



## Land at Grimstone Reservoir Stratton, Dorset

Results of an Archaeological Evaluation





# *Wessex Archaeology*

**Land at Grimstone Reservoir  
Stratton,  
Dorset**

## **Results of an Archaeological Evaluation**

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**Land at Grimstone Reservoir,  
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**Results of an Archaeological Evaluation**

**Summary**

An archaeological evaluation, commissioned by Wessex Water, was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology on land at Grimstone Reservoir, Stratton, Dorset (NGR 364650 095340) in advance of a proposed planning application to undertake construction of an additional reservoir, adjacent to the existing. The Site occupied an area of approximately 0.45ha, on the crest of the valley overlooking the River Frome. It lay immediately south of earthworks that contain well preserved traces of enclosures and associated field systems of Iron Age and Romano-British date that are now designated as a Scheduled Monument.

The evaluation area lay within an area surveyed by the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments which recorded two contiguous enclosures on the Site, although none of these have survived as extant features due, in all likelihood, to continued deep ploughing over at least the past 40 years.

Five machine-dug trenches were excavated to evaluate anomalies detected during an earlier geophysical survey and considered to be possible archaeological features. The results indicate that deposits undisturbed by the plough lie along the northern edge of the Site and especially in the north east corner of the Site. Elsewhere ploughing has truncated the subsoil into the top of the underlying pebbly clay; however in all trenches well preserved features including ditches, pits and postholes were exposed.

An artefact assemblage, principally pottery of Iron Age and Romano-British date was recovered.

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Dorset**

**Results of an Archaeological Evaluation**

**Acknowledgements**

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Wessex Water. Thanks are due to Steve Wallis, County Archaeologist for Dorset County Council for his interest in the project and for providing helpful comments during a project site meeting. Thanks are also due to Kathryn Hollard and Martin Wood of Wessex Water for their assistance in the successful completion of the project.

The preliminary geophysical survey was undertaken by Ben Urmston and Rob Fry of Wessex Archaeology. The second phase evaluation trenching was undertaken by Phil Harding assisted by Piotr Orczewski. This report was written by Phil Harding with a report on the artefact assemblage completed by Lorraine Mephram. Rob Armour Chelu acted as archaeological consultant to Wessex Water. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr and the graphics prepared by Liz James and Linda Coleman.

# Land at Grimstone Reservoir, Stratton, Dorset

## Results of an Archaeological Evaluation

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Wessex Water (the Client), to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of proposed development to construct a second reservoir on land adjacent to Grimstone Reservoir, Stratton, Dorset, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 364650 095340 (hereafter the Site, see **Fig 1**).

1.1.2 The evaluation was required by Steve Wallis, the County Archaeologist, to provide further information regarding the nature of any archaeological deposits, their extent, date, function and condition on the Site.

1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was drawn up and submitted for the approval of the County Archaeologist prior to fieldwork commencing. This document set out the strategy and methodology to be implemented in the archaeological evaluation.

#### 1.2 Site location, topography, geology and land use

1.2.1 Three areas were considered suitable for possible development, which lay west, south and east of the existing reservoir near the summit of a low plateau, at 170m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Grimstone reservoir is constructed at the head of a spur that lies at the confluence of the Sydling Water, a tributary of the River Frome, which itself flows south eastwards from the north-west (**Fig 1**). The land at the head of the spur is relatively flat but slopes gently down to the south and south east, but drops more steeply to the west.

1.2.2 The Site is located on deposits of Upper Chalk that are capped by Pleistocene Pebbly Clay and Sand (BGS Drift Geology Sheet 327). The soils are listed as brown rendzinas of the 343h Andover 1 association and the typical brown alluvial soils of the 561d Lugwardine association (SSEW 1983).

1.2.3 Following results from a geophysical survey the archaeological evaluation, which formed the second phase of investigation, was restricted to land measuring approximately 0.45ha situated to the east of the reservoir and centred on National Grid Reference 364650 095340.

1.2.4 This evaluation area forms part of a field currently under cereal cultivation; standing corn was cleared to enable the work to take place. A strip of uncultivated rough pasture, approximately 12m wide, is maintained around the north and east edges of the Site under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1.1 An extensive complex of trackways, field systems and enclosures survive as upstanding earthworks in unploughed land immediately to the north of the Site. This settlement, of Iron Age and Romano-British date, survives with numerous barrows (burial mounds) of probable Bronze Age origin, all of which are designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- 2.1.2 The settlement pattern was surveyed and described by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England) (RCHM, 1952) (**Fig 2**). The entry does not show the present reservoir but indicates that two small contiguous enclosures were visible in, what was then, newly ploughed land on the Site. More recent survey, when overlain across the earthwork plot, suggests that the reservoir was constructed across the west part of the western-most enclosure.
- 2.1.3 The earthwork survey indicated that the enclosures were defined by a bank to the north which ran parallel to lynchets to the north. This bank, now much reduced by ploughing, forms the boundary to the Site.
- 2.1.4 The RCHM survey also recorded that the south-east corner of the eastern-most enclosure had been destroyed or obscured by more recent trackways that approached from the south-west and merged with a track from the south, which runs along the east part of the Site.
- 2.1.5 An initial geophysics survey (**Fig 3**), completed before this evaluation, (WA, 2008) examined three adjoining areas around the present reservoir. A number of anomalies were noted, including a sub-annular feature approximately 19m in diameter thought to be a ploughed out Bronze Age round barrow, which lay to the south of the present reservoir. In addition several linear and numerous discrete anomalies were noted and possibly of archaeological significance.

## **3 EVALUATION STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 Given that a Bronze Age round barrow may lie in the area to the south the reservoir, the second stage of archaeological assessment was restricted to work in the area to the east of the reservoir, adjoining the area of the Scheduled Monument. A number of sub-linear and discrete anomalies, thought to be of archaeological origin, were detected in this area. They showed no coherent distribution but were used to determine the locations of the evaluation trenches.
- 3.1.2 Five machine excavated trial trenches, comprising three trenches 20m long and two trenches 10m long, were excavated, providing a 5% sample of the available Site area (**Fig 4**).
- 3.1.3 The trench array was predetermined to provide a comprehensive coverage of the Site and to evaluate potential archaeological anomalies detected in the results of the geophysical survey. All evaluation trenches were positioned and surveyed using coordinates calculated using a GPS instrument and tied in to the Ordnance Survey Grid and Datum.



## 3.2 Fieldwork

- 3.2.1 The evaluation trenches were excavated using a wheeled JCB excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. All machine operation was maintained under constant archaeological supervision. All plough-soil was removed by the machine together with, in Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 5, a veneer of the underlying plough truncated natural pebbly clay, sufficient to expose any underlying archaeological features; however in Trench 4 archaeological deposits were better preserved and only the ploughsoil was removed by machine.
- 3.2.2 Following an on-site meeting of all interested parties to discuss the results of the evaluation and on completion of the archaeological recording all trenches were backfilled and the land reinstated using the excavated material.
- 3.2.3 Before the trenches were backfilled four geotechnical pits were dug by machine to investigate the structure of the Pebbly clay and establish the height of the natural Chalk. These holes were dug after the archaeological record had been compiled at each end of Trenches 1 and 3, where it was known that no archaeological features were present.
- 3.2.4 The fieldwork was undertaken between 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> August 2008.
- 3.2.5 All archaeological features and/or deposits exposed in each trench were planned, photographed and recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system. In view of the density of features exposed in the evaluation and the ease with which they could be dated by collecting diagnostic material from the surface of each feature it was agreed with the Client and DCC's County Archaeologist that sampling of features by hand would be minimal. This contingency fell within the terms of the project specification.
- 3.2.6 All records included a written description using unique number context records, hand drawn pre-excavation trench plans at a scale of 1:50, with detailed sections of excavated features at a scale of 1:10 and post excavation plans at 1:20. All features were subsequently located using GPS and tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels was recorded along with a sample of surface heights sufficient to reconstruct topographic mapping of the site.
- 3.2.7 A full photographic record was maintained using digital format with colour transparencies and black and white negatives (on 35mm film).
- 3.2.8 In view of the minimal number of excavated features and to ensure minimal intrusions into the archaeological deposits and features identified, no bulk environmental soil samples for plant macro fossils, small animal bones and other small artefacts were taken.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The Site was covered by a dark grey to dark grey-brown silty clay topsoil derived from material reworked into the modern ploughsoil from the underlying pebbly clay natural. The contact between the ploughsoil and the underlying material was especially clear in Trenches 1, 3 and 5.
- 4.1.2 Trenches 2 and 4, however, lay at the north end of the Site adjacent to the headland of the field; here cultivation had penetrated into, but not through, a flinty sorted subsoil horizon, where spreads of prehistoric occupation material were preserved *in situ* around pits and postholes. Charcoal was present in many features, especially in Trench 4, but no *in situ* burning, sufficient to modify the surrounding pebbly clay, was noted in any of the trenches.
- 4.1.3 The following descriptions summarise the results from each trench; detailed context descriptions are contained in **Appendix 1**.

### 4.2 Trench 1

- 4.2.1 Trench 1 (**Fig 5**) measured 20m long, and was aligned north to south immediately east of the reservoir. No archaeological anomalies were detected in the results of the geophysical survey; however the trench lay on the edge of a band of ferrous response that was present on all sides of the reservoir and which probably related to its construction. The ferrous response potentially masked any archaeological features present.
- 4.2.2 The trench contained six postholes [**103**, **105**, **107**, **109**, **111**, **115**], a possible posthole [**113**] and a ditch [**117**]. Five of the postholes and possible posthole [**113**] were clustered at the north end of the trench. The largest [**103**], with adjoining posthole [**105**], was excavated.
- 4.2.3 Posthole [**103**] was oval in plan measuring 0.60m long and 0.45m wide. It was 0.4m deep with steep sides and flat base. The ghost of a probable post lay to the north east packed with a vertical stack of flint nodules and redeposited red brown pebbly clay to the south-west. Its size suggests that it formed part of a four post structure or part of a round house, possibly the entrance.
- 4.2.4 The adjoining posthole [**105**] lay 0.10m to the south west. It measured 0.25m in diameter with steep concave sides and a flat base. It was also filled with mid grey brown silty loam (**106**).
- 4.2.5 All other features were recorded in plan. Posthole [**107**] lay to the south west and was of similar size to posthole [**105**], forming a small arc of three postholes.
- 4.2.6 The unexcavated postholes, from 0.20-0.30m in diameter, were filled with grey brown silty loam and were often accompanied by flint large packing stones.
- 4.2.7 Ditch [**117**] measured approximately 0.80m across and was aligned north east to south west. The south east edge was irregular, which may represent pits; however it was not possible to confirm this by excavation. Pottery was recovered from the surface of the ditch.

- 4.2.8 The distribution of postholes within Trench 1 suggests that the evaluation trench may have been located across part of a structure. There is also a possible hint that features were aligned parallel to the ditch [117]. This ditch almost certainly recurs as ditch [202] in Trench 2 and forms the boundary between the two enclosures surveyed by the RCHM.
- 4.2.9 Subsequent reanalysis of the results of the geophysical survey, based on the findings of the evaluation, have shown that there was little correlation between the results of these two pieces of work. However, any geophysical anomalies near the centre of the trench will have been masked by the magnetic disturbance evident in the greyscale (Fig 3). Of the three features at the eastern end, only [212] is large enough to exhibit a detectable response although it shows little contrast with the magnetic background.

### 4.3 Trench 2

- 4.3.1 Trench 2 (Fig 6) was aligned west to east, 20m long, and immediately south of the bank forming the north edge of the enclosure. Removal of the modern ploughsoil revealed a flinty mid to dark grey-brown silty clay subsoil which contained sporadic pieces of well preserved pottery.
- 4.3.2 The contact between the ploughsoil and subsoil was clear; however the survival of the subsoil horizon, which in most places had been truncated by ploughing, suggests that archaeological deposits enjoy better levels of preservation in this part of the Site. This may be attributed to protection afforded by the bank at the north end of the Site and given this part of the Site is a headland, the result of the modern cultivation where ploughing is less penetrative.
- 4.3.3 The western part of the trench lay within the north east corner of the western enclosure and contained no archaeological features. This may reflect the position of a possible bank; however east of the ditch [202] which divides the two enclosures were two pits and two postholes.
- 4.3.4 Ditch [202] measured 0.90m across and was cut 0.25m into the pebbly clay natural. The sides sloped steeply to a slightly concave base approximately 0.30m across. The primary fill (206), derived from weathering of the ditch sides, comprised dark grey silty loam with mixed flint fragments. The secondary fill (203) was similar but included large flint nodules up to 0.20m across. Pottery was also more prevalent in this fill.
- 4.3.5 Ditch [202] cut through a shallow irregular hollow [204] to the east that was filled with dark grey brown silty clay (205) and fragments of pottery in the upper part. It was unclear within the confines of the trench whether this feature was man-made or represents a tree throw/ solution feature. The filling was lighter than the fill of ditch [202] but noticeably darker and contained more flint than the surrounding orange silty subsoil (207).
- 4.3.6 Pits [212] and [215] averaged 1m in diameter and were filled with dark grey brown silty loam (211, 208). Pottery was recovered from the surface of both features, including a sherd of early Roman samian (208), although which were not excavated.
- 4.3.7 Postholes [213] and [214] lay approximately 0.50m apart and 0.50m west of pit [212]. The larger [213] measured 0.45m in diameter while [214] was smaller at 0.27m in diameter. Both were filled with dark grey silty clay (210, 209); neither posthole was excavated.

4.3.8 Reassessment of the results of the geophysical survey has indicated that the results for the majority of this trench were masked by magnetic disturbance associated with the reservoir to the west and the modern service to the south. Consequently it has confirmed that no meaningful correlation between geophysical anomalies and excavated features could have been made before the evaluation.

#### **4.4 Trench 3**

4.4.1 Trench 3 also measured 20m long and was aligned north to south approximately 7m inside the eastern enclosure. The subsoil horizon was well preserved at the north end of the Site but had been heavily truncated by ploughing to the south.

4.4.2 Three pits [303, 305 311], a posthole [309] and a possible posthole [307] were recorded; none were sampled. Pits [303] and [305] measured approximately 1m in diameter, were filled with dark grey brown silty clay (304, 306) and produced diagnostic Iron Age sherds of pottery from the surface.

4.4.3 Pit [311] extended 0.60m from the east edge of the trench and contained densely packed flint nodules in the upper fill (312).

4.4.4 Posthole [309] measured 0.35m in diameter and lay 0.25m south-east of a possible posthole [307] which was only 0.15m in diameter.

4.4.5 Reasonable agreement was apparent, subsequently, between geophysical anomalies and the contents of each of the five features in this trench. It is unlikely that either [307] or [309] would have been detected alone, although their combined response is quite clear.

#### **4.5 Trench 4**

4.5.1 An evaluation trench, 10m long and aligned west to east, was located in the extreme north east corner of the Site (Fig 7). This trench lay to the east of the bank of the eastern enclosure and produced the most complex and most well preserved archaeological deposits recorded in the evaluation.

4.5.2 Removal of the ploughsoil revealed a clear contact with densely packed flinty subsoil containing archaeological material and features, principally pits. Small areas of the natural pebbly clay (408) were recognised across the trench; however damage by the mechanical excavator and the plough were considered to be minimal. The absence of plough damage almost certainly attributable to the need to raise and lower the plough in its turning circle at the corner of the field.

4.5.3 In view of the quality of preservation evident in the archaeological deposits the trench was cleaned by hand, photographed and planned before all exposed artefacts, principally pottery, were lifted by context. In addition the trench was divided into 0.50m squares, notated alphabetically and numerically from the south west corner of the trench, to provide greater accuracy of recovery in contexts that could be traced over large areas of the trench. This strategy of record and artefact retrieval was considered to offer the best solution to recover information and minimise damage during back filling.

- 4.5.4 The following description includes a speculative interpretation of deposits and features as they were recorded, none of which could be confirmed by excavation.
- 4.5.5 A minimum of three pits [404], [419] and [420] were recorded with a possible additional pit [422] of which only a part protruded from the east end of the trench. Pits were of similar dimensions as elsewhere on site, averaging 1m in diameter, although pit [419] was a larger oval feature measuring 1.2m wide and 1.5m long.
- 4.5.6 The pits were most frequently defined by flint nodules, sometimes up to 0.20m in size, around the periphery of the feature. They contained single fills of dark grey brown and dark brown silty clay (405, 412, 416), although pit [419] was characterised by a deposit rich in pottery sherds around its south edge.
- 4.5.7 A linear feature [402] protruded 0.80m from the south edge of the trench at the west end. This feature, aligned north west to south east, was defined at the north west end by a thin band of clay, which was possibly fired.
- 4.5.8 A second linear feature [421], possibly containing a wall foundation defined by parallel bands of flint nodules along the sides with a clay core, was present at the east end of the trench. It measured approximately 0.50m across, extended from the south edge of the trench and was cut by pit [420].
- 4.5.9 The areas between the features comprised deposits that often contained occupation debris in varying quantities. It was impossible to resolve without excavation whether these deposits represent settlement debris spills around pits, midden material or tertiary deposits masking other unrecognised features. These areas (406, 409, 413, 414 and 415) often contained pottery and included small areas with charcoal (407), possibly a posthole, and another area with chalk (410). Minimal investigation indicated that the latter comprised a more extensive deposit that was overlain by (409).
- 4.5.10 The features exposed in this trench have been shown to broadly correspond with geophysical anomalies, and the morphologies of anomalies and features were generally similar. The interpretation of the geophysical data was hampered somewhat by the intrusion of magnetic disturbance towards the north western extent of the trench, and may have partially masked the response from [404].

#### **4.6 Trench 5**

- 4.6.1 A trench, 10m long and aligned north-east to south west, was excavated across an area of geophysical response to the south of Trench 4. This excavation also lay to the east of the eastern enclosure, but within the area shown by the RCHM to contain trackways that had removed parts of the enclosure.
- 4.6.2 Three pits [503], [505] and [507], a pit or large posthole [511] and a possible posthole [509] were revealed in the machine-dug excavation.
- 4.6.3 All pits extended from the north, [503], or south, [505] and [507], edges of the trench; however sufficient of each pit was visible to establish that pits [503] and [505] measured approximately 1m in diameter while pit [507] was larger, approximately 1.3m across. All were filled with dark grey brown sandy silt.

- 4.6.4 Towards the east end of the trench a small pit or large posthole [511], 0.60m across was exposed beneath a layer of flint cobbles (515), which are thought likely to form a surface the track/holloway. Feature [511] was filled with charcoal rich dark grey brown silty loam (512) and fragments of Iron Age pottery.
- 4.6.5 The edge of a deposit of flint cobbles (515), up to 0.20m thick and contained in a shallow feature [514], extended from beneath the well sorted topsoil horizon of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme into the ploughsoil of the arable field. This band of cobbles, which probably formed the make-up of a holloway, thinned out approximately 1.3m into the field and was completely absent 3m from the edge of the rough pasture.
- 4.6.6 The surface of the flint cobbles within the Countryside Stewardship Scheme was not truncated in the arable field suggesting that the plough has not penetrated into the cobbles, although it seems likely that the trackway may have disturbed traces of the settlement.
- 4.6.7 Reassessment of the geophysical responses of [503], [505] and [507] show that they appear to have merged to form a single anomaly. Further to the east, a sub-linear anomaly proved to have no corresponding archaeological feature; whilst [509] is coincident with this anomaly but is too small to have produced such a response. Similarly [511] and [514] do not appear to have produced detectable anomalies, although a linear trend to the northwest of the trench may lie on a similar alignment to holloway [514].

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A small quantity of finds was recovered during the evaluation, consisting mostly of pottery. The assemblage ranges in date from Iron Age to Romano-British, although most appears to be Early Iron Age. The majority of finds came from Trench 4, in particular from a series of deposits which appeared to contain occupation debris.
- 5.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are presented in **Table 1**.

### 5.2 Pottery

- 5.2.1 This was the most commonly occurring material type, and also provided the primary dating evidence for the Site. The assemblage is dominated by sherds in two ware types: the first a fine, silty fabric, occasionally containing rare coarse flint, or rare organic inclusions; and the second a coarse, gritty fabric with prominent quartz sand inclusions and rare flint. Both wares appear to have been used for similar forms: shouldered jars or bowls, occasionally with fingertip impressions on the shoulder. These forms are sufficient to date this part of the assemblage to the Early Iron Age.
- 5.2.2 The Early Iron Age material was concentrated in Trench 4, with large groups coming from layers (406) and (411). Despite the homogeneity of the pottery from the dark unexcavated deposits in Trench 4 (406, 408, 411, 414, 415), no cross-context joins were noted, nor any cross-fits between grid squares within contexts.

5.2.3 Pottery occurred much more sparsely in other trenches, and comprised further sherds of Early Iron Age wares from all trenches, but there are also sherds in the distinctive Black Burnished ware fabric from Trenches 1 and 2; these include one very abraded bead rim jar/bowl rim, and a platter rim. The Black Burnished ware industry has its origins in the Late Iron Age, and these forms could be pre-conquest, although this cannot be definitely stated. Certainly there is one sherd of early Roman samian from Trench 2 (from the surface of unexcavated pit [215]), but nothing else which could be identified as definitively post-conquest.

### **5.3 Worked Flint**

5.3.1 Of the ten pieces of worked flint recovered, nine are unretouched flakes and one is a large core, possibly reused as a hammerstone. None of these pieces are particularly chronologically distinctive, but flake morphology and technology (large, squat flakes struck using hard hammer technique) suggest a Bronze Age date.

### **5.4 Worked Stone**

5.4.1 One piece of worked stone from layer (411) can be identified as a quern fragment, probably from a saddle quern.

### **5.5 Other Finds**

5.5.1 Other finds comprise a few small, undiagnostic fragments of fired clay; two pieces of burnt, unworked stone, and one piece of burnt, unworked flint. None of these finds are datable.

5.5.2 Table 1: All finds by context (number/weight in grammes)

Context	Worked Flint	Pottery	Other Finds
104		2/14	6 burnt stone
110		1/7	
116		5/16	
118		8/97	
201	1/40	3/28	
203	1/12	12/66	
208		11/44	1 fired clay
211		5/51	
304		5/21	
305		4/7	
401	7/256	36/201	
403		1/9	
405		1/4	
406		92/750	
408		1/20	
409	1/531		
411		75/1010	1 worked stone
412		15/207	
413		8/58	
414		4/35	1 burnt stone; 1 fired clay
415		15/105	1 burnt flint
512			2 fired clay
515		6/31	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10/839</b>	<b>310/2781</b>	

## 6 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

6.1.1 No features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

## 7 DISCUSSION

### 7.1 Distribution

7.1.1 The evaluation has established that archaeological features comprising pits, postholes and ditches are present across all parts of the Site. These features represent clear evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British rural settlement within contiguous enclosures that were surveyed by the RCHM. Most of the westernmost enclosure now lies beneath the present reservoir. More importantly the results of the evaluation have shown that



archaeological features, including some of the most well preserved deposits, extend beyond the eastern boundary of the eastern enclosure.

- 7.1.2 The evaluation has demonstrated that the two enclosures were separated by a shallow ditch. It is likely that each enclosure may have contained individual house or farm units, approached from holloways which may still exist as farm tracks in the present landscape. Most features, including postholes, were clearly defined within the orange pebbly clay which suggests that complete building plans may be recoverable in the event of larger areas being stripped and recorded.
- 7.1.3 Subsequent reassessment and correlation of the results from the geophysical survey with those of the evaluation have made it possible to interpret the results of the geophysics with more confidence.
- 7.1.4 It is also notable that where clusters of closely spaced features were recorded in the trenches that these had often coalesced into a single response on the results of the geophysical survey.
- 7.1.5 The best associations seen between excavated features and geophysical anomalies are those, principally pits, greater than 1m in diameter. This suggests that pits are likely to be present across most, if not all, of both enclosures. Numerous amorphous anomalies of this type were especially noticeable around Trench 3. Smaller anomalies, mainly postholes, could not be detected or interpreted with any confidence using geophysics.

## **7.2 Condition**

- 7.2.1 Although none of the features identified by the RCHM survey have survived as extant earthworks, the evaluation has demonstrated that the survival of below ground archaeological deposits varies across the Site. Below ground preservation was good in a band approximately 15m wide along the northern edge of the Site and especially good in the north-east corner of the Site. This can be attributed to the presence of a bank or lynchet along the northern edge of the Site and modern headland, which has minimised penetration by the plough. In these areas and especially in the north east corner flinty subsoil containing undisturbed settlement debris and refuse, including pottery broken *in situ* is preserved.
- 7.2.2 To the south of the headland ploughing has removed all traces of the subsoil horizon as demonstrated by the clear contact between the ploughsoil and the underlying pebbly clay. Preservation of deposits within features is however good with unabraded sherds of pottery and charcoal, which offer potential to recover details of the status and economy of the Site.
- 7.2.3 Trackways, recorded by the RCHM, which cross the south east corner of the Site and removed traces of the enclosure earthworks do not appear to have penetrated or damaged the underlying archaeological deposits.

## **7.3 Phasing**

- 7.3.1 The pottery assemblage recovered from the Site ranges in date from the Early Iron Age to the Romano-British period. The larger concentrations of early Iron Age material are concentrated outside of the identified enclosures (RCHM) in Trench 4; however pottery of this date is still evident, albeit in reduced quantities, in trenches to the west and south.

- 7.3.2 Later Iron Age and Romano-British pottery is noted in the westernmost trenches and although the quantities collected make detailed phasing of the Site difficult at this stage a general trend is evident.

#### **7.4 Site function**

- 7.4.1 The RCHM survey identified two small contiguous enclosures that lay within a landscape of field systems and rural enclosures of Iron Age and Roman-British date. Although no above ground evidence has survived, the size of each enclosure suggests that they probably contained individual self contained farmsteads constructed around a residential building, possible a round house. The discovery of a quern stone fragment and evidence from elsewhere in southern England suggests that cereal production was probably a significant part of the economy possibly supplemented by stock rearing and with small scale metal working.

### **8 ARCHIVE**

- 8.1.1 The archive comprises a single A4 ring bound folder which contains all original context records, graphics record sheet, photographic records, geophysical survey report, copy of the Written Scheme of Investigation, survey notes and graphics. There were also two rolls of colour transparencies, two rolls of monochrome film and digital images. The artefacts, principally pottery, are stored in cardboard box.
- 8.1.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the project code 68502 but it is anticipated that it will ultimately be deposited with the Dorset Museum Service at Dorchester for permanent storage.

### **9 REFERENCES**

British Geological Survey, Sheet 327

Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England: An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset, vol.1

WA Heritage 2008, Land at Grimstone Reservoir, Stratton, Dorset, Detailed Gradiometer Survey Report

Wessex Archaeology 2008, Land at Grimstone Reservoir, Stratton, Dorset, Written Scheme of Investigation: Method Statement for an Archaeological Evaluation.

10 APPENDIX 1- TRENCH AND CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

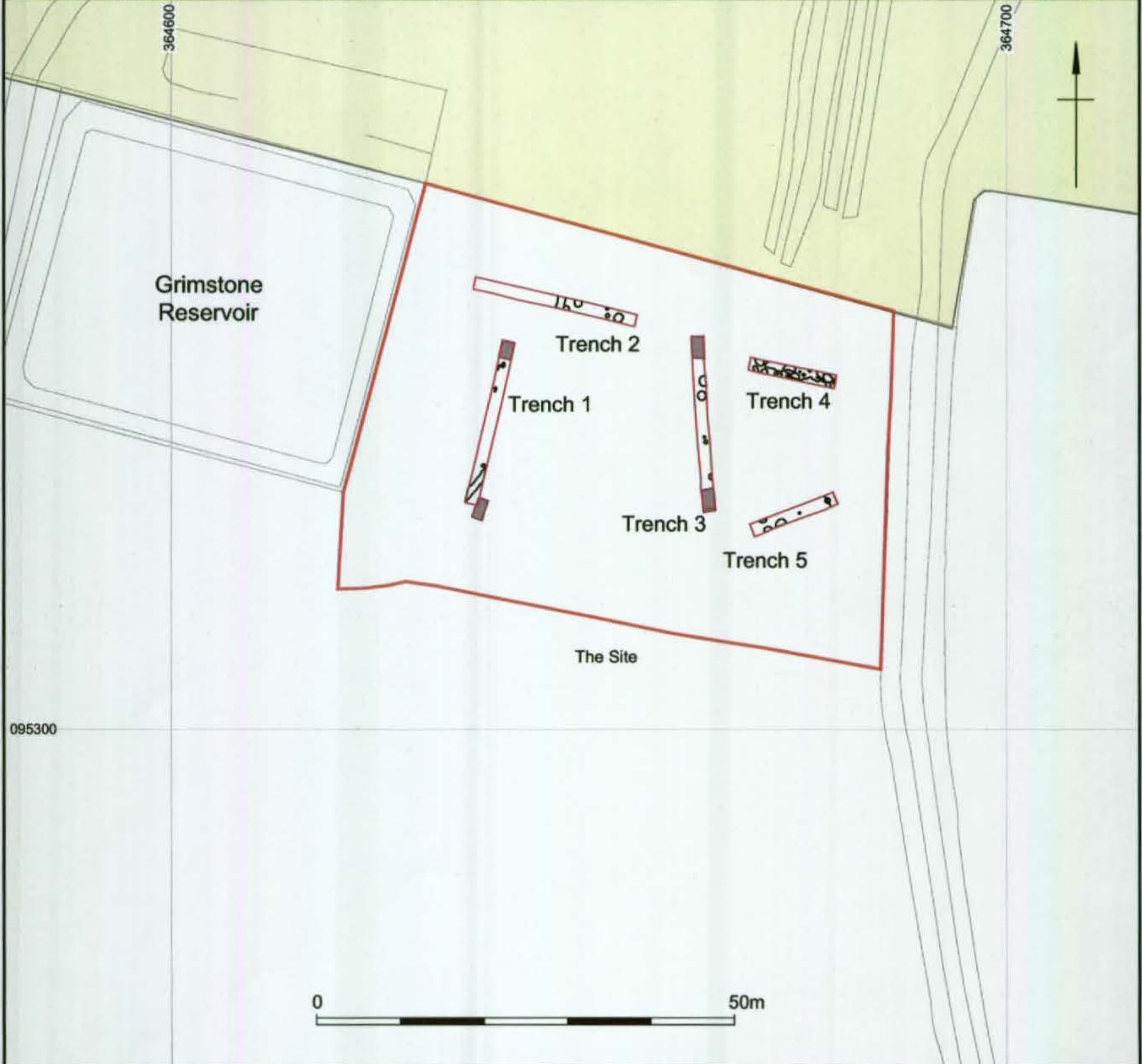
Trench 1	Ground Level (m aOD): 168.395 (N), 167.99 (S)	Length 20m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
101	Modern ploughsoil, Medium grey brown clay loam with common flint inclusions.	0-0.20
102	Medium red brown sandy clay subsoil with common flint inclusions.	0.20+
<b>103</b>	Cut of oval posthole, with steep sides and flat base.	0.40
104	Mid grey brown to mid red brown below sandy silt. Fill of <b>103</b>	
<b>105</b>	Cut of circular posthole, 0.25m diam with steep sides and flat base	0.07
106	Mid grey brown mottled orange sandy silt. Fill of <b>105</b>	
<b>107</b>	Cut of unexcavated posthole, 0.20m diam	
108	Mid grey brown silty loam. Fill of <b>107</b>	
<b>109</b>	Cut of unexcavated posthole, 0.24m diam	
110	Mid grey brown silty loam. Fill of <b>109</b>	
<b>111</b>	Cut of unexcavated posthole, 0.30m diam	
112	Dark grey brown silty loam. Fill of <b>111</b>	
<b>113</b>	Cut of unexcavated posthole, 0.18m diam	
114	Mid grey brown silty loam. Fill of <b>113</b>	
<b>115</b>	Cut of unexcavated posthole, 0.37m diam	
116	Mid grey brown silty loam. Fill of <b>115</b>	
<b>117</b>	Cut of unexcavated ditch, aligned NE-SW, 0.80m across. See also ditch <b>202</b>	
118	Mid grey brown silty loam. Fill of <b>117</b>	

<b>Trench 2</b>	<b>Ground Level (m aOD): 168.672 (W), 168.637 (E)</b>	<b>Length 20m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
201	Modern ploughsoil. Dark grey silty clay with common sub-angular flints.	0-0.20
<b>202</b>	Cut of ditch with steep, irregular sloping sides and slightly concave base; 0.77m wide. Same as ditch <b>117</b>	0.25
203	Dark grey silty clay with irregular flints. Secondary/tertiary fill of <b>202</b>	
<b>204</b>	Cut of shallow irregular hollow; cut by <b>202</b>	0.07
205	Dark grey brown silty clay with abundant sub angular flints. Fill of <b>204</b>	
206	Dark grey silty loam with sub angular flints. Primary natural silting of <b>202</b>	
207	Dark brown fine silt subsoil	
208	Grey brown silty loam with sub angular flints. Fill of unexcavated pit <b>215</b>	
209	Dark grey brown silty clay with sub angular flints. Fill of unexcavated posthole <b>214</b>	
210	Dark grey brown silty clay with sub angular flints. Fill of unexcavated posthole <b>213</b> .	
211	Dark grey brown silty clay with mixed sub angular flint nodules. Fill of unexcavated pit <b>212</b> .	
<b>212</b>	Cut of unexcavated pit, 1.10m diam	
<b>213</b>	Cut of unexcavated posthole, 0.43m diam.	
<b>214</b>	Cut of unexcavated posthole, 0.27m diam.	
<b>215</b>	Cut of unexcavated pit, 0.90m diam.	

<b>Trench 3</b>	<b>Ground Level (m aOD): 168.635 (N), 167.455 (E)</b>	<b>Length 20m</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
301	Modern ploughsoil. Dark grey brown sandy silt loam with common flint inclusions.	0-0.31
302	Mid grey brown, mottled red silty clay subsoil at the north end with abundant flint. Mid red-dark orange silty clay and yellow silt progressively to the south. Plough truncated Pebbly sand.	0.31+
<b>303</b>	Cut of unexcavated pit, 1.20m diam.	
304	Grey brown silty loam with common sub angular flints. Fill of unexcavated pit <b>303</b>	
<b>305</b>	Cut of unexcavated pit, 1.00m diam.	
306	Mid grey brown silty loam with common sub angular flints. Fill of unexcavated pit <b>305</b>	
<b>307</b>	Cut of possible unexcavated posthole, 0.15m diam	
308	Mid grey brown silty clay, fill of unexcavated possible posthole <b>307</b>	
<b>309</b>	Cut of unexcavated posthole, 0.35m diam.	
310	Mid grey brown silty clay loam with abundant small flints. Fill of unexcavated posthole <b>309</b> .	
<b>311</b>	Cut of unexcavated pit extending from trench edge, approx 0.60m diam	
312	Dark grey brown silty sand with common sub angular flints. Fill of unexcavated pit <b>311</b> .	

Trench 4	Ground Level (m aOD): 168.672 (W), 168.637 (E)	Length 10m
Context	Description	Depth
401	Modern ploughsoil. Dark grey silty clay with mixed sub angular flints.	0-0.25
<b>402</b>	Cut of unexcavated oval feature, 0.80 x 0.50m; aligned NW-SE, extending from south edge of trench.	
403	Dark grey brown silty clay with sub angular flint nodules, NW end marked by arc of red (poss fired)clay. Fill of feature <b>402</b> .	
<b>404</b>	Cut of unexcavated possible pit, approx 0.90 m diam	
405	Dark grey brown silty clay fill, with sub angular flints especially around rim, of unexcavated possible pit <b>404</b>	
406	Dark brown/dark grey brown silty clay with sub angular flints. Possible remnant of unploughed subsoil/sorted horizon with occupation debris.	
407	Very dark grey brown, circular area of charcoal rich silty clay, approx 0.45m diam, within 406. Possible top of posthole.	
408	Layer of medium/dark brown silty clay, possibly top of natural exposed by ploughing.	
409	Layer of dark grey brown silty clay with sub angular densely packed flints, possibly extended part of subsoil. Overlies 410.	
410	Layer of dark grey brown silty clay with sub rounded weathered chalk lumps. Layer overlain by 409.	
411	Dark grey/dark grey brown silty clay with sub angular flints and dense concentration of pottery and charcoal in arc around south edge of possible unexcavated pit <b>419</b>	
412	Dark brown silty clay with sub angular flints, the latter in arc adjoining 411, defining top of possible unexcavated pit <b>419</b>	
413	Layer of dark brown/dark grey brown silty clay with fractured flint, some burnt, plentiful. Arc of charcoal extends south from 411. Activity around pit <b>419</b> or fill of underlying feature	
414	Layer of dark brown silty clay; base of ploughsoil or top of subsoil as 406.	
415	Very dark brown silty clay, possibly, as 413, activity around unexcavated pit <b>420</b> or filling of unrecognised feature.	

416	Dark grey brown silty clay with sub angular flints around stone-free core. Charcoal plentiful. Fill of unexcavated pit <b>420</b>	
417	Grey brown silty clay with flint nodules, especially along edges of central core, filling unexamined possible wall foundation/ditch <b>421</b> .	
418	Grey brown silty clay with sub angular flints filling unexcavated possible pit <b>418</b> .	
419	Cut of unexcavated possible pit	
420	Cut of unexcavated possible pit. Cuts possible wall foundation/ditch <b>421</b> .	
421	Cut of unexcavated possible wall foundation/ditch. Cut by pit <b>420</b> .	
422	Cut of unexcavated possible pit. Extends only 0.25m from south end of trench.	



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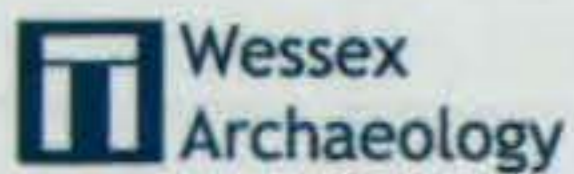
Site and trench location plan

Figure 1





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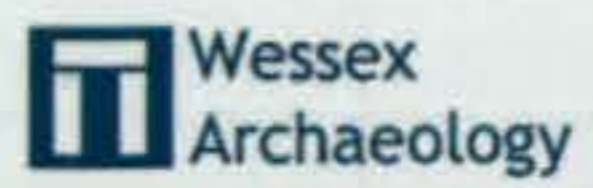
Evaluation trenches with geophysical survey results

Figure 2



- Evaluation trench
- Scarp
- Probable bank

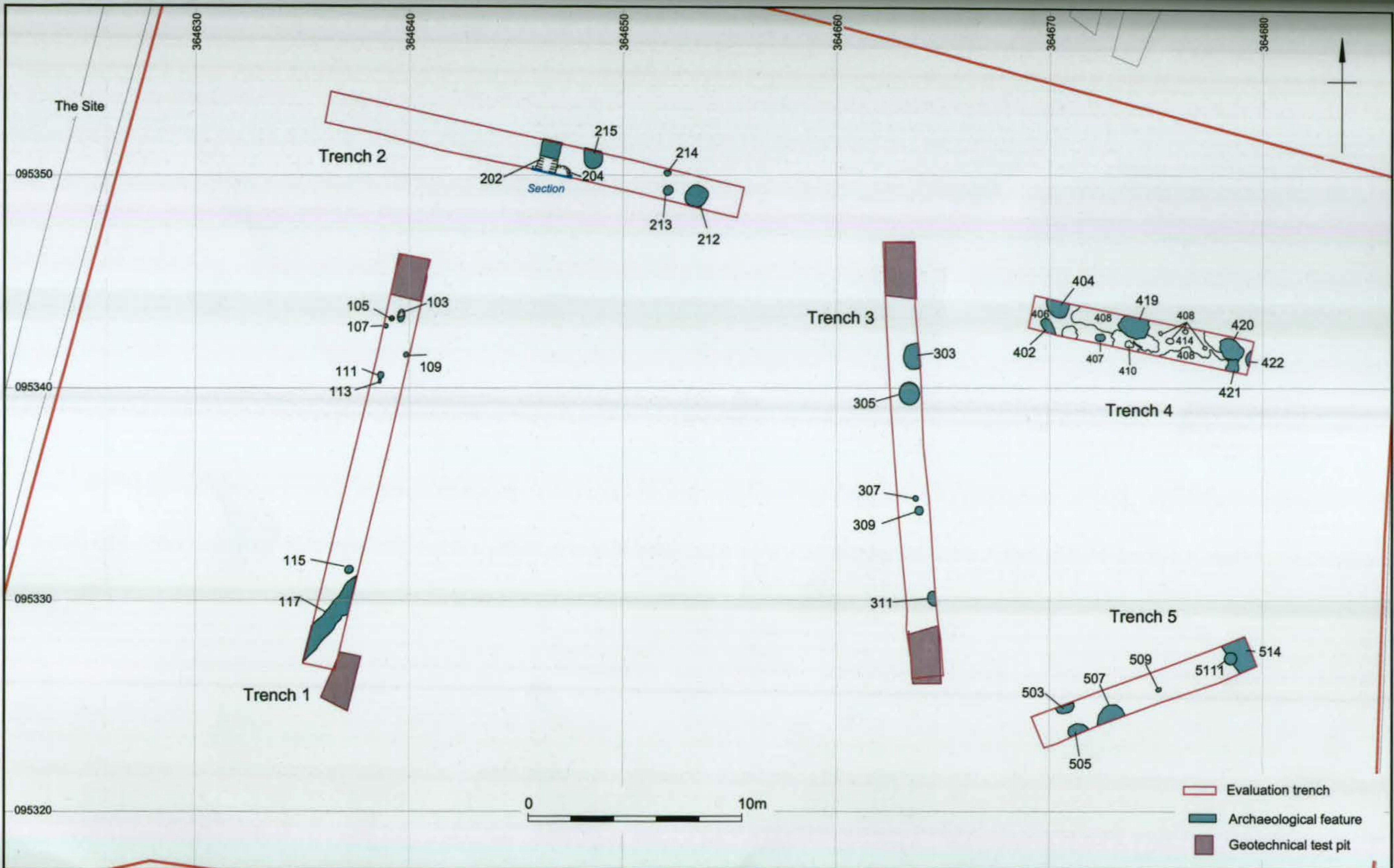
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Evaluation trenches with RCHME earthworks

Figure 3



Detail plan of evaluation trenches

Figure 4



Plate 1: Trench 1 viewed from the north



Plate 2: Trench 3 viewed from the north

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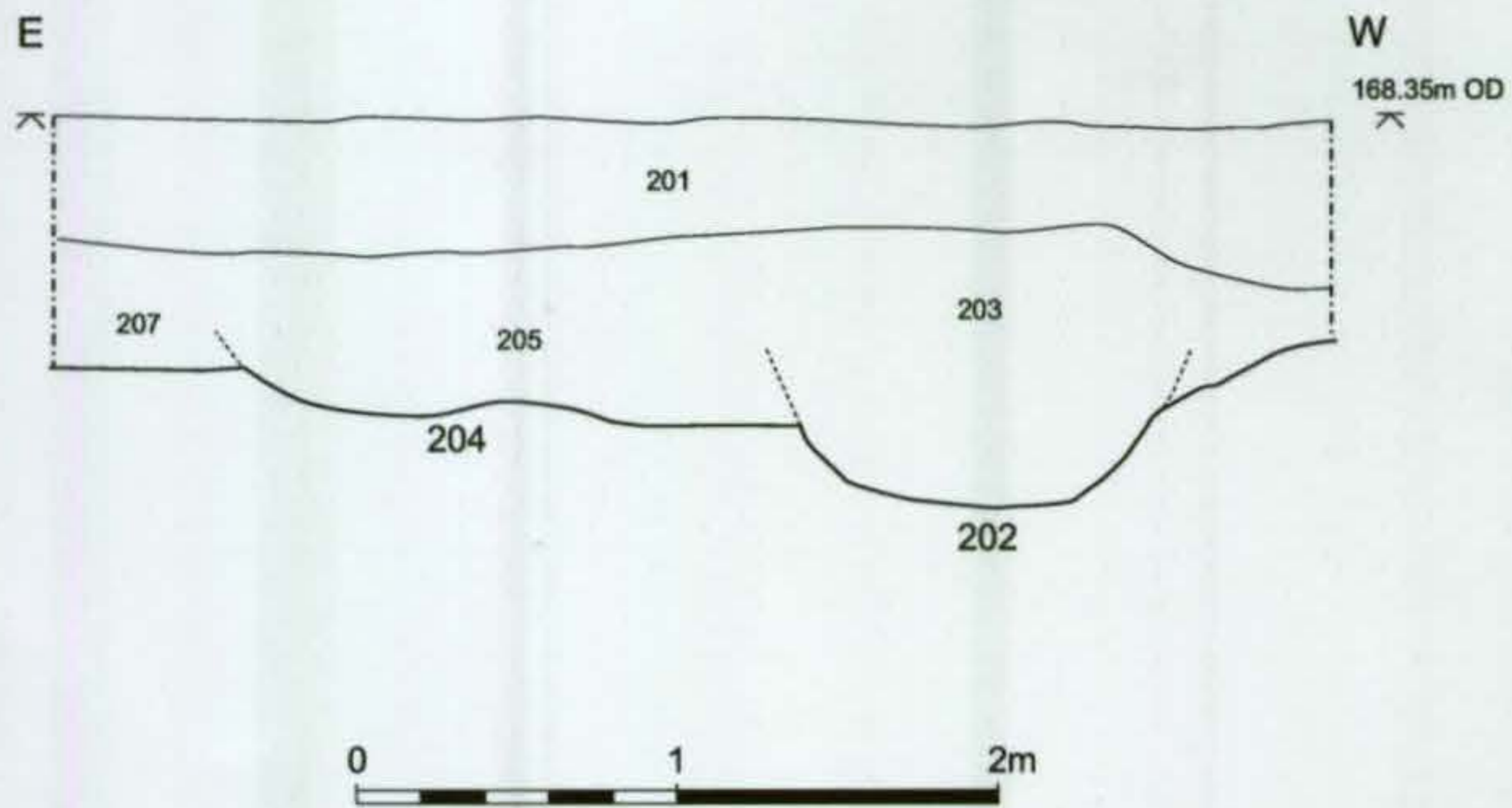


Plate 3: Ditch 202 & feature 204

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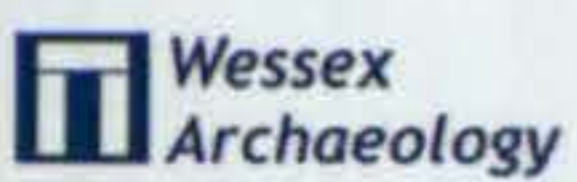




Plate 4: Trench 4 viewed from the north



Plate 5: Trench 5 viewed from the north

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