.45m to the west of the site.
- 1.2.4 CAT monitored geotechnical site investigation works at the site on 18 July 2023, revealing made ground resting above alluvia and sand deposits (Denyer and O'Shea Walker 2023). The latter deposits were tentatively identified as a possible continuation of the Quaternary Alluvium mapped to the north-west of the site. Bedrock geology of chalk was not reached in any of the monitored locations.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was consulted on 06.12.2023, employing a search radius of 1km from the site centre. The HER records no known sites within the site itself. There is a concentration of monuments and Listed Buildings recorded within the historic core of the town, comprising the High Street (and its northern and southern extensions) and Tilehouse Street to the south. This area has been designated an Area of Archaeological Significance and the PDA stands 195m outside it, to the north-east.

Prehistoric

- 1.3.2 Palaeoliths, mostly hand-axes, have been found in the Hitchin area. Some were recovered from brickfields in the 19th century, including that at Bearton Green (12632) c.965m to the north-west of the PDA. Palaeolithic flint implements (282) were discovered at 'Brand Street', c.590m to the south-west; whilst only one artefact from the collection is confirmed as having derived from Brand Street, the others are also likely to be local finds. The Palaeolithic flint implements (1186) from the Benslow area of Hitchin, east of the PDA, have an unknown findspot, whilst others are recorded as from Brampton Park Road (1192), c.570m north-west of the PDA.
- 1.3.3 An augering survey in Hitchin town centre car parks recorded a dark brown organic deposit west of Biggin Lane, c.690m south-west of the PDA, which contained molluscs and charred grains, indicative of a damp open area, probably a water meadow, from the Early Mesolithic period (13614).
- 1.3.4 A Mesolithic flint flake and graver (6454) were found at Benslow; the findspot is unknown. A broken blade typical of the Mesolithic period was found during an evaluation at 35 Tilehouse Street, c.875m south-west of the PDA (11795). Microliths (4874) were recovered from Wymondley Road, south-east Hitchin, at the site of a large late 19th century house. An excavation in 2001 at 33 Queens Street, c.700m south of the PDA, uncovered a late Mesolithic/Neolithic flint core in a later post-hole and a prehistoric pit with undiagnostic flint flakes (13717).
- 1.3.5 In Hitchin, a Neolithic flint axe was found at Crofton, The Avenue (294), c.290m south-east of the PDA; 'Highbury Avenue', c.280 north-west of the PDA (298); and Bury Mead (2086), c.635m north of the PDA. Other Neolithic finds from Hitchin comprise: the flint 'figure stones' from Bury Mead, Sewage Farm (295); an implement from Riddy Field (297), c.740m south of the PDA; and a leaf-shaped arrowhead from Brooker's Yard (18276). A Neolithic or Bronze Age flint fabricator was found at Fairfield, Benslow Lane (310), c. 240 south-east of the PDA and Neolithic/Bronze Age flints were recovered from 35 Tilehouse Street (11794), c.875m south-west of the PDA and Portmill Lane (15639), c.490m south-west of the PDA.
- 1.3.6 Bronze Age finds have been found at Benslow Lane, c.125m south-east of the PDA (socketed axe, 303); Periwinkle Lane (founders metal, 305); Benslow (axe and flints, 307); Riddy Field (flint borer, 30); and Verulam Road, c.86m west of the PDA (arrowhead, 6452). There is little evidence for Bronze Age settlement in Hitchin; a possible Late Bronze Age - Early Iron Age ditch was excavated at Upper Tilehouse Street (12858) and a Late Bronze Age/Earlier Iron Age post-holes were excavated at Brooker's Yard (18273). Also in Hitchin, excavation uncovered Early – Middle Iron Age occupation including 4-post structures and intercutting pits (Barlow and Newton 2013).
- 1.3.7 Possible Iron Age settlement is also represented by the discovery of a possible Iron Age roundhouse recorded off Paynes Park (12582). Further evidence of occupation is indicated by the recording of

possible Late Iron Age cremations at Fairfield, Benslow Lane (6194) and 'Late Iron Age urns' at Bancroft (1204).

- 1.3.8 Possible prehistoric occupation was recorded at 33 Queen Street (13717) in the form of a single pit, whilst an archaeological evaluation in 2007 identified a prehistoric ditch (HER 16286) at 89 Walsworth Road, c.325m east-south-east of the PDA.

Roman

- 1.3.9 Roman sites are well represented in Hitchin. The Verulamium to Ickleford Roman road (4605) is suspected to run through Hitchin. Roman occupation of the 3rd to 4th centuries was recorded at 33 Queens Street (11350) in the form of intercutting pits, post-holes and possible cellars indicative of buildings with rubbish pits, and linear features suggestive of the foundation trenches of a large timber building. Nearby, Late Roman/Saxon inhumation burials were recorded at 40 Queen Street (11351), whilst a probable cemetery of this date was found on the High Street (13353).
- 1.3.10 Other remains have been found at 35 Tilehouse Street (building materials, 11793); Portmill Lane/Queen Street (features include a water channel, 12581); land off Paynes Park (field ditches, 12583); Queen Street (dump deposit; 13612); Biggin Lane (pit, 13613) and Taylor's Hill (two cinerary urns, 1201).
- 1.3.11 Findspots have been recorded at St Michaels Road (coins, 460); Bancroft (glass vessels of 1200 and quern fragment of 1203); Bury Mead and St Andrew's Hill (pot, 1205 and 1415); Highbury Road, Payne's Park, the grammar school, Windmill Hill and Bancroft (pottery, 1418, 1419, 1420, 4863 and 4864); Portmill Lane (pottery and coins, 6474); Market Place (marble sarcophagus fragment, 12352)

Anglo-Saxon

- 1.3.12 The late Saxon manor of Hitchin (11190) is recorded in Domesday Book of 1086; the recorded church was documented in a 10th century will. A large ditch off Paynes Park (12584) is of probable Saxon date and may have functioned as the western boundary of a burh (fortified settlement) and its minster church, accessed from the east along Hollow Lane. Whilst Late Saxon pottery of the late 9th to 11th centuries was found east of St Mary's Church, at 33 Queen Street (12350), the presence of a Saxon settlement on Queens Street (11465) cannot be confirmed.

Medieval

- 1.3.13 Hitchin was a medieval borough (HER 13) by 1268. The town still retains much of its medieval topography, including the marketplace and burgage plots, and many fine late medieval houses. Medieval occupation has been recorded at 33 Queens Street, Hitchin (12350) with evidence for medieval cultivation nearby at 40 Queen Street (11351).
- 1.3.14 Multiple medieval sites are known from Bancroft in Hitchin, with a pottery kiln identified at No. 96 (12805); ditches encountered behind Nos. 67-104 (10883); pits recorded at Nos. 46-40 (1089) and other medieval features found at No. 48 (17420) and behind No. 122 (2619).
- 1.3.15 Evidence for medieval pottery production was also discovered at Tilehouse Street (pottery waste pit; 11447), whilst a tile kiln was uncovered behind 35 Tilehouse Street (11789) and another possible example was found at Brooker's Yard (18275).

Post medieval and modern

- 1.3.16 According to early Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of the area (NLS on-line), during the mid-nineteenth century the site formed part of the northern end of a large tree-lined garden or plot of land, possibly associated with a former large property labelled as 'The Grove' (OS map 1851, surveyed). The Grove was once located to the south-east of the site on what is now residential development along Convent Close. An expansion in residential development is clearly shown on the 1897 OS map, with the establishment of the site boundaries by this time and a long rectangular structure, on a north-south alignment, constructed within the eastern extent of the site. On the 1922 OS map, this structure appears to have been replaced with an east-west aligned building (no 81 Whinbush Road) located along the northern boundaries of the plot.
- 1.3.17 The 1946 OS map shows the plot as vacant although some dashed lines within the eastern side of the site may perhaps suggest the remnants of foundations. According to later maps and aerial photographs

of the site, development within the plot appears to have occurred sometime after the mid twentieth century.

Past investigations on site

- 3.18 CAT monitored geotechnical site investigation works at the site on 18 July 2023 (Denyer and O'Shea Walker 2023). The archaeological watching brief comprised monitoring the excavation of five boreholes (windowless samples) and one test-pit to investigate possible land contamination across the site. Boreholes were excavated to a depth of 4m below ground level, with recovered cores from each windowless sample split and logged on site. The test pit was excavated to a depth of 0.87m below ground level. Observations of the cores indicated the consistent presence of modern made ground of brick and concrete rubble, overlying alluvia and sand deposits; the latter deposits were tentatively identified as a possible continuation of Quaternary alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel located towards the north-west of the development site. Windowless sample locations 1 and 5, which are located close to Whinbush Road, showed noticeably thicker deposits of modern made ground, indicative of extensive modern disturbance in the area. Bedrock geology of chalk was not reached in any of the monitored locations, and no archaeological or geoarchaeological artefacts or deposits were identified during the site investigation works.

1.4 Objectives

- 1.4.1 The purpose of an archaeological field evaluation, as defined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020a), is to:

- *determine and report on, as far as is reasonably possible, the nature of the archaeological resource within a specified area using appropriate methods and practises.*

This is further explained as:

- *a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts, and their research potential, within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, reports on them, and enables an assessment of their significance in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.*

- 1.4.2 An evaluation may therefore result in the need for an agreed mitigation strategy and the implementation of further archaeological works with a specific written scheme of investigation potentially required to fulfil planning conditions. Additional mitigation measures may, for example, include preservation in situ and/or archaeological excavation prior to development and/or an archaeological watching brief during construction work.
- 1.4.3 The principal objectives of the evaluation work are to determine whether any significant archaeological remains survive on site and to ascertain their extent, depth below ground surface, character, condition and date.
- 1.4.4 More specific objectives include to:
- identify the presence/absence of any prehistoric features, deposits or finds, particularly of Bronze Age date, which would enhance our limited knowledge of prehistory within the vicinity of the site;
 - identify the presence/absence of any archaeological remains of Roman, Saxon or medieval date, especially associated with settlement;
 - identify any Post-medieval archaeology, in particular that related to buildings pre-dating the OS maps, which will help increase our knowledge of the development of this part of Hitchins prior to the mid-nineteenth century;

- place and assess any archaeological remains revealed within the context of any other archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the site and within the setting of the local landscape and topography; and
- identify, as the project progresses, any opportunities for public outreach activities, such as at the dissemination stage of the results.

1.5 Methodology

- 1.5.1 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the WSI (CAT 2023a) and the methods of practice outlined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020a). It comprised the machine excavation of two trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development (Figures 2-3). The trenches were opened in their approximate proposed locations, with Trench 2 targeting the proposed rear east wall of the new build.
- 1.5.2 In addition, the machine excavation of a geotechnical test pit was monitored (Plate 2 and Figure 2). This test pit was opened to the rear south-east corner of the site. It measured 2m long by 0.80m wide and reached a depth of 1.80m. The natural superficial geology was reached at a shallow depth of 0.10m-0.15m below the existing tarmac hardstanding. No features were observed cut into the surface of the natural deposit and no artefacts were recovered from the sequence of superficial deposits exposed. The sequence comprised a band of mid orangey brown sandy clay within mid greenish grey clay with chalk inclusions. The test pit is not mentioned further within this report.
- 1.5.3 The trench footprints and surrounding areas were scanned using a suitably calibrated Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) scanner by a qualified operative.
- 1.5.4 Mechanical excavation was limited to the removal of overburden to expose the uppermost archaeological deposits or the natural geological surface, whichever was the higher. Ground reduction was undertaken using a 6 tonne 360° tracked mechanical excavator, fitted with a flat-bladed bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. A beaker was used to break the tarmac hardstanding of the forecourt.
- 1.5.5 The features and deposits encountered were sample excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards. All plans were tied into the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.
- 1.5.6 A full colour digital photographic record of the fieldwork was produced. The photographic record comprises part of the site archive.
- 1.5.7 The fieldwork was monitored by Greer Dewdney, Historic Environment Advisor at Hertfordshire County Council.

1.6 Health, safety and welfare

- 1.6.1 All site investigation works were conducted in accordance with a project specific risk assessment and method statement (CAT 2023b) and the CAT health and safety general policy (CAT 2023c).
- 1.6.2 All CAT operatives hold valid Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards. CAT is a member of Constructionline and is AcclaimSSIP (Safety Schemes In Procurement) accredited.
- 1.6.3 All necessary precautions to the satisfaction of the statutory or other service authorities and the landowner concerned were taken to avoid interference with, or damage to, their services, and to comply with any applicable codes of practice. Prior to excavation, trench locations were scanned using a cable avoidance tool scanner.

1.7 Project archive

- 1.7.1 The project archive has been prepared in accordance with the archiving guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020b), with the archive name '81 and 81a Whinbush Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1PZ', CAT site code EV 81WR 23, and CAT archive number 5095.
- 1.7.2 All fieldwork records have been collated and checked for consistency and a full digital copy made.

- 1.7.3 No finds were recovered and no environmental samples were taken.
- 1.7.4 The project archive is held in the offices of CAT (92a Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2LU). Upon completion of the project, the project archive will be prepared and transferred to an approved local archive receiving body as recommended by Hertfordshire County Council.
- 1.7.5 An entry was completed and submitted to OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations; OASIS No. canterbu3-521877). The form is appended to the report as Appendix 1, along with an Historic Environment Record (HER) summary form (Appendix 2). The approved report will be submitted digitally to the Archaeology Data Service for HER distribution via the OASIS website within two weeks of approval.

2 Archaeological Results

2.1 Trench 1 (Plates 3-6 and Figures 3-6)

Table 1. Trench 1 contexts

Trench length: 9.25m at base Width: 1.80m Orientation: W-E Depth (to natural): 0.47m (W) – 0.57m (E)			
Ground level: 59.48 (W) – 59.65m OD (E) Exposed natural level: 59.01 (W) – 59.08m OD (E)			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Date
(100)	Deposit - tarmac	Tarmac hardstanding, up to 0.05m thick.	Modern
(101)	Deposit - bedding material for (100)	Pinkish grey MOT, c.0.10m thick.	Modern
(102)	Deposit - bedding material for (100)	Concrete, up to 0.05m thick. Bedding material for (100).	Modern
(103)	Deposit - made ground/levelling	Frequent red and yellow brick fragments in a mid orangey brown gravelly, sandy clay matrix, up to 0.17m thick.	Late Post-medieval/modern ?
(104)	Fill of [105]	Yellowish brown sterile sandy silt.	n/a
[105]	Cut	Linear feature interpreted as geological. Hand investigated.	n/a
(106)	Fill of [107]	Yellowish brown sterile sandy silt.	n/a
[107]	Cut	Linear feature interpreted as geological. Not hand investigated.	n/a
(108)	Deposit - natural superficial geology	Mid greenish grey clay with chalk inclusions.	n/a
(109)	Deposit - made ground/levelling	Loose, abundant red brick fragments, up to 0.15m thick.	Modern?
(110)	Deposit - made ground/levelling	Mid grey hard core/crush containing abundant brick fragments and stone, up to 0.15m thick.	Modern?

- 2.1.1 In Trench 1, the natural superficial geology (108) was encountered at a minimum depth of 0.47m BGL. A sondage was machine excavated through it, within the west end of the trench, to investigate the deposit. It revealed that the deposit continued unchanged beyond a depth of 1.00m.
- 2.1.2 Within the western half of Trench 1, the surface of the natural geological deposit (108) appeared to have been cut by two slightly irregular linear features [105] and [107], which ran north-west/south-east parallel to each other and 1.14m apart. The larger of the two features, [105], had an exposed length of 1.85m, tapering away to the north-west. A section was hand excavated through the feature to reveal a width of at least 0.46m (it extended beyond the Limit of Excavation), a steeply curving side and a gradual break of slope leading to a base that levelled off and became flat (Plate 4 and Figure 4). The sole fill (104) comprised a sterile yellowish brown sandy silt with a depth of 0.40m. The sterile fill and absence of artefacts suggest that this cut feature was natural in origin. The second linear feature [107] had an exposed length of 0.92m and was up to 0.15m wide. It looked to contain the same fill as [105] and produced no surface finds. On considering its shared similarities with and close proximity to [105], cut [107] was not hand investigated.

- 2.1.3 Across the length of Trench 1, a sequence of made ground/levelling deposits, up to 0.43m thick, overlay the natural geological deposit (108).
- 2.1.4 Overlying features [105] and [107], at the west end of Trench 1, deposits (103) and (110) were sealed by a layer of pink MOT (101) and a thin layer of tarmac hardstanding (100) that served as the forecourt surface (Plate 5 and Figure 5).
- 2.1.5 At the east end of Trench 1 (Plate 6 and Figure 6), two brick deposits (103) and (109) were overlain by thin layers of concrete (102) and tarmac (100).
- 2.1.6 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were found in Trench 1.

2.2 Trench 2 (Plates 7-8 and Figures 3 and 7)

Table 2. Trench 2 contexts

Trench length: 7m at base Width: 1.80m Orientation: N-S Depth (to natural): 0.35m (S) – 0.45m (N)			
Ground level: 59.68 (S) – 59.60m OD (N) Exposed natural level: 59.33 (S) – 59.15m OD (N)			
Context	Interpretation	Description	Date
(200)	Deposit - tarmac	Tarmac hardstanding, up to 0.05m thick.	Modern
(201)	Deposit - bedding material for (200)	Pinkish grey MOT, up to 0.05m thick.	Modern
(202)	Deposit - bedding material for (200)	Grey MOT, up to 0.05m thick.	Modern
(203)	Deposit - bedding material for (200)	Concrete (poured and crush), up to 0.10m thick.	Modern
(204)	Deposit - natural superficial geology	Mid greenish grey clay with chalk inclusions	n/a
(205)	Deposit - made ground/levelling	Red brick rubble, up to 0.23m thick.	Modern?

- 2.2.1 In Trench 2, the natural superficial geology (204) was encountered at a minimum depth of 0.35m BGL. No features were observed to cut this deposit, although a patch of discolouration (possibly from hydrocarbons) was observed against the east side of the trench; it could alternatively have been natural in origin. A sondage was machine excavated through the south end of the trench to investigate deposit (204). It revealed that the deposit continued unchanged beyond a depth of 1.30m.
- 2.2.2 At the south end of Trench 2, the natural geological deposit (204) was overlain by a brick rubble deposit (205), concrete (203), and tarmac hardstanding (200), with a combined depth of approximately 0.32m (Figure 7 and Plate 8). Further north in the trench, the concrete was replaced with MOT (201 and 202).
- 2.2.3 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were found in Trench 2.

3 Conclusions

3.1 Interpretation

- 3.1.1 Two evaluation trenches were opened within the footprint of the proposed building, with Trench 2 targeting its rear east wall. Trenching exposed a natural superficial deposit of clay with chalk, overlain by modern levelling deposits of brick rubble and aggregate, sealed with the tarmac hardstanding of the garage forecourt. The natural bedrock geology of West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation was not reached, whilst the superficial deposit encountered may be interpreted as the Lowestoft Formation (a chalky till with an outwash of sands and gravels, silts and clays) which the British Geological Survey maps for the site.
- 3.1.2 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were recorded, and the superficial deposit is considered to have low archaeological potential. There is the possibility that this deposit has been truncated to some degree by past construction phases on site; in which case, any former archaeological remains may have

been fully removed. Due to the absence of finding, this evaluation cannot enhance current archaeological knowledge of Hitchin, specifically that to the north of the town centre.

3.2 Development impact

- 3.1.1 The proposed development comprises the erection of an apartment building with associated parking and amenity space following demolition of the existing car workshop building, and alterations to the existing dwelling of 81a Whinbush Road, including a rear extension following demolition of the existing attached rear office building. (Planning Ref. 22/02953/FP).
- 3.1.2 The natural superficial geology was encountered at a depth of 0.35m-0.57m below ground level. Groundworks for the proposed development, including the excavation of footing trenches and services, will extend beyond this depth. However, no archaeological features were observed to cut the superficial deposit and as the archaeological potential of the site is regarded as low, it is unlikely that groundworks for the development will have an archaeological impact.

3.3 Confidence rating

- 3.3.1 The evaluation was sufficiently resourced and conducted under good weather conditions.

References

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92A Broad Street, Canterbury,
Kent CT1 2LU

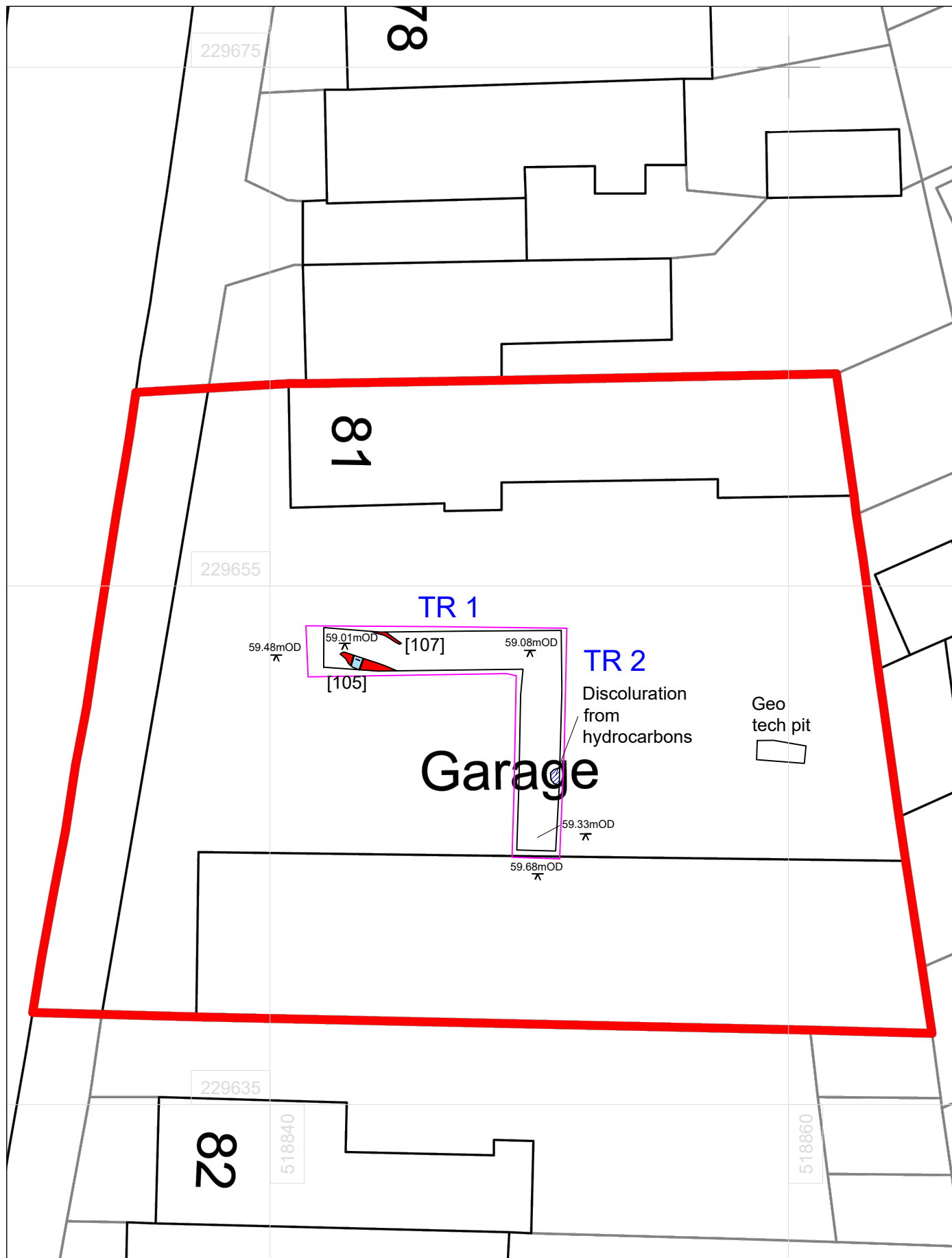
t: 01227 462062
e: admin@canterburytrust.co.uk
w: canterburytrust.co.uk

PROJECT 81 and 81a Whinbush Road, Hitchin	DRAWN BY LOW	SCALE(S) 1:500@A4
	DATE 10/01/2024	LAST REVISION -
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	REF/DRG NO. 81 WR 23 Location plan v2.dwg	



10m

Figure 1. Site location plan (in red)



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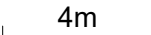



Figure 2 Evaluation trench location plan

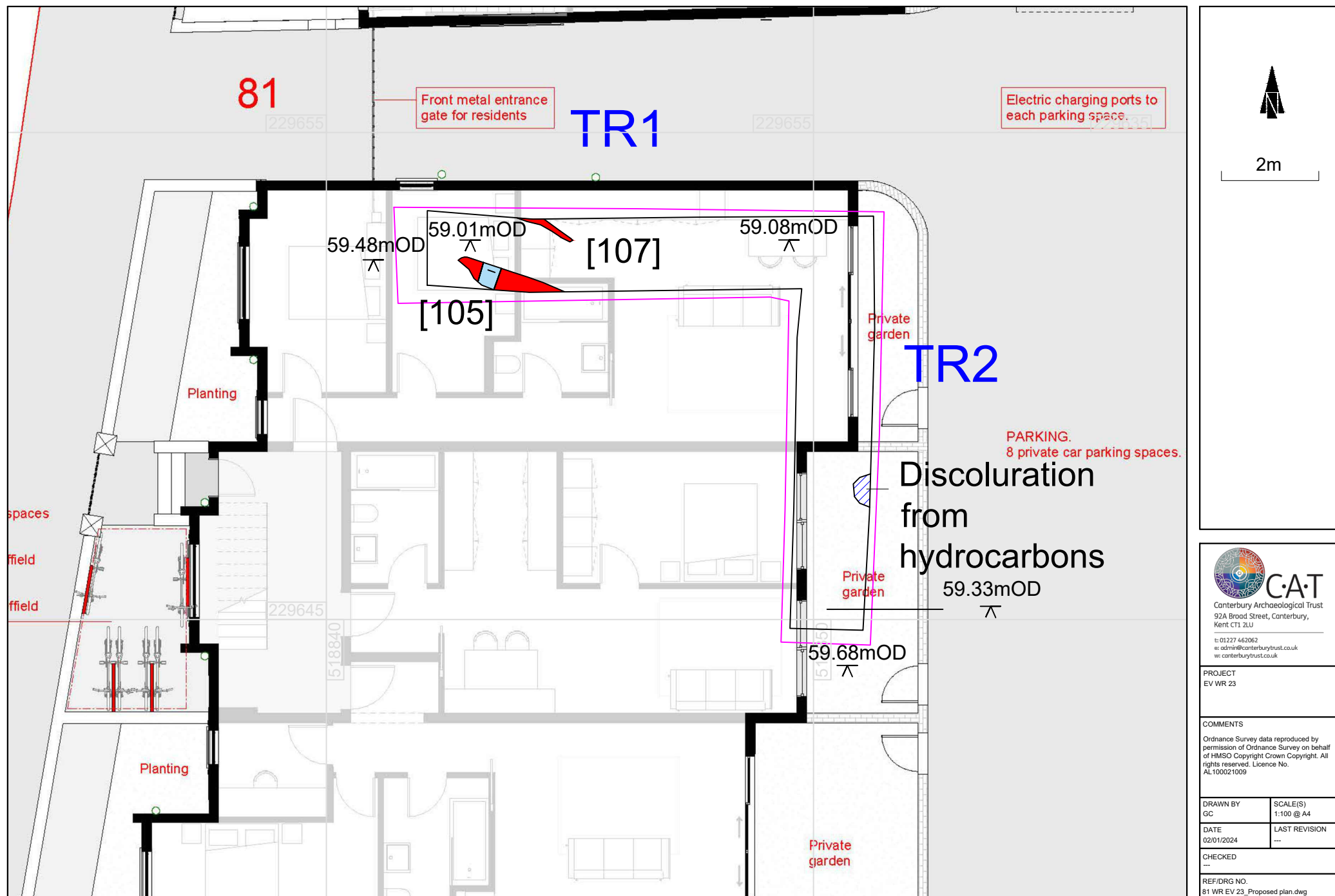


Figure 3 Proposed development plan with trenches 1 and 2

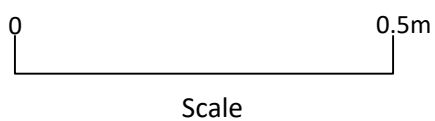
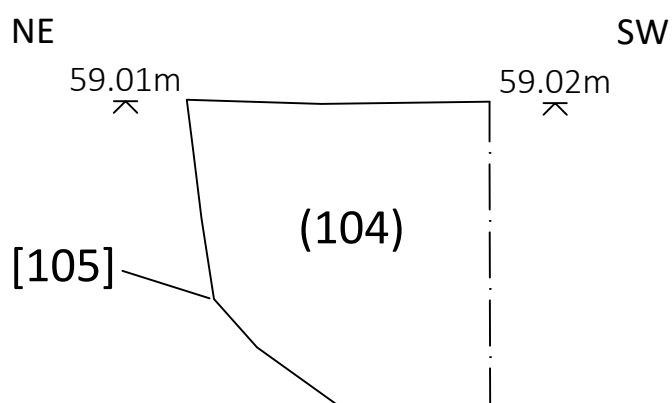
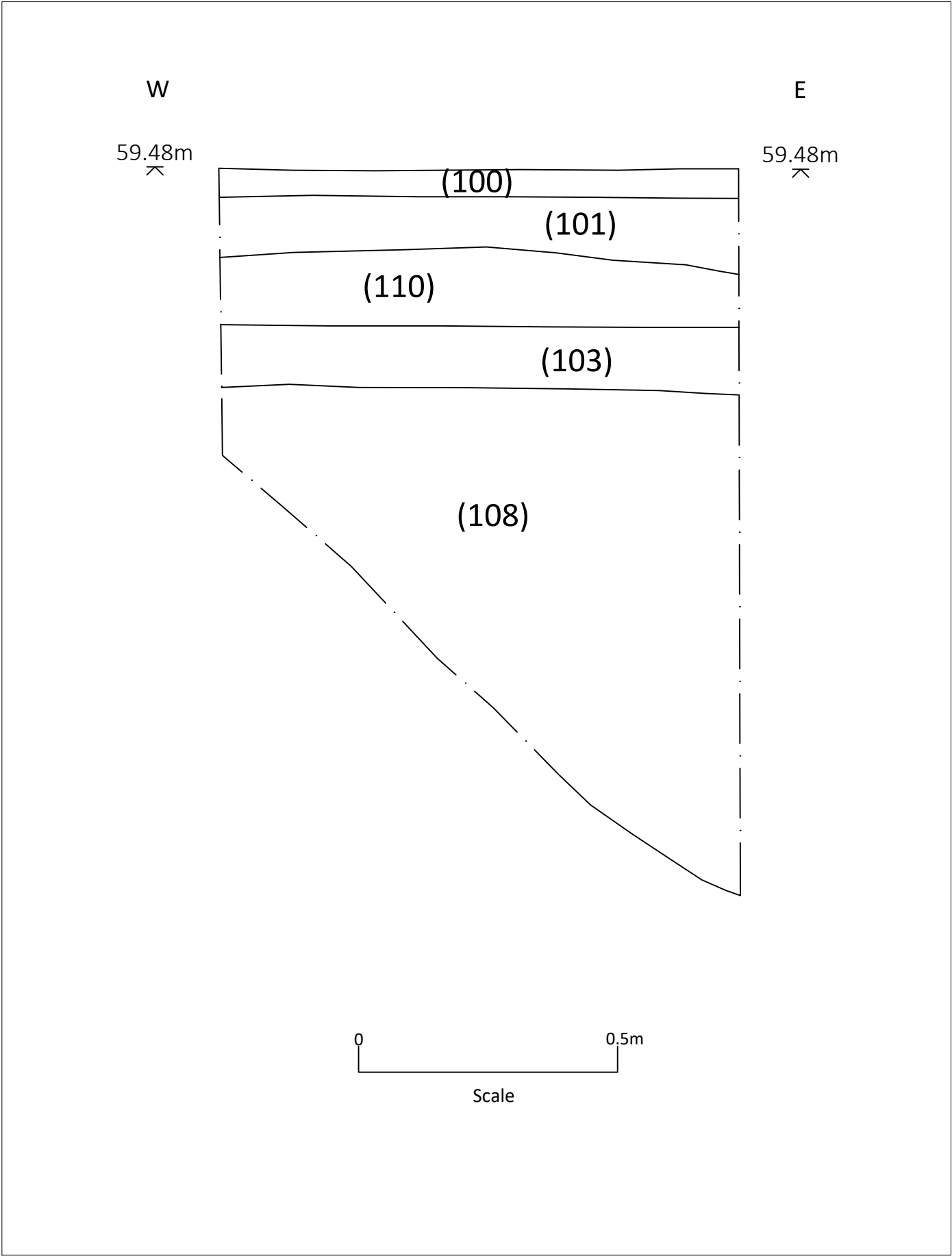


Figure 4. North-west facing section of linear feature [105]



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		REF/DRG NO. Fig 5.dwg	

Figure 5. Representative south facing section within sondage at extreme west end of Trench 1

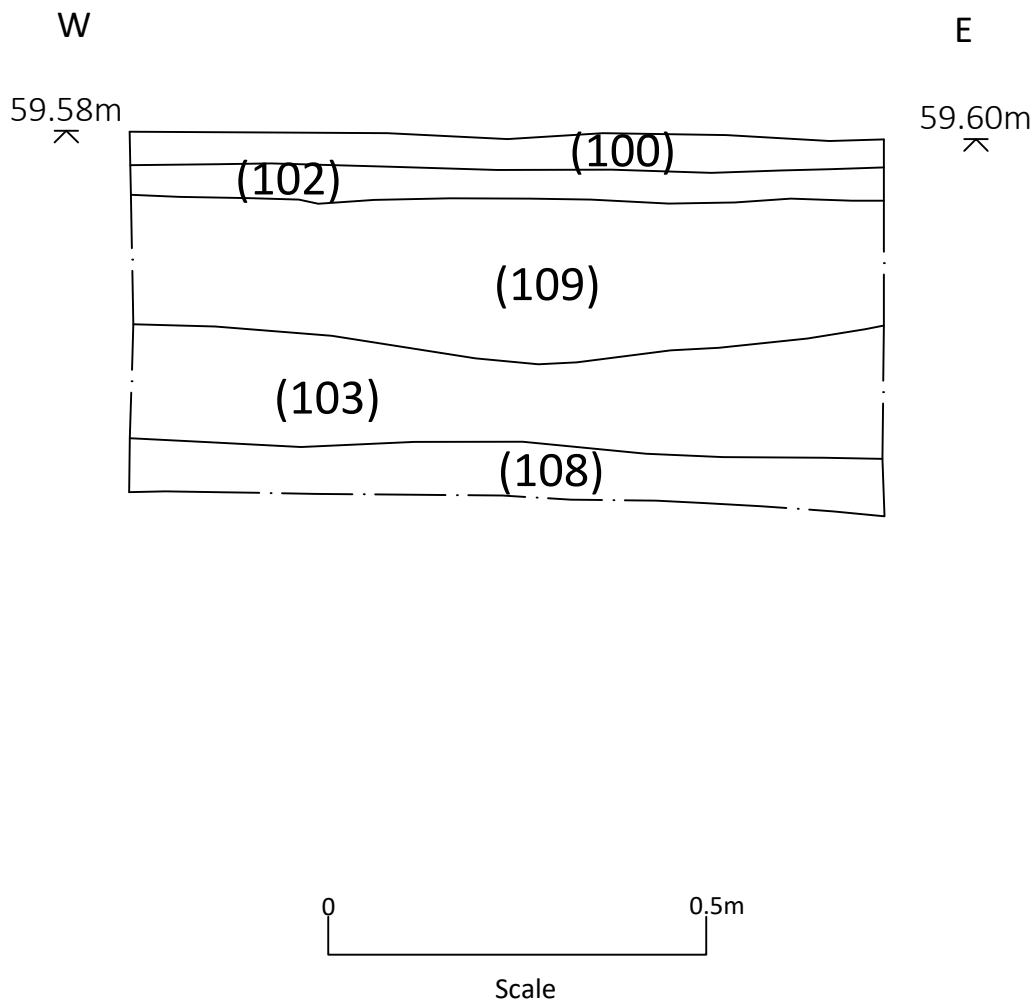


Figure 6. Representative south facing section at extreme east end of Trench 1

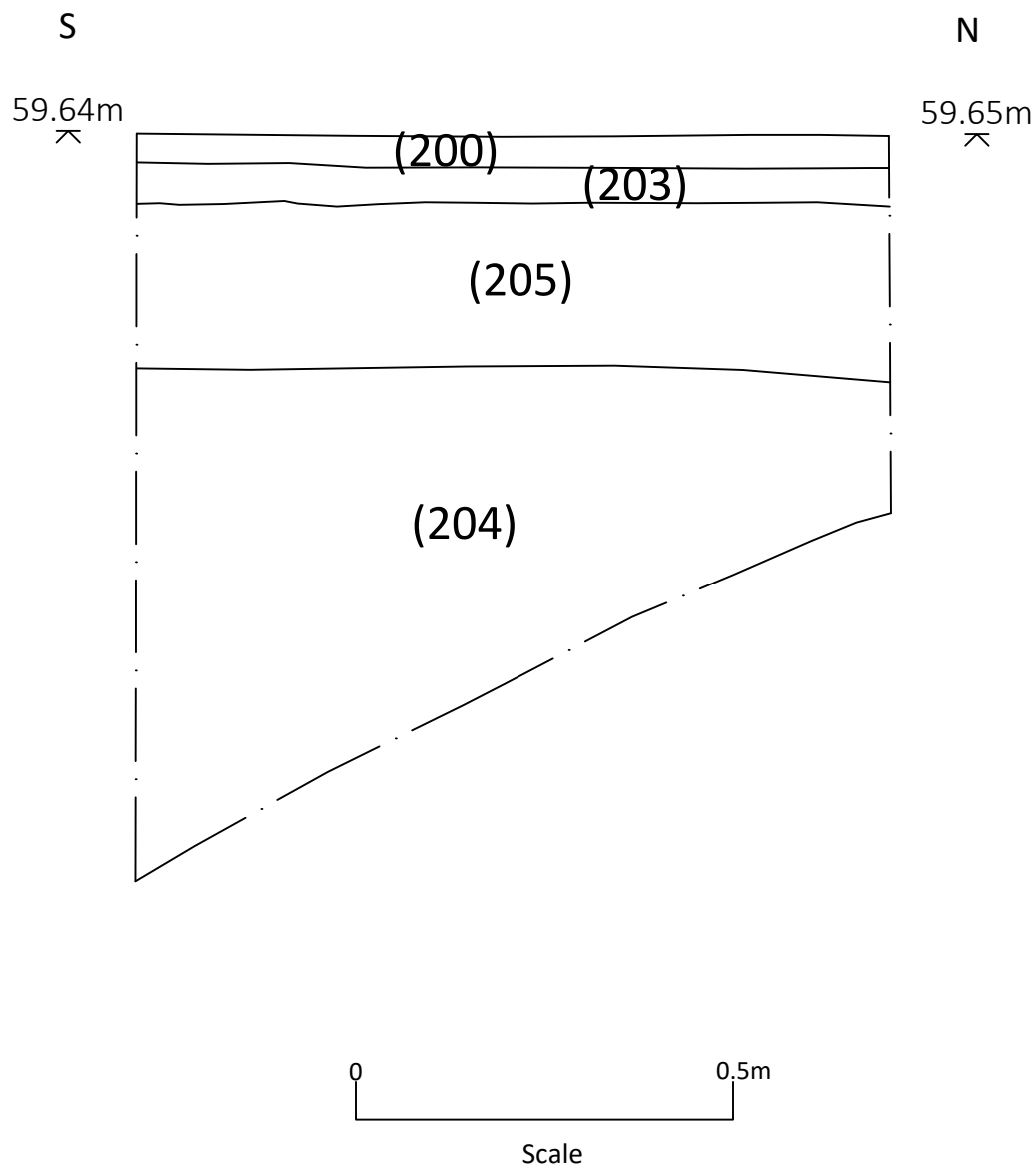


Figure 7. Representative east facing section at extreme south end of Trench 2

Plates



Plate 1: Pre-excavation view across the site, looking south-west, showing tarmac hardstanding (100 and 200)



Plate 2: Geotechnical test pit, looking south, showing the natural superficial geology and the overlying tarmac hardstanding and its bedding material (scale 2m)



Plate 3: Trench 1, looking east, showing linear features [105 and 107] in the foreground cutting the natural superficial geology (108) (scale 1m)



Plate 4: North-west facing section of linear feature [105] with sole fill (104) (scale 0.5m)



Plate 5: Representative south facing section within sondage at extreme west end of Trench 1, showing deposits (108), (103), (110), (101) and (100) (bottom to top respectively) (scale 2m)



Plate 6: Representative south facing section at extreme east end of Trench 1, showing deposits (108), (103), (109), (102) and (100) (bottom to top respectively) (scale 1m)



Plate 7: Trench 2, looking north, showing natural superficial geology (204) overlain by made ground/levelling (205), concrete (203) or MOT (201 and 202), and tarmac hardstanding (200) (scale 1m)



Plate 8: Representative east facing section at extreme south end of Trench 2 (scale 1m), showing natural superficial geology (204) overlain by made ground/levelling (205), concrete (203) and tarmac hardstanding (200) (scale 1m)

APPENDIX 1

OASIS Summary for canterbu3-521877

OASIS ID (UID)	canterbu3-521877
Project Name	81 and 81a Whinbush Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1PZ- Archaeological evaluation report
Sitename	81 and 81a Whinbush Road, Hitchin
Sitecode	EV 81WR 23
Project Identifier(s)	81 and 81a Whinbush Road, Hitchin
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	22/02953/FP (North Hertfordshire District Council)
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Canterbury Archaeological Trust
Project Dates	13-Dec-2023 - 14-Dec-2023
Location	81 and 81a Whinbush Road, Hitchin NGR : TL 18850 29640 LL : 51.95256086849558, -0.271992611467362 12 Fig : 518850,229640
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Hertfordshire Local Authority District : North Hertfordshire Parish : North Hertfordshire, unparished area
Project Methodology	The evaluation comprised archaeological supervision of the machine excavation of two trenches located within the footprint of the proposed development. The trenches each measured 10m and 8m in length. The machine excavation of a geotechnical test pit, opened to the rear south-east corner of the site, was also monitored and measured 2m long and 0.8m wide, and was excavated to a depth of 1.8m.
Project Results	No archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded. The earliest identified deposit comprised a natural superficial deposit of clay with chalk, identified at a depth of 0.35-0.47m below modern ground level. This deposit may have been truncated to a degree by the laying of a series of late post-medieval and modern levelling deposits, sealed by tarmac hardstanding.
Keywords	
Funder	Private or public corporation Sevenoaks Environmental Consultancy Ltd
HER	Hertfordshire HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Caroline Russell
HER Identifiers	
Archives	

Appendix 2. Historic Environment Record Summary Form

Site Name: 81 and 81a Whinbush Road,	
Site Address: Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1PZ	
Summary: Canterbury Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological evaluation at the site as part of preparatory works for the erection of an apartment building with associated parking and amenity space following demolition of the existing car workshop building, and alterations to the existing dwelling of 81a Whinbush Road, including a rear extension following demolition of the existing attached rear office building (Planning Ref. 22/02953/FP). The work was commissioned by Sevenoaks Environmental Consultancy Ltd.	
District/Unitary: North Hertfordshire District Council	Parish:
Periods: Late Post-medieval or modern	
National Grid Reference: 518850 229640	
Type of archaeological work: Evaluation	
Date of recording: 13/12/2023 - 14/12/23	
Unit undertaking recording: Canterbury Archaeological Trust Ltd, 92A Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2LU Tel: 01227 462062 Email: admin@canterburytrust.co.uk	
Geology: West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation (chalk and limestone), with a superficial deposit of Lowestoft Formation (chalky till deposit with outwash of sands and gravels, silts and clays).	
Title and author of accompanying report: 81 and 81a Whinbush Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 1PZ Archaeological evaluation report Report no. 2024/1 Archive no. 5095 Author: G. Carstairs	
Summary of fieldwork results: A natural superficial deposit of clay with chalk was recorded. It is considered to have low archaeological potential and may have been truncated to a degree by the laying of a series of Late Post-medieval and modern levelling deposits, sealed by tarmac hardstanding. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were recorded.	
Location of Archive: Canterbury Archaeological Trust Ltd	
Contact at Unit: Caroline Russell	Date: 03/01/2024