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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Blackthorns, Five Mile Lane, ~~Heighington~~ Washingborough, Lincs
Archaeological Evaluation

NGR: TF 049 704
Site code: HWB 05
Accession No: 2005.228
Planning Application No.: N/71/1063/05

Report

for

Campbell Construction (Lincs) Ltd

By

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LAS Report No: 873

October 2005

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Blackthorns, Five Mile Lane, ~~Heighington,~~Lincs
Proposal for Archaeological Evaluation
NGR: TF 049 704
Site code: HWB 05
Accession No: 2005.228
Planning Application No.: N/71/1063/05

Summary

Evaluation at Five Mile Lane, Heighington consisted of two evaluation trenches. Although considerable Bronze Age remains have been recorded in the vicinity, no similar remains were found during the evaluation on this site. Despite being adjacent to the Roman Car Dyke, nothing associated with it was located. There was also an absence of the peat layer that is present in the adjacent fields. Modern disturbance on the site may have eradicated any archaeological or peat deposits. Despite the high potential of the site no archaeological remains were encountered, therefore the impact of the development is likely to be minimal.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Campbell Construction in August 2005 to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the above site in accordance with a brief provided by the Heritage Officer, North Kesteven District Council dated September 22nd 2005 and the requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* published by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (1998).

Site Description

Washingborough village sits on the southern bank of the River Witham c.5km east of Lincoln (Fig 1). The proposed development site is a rectangular plot of land c.0.36ha in extent and is located on the northern side of Five Mile Lane east of the modern village, at the junction with the B1190 (Main Road), just within the parish of Heighington. The site is currently overgrown, with sheds occupying parts of the site.

Archaeological Background

The proposed development area (Fig. 1, Pl. 1) is located adjacent to the channel and associated banks of the Car Dyke. Within Washingborough the Car Dyke is generally well preserved and stretches to the west, and south, of the proposed development site, are protected as a scheduled ancient monument (LI 275). Two possible Bronze Age burial mounds have been identified on aerial photographs in the field to the north of the proposed development, which are part of a large barrow cemetery in Washingborough Fen. Work in the vicinity has established that a thin blanket of peat masks an earlier prehistoric land surface and it was thought possible that additional features and artefacts of Bronze Age date or earlier may be present on the site.

Planning Background

An application has been made for the construction of two industrial units. An archaeological evaluation was requested prior to determination of the application. The site lies within an area designated as an employment site in the Local Plan (E1-WAS1).

Aims and Objectives

In general terms the purpose of the evaluation was to

- establish the presence or absence, quality and extent of archaeological remains and their location within the development area
- gather sufficient information to enable an assessment of the potential significance of any archaeological remains to be made and the impact which development will have upon them
- enable an informed decision to be made regarding the future treatment of any archaeological remains and consider any appropriate mitigatory measures either in advance of and/or during development
- More specifically the purpose of the evaluation was to look for any archaeological deposits associated with the Car Dyke and prehistoric land surface.

Scope of the investigation

Evaluation comprising a single trench along the width of the development plot up to 40m long was requested, respecting constraints posed by existing site conditions. It was decided to stagger the trenching and to excavate 2 x 20m long trenches (Fig 2) so that access could be maintained. There was a filled-in pond on the site which we attempted to work around.

Method

The two evaluation trenches were excavated using a JCB, with a toothless dyking bucket, to the first archaeological horizon. All machine excavation was monitored by an experienced archaeologist.

Archaeological recording was carried out by a team of 2 experienced archaeologists, including a Site Director. The top surface and vegetation was cleared and the trenches were machine excavated under archaeological supervision. Geotechnical test pits have established that the sand lies at a depth of c.0.80m below existing ground level. Overlying soil and peat deposits were excavated in spits in order to establish the presence of any features or artefacts within the peat. The sand layer was hand-cleaned to look for flint artefacts and any cut features.

The trenches were hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan. Carefully selected cross-sections through the features were excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded.

A full written (single context) and photographic record was made of the site, to include site plans at a scale of 1:50 or 1:20, as appropriate, and section drawings at 1:10. A plan of each trench was made with section drawings of at least one side. In addition, further plans and sections were made of individual features as appropriate. A full photographic record was made during the progress of the excavation to cover each feature together with general site shots. LAS operates a standard context recording system, developed by its staff over the past 20 years based on MOLAS and CAS models.

Results

The evaluation trenches were staggered across the site but their location was restricted by the presence of a number of buildings and a pond which is larger than the site plan suggests. The pond occupies a significant portion of the south end of the site and extends almost up to the hedge line adjacent to Five Mile Lane.

Trench 1 (Pl 2, Fig 3)

Trench 1, was located to the north of the site and pond. The trench was machine excavated in spits in expectation of archaeology. However it quickly became apparent that the natural sand, **103**, the presence of which was established by the geo-technical pits, was present at a depth of 40cm, its most shallow point, and 80cm at its deepest. Within the sand were bands of small gravel and stones. No archaeology was present in this trench but a number of pieces of very modern brick were found in the subsoil just above the sand.

Trench 2 (Pl 3, Fig 3)

Trench 2, was located to the south of the site. Whilst every effort was made to avoid the pond, the excavation demonstrated that it had occupied a larger area than had previously been suspected. The south perimeter of the pond was detected in the north side of Trench 2 and its fill was visible in the section as a soft black silty deposit.

The natural sand, **202**, was reached at a depth of 70cm with some undulation along the trench surface. Once again the sand was mixed with small patches of gravel and stones. One cut feature, **203**, (Pls. 3 and 4) was clearly visible in the sand. This was a clearly defined oval pit with sloping sides and a flat base. Hand excavation of the pit revealed very dry, grey, well compacted, powdery sand, **204**. However, securely within the fill was a single large piece of pantile, thereby confirming a post medieval date for this part of the trench.

In the south west corner of Trench 2 was part of a possible ditch, **206**, (Pl. 5). It had a vertical side and a curved base and contained three different types of sand, **207**, **208**, **209** all variations on the natural sand found on the site. The cut of the feature, **206**, was either contemporary with the pond or perhaps pre-dated it. No dating evidence was found within it.

Close by **206** was single piece of asbestos, approximately 10 x 8cm. This was associated with the natural sand **202** and is clearly of a modern date. Also within Trench 2 were further examples of modern red brick, as in Trench 1.

Discussion

The south west quarter of the field is mostly occupied by the pond which has also lowered the ground level of the field by its presence. Hence, in Trench 1, on the north of the field, removal of the topsoil quickly gives way to the top of the natural sand at a depth of c.40cm. It is thought, by those living adjacent to the field that the pond was created during the 1950s although what was dug out is unknown.

Although placed towards the field boundary along Five Mile Lane, Trench 2 still caught the southern edge of the pond. Below this the features cut into the natural sand were contaminated with modern brick and asbestos, indicating that some industrial building material had been deposited on site to help backfill the pond. Both of these features appear to be either contemporary with the pond but could possibly pre-date it.

Conclusion

Despite the close proximity of the Car Dyke and the Bronze Age burial mounds no archaeology was found on the site. There was no indication of the peat layer that has been found in nearby fields. It may be that the sand and gravel represents a small island of raised ground and any archaeological features are located around, rather than on, it. Given this absence, and the topographical changes wrought by the pond, the proposed development is unlikely to encounter or disrupt any archaeological remains. Despite the high potential of the site no archaeological remains were encountered therefore the impact of the development is likely to be minimal.

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Lindsey Archaeological Services
October 2005

Acknowledgments

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Site Archive

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THE FIGURES

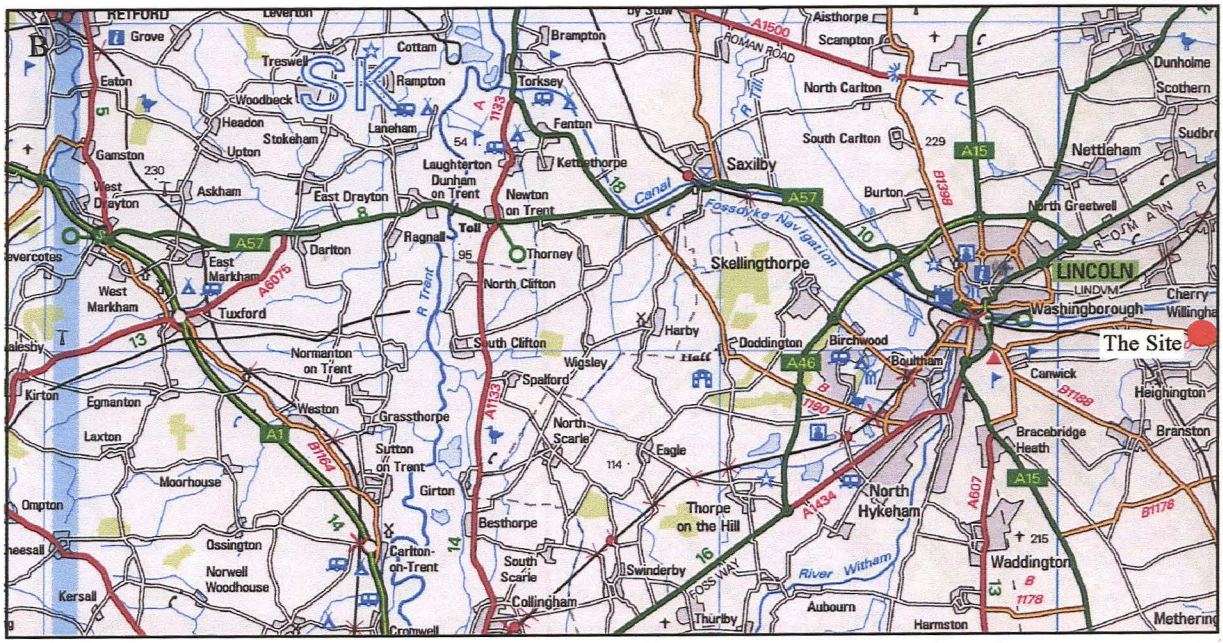

Fig.1 Location of Blackthorns, Five Mile Lane, Heighington (inset C based on the 1976 Ordnance Survey map 1:10,000 TF 07 SW. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence no. AL 100002165).

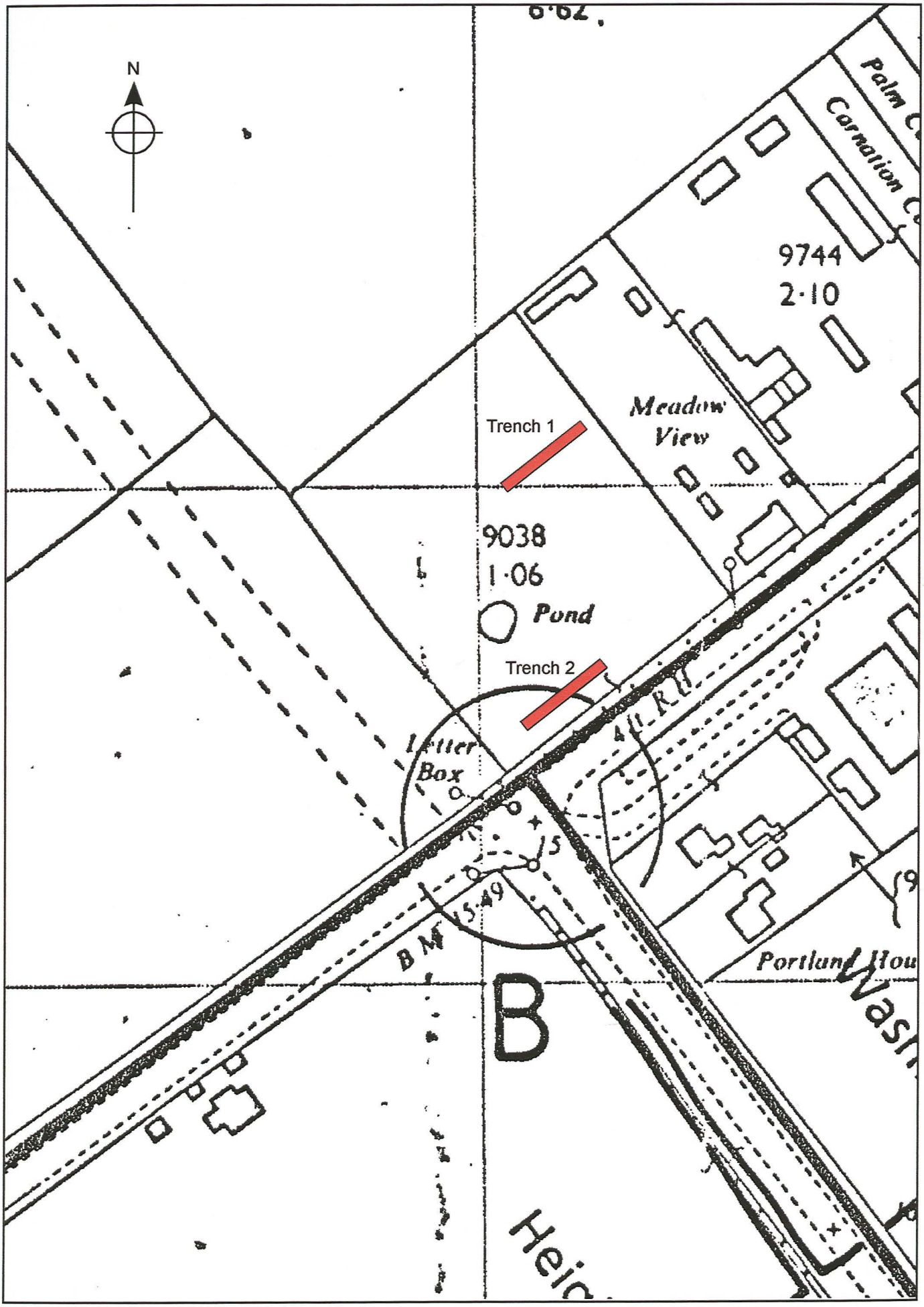

Fig. 2 Location of evaluation trenches within development area.

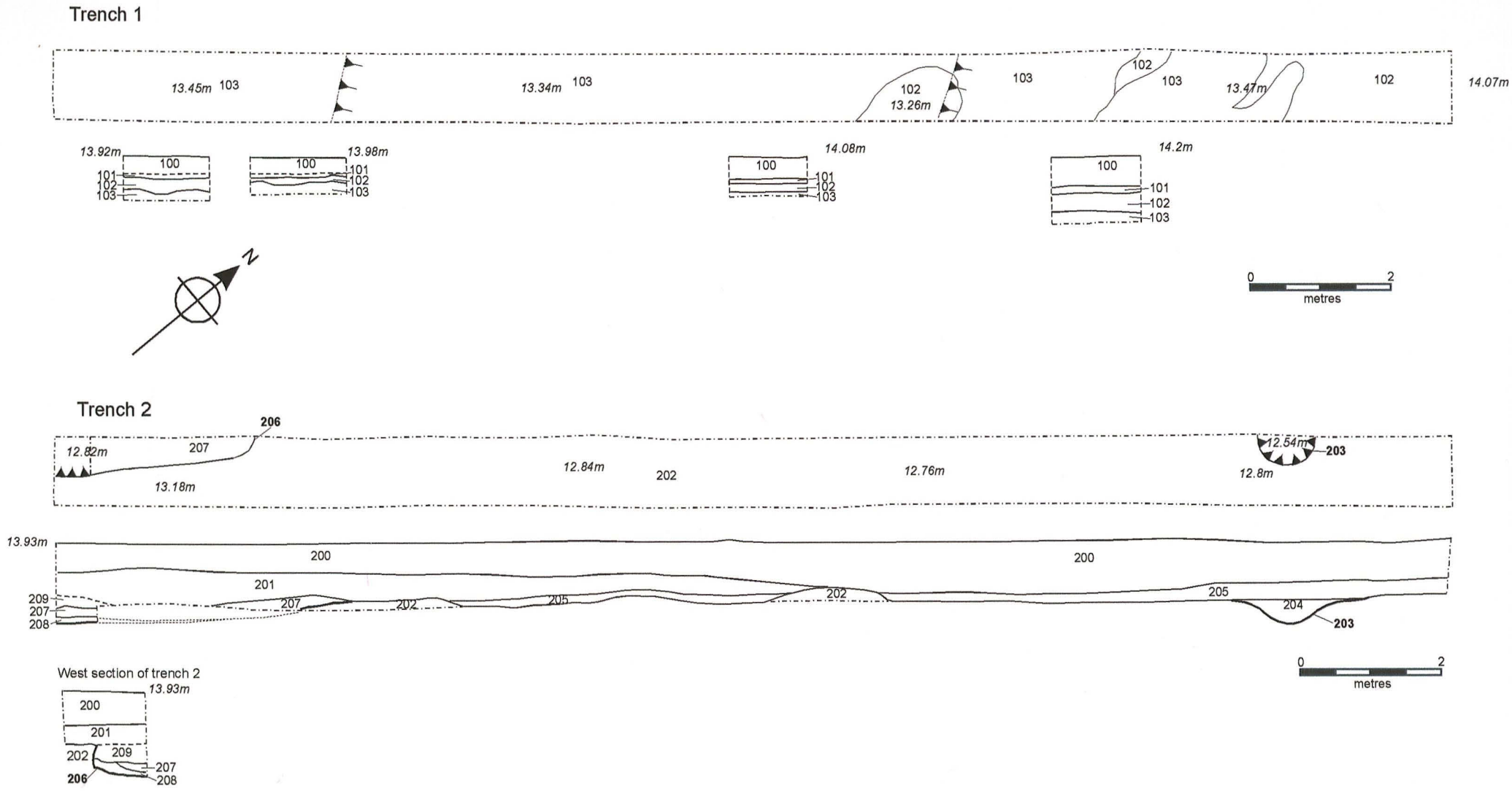

Fig. 3 Plan and sections of Trenches 1 and 2

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Pl 1 The site at Blackthorns, Five Mile Lane looking east.

Pl 2 Trench 1 looking east.

Pl 3 Trench 2 looking west with context **203** to the right

Pl 4 Context **203** after excavation

Pl 5 Excavated ditch **206** in Trench 2

Pl 6 The sequence of deposits in both trenches.