Survey of Medieval Earthwork:

Land to the North of
No.4 Bryant's Close,
High Street, Upper Dean,
Bedfordshire, PE28 0LU

(NGR 504839, 267863)



August 2016

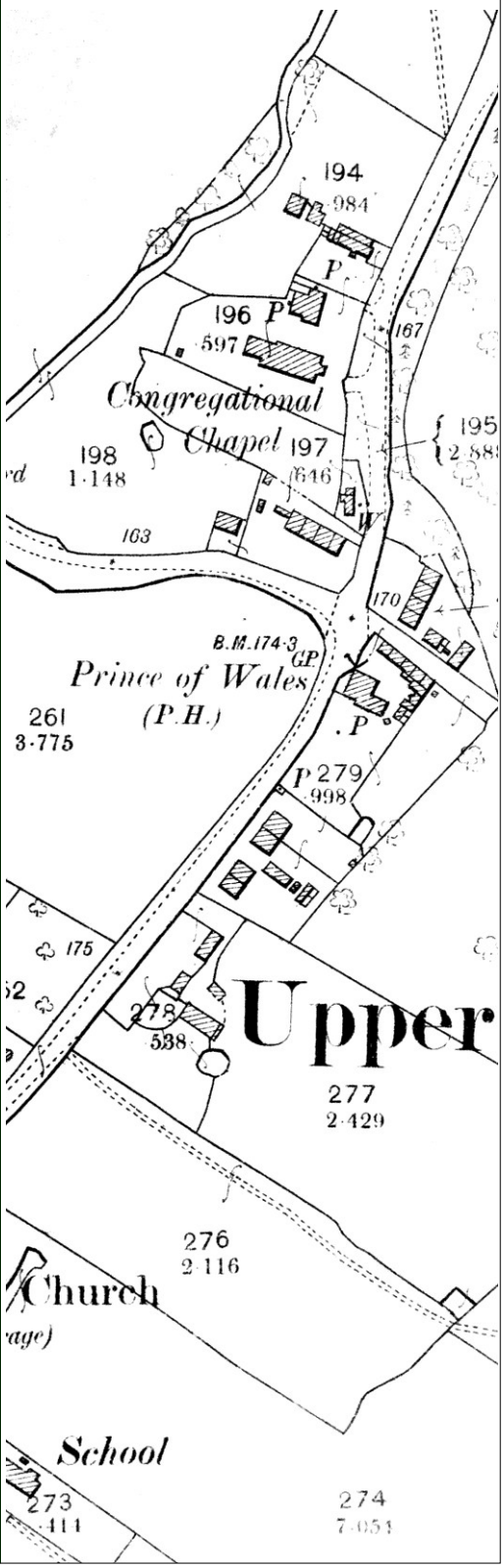
Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd

for

David Soul Esq.

Souterrain

Archaeological Services Ltd



SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL EARTHWORK:

LAND TO THE NORTH OF NO.4 BRYANT'S CLOSE, HIGH STREET, UPPER DEAN, BEDFORDSHIRE, PE28 0LU

(NGR 504839, 267863)

Planning Application 14/01459/DC3

Souterrain Project ID: SOU16-453

August 2016

Produced for:

Mr D Soul Esq.
Yelden, Bedfordshire

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Preface

All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd (Souterrain) cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

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Report:

Martin Wilson & Mercedes Planas

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On the 26th of April 2016, Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd (Souterrain) carried out a survey of a medieval earthwork at land north of No. 4 Bryants Close, High Street, Upper Dean, Bedfordshire (Fig. 1), as a part of the mitigation requirements for a planning condition.

1.2 The survey was carried out on behalf of Mr David Soul, the land owner and planning applicant, at the request of the Historic Environmental Team at Bedford Borough Council.

1.3 Planning permission 14/01459/DC3 was granted subject to Conditions on the 2nd October 2014 to Bedford Borough Council for the erection of two houses on land at No.1 and No.4, Bryants Close Upper Dean, PE28 0LY[1]. The Application Site was considered by Geoff Saunders, Archaeological Officer for Planning Services Bedford Borough Council (hereafter 'AOBBC') to have the potential to reveal evidence of early medieval to medieval activity and/ or occupation. Accordingly, a Condition (No. 11) of the Planning Permission requires the implementation of an archaeological strategy for evaluation, and if necessary, a further mitigation strategy based on the outcome of the evaluation, prior to development taking place.

1.4 An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was subsequently carried out in March 2016 by Souterrain[2]. It revealed a sparse range of archaeological 'negative' features (gullies and possible pits) which were dated broadly to the medieval period and a gully dated to the 12th / 13th century. Additionally, there were two successive medieval layers which were understood to comprise make-up layers of a possible medieval embankment earthwork around the northern and eastern perimeter of one of the house plots.

1.5 Three stages of archaeological mitigation were subsequently agreed with the AOBBC, as follows:

i. A survey to be carried out of the earthwork bank around the northern and eastern perimeter of Plot 2;

ii. A watching brief of all ground works (at both house plots);

iii. Post-excavation analysis, appraisal report (including earthwork report), archive and publication, in accordance with relevant sections of the Written Scheme of Investigation specifically devised for the project.

2. PURPOSE & AIMS

2.1 The overall purpose of the archaeological condition is to ensure that the archaeological interest of a heritage asset is adequately safeguarded, pursuant to paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[3].

[1] The areas of proposed development are defined on the drawings (latest revisions) by Bedford Borough Council Design Services associated with the planning application.

[2] Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd 2016. *Land at No.1 and No.4 Bryants Close, Upper Dean, Bedfordshire, PE28 0LU & PE28 0LY (TL048 678): Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*, SOU16-453, V. 1. 19th Feb 2016

[3] Dep. Communities & Local Government, 2012. *National Planning Policy Framework*. 27.03.2012

2.2 The aim of the field survey is to provide an accurately measured survey and an illustrative and descriptive record of the embankment earthwork prior to the development of the site. In particular, the site has the potential to recover further information that may contribute to our understanding of the origins and developmental history of the nucleated village of Upper Dean.

3. SITE LOCATION AND ASPECT

3.1 Upper Dean is located within the parish of Dean and Shelton which lies on the northern boundary of the county, about 24 miles north of Bedford. The Application Site is situated in the historic core of the village at the southwest junction of High Street and Shay Lane, which is within the Designated Conservation Area of Upper Dean. It comprises two plots of land, referred to respectively as Plot 1 and Plot 2, one at either end of a 20th century terrace, at Nos. 1 and 4, Bryants Close.

3.2 The earthwork survey was undertaken at Plot 2 (Fig. 2), which is located at the northeast end of the terrace, centred on NGR 504843,267860. The plot, which is broadly rectangular, approximately 930 sq.m., has latterly been in use as a garden. The north to north-eastern side of the plot is flanked by Shay Lane, while its south-eastern side fronts High Street. The ground has a slight gradient from around c. 52.34 m AOD at the southeast, to 52 m AOD at the northwest. Beyond its north-eastern boundary there is steep fall in height of c. 2 m to Shay Lane, the latter which has the appearance of a former sunken lane.

3.3 The underlying solid geology is understood to be an Oxford Clay formation of the Jurassic period.

4. THE EARTHWORK

4.1 The earthwork was first identified during the archaeological evaluation of the Application Site by trial trenching in March 2016. It consists of a wide embankment which runs around the northern and eastern periphery of Plot 2 (Fig. 2) and it also present beneath a hedge on the eastern side of Plot 1 (Fig. 2).

4.2 Two of the evaluation trenches in Plot 2 (Fig. 2, trenches 2 and 3) encountered two deposits which were considered to be make-up layers of the earthen embankment towards its inner side. A small amount of un-diagnostic medieval shelly-ware pottery was recovered from the uppermost deposit in Trench 2, while a residual sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery was found in the lower deposit. An assemblage of carbonised cereal grains and other plant macrofossils recovered from both deposits are congruent with the medieval period. In Trench 3, the deposits sealed a 12th / 13th century gully.

4.3 The course of the earthwork has been traced north-westwards along Shay Lane (Fig. 9), where it is present on either side a small brook (a tributary of the Ivel). It then turns south-westwards along Brook Lane, before fading mid way along the lane. The embankment encloses two fields which contain linear earthworks of uncertain origin or function: in Brian's Meadow on the southeast side of the brook (HER 15020) and in Pickbones Meadow on the northwest side of the brook. As yet, there has been no analytical earthwork survey carried out in either of these fields. Along High Street, runs a more fragmentary course south westwards from Plot 2, having been cut

through by the driveways to houses [10] and [11], though may be traced for about 200 m.

4.4 The function of the earthwork is presently uncertain. One preliminary hypothesis is that it represents part of a boundary of a magnate enclosure, a little known type of early medieval monument, comprised of an extensive ditch and/or bank, enveloping church and manor house and certain demesne grounds. Two Bedfordshire examples of such are the nearby village of Melchbourne[4] and Meppershall (c. 16 km SE of Bedford)[5], whilst another suspected site may be present at the nearby village of Shelton (c. 1.5 km NW). A related hypothesis is that the earthworks form a part of a medieval water management system, comprised of dams and fish (?and eel) ponds on either side of the brook.

5. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

5.1 The earthwork survey has been undertaken to the requirements of Historic England 'Level 2' as described in *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes* (Historic England 2007 (2014).

5.2 The earthwork and the associated topography of Plot 2 was surveyed to Ordnance Survey National Grid co-ordinates and orthometric heights. Data was recorded using a combination of RTK Differential GPS and Total Station. Plan precision was generally from to 60 mm to 20 mm, and height precision between 10 mm to 30 mm

5.3 Three representative profiles were surveyed of the embankment earthwork whereby data was recorded at intervals between 0.30m and 0.40m.

6 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

6.1 The results of the field survey are presented in a series of scaled plans. Figure 3 is a plan of the earthwork using hachures to show relief. The locations of three representative profiles of the earthwork (Fig. 7) are also shown. The digital survey data (*ante*. 5.2) has been used to enable 3D digital elevation model views of the earthwork; these are shown at Figures 4 and 5. A contour plan was also generated (Fig. 6).

6.2 The numbers in bold refer to photographs at Section 9. The photograph viewpoints are shown on Figure 8. The metric scales which appear in the photographs are 1 in length with divisions of either 0.2 m or 0.5 m.

7. DESCRIPTION

7.1 The outer slope of the embankment is most pronounced at the northwest extent of Plot 2 (**1**, **3**, **4**], where it is enhanced by the natural fall of slope north-westwards along Shay Lane. At this point the outer face of the embankment has a slope of approximately 60° (Fig. 3, profile 3) and is approximately 1.97 m in height, from the roadside (c. 50.11 m OD) to the top of the earthwork (c. 52.08 m OD). The crest of the

[4] *c.f.* Shotliff, D, 1998, Melchbourne, Hillands End House (SP02756537) *South Midlands Archaeology* 28, 10

[5] See Edgeworth, M, 'Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Bedfordshire – AD 400 – 1550' in Oake, et al, *Bedfordshire Archaeology*, 2007, 100

embankment is about 3.5 m wide. Its inner side tapers gently down to around 51.09 m OD over a distance of c. 2m to 3 m, with the overall width of the embankment being about 8m to 9 m.

7.2 Towards the road junction at High Street, the outer face of the embankment rises at an angle of 15° to 20° (Fig. 3, profile 2) and to an overall height of approximately 1.6 m (c. 52.65 m OD). The top of the embankment is generally 3.5 m wide. The inner side slopes at less than 10° to around 52.30 m OD. The overall width of the embankment is this part is approximately 9.5 to 10 m.

7.3 Where the embankment borders High Street, its outer face has a slope generally around 30° (Fig. 3, profile 1) and is just over 1 m high (c. 52.76 m OD). The crest is about 2.5 m wide, while the overall width of the embankment is approximately 6 m. The inner face has a very gentle slope (c. 5°) down to c. 52.55 m OD.

7.4 The topography of the interior of the Plot is featureless.

8. ARCHIVE

8.1 This report is to be integrated to the final site archive. All records are referenced with the Bedford Museum Accession number BEDFM 2016.10.A digital copy of the report will be made available through 'Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations: www.oasis.ac.uk.

8.2 The investigation was conducted with due consideration to Health and Safety and in accordance with the requirements of the Written Scheme of Investigation and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014).

9. PHOTOGRAPHS



1. View from the top of the earthwork, in the NW corner of Plot 2. Facing NE



2. View from the top of the earthwork, in the NW corner of Plot 2, facing W



3. View the earthwork from Shay Lane, facing SE



4. View the earthwork from Shay Lane, facing SW



5. View the earthwork from Shay Lane, facing SE



6. View of the SE part of the earthwork at Plot 2, facing NE



7. View along the SE part of the earthwork at Plot 2, facing NW



8. View of the SE part of the earthwork at Plot 2, facing N



9. View of the earthwork from High Street, showing site of proposed pedestrian entrance at Plot 2, facing NW



10. View of the earthwork at Plot 1 from High Street, facing SW



11. Cut through earthwork for driveway at No 1 Bryants Close (High Street), facing NE

10. FIGURES

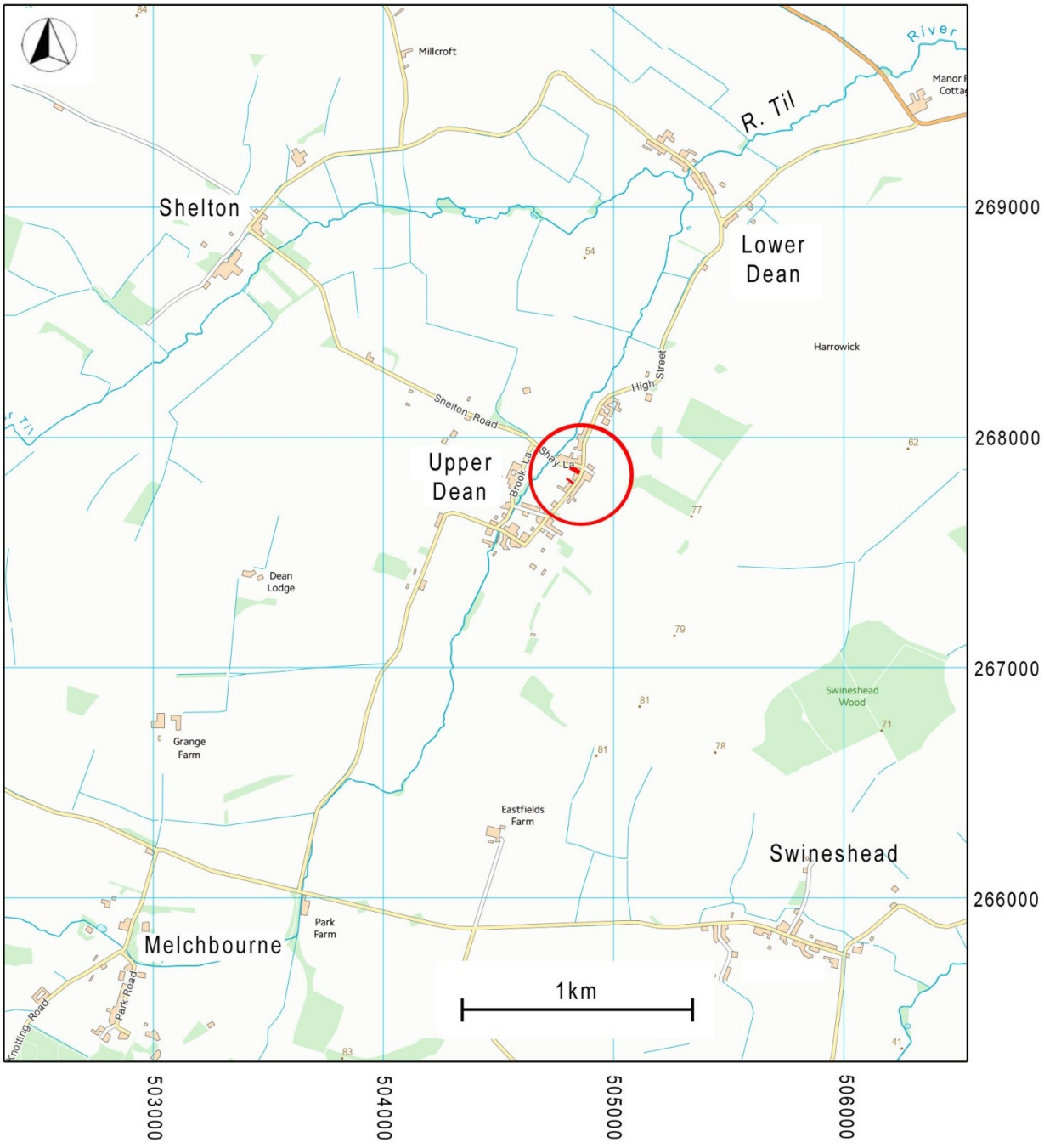


Figure 1 Location of site

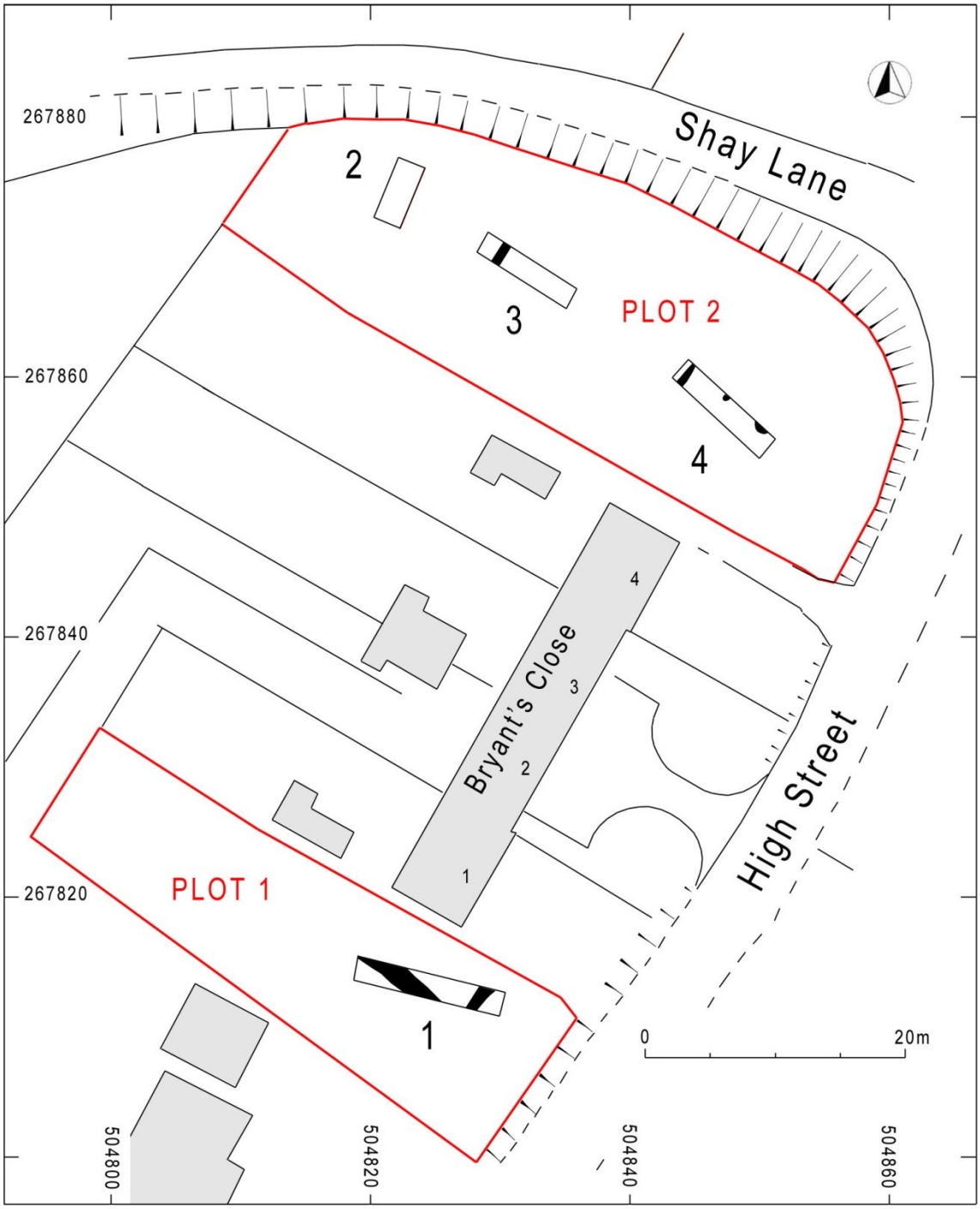


Figure 2 Plan of Application Site (Plots 1 and 2) with location of evaluation trenches

Figure 3

Hachure plan of earthworks, showing location of profiles

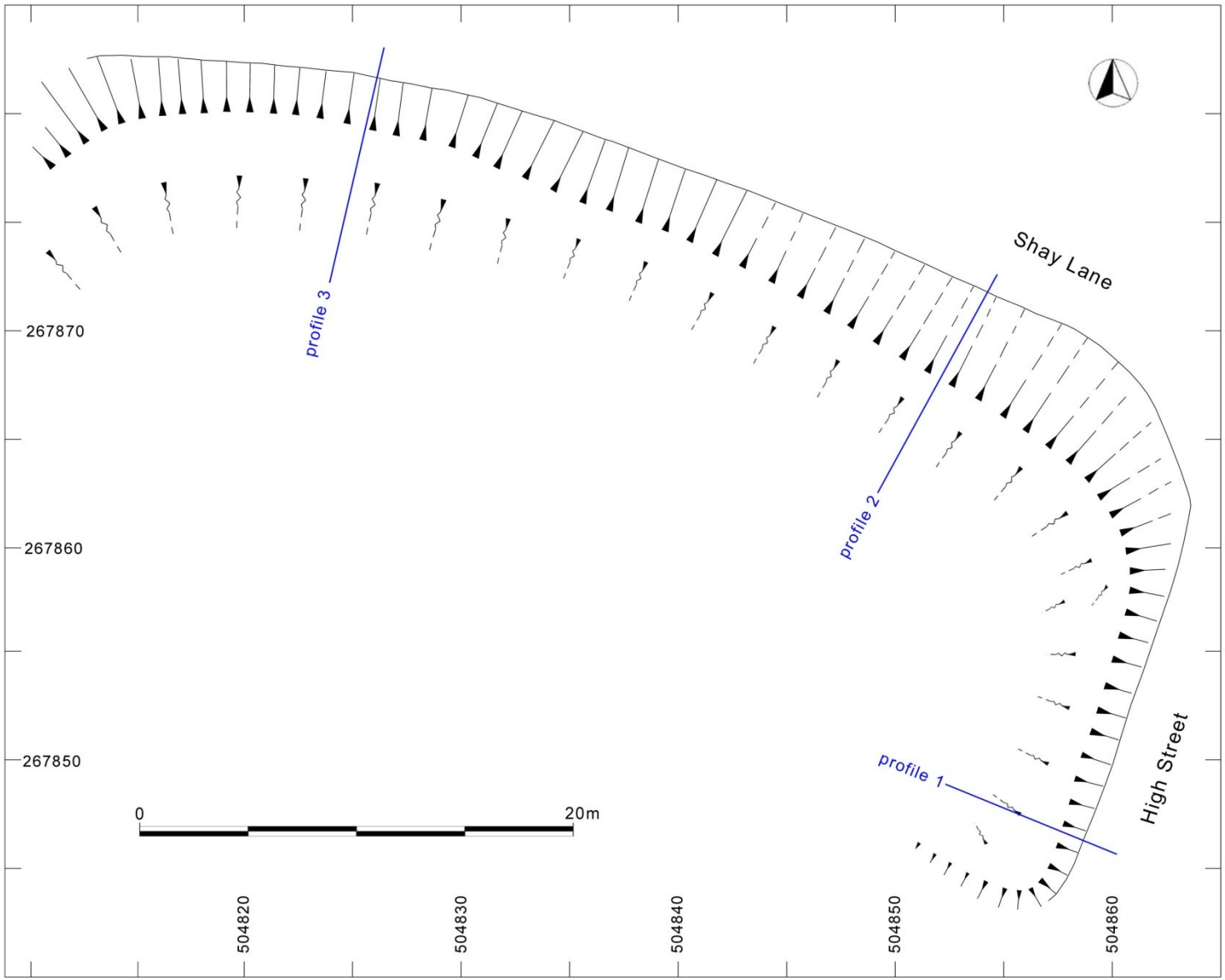


Figure 4

Digital Elevation Model of earthwork.

View to the southwest

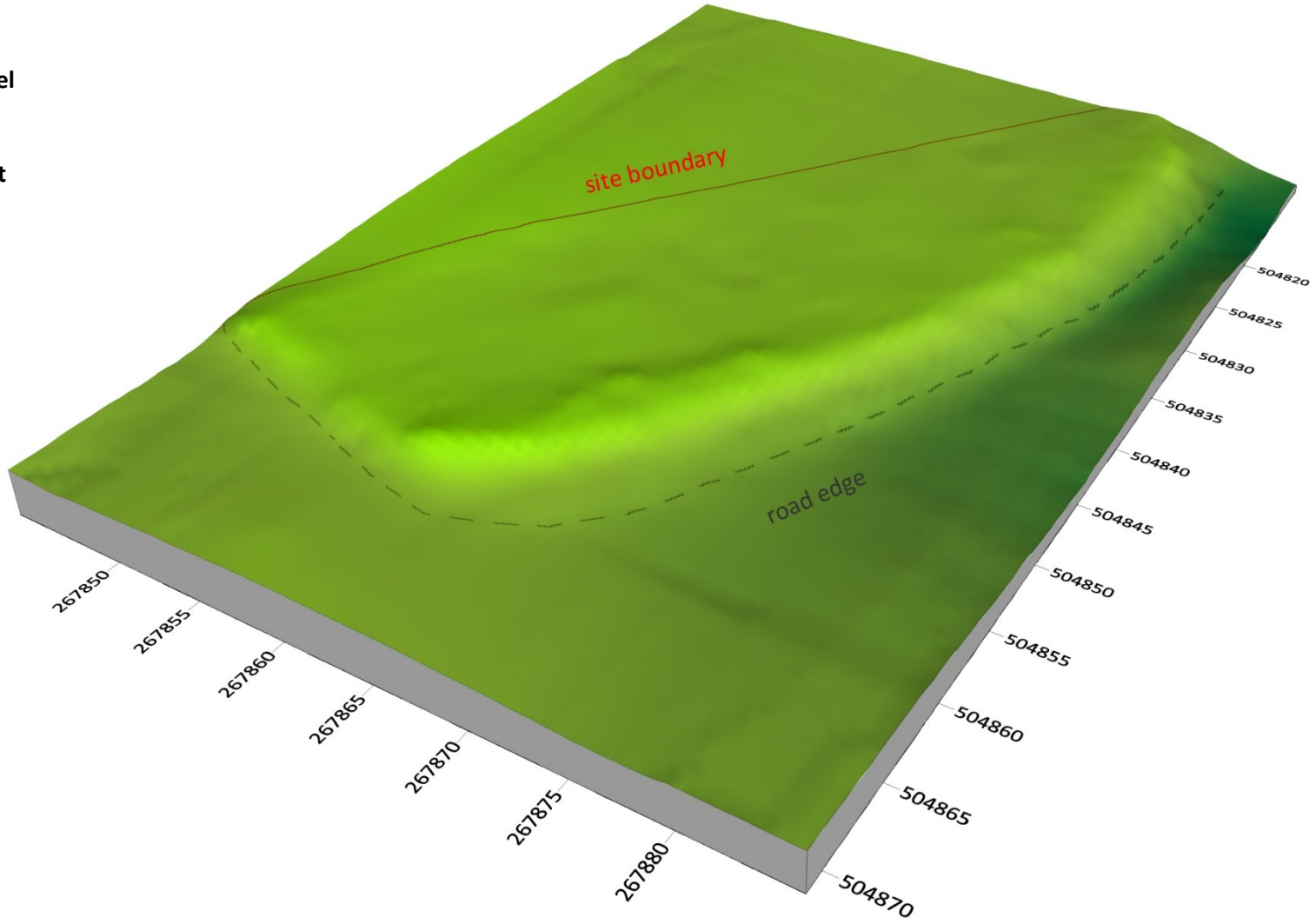
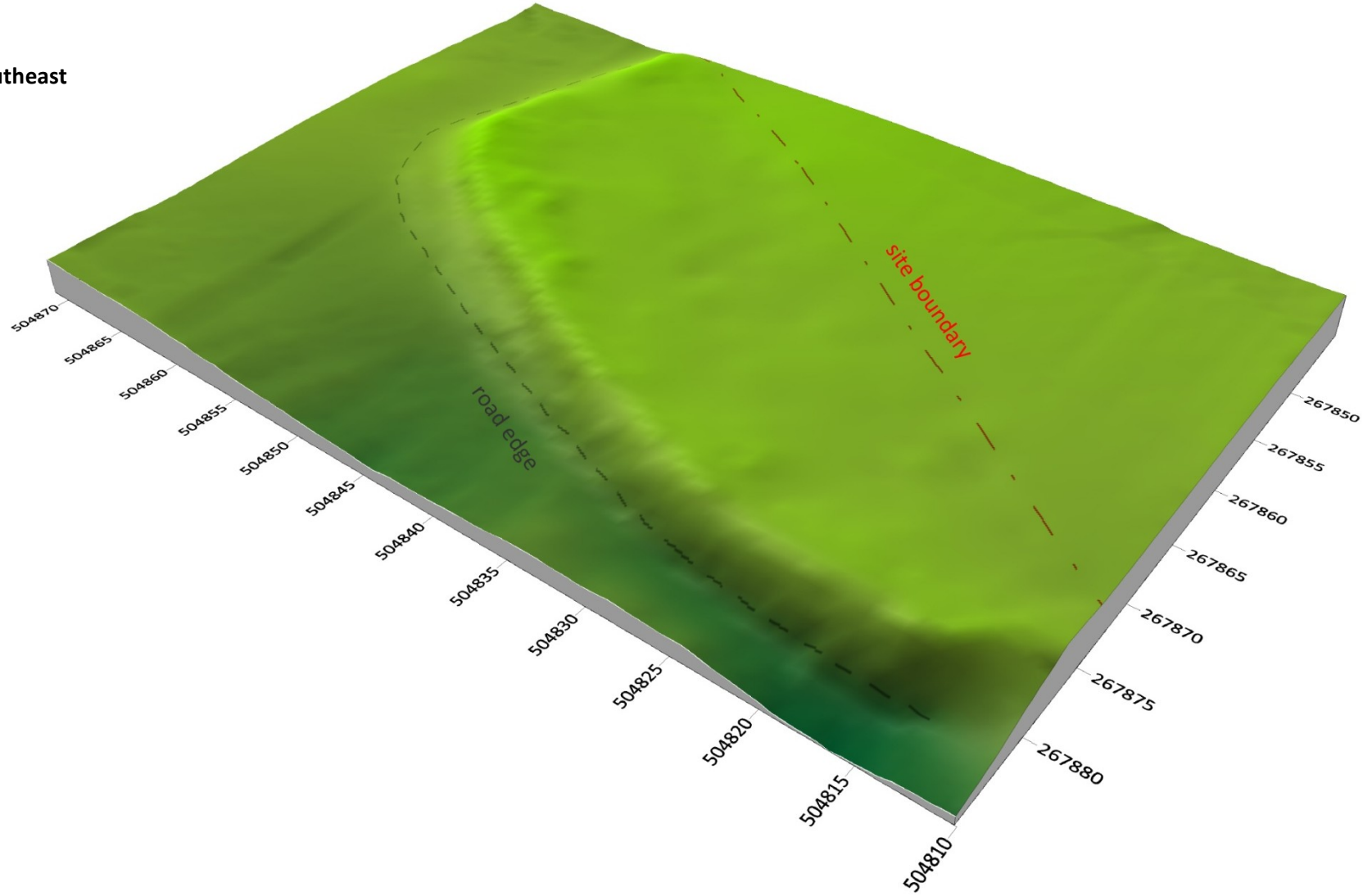


Figure 5

Digital Elevation Model of earthwork.

View to the southeast



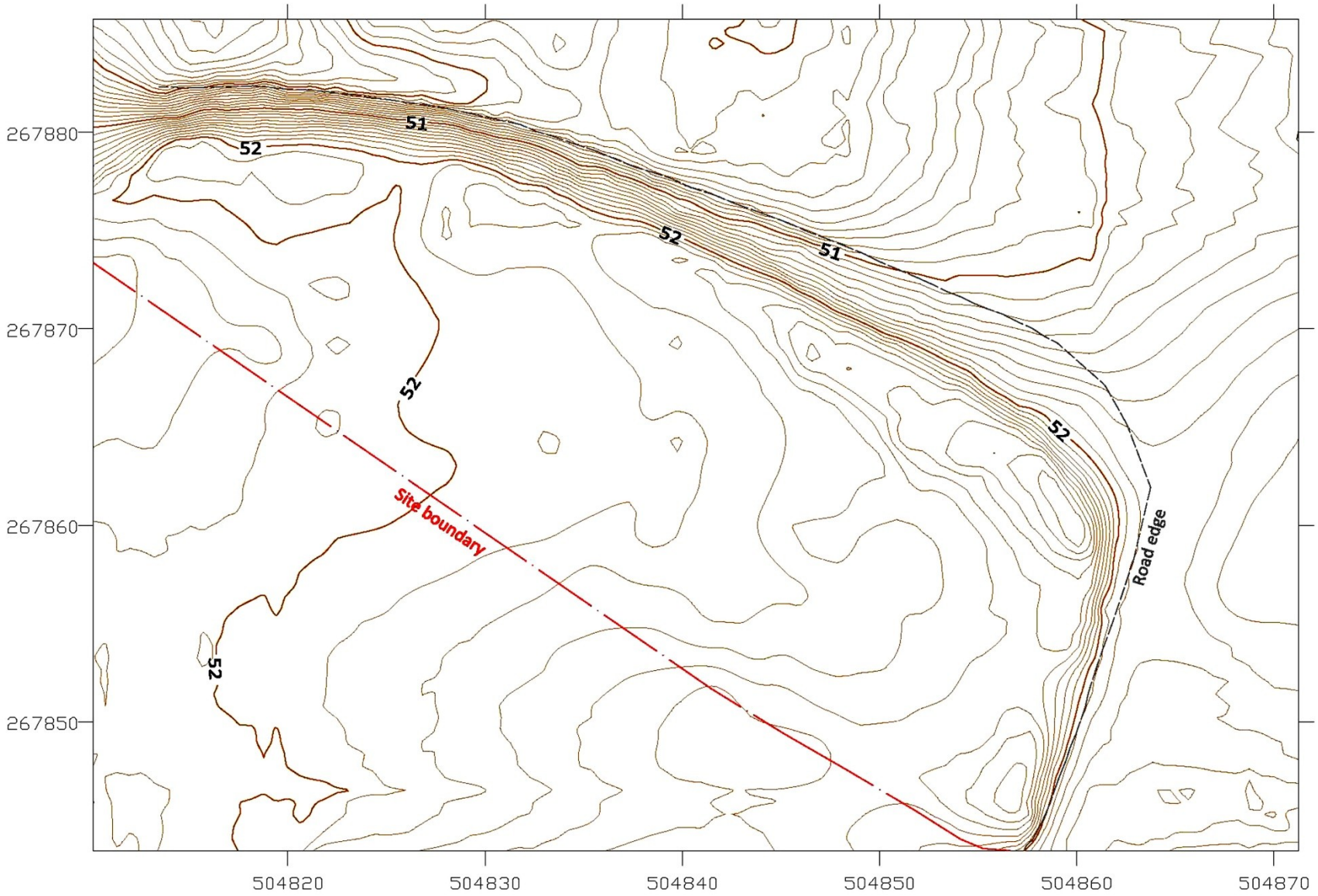


Figure 6 Contour plan of earthwork (0.1 m intervals)

Figure 7
Profiles

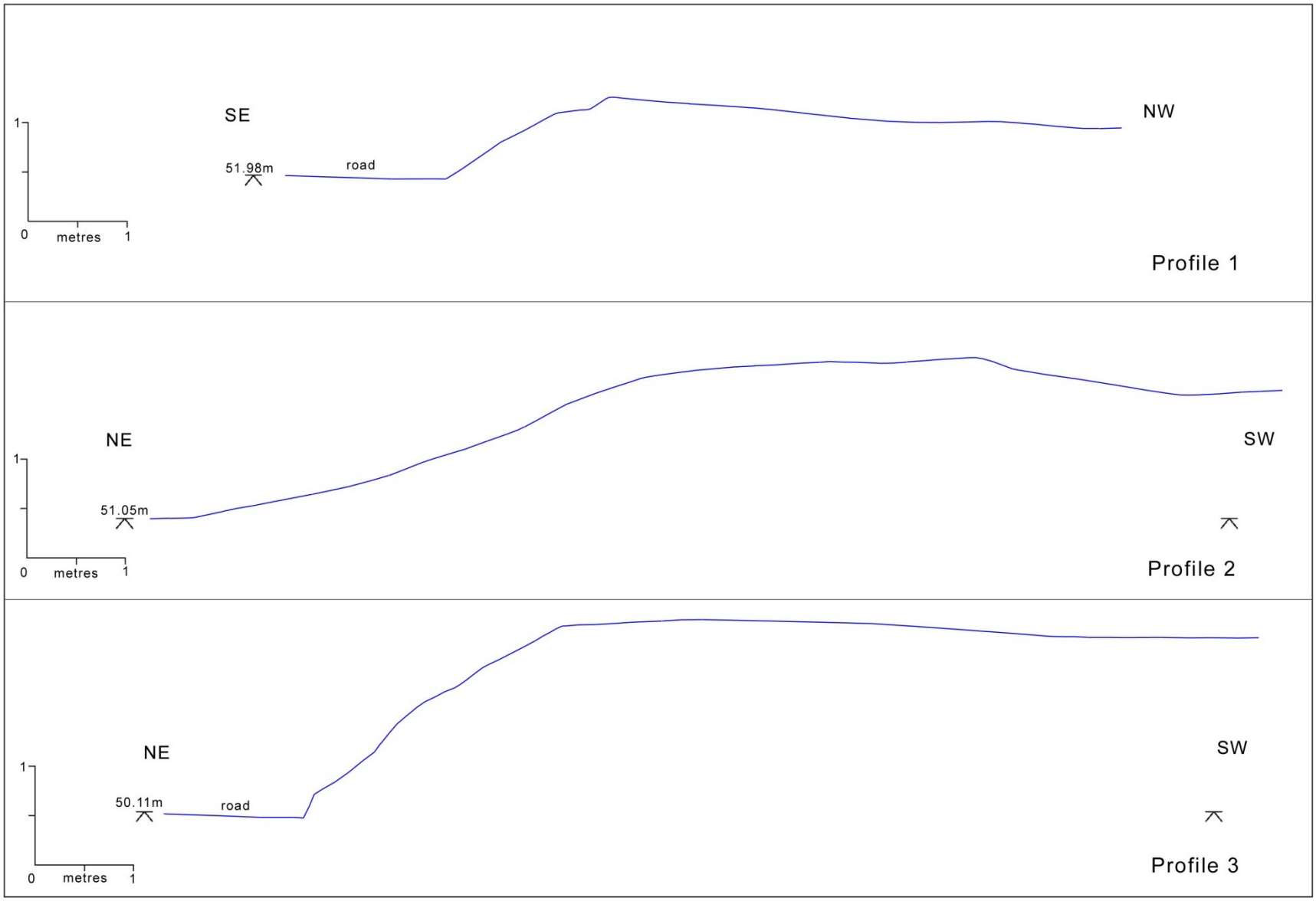
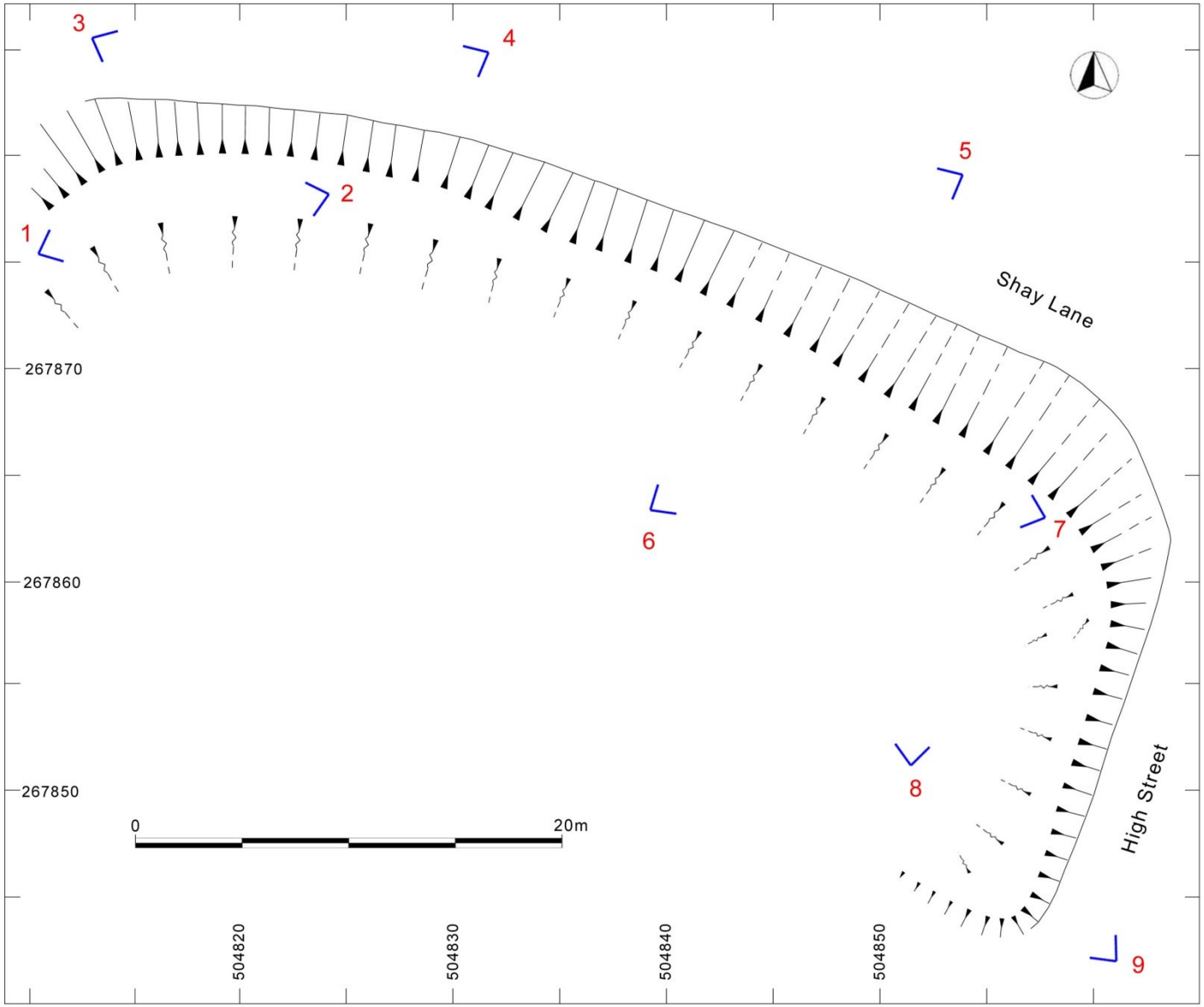


Figure 8

Location of profiles and direction of photographs



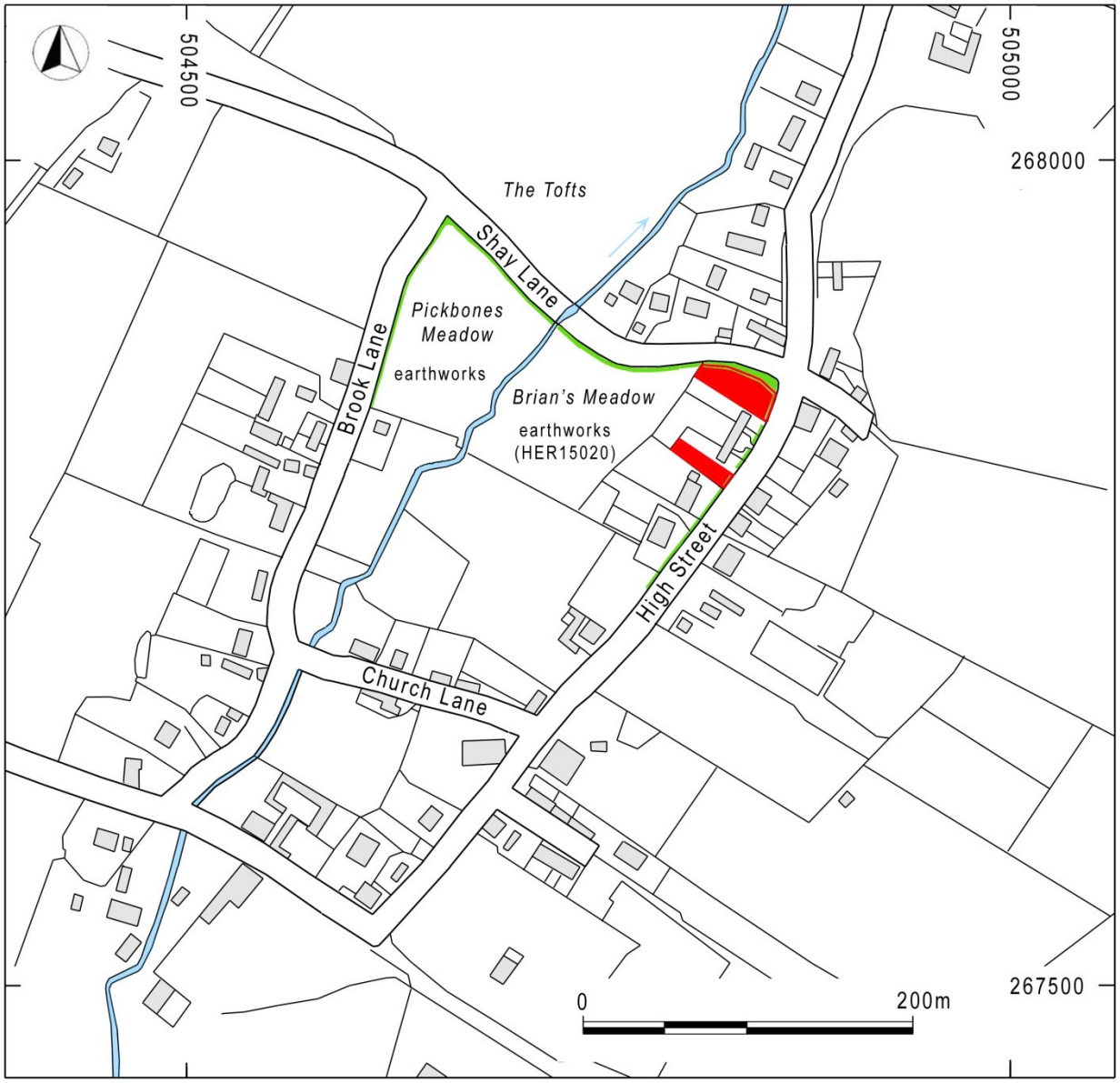


Figure 9 Location of perimeter earthwork (green) and other earthworks mentioned in the text