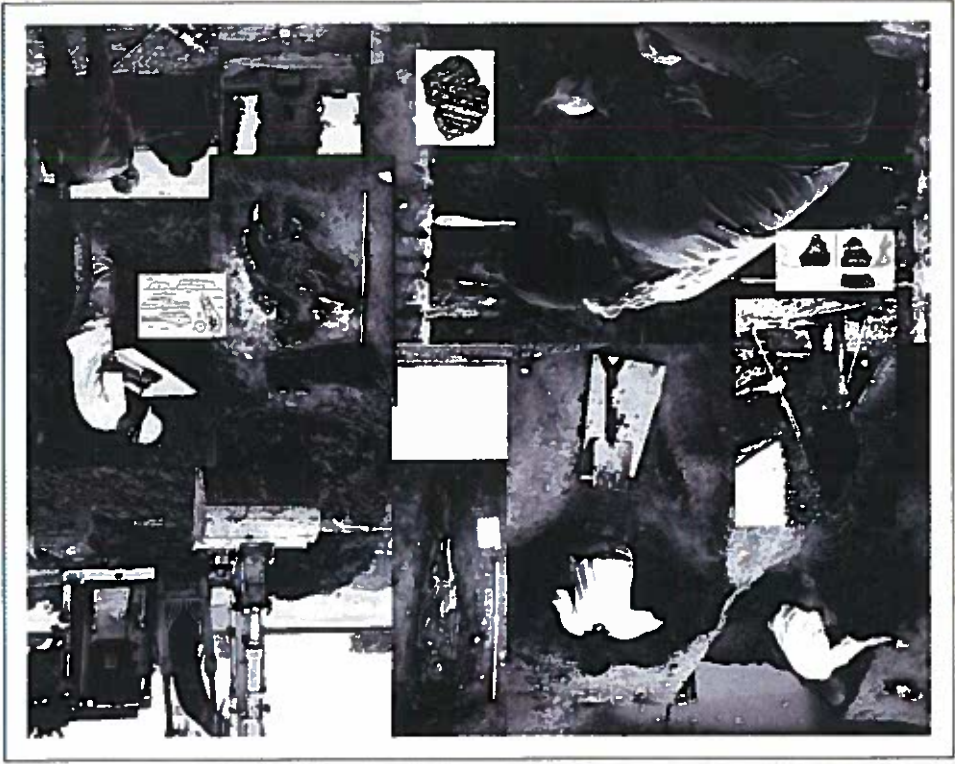


EVENT PLAN 54465

CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD.

# Freemans View, Merlins Bridge Haverfordwest

Archaeological Evaluation



By  
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GAP Report No. 411

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

**Freemans View, Merlins Bridge**

**Havfordwest**

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Prepared for:  
Pembrokeshire Housing

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## Summary

A field evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to Freeman's View, Merlin's Bridge, Haverfordwest, in advance of the development of the site for housing. The evaluation was undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects over 3 days, 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

Five trenches were excavated by machine, using a toothless bucket, which removed the topsoil and subsoil down to the level of the underlying natural clay. The machine stripping was monitored by project staff, and the trenches were subsequently cleaned back by hand to reveal any features of archaeological interest.

The evaluation determined that nothing of archaeological significance was located in the development area. The project was monitored by Charles Hill of Cambria Archaeology.

## 1 Background

The area of proposed development lies to the south of Haverfordwest, at Freemans View, Merlin's Bridge, Haverfordwest (SM 9548 1440). The site lies on the edge of an extensive housing estate. The site was under pasture, having been grazed by horses until recently, but had clearly been a chosen location for litter dumping and burning, associated with the construction and occupation of the neighbouring estate. For a location of the site see Figs 1 and 2.

The Regional Sites and Monuments Record lists two sites of archaeological interest in the vicinity of the development area: the ruins of the Medieval house and gardens of Haroldston, a scheduled ancient monument, and a lithic scatter identified in 1973 and tentatively dated to the Mesolithic.

The lithic scatter was recorded as having been found in two fields bordering Clay Lane' (Rees 1973), one of which coincided with the development site. The SMR record and the short note published in *Archaeology in Wales* (1973) give insufficient information for the significance of this find to be established, however, it was clearly only a small scatter of material distributed over a fairly wide area. The records indicate that blades were amongst the material recovered, which would point to a late Mesolithic/early Neolithic date for the material. A core and a scraper were also recovered, although no description is given. Without further details about the morphology of the assemblage, its distribution and density, and information about the local context, it is impossible to determine whether the material represents a 'site'. Nevertheless, the identification of material tentatively dated to the late Mesolithic/early Neolithic is interesting in establishing a prehistoric presence in the landscape.

Two standing stones in neighbouring fields were also thought to represent prehistoric, possibly Bronze Age activity, however, a recent re-evaluation has established that these are most likely to have been erected in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as cattle rubbing stones.

The extensive ruins at Haroldston are important remains, constituting one of the only examples of a late Medieval and Tudor manorial complex in Pembrokeshire (Turner 1991). The house was first recorded around the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and was in the hands of the Perrot family until the 1700s (Turner 1991). Indeed, it is as the birthplace of Sir John Perrot, illegitimate son of Henry VIII, that Haroldston is most renowned (Turner 1991). The house fell into ruin during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Turner 1991), although one building, the 'Stewards House' remained intact until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as contemporary prints show (Turner 1991).

A number of buildings occupy the site, the most prominent of which is the 'Steward's Tower'. This has been interpreted as a medieval defensive dwelling, although Turner suggests instead that it is a Tudor banqueting house, comparable to examples at Edsall Castle and Chatsworth (Turner 1991). The tower is L-shaped in plan, with visible undercroft and the remains of a spiral staircase. Parts of the tower survive to a height of 2.5m (Turner 1991). The main group of buildings is located to the west of the tower, and includes a pointed-arched undercroft (Turner 1991). Surrounding the house are a number of formal gardens, fields and earthworks. A line of lime trees appears to be a remnant of the original garden layout, while a boggy area may represent the remains of a pond (Turner 1991). The scheduled area encompasses the different elements of the site, and stretches from the railway line to the south of the complex, to Clay Lane to the north.

It is likely that the building complex at Haroldston would have formed one element of the settled landscape of Haverfordwest in the late Medieval and Tudor periods. Indeed it is probable that the surrounding land would have been farmed to provide food for the household and its servants. The proximity of the proposed development site to the scheduled area may increase the likelihood of remains contemporary to the use of the Haroldston complex being found. Indeed, some indications of the presence of ridge and furrow have been noted in the development area.

## 2 The Evaluation

### *Aims and Methodology*

The aims of the evaluation were to assess the archaeological potential of the development site through trial trenching. Features of archaeological interest were to be recorded and subsequently excavated, and finds were to be collected.

Five trenches were excavated, each 43m long and 2m wide – representing 2% of the overall development area. Each trench was initially stripped of topsoil and subsoil by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket – this was done under the close supervision of Cambrian Archaeological Projects staff. The trenches were then cleaned back by hand to reveal the surface of the natural and any features cut into it. Each trench was photographed, and context recording undertaken. Where features were revealed, these were photographed and drawn before being sectioned; finally, photographs and section drawings were undertaken.

## 3 Results

In all cases, the trenches measured 43m in length by 2m wide, and were initially excavated to the upper level of the natural by machine.

### *Trench 1*

The trench was located close to the western boundary of the site. The topsoil was an average of 0.15m in depth along the length of the trench, and comprised a loose brown organic clay soil containing numerous inclusions of modern rubbish – plastic, ceramic, glass.

Underlying the topsoil was a layer of compact brown clay subsoil containing modern rubble – brick, glass and coal. It was an average depth of 0.8m along the length of the trench.

The natural clay was at an average depth of 0.26m below the turf, and comprised compact red clay with occasional outcrops of shattered rock.

No archaeological features were identified, although a single flint flake was recovered from the lower levels of the subsoil (see flint report).

### *Trench 2*

Trench 2 was located adjacent to the southern edge of the site, running parallel with the boundary fence.

The topsoil was comparable to that in trench 1, and averaged 0.14m in depth.

The subsoil averaged 0.13m in depth, and comprised compact brown clay subsoil, comparable to that in trench 1, but with notably less modern inclusions.

The natural comprised compact red clay with several large areas of loose shattered stone at an average depth of 0.28m below the turf.

No archaeological features were present, although a piece of possible medieval pottery was recovered from the lower levels of the subsoil.

### *Trench 3*

Trench 3 was located adjacent to the edge of the housing estate, running north/south, following the boundary wall.

The topsoil averaged 0.18m in depth, and was comparable to trench 1, with numerous modern inclusions throughout.

The compact brown clay subsoil averaged a depth of 0.13m and contained modern rubble, glass and coal.

The natural comprised compact red clay with several large areas of shattered stone, and was at an average depth of 0.26m below the turf.

Three linear features were identified running NE-SW across the central part of the trench. These were planned and sectioned. See Fig 3 and Plate 1.

Feature 1 was 0.35m wide and 0.03m deep, with a rounded base. It was cut into the bedrock and filled with dark brown loose silty clay

Feature 2 was 0.37m wide and 0.035m deep with a flattened base and rounded sides, cut into the natural. The soil fill was comparable to feature 1.

Feature 3 was 0.41m wide and 0.04m deep with an uneven base cut into the natural, and was filled with material comparable to feature 1.

No finds were recovered from the features, although fragments of clay pipe were recovered from the subsoil.

#### *Trench 4*

Trench 4 ran along the SE edge of the site, parallel to the fence line.

The topsoil averaged 0.2m in depth and was comparable to trench 2, with few modern inclusions.

The compact brown clay subsoil averaged 0.18m in depth and also contained few modern inclusions.

The compact red clay natural was at an average depth of 0.34m and included two large spreads of shattered stone.

Four possible plough marks (context 13) were identified towards the western end of the trench, running NW/SSE. All were very ephemeral and only a few mm deep. They were recorded and sectioned, and were all found to be filled by a loose brown clay soil. See Fig 3 and Plate 2.

#### *Trench 5*

Trench 5 was located at the northern end of the site, running parallel with the fence and adjacent road.

The topsoil averaged a depth of 0.19m, and was comparable to trench 1, with modern debris including shoes and plastic cartons identified.

The compact brown clay subsoil was comparable to trench 2, containing few modern inclusions.

The natural comprised entirely shattered stone, and was at an average depth of 0.33m below the turf.

No archaeological features or find were identified.

#### **4 Lithics**

A single flake of rolled grey flint was recovered from the lower levels of context [002] in evaluation trench 1. The flake was regular in shape, with parallel lateral edges, and retained a small patch of cortex at the distal end – this was abraded and characteristic of a beach pebble source. The dorsal scar patterns indicate that this piece was struck from a blade core.

The proximal end of the flake is crushed, with the platform missing, suggesting a hard hammer technique. This is also indicated by the presence of pronounced concoidal ripples.

The lateral edges of the flake show signs of retouch or edge damage, although the rolled state of the piece make it difficult to determine whether this was the result of deliberate retouch or use, or post-depositional damage.

The recovery of this flake in an area recorded as containing a Mesolithic flint scatter is interesting, particularly as the dorsal scar patterns indicate that it derived from a blade core. This would suggest that the flake derived from late Mesolithic or early Neolithic activity.

## 5 Interpretation

The recovery of a single flint flake in trench 1, in the vicinity of the reported lithic scatter is interesting, although it does not, unfortunately, move us further forward in our understanding of this scatter.

The linear features identified in trench 3 remain ambiguous, although it is possible that they relate to possible ridge and furrow tentatively identified in the field. Their close spacing would perhaps discount this interpretation, although some hand dug rig can be very narrow.

The plough marks in trench 4 are likely to be ancient, due to the lack of signs of ploughing in the overlying subsoil. However, without dating evidence their significance cannot be ascertained.

The features identified and artefacts recovered point to a human presence in this landscape over many millennia, albeit a presence that has left few enduring traces. There is no evidence to link the site with the occupation of Haroldston, or further notable traces of the reported lithic scatter.

## 6 Acknowledgements

Thanks to Charles Hill, Marion Page and Richard Jones at Cambria Archaeology for their help with the evaluation and for providing information from the SMR. Thanks also to all at Lugsy's Plant Hire and Jehu for all their assistance in the undertaking of the evaluation trenching.

## 7 Bibliography

Turner, R. C. 1991. *Haroldston house and Gardens*. SMR Visit Description Text

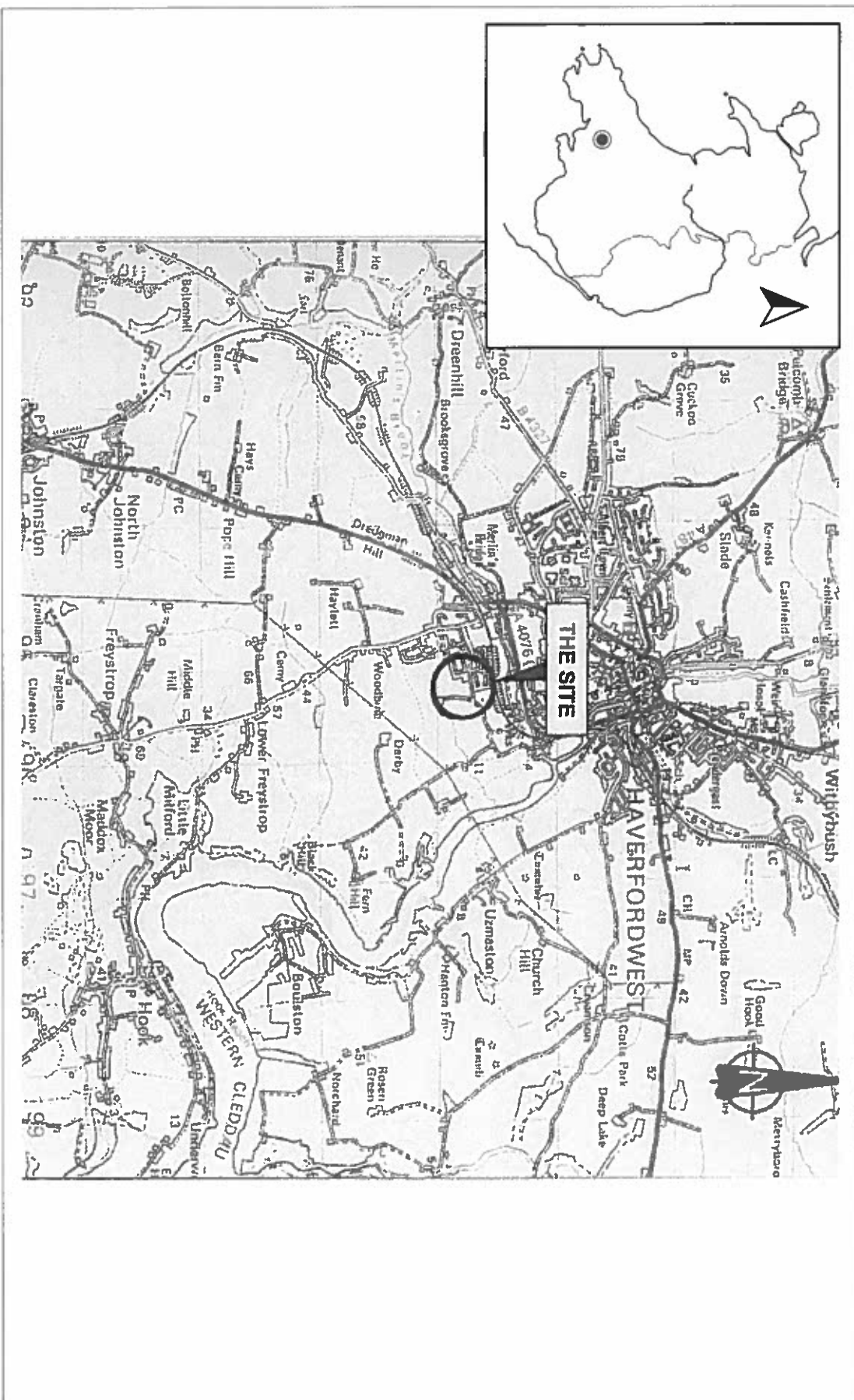


Fig 1: Site Location

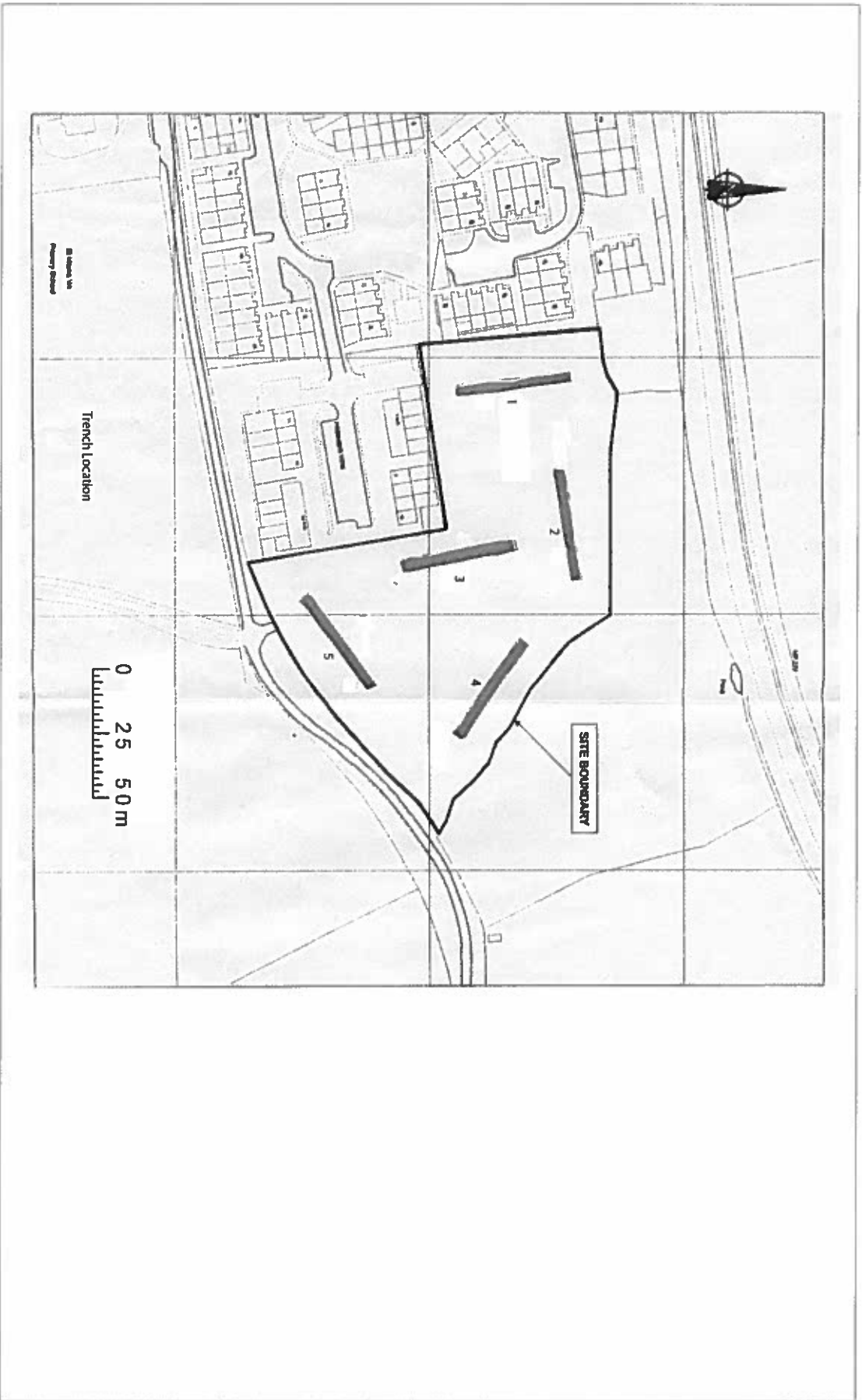


Fig2: Trench Location Plan

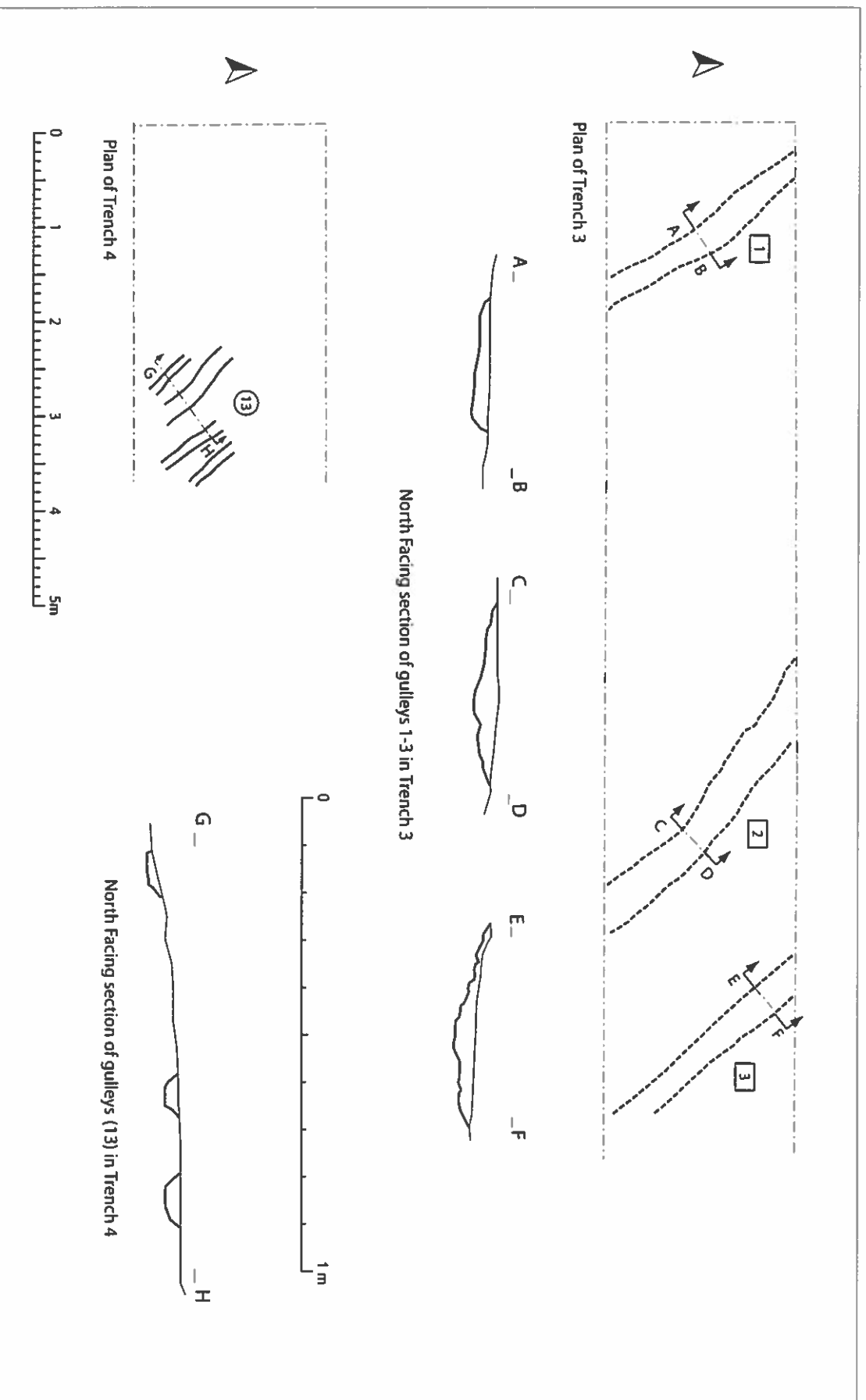


Fig 3: Detail of features in Trenches 3 and 4

Plate 3: Trench 3, feature 1, Scale 2m



Plate 1: Trench 3, general view, Scale 2m



Plate 2: Trench 4, general view, Scale 2m



ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Freemans View, Merlins Bridge, Havertfordwest  
(FVH/06/EVAL)

|                         |                                                              |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Site Name:              | Freemans View, Merlins Bridge, Havertfordwest                |
| Site Code:              | FVH/06/EVAL                                                  |
| PRN:                    | N/A                                                          |
| NPRN :                  | N/A                                                          |
| SAM:                    | N/A                                                          |
| Other Ref No:           | Project No 739                                               |
| NGR:                    | SM 9548 1440                                                 |
| Site Type:              | Flint scatter, ancient ploughing and rig and possible furrow |
| Project Type:           | Evaluation trenching                                         |
| Project Officer:        | Amelia Pannett                                               |
| Project Dates:          | January 2006                                                 |
| Categories Present:     | N/A                                                          |
| Number of Finds Boxes:  | 1 flint included in archive box                              |
| Location of Finds:      | N/A                                                          |
| Museum Reference:       | N/A                                                          |
| Copyright:              | CAPLtd                                                       |
| Restrictions to access: | None                                                         |

