

Groveswood Cottage, Holgate, Clifton, Nottingham.

Report on an Archaeological Evaluation





April 2017
Planning Ref: 16/00424/PFUL3
TPA Report number: 047/2017
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Client Name: Derek Trowell Architects
Client Ref No: -
Document Title: Groewood Cottage, Holgate, Clifton, Nottingham: Report on an Archaeological Evaluation
Document Type: Final Report
Issue/Version Number: V1
Grid Reference: SK 54151 34803
TPA Site Code: GCC
Report No. 047/2017

Issue Number	V1R0
Prepared by	T. Keyworth
Date	3rd April 2017
Checked by	K. Smart
Signed	
Date	4th April 2017
Approved by	E. Taylor
Signed	 4th April 2017
Status	Final Report

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Summary

- An archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken at Groveswood Cottage, Holgate, Clifton, Nottingham on the 17th March 2017 prior to the extension of the property.
- Three evaluation trenches were excavated revealing the foundation of possible 18th -19th century walls, a 19th century land drain and a modern dog burial.
- The walls are likely to relate to the original stable block of Clifton Hall, of which Groveswood Cottage is a part.

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1 Introduction and Site Background

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Trent & Peak Archaeology (TPA) was commissioned by Derek Trowell Architects on behalf of their client to carry out an archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Groewood Cottage, Holgate, Clifton, Nottingham. This involved the excavation and recording of four evaluation trenches.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken in response to a request for archaeological evaluation made by the Nottingham City Archaeologist, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012). The work followed a brief supplied by the City Archaeologist (Lomax 2016) and the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Groarke 2017), and adhered to guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (2014a, 2014b).

1.2 Site Background

- 1.2.1 The excavations were undertaken in advance of the proposed construction of a single storey extension of the existing Groewood Cottage, and the creation of a basement underneath the current building footprint. The site is centred at SK 54151 34803, within the area of Clifton, a suburb of the city of Nottingham.
- 1.2.2 The site was bounded by residential properties to the east, Holgate to the north and a second, smaller road to the and west south providing access to the rear of the Holgate properties and several agricultural buildings.
- 1.2.3 The site was situated on bedrock of Gunthorpe Member mudstone, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 229 to 246 million years ago in the Triassic period. No superficial deposits are recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?>).

2 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The proposed area of development lies within the Clifton Village Archaeological Constraint Area. This area recognises the high potential for undisturbed archaeological features in this location, particularly of medieval and post-medieval date, and aims to protect any remains present (Lomax 2016).
- 2.2 The site is located approximately 5m from the eastern boundary of the Church of St Mary, a Grade I listed building, and 11m from the church building itself. The earliest parts of the current church building are believed to date to the 12th century, probably replacing an earlier 11th century building (*ibid.*).
- 2.3 The area's medieval origins are also evidenced by the listing for Clifton in the Domesday Book of 1086. It is stated that 'Countess Gytha had 2 1/2 caractures of land taxable. Land for 5 ploughs. William (Peverel) has 2 ploughs in lordship and 4 Freemen, 19 villagers and 8 smallholders who have 9 ploughs. A priest and a church, 1 mill, 12d; meadow, 12 acres. There also, Ulfkell had and has from the King 1 bovate of land taxable and 1 villager with 2 oxen. Meadow, 1 acre. (Ralph son of Hubert had) 2 bovates of land taxable which belong to Barton.' (*ibid.*).
- 2.4 The cottage itself is Grade II listed, being originally part of the stable range for Clifton Hall, and dates to the late 18th century. There have been limited opportunities for archaeological evaluations in the vicinity of the site, and mainly concern Clifton Hall, located c. 100m to the west. The closest archaeological interventions have been c. 80m to the west and south-west of the site, concerning the former grounds of Clifton Hall (*ibid.*).
- 2.5 Excavations to the south of Clifton Hall unfortunately revealed no features of any archaeological interest. To the north of the hall, structural remains constructed from stone and brick were uncovered, which were interpreted as being post-medieval in date. Other walls of a similar date were revealed in the immediate vicinity of the hall (*ibid.*).
- 2.6 A watching brief carried out in advance of a housing development to the south of Clifton Hall, on part of the former grounds of the Hall, uncovered the remains of a retaining wall used for terracing, consistent with the site's former use as a landscaped garden (*ibid.*).
- 2.7 No professional or amateur/antiquarian archaeological investigations have ever been recorded for the area to the east of St Mary's Church. Due to the location of the proposed developments and the archaeologically sensitive nature of the area, together with the proximity of the medieval church, there is good potential for surviving archaeological features of a medieval/post-medieval date (*ibid.*).

3 Objectives

- 3.1 The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to identify and evaluate the character, extent, condition and presence of any archaeological remains to be affected by any intrusive aspects of the development, and to inform whether or not any further archaeological mitigation (in order to achieve an appropriate level of *preservation by record*) in accordance with Paragraph 128 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) will be required.
- 3.2 The work also aimed to record any features of geoarchaeological significance identified during the evaluation, and where there was potential for palaeoenvironmental data, an appropriate level of sampling was to be undertaken.

4 Methodology

- 4.1 All work followed the methodology set out in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Groarke 2016).
- 4.2 The evaluation took the form of three trenching areas: Trench 1 (subdivided into Trenches 1a and 1b), Trench 2 and Trench 3 [Fig 1].
- 4.3 Excavation was undertaken using a back-acting machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. All archaeological deposits or features were cleaned by hand, investigated and recorded.
- 4.4 As a minimum, recording involved scale drawing of the remains in plan and in section and the creation of a photographic record. Details of the deposits and features were recorded on pro-forma context recording sheets. All recording followed guidelines set out in the TPA Recording Manual and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2014b).

5 Results

5.1 A total of three evaluation trenches (Trenches 1-3) were excavated (Fig. 1).

Trench 1

5.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 2) was located within the garage and was sub-divided into Trench 1a and Trench 1b.

5.3 Trench 1a measured 3.44m x 2.00m in size and was oriented roughly north to south. The trench was sealed by a modern concrete floor 0.1m thick (0100) which overlaid a deposit of loose modern rubble 0.2m thick (0101) (Fig 3, Dr.01). This was situated directly above a layer of compacted red natural clay (0102) which was cut by three small walls. (Plates 1-3). The first wall [0103] ran roughly west-east, comprising a single course of brick measuring approximately 2.00m in length and 0.35m wide, with both ends running into the trench edge. This wall was within a foundation cut [0104] which was cut into the red clay (0102).

5.4 1.20m to the north of wall [0103] was another similar brick wall [0105] on the same alignment, consisting of a single course of brick 2.00m long and 0.30m wide. This wall also lay within a foundation cut ([0106]) within the red clay (0102).

5.5 To the north-west corner of Trench 1a was another small brick wall [0107] consisting of a single course of bricks. The wall was aligned roughly north-south and was 0.46m in length and 0.30m in width, with the northern end running into section. This lay within a foundation cut [0107] cut into the red clay (0102). It is likely that all the walls are related and were originally part of the same structure.

5.6 Trench 1b was 1.64m x 2.00m in size. It was located 1.30m east of Trench 1a and was separated from it by an inspection pit for the garage (Fig 2). Within the trench, below the concrete floor (0100), which was 0.1m deep and loose rubble (0101), which was 0.2m deep, was a compacted natural red clay layer (0102), the same deposit as was seen in Trench 1a. Within this was the continuation [0109] of the wall observed in Trench 1a ([0103]) on the same roughly west-east alignment. It also lies within a foundation cut [0110] cut into the red clay (0102). The wall measured 2.00m in length, 0.30m in width and ran into both trench edges.

5.7 All of the walls located within Trench 1a and 1b have been interpreted as post-medieval in date, probably Georgian, relating to the original stable block structure.

Trench 2

5.8 Trench 2 (Fig. 2) was located approximately 8.67m to the south-east of Trench 1, outside of the existing garage building. The trench measured 5.00m in length and was 2.00m wide. The trench was sealed by a deposit of loose black topsoil 0.24-0.58m thick (0200) which overlaid a layer of loose mid brown silty clay subsoil 0.12-0.19m thick (0201) (Fig 3, Dr.04). Below the subsoil was a compact red natural clay (0202) similar to the natural substratum observed in Trench 1. In the south-west corner of the trench was a sub-rectangular cut [0203] approximately 0.87m in length by 0.7m wide. This contained the remains of a modern canine burial (0204) (Plates 4, 5 and 6).

Trench 3

5.9 Trench 3 was located immediately to the west of Trench 2 (Fig 2). The trench measured 5.36m in length and was 2.00m wide. As with Trench 2, the trench was sealed by loose black topsoil 0.60-0.65m thick (0300) overlying loose mid-brown silty clay subsoil 0.18-0.22m thick (0301) (Fig 3, Dr.02). Directly below the subsoil was the same compact red clay (0302) as observed in Trench 2 (0202). Cut into this, at the eastern extent of the trench, was a roughly north-south aligned ditch [0303] (Plates 8 and 9) for a Victorian land drain. This consisted of a V-shaped linear feature 2.00m deep and 0.70m wide, tapering to 0.20m wide at the base. This was filled by a loose light grey sandy silt (0304) containing fragments of

19th century pottery (Fig 3, Dr.03). At the base of the ditch the ceramic land drain itself was observed.

6 The Finds

By Alison Wilson

- 6.1 A total of 14 finds were recovered during the archaeological investigation of Groveswood Cottage. A quantification of these finds can be seen in Table 1 below.

Material	Quantity
Ceramic tile	9
Pot - Post-medieval	4

Table 1: Quantification of finds

6.2 The Pottery

- 6.2.1 A total of 4 fragments of pottery weighing 170g were recovered from the excavation, all dating to the 18th and 19th centuries. The assemblage was quantified by two measures: number of sherds and weight. The pottery is stored in one archive box which is at present stored at the Trent & Peak Archaeology stores, Chilwell, Nottingham.
- 6.2.2 All the pottery was recovered from context [0303], fill (0304), and consisted of 2 sherds of coarse earthenware and 2 sherds of Blackware. The coarse earthenware, which is dateable to the 18th and 19th centuries, comprised of a rim sherd with an impressed decoration beneath the rim, and a body sherd with a mid brown internal glaze. The two body sherds of Blackware provide a slightly earlier date, being produced in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Discussion

- 6.2.3 The pottery is entirely post-medieval in date and is a typical domestic assemblage from the late 17th to 19th centuries.

6.3 The Ceramic Building Material

- 6.3.1 Nine fragments of ceramic roofing tile weighing 1848g were recovered from the excavation. Like the pottery, all the assemblage was recovered from context [0303] Fill(0304). The material was un-diagnostic and could only be assigned to a general period of medieval to modern. However, given the pottery dates it is likely to belong to the 17th - 19th centuries.

7 Discussion

- 7.1 In Trench 1 a series of small wall structures were revealed. These are likely to be Georgian (1740–1830) in date and are probably related to external features of the original stable block range.
- 7.2 In Trench 3 a ceramic land drain was exposed with 19th century pottery also being recovered. It is probable that more land drains are present on the site.
- 7.3 Within the context of the history of Clifton these later post-medieval features and structures can be deemed to be of limited archaeological significance.

8 References

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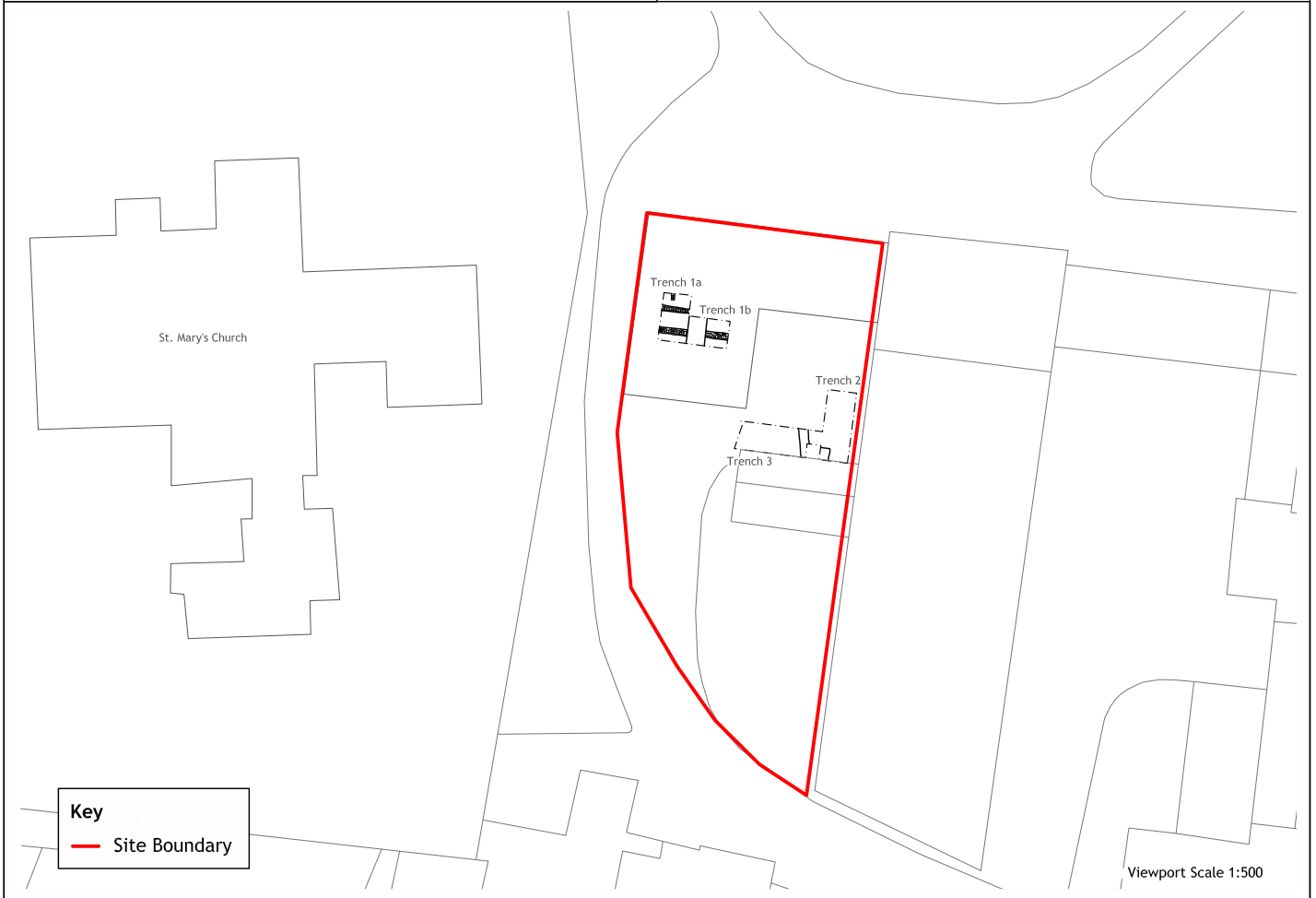
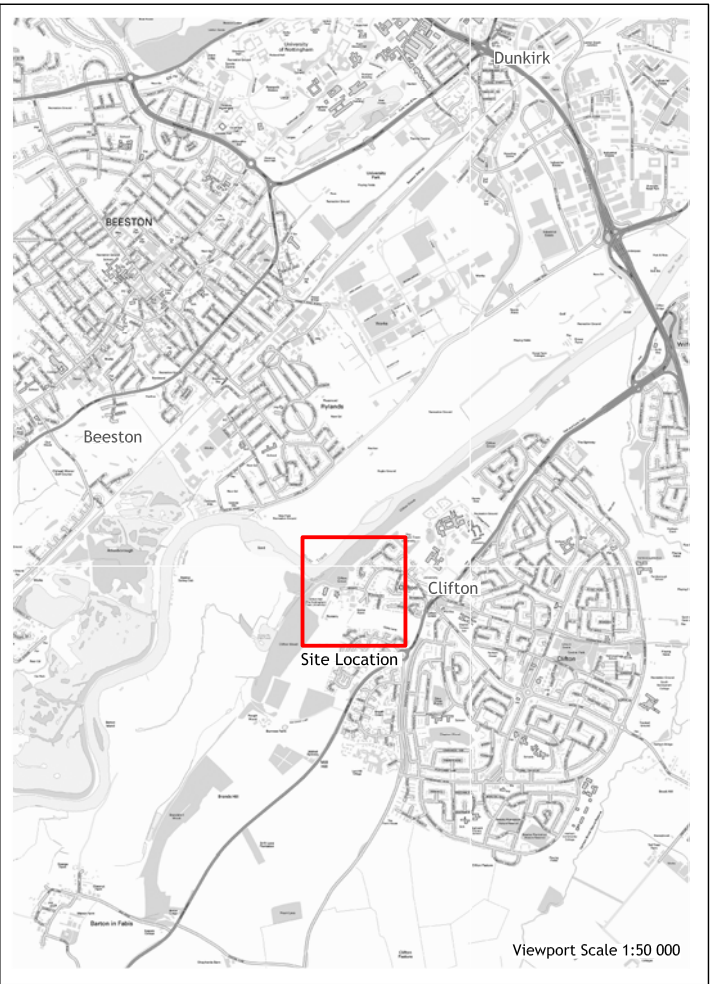
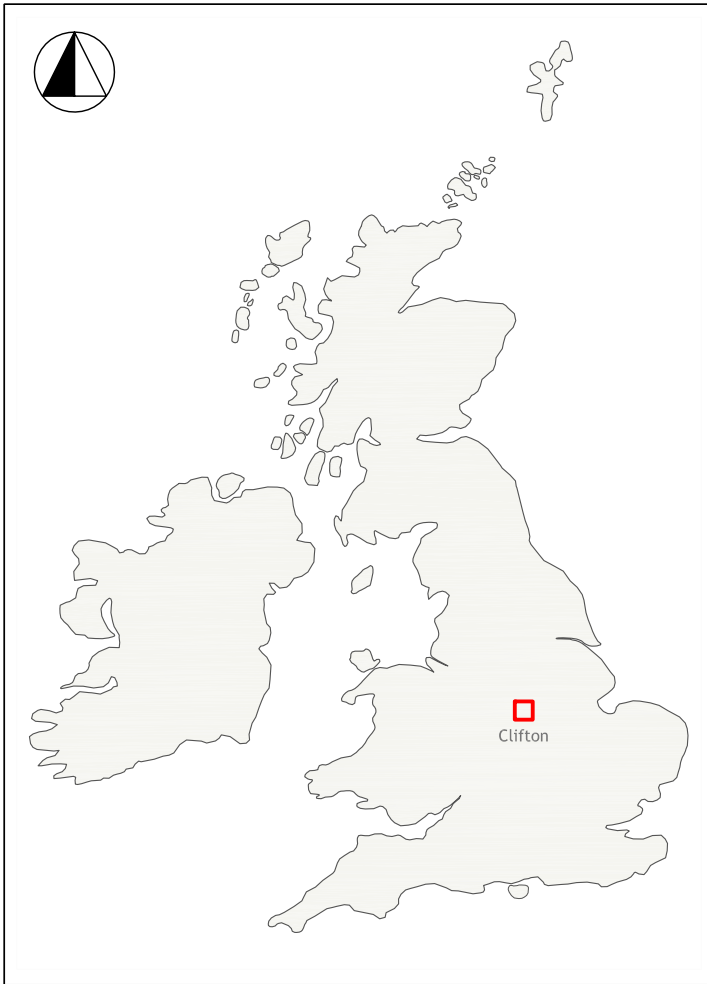
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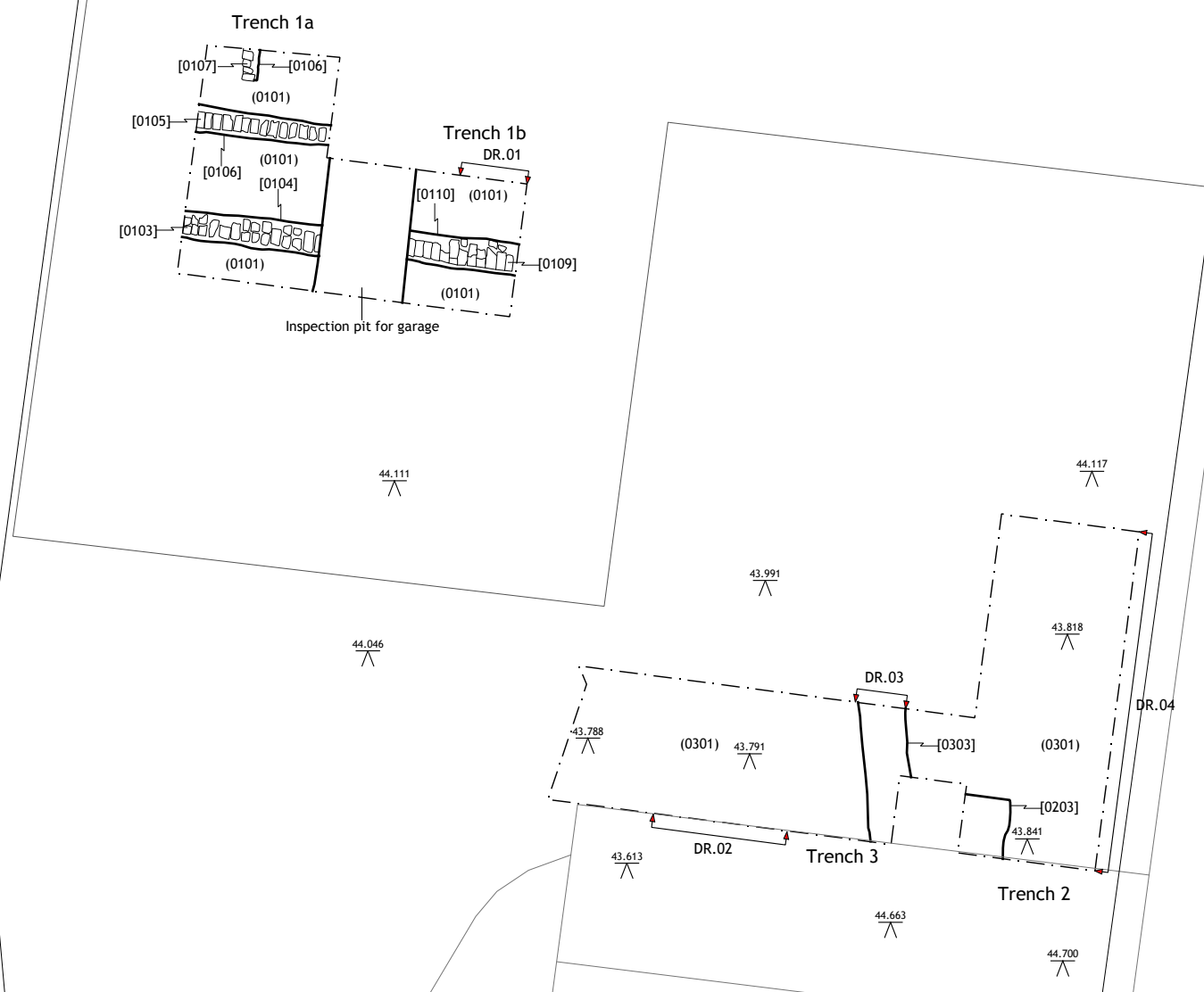
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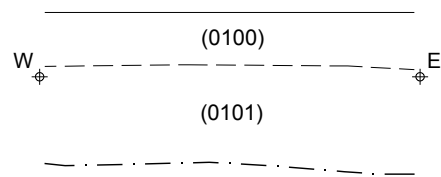
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Appendix 1: Figures

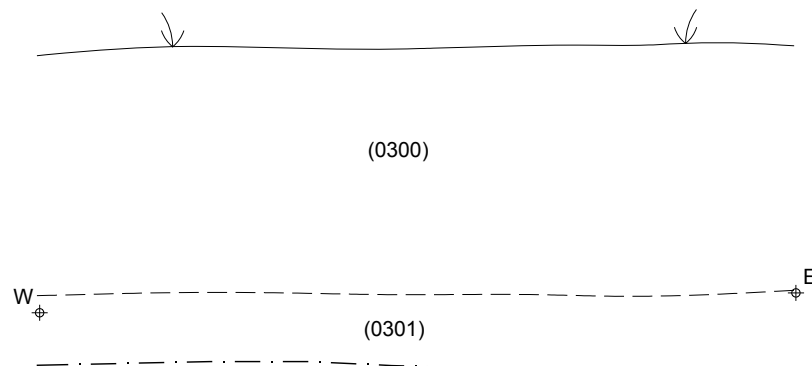




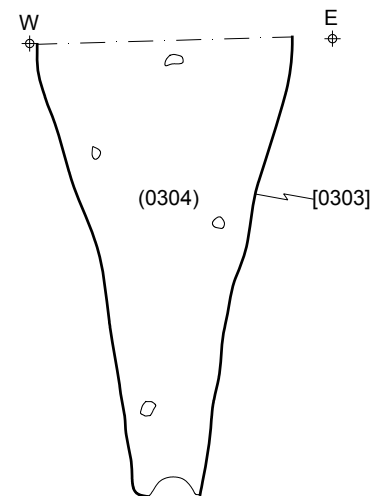
Dr. 01
South Facing Representative Section of Trench 01b



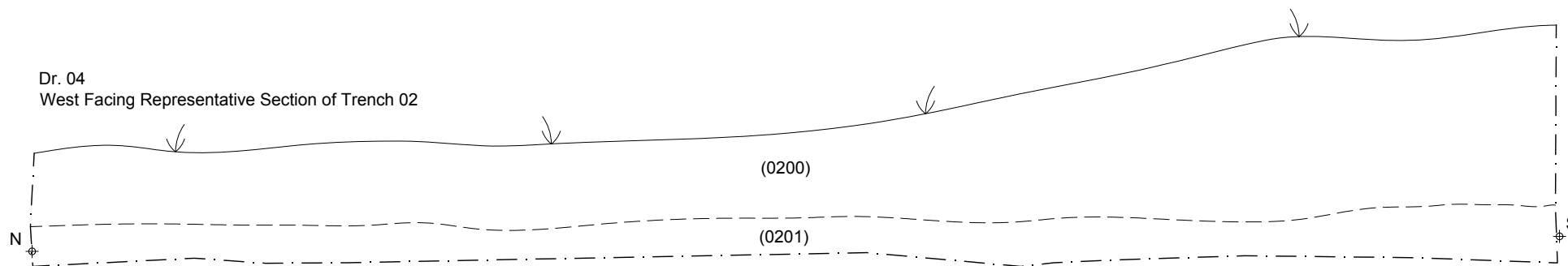
Dr. 02
North Facing Representative Section of Trench 03



Dr. 03
South Facing Section of [0303]



Dr. 04
West Facing Representative Section of Trench 02



Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1a (foreground) and 1b (background). In Trench 1a from left to right are walls [0107], [0105] and [0103]. In Trench 1b is wall [0109]. Scale = 1m



Plate 2: Trench 1a showing walls [0103] (bottom), [0105] (middle) and [0107] (top). Scales = 2 x 1m



Plate 3: Trench 1b showing the wall [0109] as a continuation of wall [0103] observed in Trench 1a. Scale = 1m.



Plate 4: Trench 2. [0203] can be seen in the top right corner. Scales = 2 x 1m



Plate 5: [0203] pre-excavation. Scale = 1m.



Plate 6: [0203] during excavation. Scale = 1m.



Plate 7: Trench 3. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Plate 8: [0303] pre-excitation. Scale = 1m.



Plate 9: [0303] post-excavation with the land drain exposed. Scales = 2 x 1m.