

A Trial Trench Excavation on Land at Southwell Road, Farnsfield, Nottinghamshire



For Bellway Homes

Prepared by Richard Parker


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Summary

- Trent & Peak Archaeology were contracted on behalf of Bellway Homes East Midlands to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Southwell Road, Farnsfield. The site is centred at NG SK 653563.
- The work, carried out between the 23rd – 26th January 2017 incorporated an area of open pasture covering 1.5 ha.
- Prior to this evaluation a geophysical survey of the area was carried out which identified ridge and furrow across the site (Vickers 2017).
- Thirteen trenches were excavated, twelve measuring 20m x 2m and one measuring 12m x 2m.
- Of the thirteen trenches excavated, seven produced archaeological features.
- Traces of ridge and furrow orientated N-S were identified occupying the main body of the site, whilst in the N-W corner of the site an E-W orientation was observed validating the geophysical survey.
- One large piece of Romano-British pottery was recovered from pit [4004] in Trench 4 and a single piece of metalwork (possibly a similar date) recovered from the spoil of Trench 11 with the use of a metal detector.
- Whilst the site has been affected by ridge and furrow, it is clear there are still pockets of archaeology which have survived beneath the ridges. Furthermore, the concentration of archaeological features appears to intensify in the northern two thirds of the site. The low quantity of artefacts recovered suggest that the evaluation has identified a small-scale agricultural settlement and/or field boundaries of possible Romano-British date.

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Acknowledgments

The project was supervised by Richard Parker and fieldwork was undertaken by Camilla Collins and Norma Oldfield. The project was managed by Paul Flintoft and monitored by Ursilla Spence on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Trent & Peak Archaeology was commissioned by Bellway Homes East Midlands to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Southwell Road, Farnsfield, Nottinghamshire, SK 653563 (Fig 1).
- 1.2 The work was carried out as part of a programme of archaeological works required by Leicestershire County Council's Principal Archaeologist in advance of a residential development, in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).
- 1.3 The site comprises a small parcel of land measuring 1.5ha.
- 1.4 Prior to this evaluation a Geophysical survey of the site was undertaken by GSB Prospection Ltd which revealed the faint remnants of ridge and furrow across the site.
- 1.5 The work was carried out between the 23rd and 26th January. A total of 13 trenches were excavated, 12 measuring 20m x 2m and one measuring 12m x 2m.

2 Topography and Geology

- 2.1 The proposed development area consists of a small, flat parcel of land open to pasture measuring 1.5ha. It is bounded by properties to the west and Southwell Road to the south of the site.
- 2.2 The 1:50,000 British Geological Mapping shows that the site is situated on bedrock of Triassic Rocks (undifferentiated), mudstone, siltstone and sandstone (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

3 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1 Preliminary archaeological investigations of the proposed development area have established that there are no designated heritage assets on the site itself. Cartographic evidence from the 18th and 19th Centuries depicts potteries within the locality of the proposed development site. In addition to this, there is anecdotal evidence for dumps of earthenware in the vicinity, although their precise nature remains uncertain.
- 3.2 There are few records of earlier (Prehistoric, Roman or Anglo-Saxon) remains in the immediate vicinity however evidence of these can be attributed to the wider area.

4 Aims and Objectives

- 4.1 The aims and objectives of the project were as follows:
 - To assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered during trial trenching.
 - To inform formulation of further measures (if required) to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains.
 - To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.

5 Methodology

- 5.1 **Trenches were excavated using a 17 tonne 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.** Excavation was carried out under continuous archaeological supervision and excavated to a clean geological surface at which point cut archaeological features could be clearly observed.
- 5.2 The area was located using a Leica System 1200 GPS. All trench locations were scanned with the Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) prior to excavation.
- 5.3 The location of any artefacts recovered in the subsoil or in features was recorded three dimensionally or by context as appropriate.
- 5.4 All excavations were recorded at an appropriate scale by GPS survey, measured drawing and photography. The features and deposits investigated by hand excavation were recorded on individual context recording sheets. Sections of excavated features were also recorded (at a scale of 1:20). Spot heights were recorded relative to the Ordinance Datum.
- 5.5 All works were carried out in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Trent & Peak Archaeology (2015) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation* (CIfA 2014).

6 Results

- Trench 01*
- 6.1 Orientated broadly N-S, this trench measured 20m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 5; Plate 01). No archaeological features or finds were present.
- Trench 02*
- 6.2 Orientated broadly E-W, this trench measured 20m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 5; Plate 02). No archaeological features or finds were present.
- Trench 03*
- 6.3 Orientated broadly N-S, this trench measured 20m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 5; Plate 03). No archaeological features or finds were present.
- Trench 04*
- 6.4 Orientated broadly E-W, this trench measured 20m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 5; Plate 04). A single oval-shaped pit [4003] was observed which measured 1.18m x 0.54m x 0.44m (Figure 6; Plates 14-16). The upper fill of this feature (4004) comprised a mid-brown clayey silt deposit with frequent large quartzite pebbles. Below this was a light orangey-grey sandy clay deposit (4005) which produced a fragment of pottery.
- Trench 05*
- 6.5 Orientated broadly N-S, this trench measured 20m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 5; Plate 05). No archaeological features or finds were present.
- Trench 06*
- 6.6 Orientated broadly E-W, this trench measured 20m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 5; Plate 06). A single narrow linear ditch [6003] was observed across the width of the trench (2m), oriented N-S. This feature measured 2.25m in width and 0.38m in depth and was filled with a single fill of leached light grey silty clay with

moderate inclusions of small rounded stones (6004) (Figures 6; Plates 17-18). No datable evidence was retrieved.

Trench 07

- 6.7 Orientated broadly N-S, this trench measured 20m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 04; Plate 07). No archaeological features or finds were present.

Trench 08

- 6.8 Orientated broadly E-W, this trench measured 20m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 4; Plate 08). Two linear features were observed oriented in a N-S direction.

- 6.9 Located at the western end of the trench, linear [8003] measured 1.9m in width and 0.07m in depth (Figure 6). This feature had a mid orangey-brown silty clay fill with moderate rounded stone inclusions (8004). It had the wide, flat-based form characteristic of a furrow, and was on the same alignment as those highlighted by the geophysical survey. No datable evidence was retrieved from this feature.

- 6.10 A further linear located towards the eastern end of the trench, [8005], measured 2.25m in width and 0.56m in depth (Figure 7). **This feature had a splayed 'U' shaped profile and** was filled by (8002), which was a leached mid orangey-grey silty clay; this was cut by the later insertion of a land drain (8005) which was perhaps put in place to drain the depression of this feature during early 20th century. No datable evidence was recovered from the fill of this feature however the leached nature of the fill may suggest a date pre-dating the later medieval.

Trench 09

- 6.11 Orientated in a broadly N-S direction, this trench measured 20m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 4; Plate 09). Excavation revealed a small curvilinear feature [9003] measuring 0.7m in width and 0.2m in depth (Figure 7; Plates 19-22). It contained a single fill (9004) comprising a dark orangey-brown silty clay fill. No datable evidence was retrieved from this feature or evidence to indicate its purpose. This feature was cut along the eastern edge of the trench by a small, circular pit [9005], which was 0.84m at its widest point and 0.34m in depth. It contained a single mid-orangey brown silty clay with occasional small, rounded stones.

Trench 10

- 6.12 Orientated broadly E-W and measuring 20m x 2m, this trench was excavated to a depth of around 0.4m (Figure 4; Plate 10). Two features were observed which included a N-S linear [10003] and a small curvilinear feature [10005] (Figure 8; Plates 23-28).

- 6.13 Excavation of linear feature [10003] demonstrated it was 2.25m at its widest point, but relatively shallow (0.08m in depth), filled by a single mid-orangey brown silty clay (10004). No datable evidence was recovered from this feature however the leached nature of the fill may suggest an early date.

- 6.14 Curvilinear feature [10005] measured 3.4m x 1.2m x 0.2m. It demonstrated **a splayed 'U'** shaped profile with a terminus at each end of the feature. The fill comprised of a mid-orangey brown silty clay (10006) which produced no datable evidence.

Trench 11

- 6.15 Orientated broadly N-S and measuring 20m x 2m, the excavation of this trench identified four features (Figure 4; Plate 11). These were an E-W linear [11003], oval pit [11005], small burnt pit [11006] and a large oval pit [11008] (Figure 4; Plates 29-32).

- 6.16 Linear feature [11003] was located at the southern end of the trench. It had sloping sides and a flat base and measured 2.25m in width and 0.32m in depth. The fill (11004) was comprised of a mid greyish brown clay and gravel (Plate 28). Detailed observation of the

geophysical survey shows the faint remnants of ridge and furrow orientated (E-W), opposite to the rest of the field suggesting the N-W corner of the site was once part of a separate field system, with which this feature was associated. No datable evidence was retrieved.

- 6.17 Located to the north of linear [11003] was medium-sized pit [11005] which measured 1.14m x 0.96m x 0.25m. The sides of the feature were gently sloping, and it had an irregular base, perhaps indicating that it once contained smaller postholes. It had a fill which was comprised of a light, yellowish-grey silty clay (11009) (Plates 30-31). No datable evidence was retrieved from this feature.
- 6.18 Immediately to the east of feature [11005], lay a small burnt pit [11006] which contained clear observable burnt bone fragments within a fill of black sandy silt ash (11007) (Plate 32). This feature measured 350mm x 250mm x 100mm and excavation revealed no datable evidence.
- 6.19 Approximately 1.5m N-W of [11006] a feature was observed which was initially interpreted as a large pit [11008]. Excavation demonstrated that the feature had a relatively shallow depth of around 0.24m and a fill which comprised a light yellowish-grey silty clay with frequent moderately-sized rounded stone inclusions. Excavation of this feature identified a continuation of the initial observable outline in plan and was subsequently interpreted as a second cut feature [11010]. However, further examination of the plan and its spacing pose the possibility that these two features were in fact the remnants of a further furrow and that pit [11005] and small burnt pit [11006] were located within the area of the ridge and consequently survived being destroyed.
- 6.20 A metal detector survey of the spoil heap of this trench in the vicinity of the above features uncovered a small decorated copper alloy object of probable Roman date.

Trench 12

- 6.21 Trench 12 was orientated broadly E-W and measured 20m x 2m; it was excavated to a depth of approximately 1m. Excavation of this trench revealed a single posthole [12003] measuring 0.9m x 0.96m x 0.07m (Figure 4; Plates 12, 33-34). This feature had a mid brownish-grey sandy silt fill (12004) with ash/charcoal inclusions (Plates 33-34). No datable evidence was recovered from this feature.

Trench 13

- 6.22 Orientated broadly N-S, this trench measured 12m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of c. 0.4m (Figure 4; Plate 13). The geophysical survey of this area seemed to suggest an area of disturbance over which this trench was located. Excavation of the trench demonstrated there were no archaeological features present indicating the anomalies identified on the survey may be the result of ferrous contaminants within the topsoil.

7 The Finds

By Alison Wilson

- 7.1 A single piece of pottery weighing 106g was found within (4005). This was identified as part of a Romano-British narrow-based vessel of black-brown reduced ware, in a coarse, sandy fabric. These wares were largely used in the 3rd and early 4th century (Plate 34).
- 7.2 A metal detector survey of the spoil heap of Trench 11 uncovered a small, decorated copper alloy object of probable Roman date (Plate 35).

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 A total of thirteen trenches were excavated across the site giving a broad coverage; some of these trenches were positioned in order to target features such as ridge and furrow and other anomalies highlighted on the geophysical survey. Of the thirteen trenches excavated more than half were found to have an archaeological feature within them.
- 8.2 Traces of ridge and furrow orientated N-S were identified occupying the main body of the site, whilst in the N-W corner of the site an E-W orientation was observed validating the geophysical survey.
- 7.3 As well as ridge and furrow a number of other archaeological features were observed, these varied in form and included linear features, curvilinear features, pits and post holes. The majority of these features contained a leached fill, a characteristic often attributable to an early date.
- 7.4 A single piece of Romano-British pottery was retrieved from pit fill (4003) and a metal fitting, possibly of the same period, was recovered with a metal detector as a topsoil find in Trench 11.
- 7.5 Whilst the site has been affected by ridge and furrow, it is clear there are still pockets of archaeology which have survived below the ridges. Furthermore, the concentration of archaeological features appears to intensify in the northern two thirds of the site. The low quantity of artefacts recovered suggest that the evaluation has identified a small-scale agricultural settlement and/or field boundaries of possible Romano-British date. Early contact with the NCC Archaeologist should be made as there may be further mitigation requirements in relation to this scheme.

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Appendix 1: Trench logs

Trench 01					
Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	N-S	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
1001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
1002	Layer	Natural geology – mid –greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m

Trench 02					
Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	E-W	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
2001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
2002	Layer	Natural geology: mid –greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m

Trench 03					
Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	N-S	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
3001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
3002	Layer	Natural geology: mid –greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m

Trench 04					
Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	E-W	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
4001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
4002	Layer	Natural geology: mid –greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m
4003	Cut	Shallow pit			0.44m

4004	Fill	Weak, mid-brown clayey silt secondaryfill of [4003]	0.06m
4005	Fill	Firm, light orangish-grey clay primary fill of [4003]	N/A

Trench 05					
Trench Length	20m x2m	Trench Alignment	N-S	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
5001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
5002	Layer	Natural geology: mid –greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m

Trench 06					
Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	E-W	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
6001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
6002	Layer	Natural geology: mid –greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m
6003	Cut	NNW-SSW gully			0.38m
6004	Fill	Firm, ligh grey silty clay fill of [6003]			0.38m

Trench 07					
Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	N-S	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
7001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
7002	Layer	Natural geology: mid –greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m

Trench 08					
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Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	E-W	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
8001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
8002	Layer	Natural geology: mid –greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m
8003	Cut	Shallow linear			0.07m
8004	Fill	Weak, mid-organish-brown silty clay fill of linear [8003]			0.07m
8005	Cut	Linear parallel to [8003]			0.56m
8006	Fill	Firm, mid-orangish-grey silty clay fill of linear [8005]			0.56m

Trench 09					
Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	N-S	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
9001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
9002	Layer	Natural geology: mid –greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m
9003	Cut	Curvilinear gully			0.2m
9004	Fill	Weak, dark orangish-brown silty clay fill of [9003]			0.2m
9005	Cut	Small, circular pit, cutting [9003]			0.34m
9006	Fill	Weak, mid-orangish brown silty clay fill of pit [9005]			0.34m

Trench 10					
Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	E-W	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
10001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
10002	Layer	Natural geology: mid–greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m
10003	Cut	NNE-SSW aligned linear feature			0.08m
10004	Fill	Weak, mid-orangish-brown silty clay fill of linear [10003]			0.08m
10005	Cut	Curvilinear gully			0.12m
10006	Fill	Weak, mid-organish-brown silty clay fill of [10005]			0.12m

Trench 11					
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Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	N-S	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
11001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.3m
11002	Layer	Natural geology: mid–greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m
11003	Cut	WNW-ESE aligned ditch			0.32m
11004	Fill	Fill of ditch [11003]			0.32m
11005	Cut	Circular pit			0.24m
11006	Cut	Pit			0.14m
11007	Fill	Friable, mid-brown-grey sandy silt fill of [11006]			0.14m
11008	Cut	Circular pit			0.24m
11009	Fill	Weak, light yellowish-grey silty clay fill of pit [11005]			0.24m
11010	Cut	Pit, cuts [11008]			0.20m
11011	Fill	Weak, light-yellowish-grey silty clay fill of pit [11010]			0.20m
11012	Fill	Weak, mid-greyisg brown silty clay fill of pit [11008]			0.24m

Trench 12					
Trench Length	20m x 2m	Trench Alignment	E-W	Trench Depth	0.4m
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
12001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			0.4m
12002	Layer	Natural geology: mid–greyish-orange clay and gravel			> 1m
12003	Cut	Small posthole			0.07m
12004	Fill	Weak, mid-brown-grey sandy silt fill of [12003]			0.07m

Trench 13					
Trench Length	12mx2	Trench Alignment	N-S	Trench Depth	400mm
Context	Type	Description			Thickness (m)
13001	Layer	Topsoil Weak, mid greyish brown clay silt			300mm
13002	Layer	Firm mid greyish orange clayey sand/gravel			100mm>

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 01. View of Trench 01



Plate 02. View of Trench 02



Plate 03. View of Trench 03



Plate 04. View of Trench 04.



Plate 05. View of Trench 05



Plate 06. View of Trench 06



Plate 07. View of Trench 07



Plate 08. View of Trench 08



Plate 09. View Of Trench 09



Plate 10. View of Trench 10



Plate 11. Trench 11



Plate 12. Trench 12



Plate 13. View of Trench 13



Plate 14. Trench 04: Pre-excitation shot of pit [4003]



Plate 15. Trench 04: South-east facing section of pit [4003]



Plate 16. Trench 04: Post-excavation shot of pit [4003] showing cut in section



Plate 17. Trench 06: Linear feature [6003]



Plate 18. Trench 06: South facing section of linear feature [6003]



Plate 19. Trench 09: West facing section curvilinear feature [9003/5]



Plate 20. Trench 09: South-east facing section of curvilinear feature [9003]



Plate 21. Trench 09: East facing section of curvilinear feature [9003]



Plate 22. Trench 09: General shot curvilinear feature [9003]



Plate 23. Trench 10: N-E facing section of furrow [10003]



Plate 24. Trench 10: East facing section of curvilinear feature (Easter butt end)



Plate 25. Trench 10: South-east facing section of curvilinear feature [10005] (midway intervention)



Plate 26. Trench 10: North-west facing section of curvilinear [10005] (West butt end)



Plate 27. Trench 10: General shot of [10005] with cuts.



Plate 28. Trench 10: Post-excitation shot of curvilinear feature [10005]



Plate 29. Trench 11: East facing section of furrow [11003].



Plate 30. Trench 11: Pre-excitation shot of medium sized pit [11005].



Plate 31. Trench 11:South-west facing section medium pit [11005]



Plate 32. Trench 11: Pre-excavation shot of small burnt feature [11006].



Plate 33. Trench 12: Pre-excitation shot of post hole [12003].



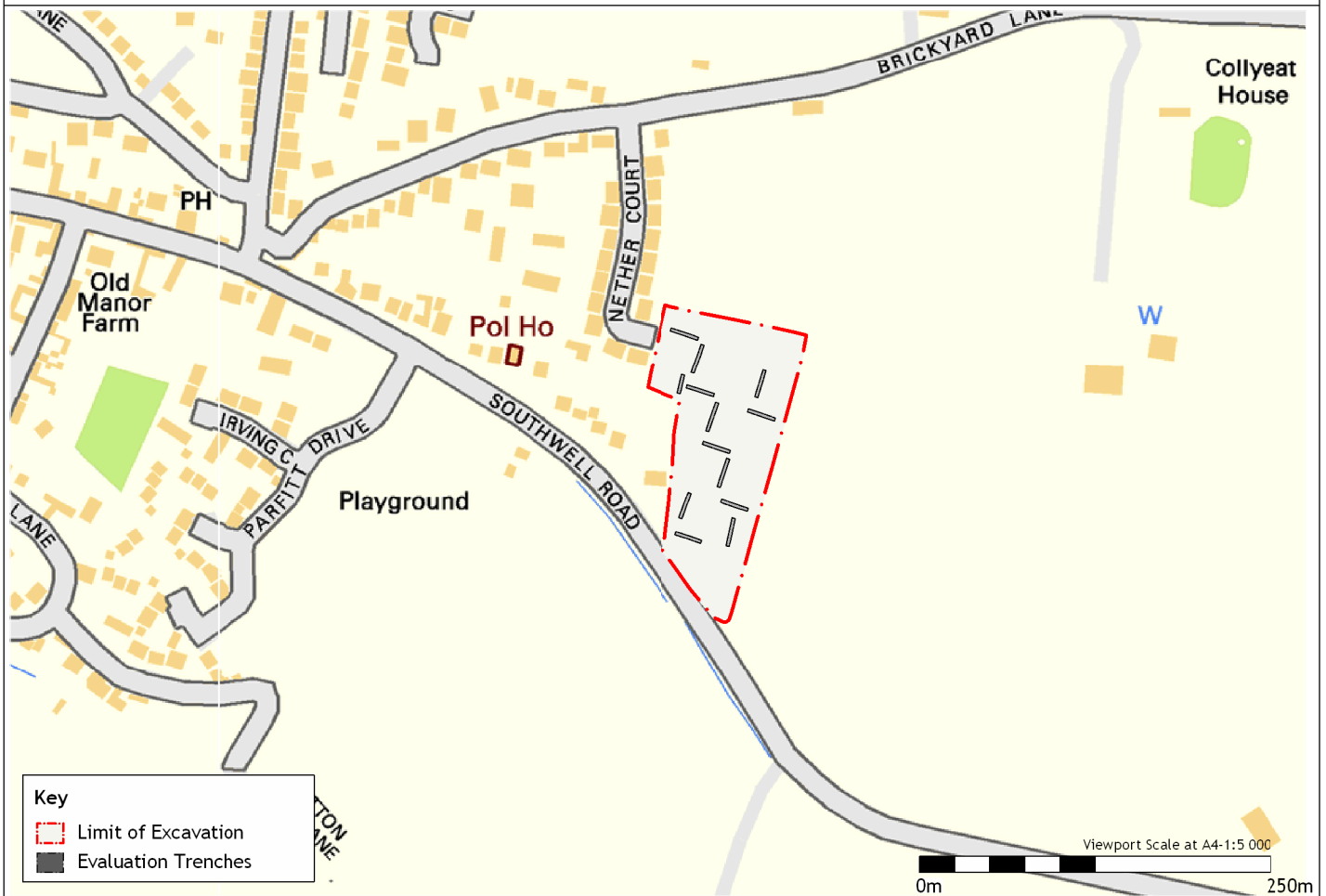
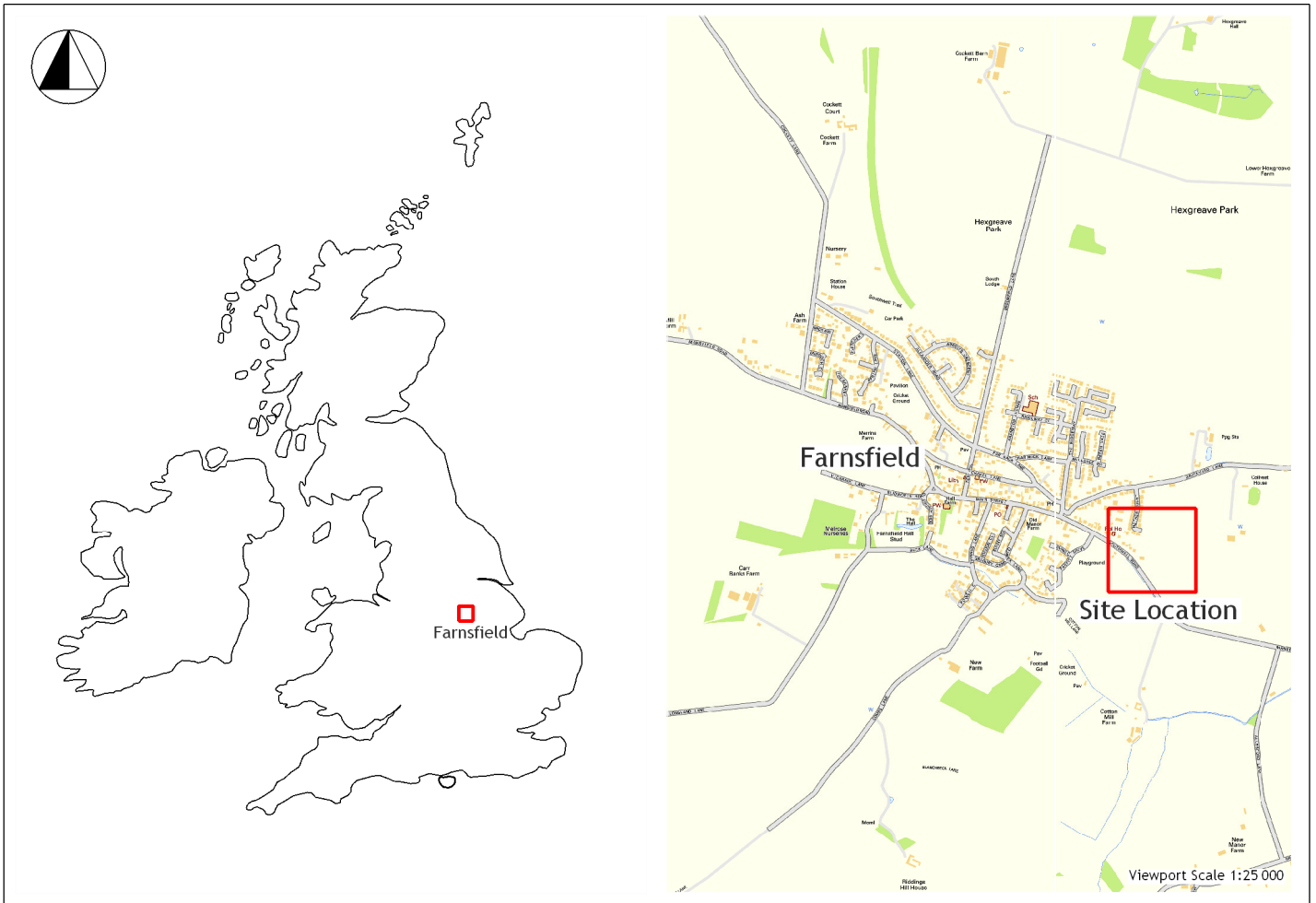
Plate 34. Trench 12: South-facing section post hole [12003].



Plate 35: Pottery vessel from (4005)



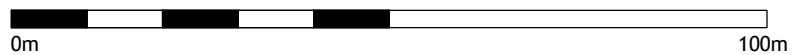
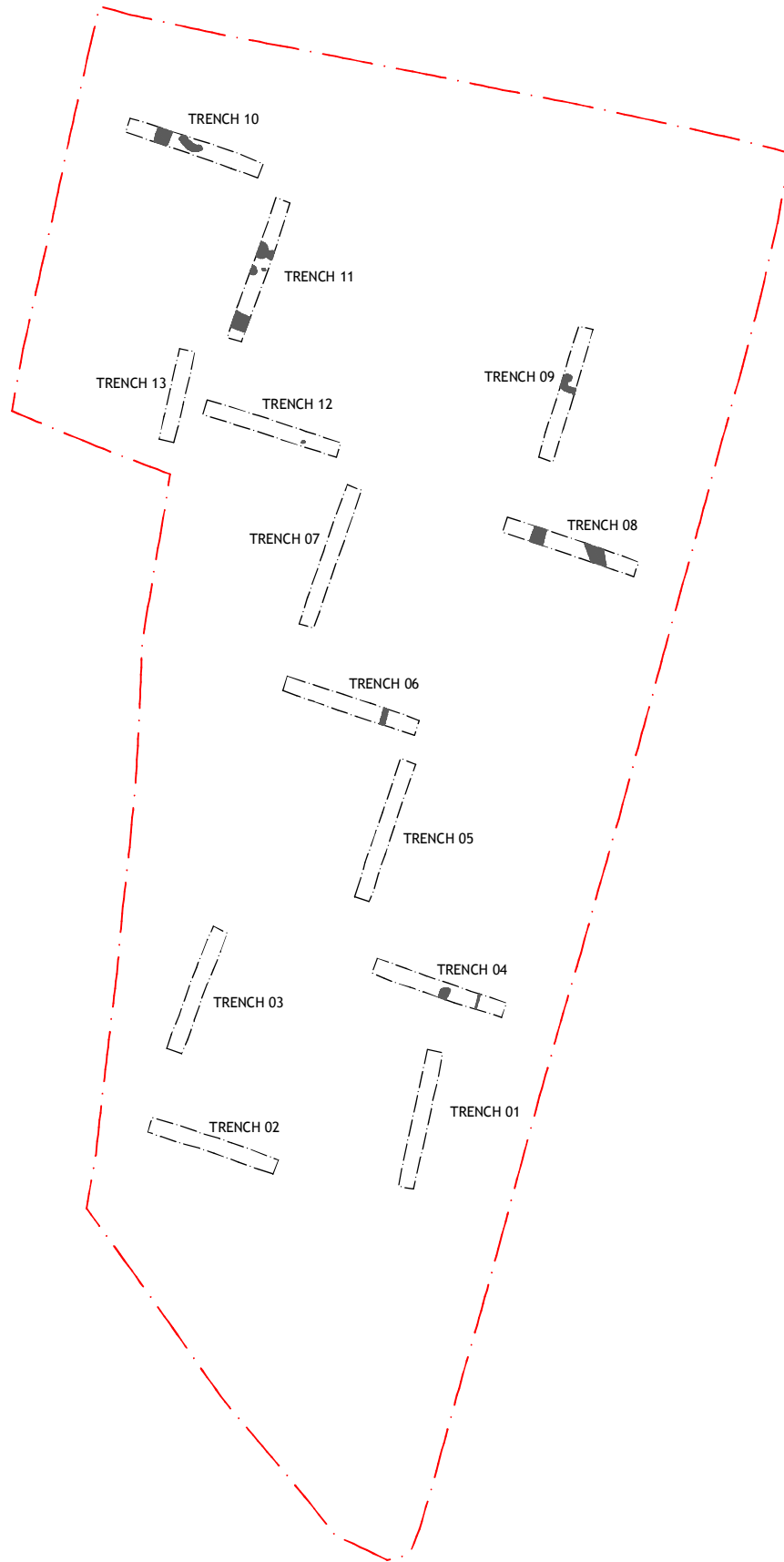
Plate 36: Copper alloy object from the spoil heap of Trench 11



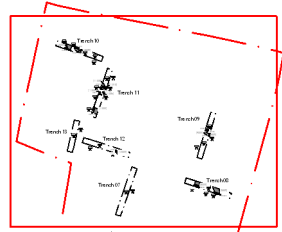
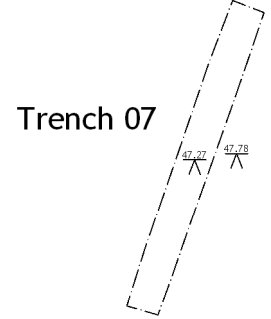
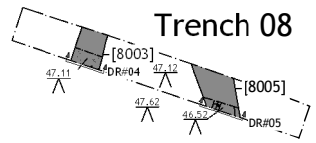
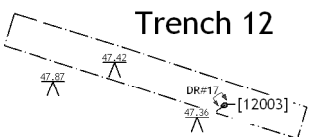
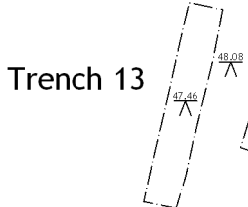
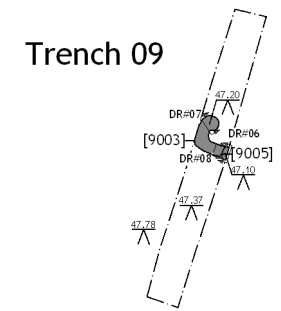
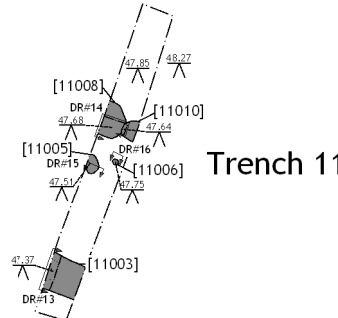
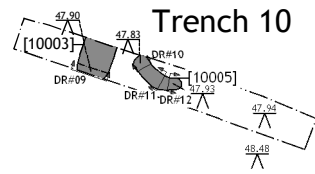

SRF1
Figure 1
Scale at A4-varies

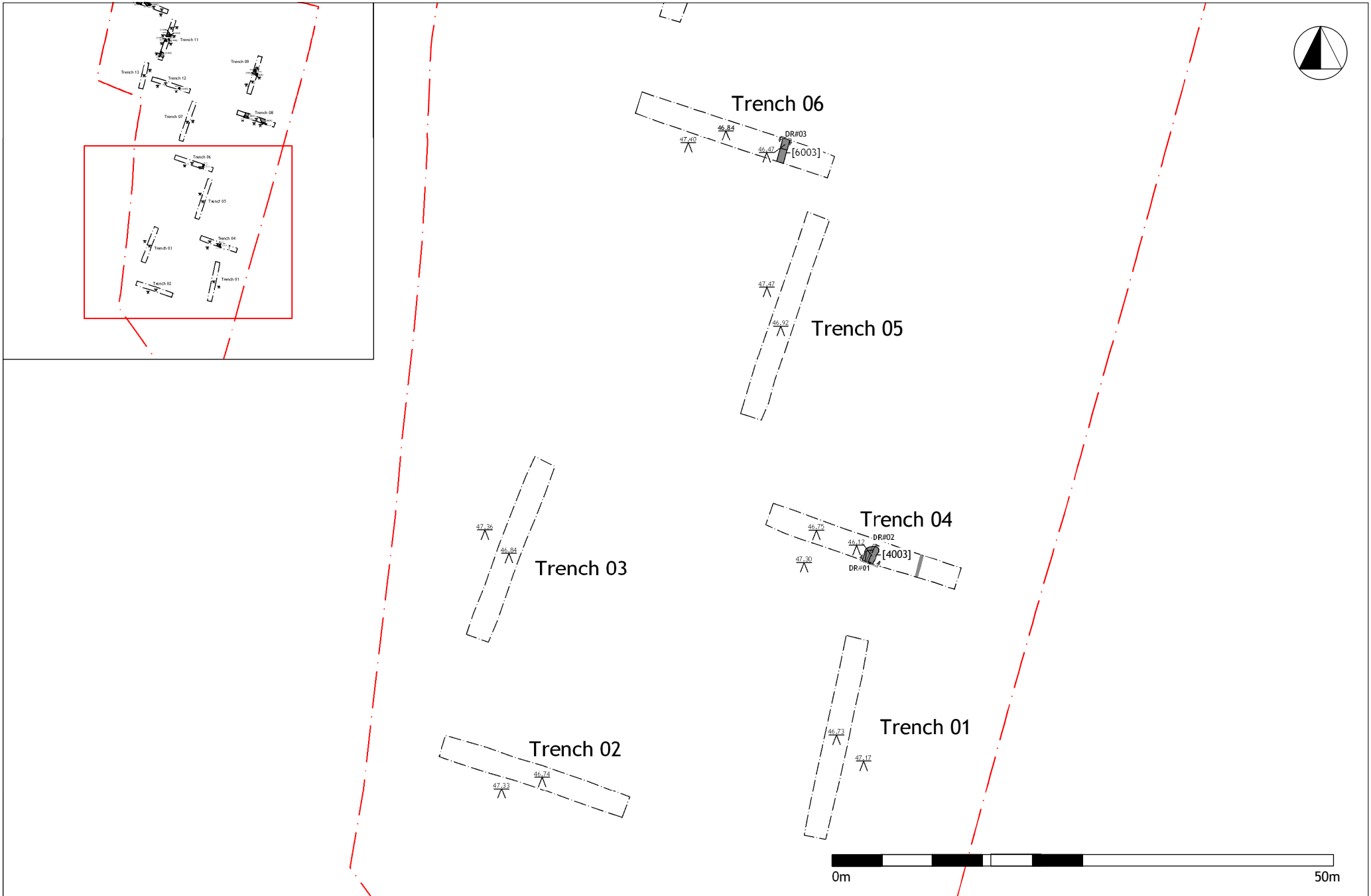
Southwell Road, Farnfield
Location Map

(Ordnance Survey map reproduced with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright Licence No. AL 100020618).

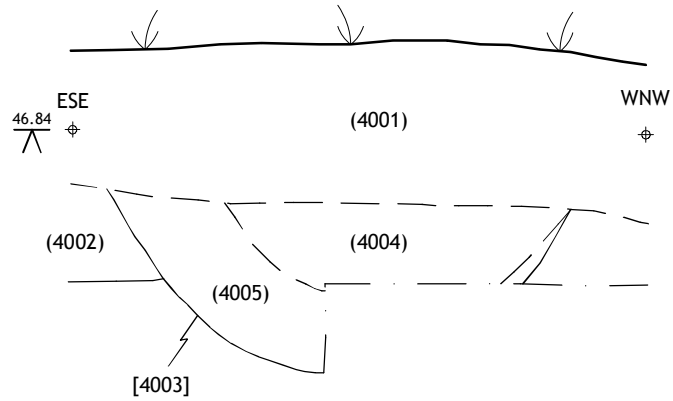




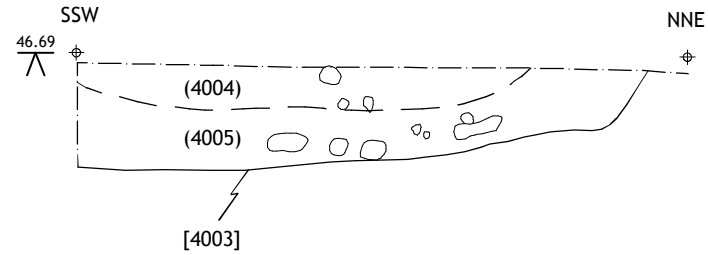




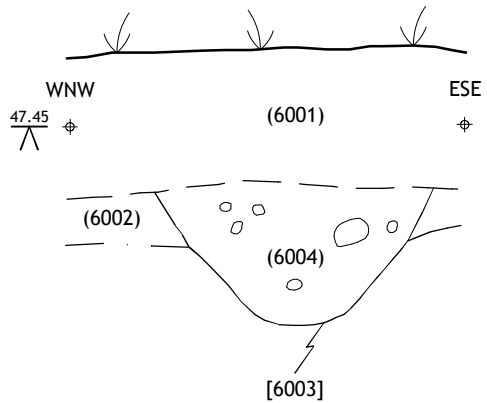
DR#01
NNE Facing section of [4003]



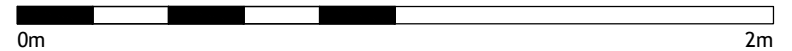
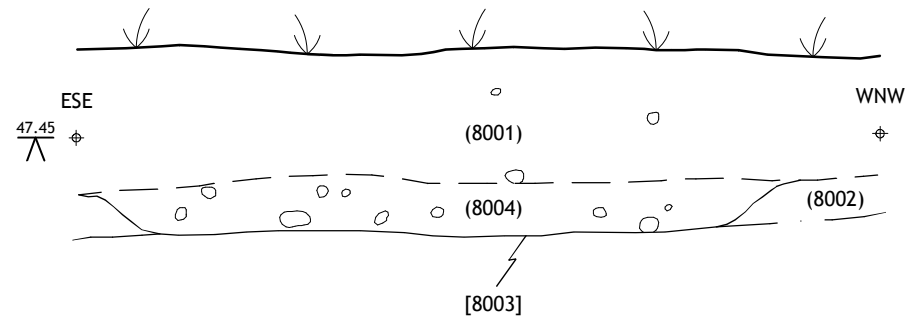
DR#02
NNE Facing section of [4003]



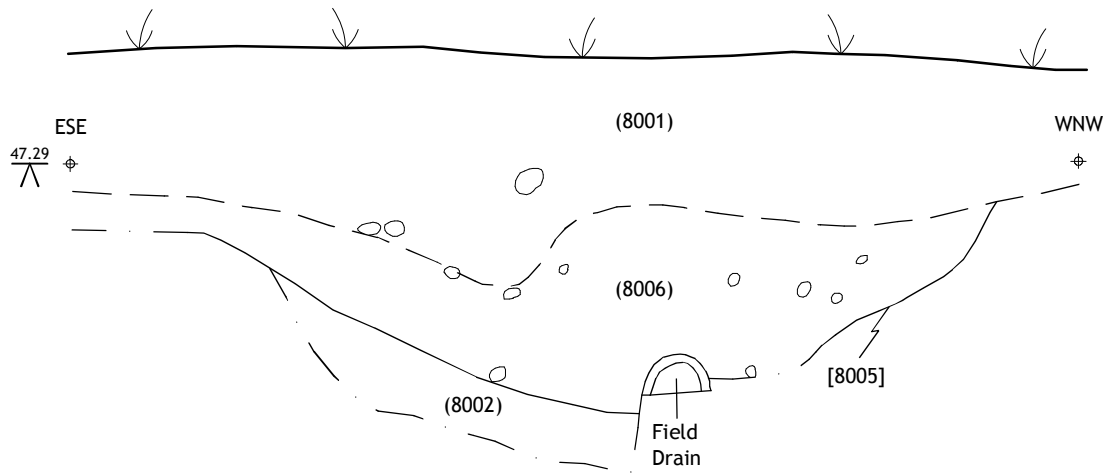
DR#03
SSW Facing section of [6003]



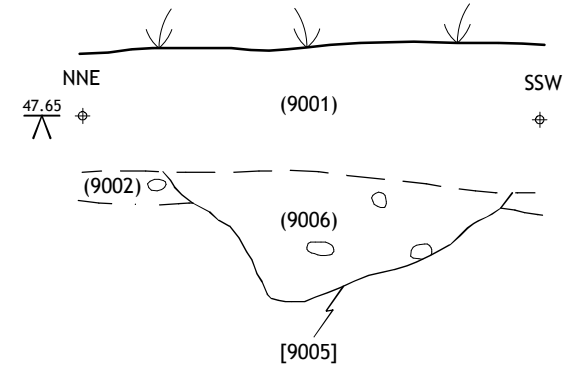
DR#04
SSW Facing section of [8003]



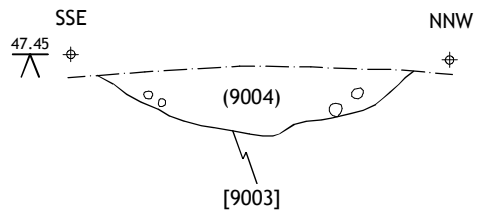
DR#05
NNE Facing section of [8005]



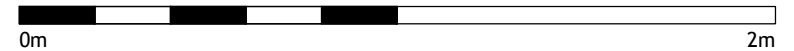
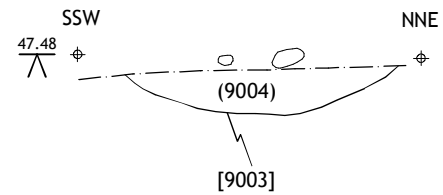
DR#06
WNW Facing section of [9005]



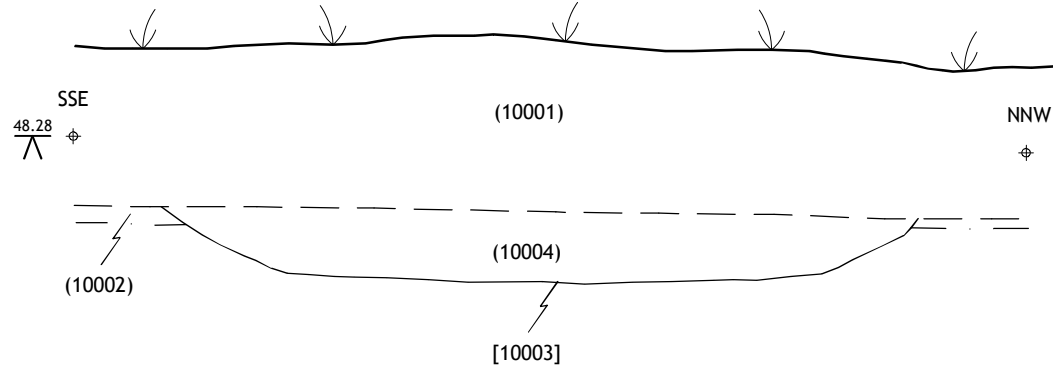
DR#07
ENE Facing section of [9003]



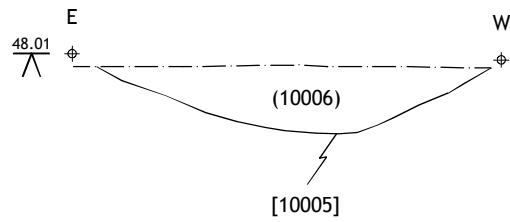
DR#08
ESE Facing section of [9003]



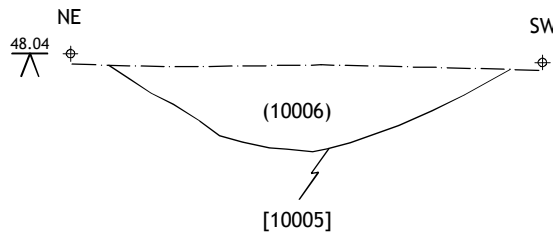
DR#09
NNE Facing section of [10003]



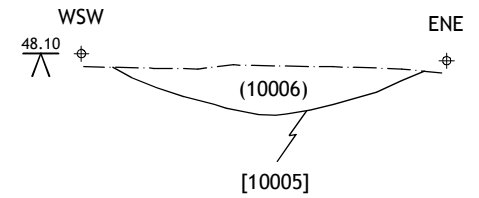
DR#10
N Facing section of [10005]



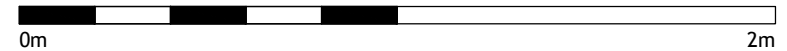
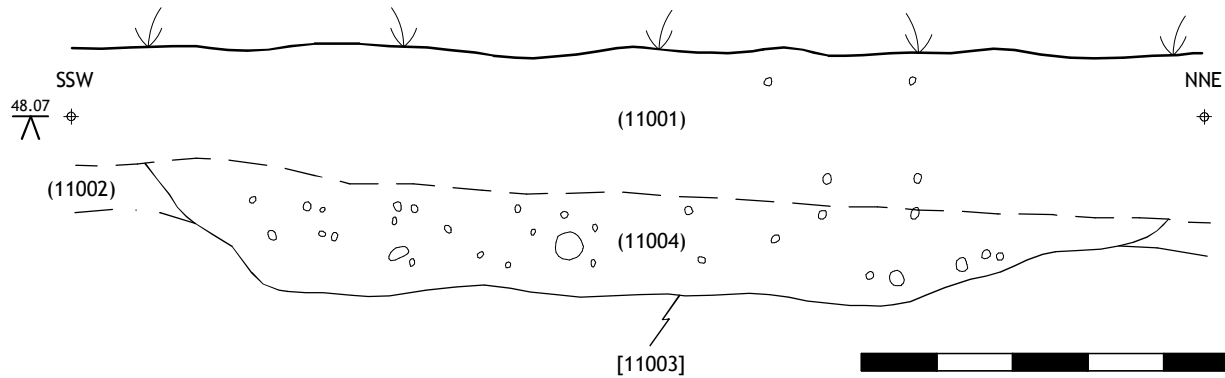
DR#11
NW Facing section of [10005]



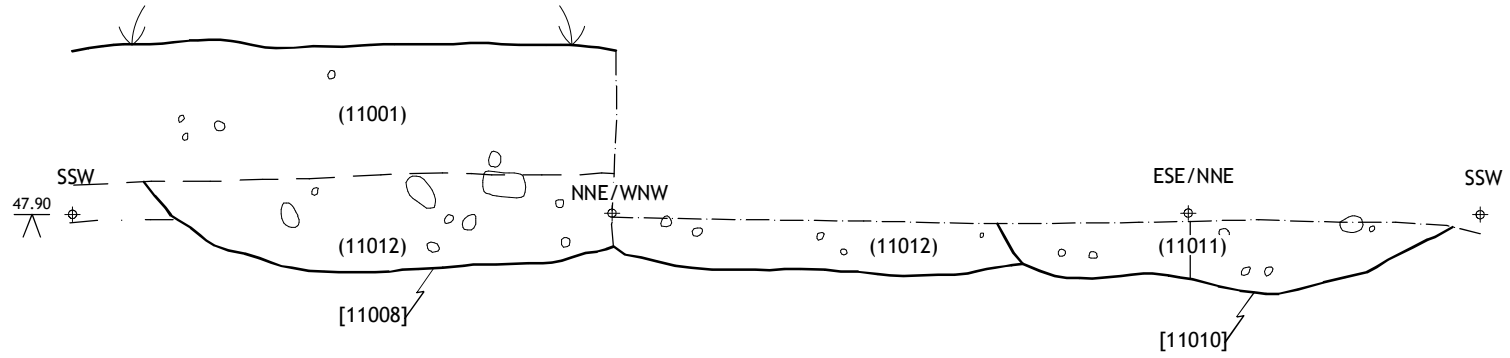
DR#12
SSE Facing section of [10005]



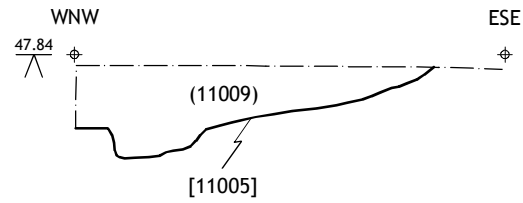
DR#13
ESE Facing section of [11003]



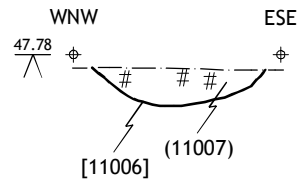
DR#14
Sections for [11008] [11010]



DR#15
SSW Facing section for [11005]



DR#16
SSW Facing section for [11006]



DR#17
SE Facing section for [12003]

