



**Land West of Combe Hayes
Sidmouth
Devon**

Archaeological Evaluation

for
CgMs Consulting


CA Project: 4402
CA Report: 13480

August 2013

Land West of Combe Hayes
Sidmouth
Devon

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CA Project: 4402
CA Report: 13480

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date	12 August 2013
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signed	12 August 2013 
date	
issue	02

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land West of Combe Hayes
Location:	Sidmouth, Devon
NGR:	SY 1255 8968
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	22-25 July 2013
Planning Reference:	12/2452/MFUL
Location of Archive:	Royal Albert Memorial Museum
Accession Number:	Pending
Site Code:	CBE 13

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in July 2013 at land west of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth, Devon. Eight trenches were excavated.

A large shallow feature, probably representing a naturally infilled combe or hollow, was identified in the south-western corner of the site. A highly abraded sherd of possible Bronze Age pottery and a worked flint flake were recovered from the surface of this feature, although they are likely to be residual.

An undated pit/posthole was identified to the south of the site. An undated ditch, probably relating to land management and/or division was identified towards the north-eastern corner of the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 2013 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for CgMs Consulting at land west of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth, Devon (centred on NGR: SY 1255 8968; Fig. 1). Planning permission for residential development has been granted by East Devon District Council (EDDC) (ref: 12/2452/MFUL), with a condition (no. 3) attached: *No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out at all times in strict accordance with the approved scheme, or such other details as may be subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.* Stephen Reed, Archaeologist, Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET), the archaeological advisors to EDDC, required that archaeological work would commence with the excavation of a series of evaluative trenches to determine the nature and extent of the survival of archaeological deposits within the area affected by the proposed development.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Cotswold Archaeology (2013) and approved by Mr Reed. The evaluation also followed the *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2009), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006). It was monitored by Mr Reed, including a site visit on 23 July 2013.

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development area encloses an area of approximately 0.8ha, and comprises undeveloped land, with some scrub and tree growth, surrounded by hedgerows. The site is surrounded by residential properties, fronting onto Lower Wheathill to the north, Sidford High Street to the south, Bramble Close and Combe Hayes to the east and a new residential development to the west. Ground level slopes down across the site from north to south and to the south-western corner, dropping from c. 78m AOD in the north to c. 67m AOD in the south.

- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Sidmouth Mudstone Formation of the Triassic Period (BGS 2013), overlain by Superficial deposits of Head (Clay, Silt, Sand And Gravel) of the Quaternary Period.

Archaeological background

- 1.5 A search was carried out of Devon County Council Historic Environment Record (HER), with a search area of 500m radius from the site. A geophysical survey was carried out on land at Stowford Rise, adjacent to the west and south-west of the current site, which identified anomalies of potential archaeological origin; this was followed by trial trench evaluation and a watching brief during geotechnical investigations HER refs EDV 5073; 5074; 5149; 5150; MDV 80086; 80407) The evaluation identified a large concentration of archaeological features in one trench, comprising postholes, stakeholes, pits and ditches/gullies, which were cut through a subsoil layer. The pottery recovered from the features and subsoil indicate a date of around the end of the late Bronze Age and beginning of the early Iron Age (circa 900-600 BC). Features contained large quantities of charcoal, daub and fired clay. The processing and subsequent scanning of bulk soil samples from some features indicated the survival of smaller artefacts and ecofacts, including worked flint chips, carbonised grain, burnt bone and snails. The watching brief recovered prehistoric worked flint. The features and deposits appear to relate to a small prehistoric settlement of at least one structure, but no coherent plan of the group of features could be established, although there were indications of formal alignments of postholes. There was no evidence of a ditch enclosure to the settlement remains and the settlement appears to be confined to a broadly level east-west terrace approximately 50 metres by 45 metres, although it may extend further to the west into an area where access was not possible. The evaluation also identified one medieval and one undated (probably medieval) ditch. No other archaeological remains are recorded within the HER search area.

Archaeological objectives

- 1.6 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality. In accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2009), the evaluation has been designed to be minimally intrusive and minimally destructive to archaeological remains. The information gathered will enable DCCHET to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of

the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

Methodology

- 1.7 The fieldwork initially comprised the excavation of six trenches, each measuring 1.8m in width and 30m in length, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Following on-site discussions with Mr Reed two further trenches, 4b and 4c, were excavated to further investigate the extent of ditch 403 (identified in Trench 4a). Both Trenches 4b and 4c measured 3m in length and 1.8m in width. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* (2012).
- 1.8 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.9 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003). No deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (1995).
- 1.10 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (accession number pending), along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 2.2 The natural geological substrate within the excavated trenches comprised mid red brown silt clay with abundant flint patches. In Trenches 1-4 and 6 this was overlain by between 0.2m and 0.75m thickness of subsoil (101, 201, 301, 401 and 601) which was itself overlain by between 0.3m and 0.4m of modern topsoil and turf (100, 200, 300, 400 and 600). In the southern third of Trench 5 the natural geological substrate was overlain by c.0.55m of sterile mid grey brown silt clay deposit, probably representing an episode of colluviation 501, which was itself directly overlain by 0.35m of modern topsoil and turf 500.
- 2.3 All identified archaeological features cut the natural substrate. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in Trenches 1 and 5.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 3)

- 2.3 A north-south aligned feature 203 (measuring c13.5m wide by >1.8m long by >1m deep) was identified towards the centre of the trench. It had a shallow 'U'-shaped profile and was filled by silt clay deposit 204, which appeared to have formed as part of a process of natural silting. An abraded sherd of possible Bronze Age pottery and a broken flint flake were recovered from the surface of this deposit.
- 2.4 The wide, shallow nature of this feature along with the relatively sterile nature of its fill suggests that it represents an infilled combe or natural hollow. It corresponds closely with a shallow depression still partially visible in the field and appears to be a continuation of feature 303 and 605, identified in Trenches 3 and 6 respectively.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

- 2.5 Feature 303 was partially exposed at the north-western end of the trench where it measured 5m in width. It remained unexcavated following discussions with Mr Reed and no finds were recovered from the surface of this feature. It is likely that this feature represents a continuation of probable infilled combe or natural hollow 203 and 605, identified in Trenches 2 and 6 respectively.

Trench 4a (Figs 2 & 4)

- 2.6 A north-west/south-east aligned ditch 403 (measuring c1.15m wide by >1.8m long by 0.4m deep) was identified towards the eastern end of the trench. It had an irregular profile and contained a single undated fill, 404. It is likely that this feature represents a continuation of ditch 408 and 413 identified in Trenches 4b and 4c respectively.

Trench 4b (Fig. 2)

- 2.7 A north-west/south-east aligned ditch 408 was identified in the centre of the trench. It remained unexcavated following discussions with Mr Reed and no finds were recovered from the surface of this feature. It is likely that this feature represents a continuation of ditch 403 and 413 identified in Trenches 4a and 4c respectively.

Trench 4c (Fig. 2)

- 2.8 A north-west/south-east aligned ditch 413 was identified in the centre of the trench. It remained unexcavated following discussions with Mr Reed and no finds were recovered from the surface of this feature. It is likely that this feature represents a continuation of ditch 403 and 408 identified in Trenches 4a and 4b respectively.

Trench 6 (Figs 2 & 5)

- 2.9 A circular pit/posthole 603 (measuring c.0.2m wide by 0.16m long by 0.07m deep) was identified towards the north-eastern end of the trench. It had a shallow bowl-shaped profile and contained a single undated fill, 604.
- 2.10 Feature 605 (measuring >1.8m wide by >2.8m long) was partially exposed at the south-western end of the trench. It remained unexcavated and no finds were recovered from the surface of this feature. It is likely that this feature represents a continuation of probable infilled combe or natural hollow 203 and 303, identified in Trenches 2 and 3 respectively.

The finds

- 2.6 The finds recovered from the evaluation are summarised in Appendix B. The pottery assemblage consisted of a single herd of possible Bronze Age pottery recovered from fill 204 of possible combe 203. A single piece of worked flint was also

recovered from this deposit, though both were located at the deposit surface and may be intrusive.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 The evaluation has identified a small number of archaeological features within the proposed development area. These features were confined to Trenches 2, 3, 4 and 6.

3.2 The recovery of a single sherd of possible Bronze Age pottery and a worked flint from the fill of probable infilled combe/natural hollow 203/303/605, identified in Trenches 2, 3 and 6 respectively, represent the only artefacts recovered. The abraded nature, location of recovery and limited quantity of the finds suggest that they are residual and have made their way into the feature via natural processes.

3.3 Despite the close proximity of possible Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age settlement, no evidence of further prehistoric activity was exposed by the current evaluation.

3.4 Undated ditch 403/408/413 and undated pit/posthole 603 were identified in Trenches 4a/4b/4c and 6 respectively. Due to their isolated nature the exact function of these features remains unclear. However, ditch 403/408/413 is likely to relate to medieval or post medieval land management and/or division and its north-west/south-east alignment correlates closely with the general pattern of fields shown on the 1889 first edition OS map. This general field alignment appears to have been present until the recent residential development of the area.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Steven Sheldon, assisted by Luke Brannlund and Alex Thompson. The report was written by Steven Sheldon. The finds report was written by Jacky Summerville. The illustrations were prepared by Dan Bashford. The archive has been compiled by Steven Sheldon, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Ian Barnes.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2011 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 26 July 2013

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013 *Land West of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.4	
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.4	
1	102	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid red brown silt clay with abundant flint patches	>30	>1.8	>0.1	
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.3	
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.75	
2	202	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid red brown silt clay with abundant flint patches	>30	>1.8	>0.2	
2	203	Cut		Infilled combe/natural hollow	N/S combe or natural hollow	>1.8	13.5	1	
2	204	Fill	203	Fill	Mid grey brown silt clay with frequent flint nodules and rare charcoal flecks	>1.8	13.5	1	
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.3	
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.2	
3	302	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid red brown silt clay with abundant flint patches	>30	>1.8	>0.1	
3	303	Cut		Infilled combe/natural hollow	NE/SW combe or natural hollow	>1.8	5	N/A	
3	304	Fill	303	Fill	Mid grey brown silt clay with frequent flint nodules and rare charcoal flecks	>1.8	5	N/A	
4a	400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.3	
4a	401	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.3	
4a	402	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid red brown silt clay with abundant flint patches	>30	>1.8	>0.05	
4a	403	Cut		Ditch	NW/SE ditch	>1.8	1.15	0.4	
4a	404	Fill	403	Fill	Mid grey brown silt clay with occasional charcoal fleck inclusions	>1.8	1.15	0.4	
4b	405	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.4	
4b	406	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.3	
4b	407	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid red brown silt clay with abundant flint patches	>30	>1.8	>0.05	
4b	408	Cut		Ditch	NW/SE ditch	>1.8	1.05	N/A	
4b	409	Fill	408	Fill	Mid grey brown silt clay with occasional charcoal fleck inclusions	>1.8	1.05	N/A	
4c	410	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.4	
4c	411	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.4	
4c	412	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid red brown silt clay with abundant flint patches	>30	>1.8	>0.1	
4c	413	Cut		Ditch	NW/SE ditch	>1.8	1.02	N/A	
4c	414	Fill	413	Fill	Mid grey brown silt clay with occasional charcoal fleck inclusions	>1.8	1.02	N/A	
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.35	
5	501	Layer		Colluvium	Sterile, homogenous mid grey brown silt clay. Present in the southern third of Trench 5	>12	>1.8	0.55	
5	502	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid red brown silt clay with abundant flint patches	>30	>1.8	>0.5	
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.3	
6	601	Layer		Subsoil	Mid orange brown clay silt	>30	>1.8	0.1	
6	602	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid red brown silt clay with abundant flint patches	>30	>1.8	>0.2	

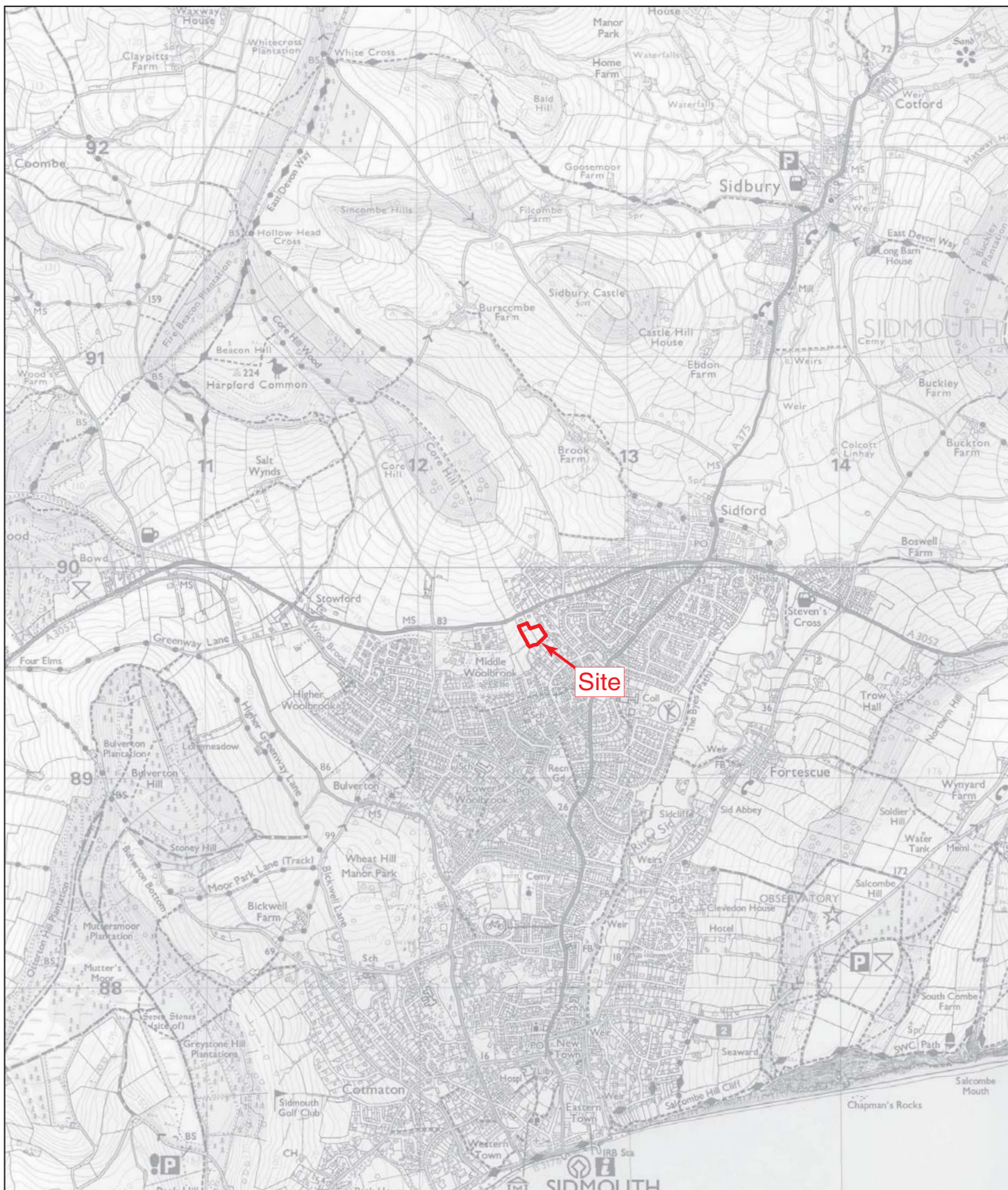
Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
6	603	Cut		Pit/posthole	Small pit/posthole	0.2	0.16	0.07	
6	604	Fill	603	Single fill of pit/posthole 603	Dark grey brown silt clay with occasional angular flint inclusions and rare charcoal flecks	0.2	0.16	0.07	
6	605	Cut		Infilled combe/natural hollow	NE/SW combe or natural hollow	>1.8	>2.8	N/A	
6	606	Fill	605	Fill	Mid grey brown silt clay with frequent flint nodules and rare charcoal flecks	>1.8	>2.8	N/A	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Material	Count	Weight	Date	Comments
204	Pottery	1	3	Bronze Age?	
204	Worked flint	1	2	Prehistoric	Flake fragment

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land West of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth, Devon	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in July 2013 at land west of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth, Devon. Eight trenches were excavated.</p> <p>A large shallow feature, probably representing a naturally infilled combe or hollow, was identified in the south-western corner of the site. A highly abraded sherd of possible Bronze Age pottery and a worked flint flake were recovered from the surface of this feature, although they are likely to be residual.</p> <p>An undated pit/posthole was identified to the south of the site. An undated ditch, probably relating to land management and/or division was identified towards the north-eastern corner of the site.</p>	
Project dates	22-25 July 2013	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Land West of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth, Devon	
Study area	0.8ha	
Site co-ordinates	SY 1255 8968	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ian Barnes	
Project Supervisor	Steven Sheldon	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content
Physical	Royal Albert Memorial Museum	Pottery and flint
Paper	Royal Albert Memorial Museum	Trench recording forms, context sheets, section drawings, photographic registers, B&W photographs
Digital	Archaeological Data Service	Site archive records
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013 <i>Land West of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth, Devon: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 13480		



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PROJECT TITLE

Land West of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth
Devon

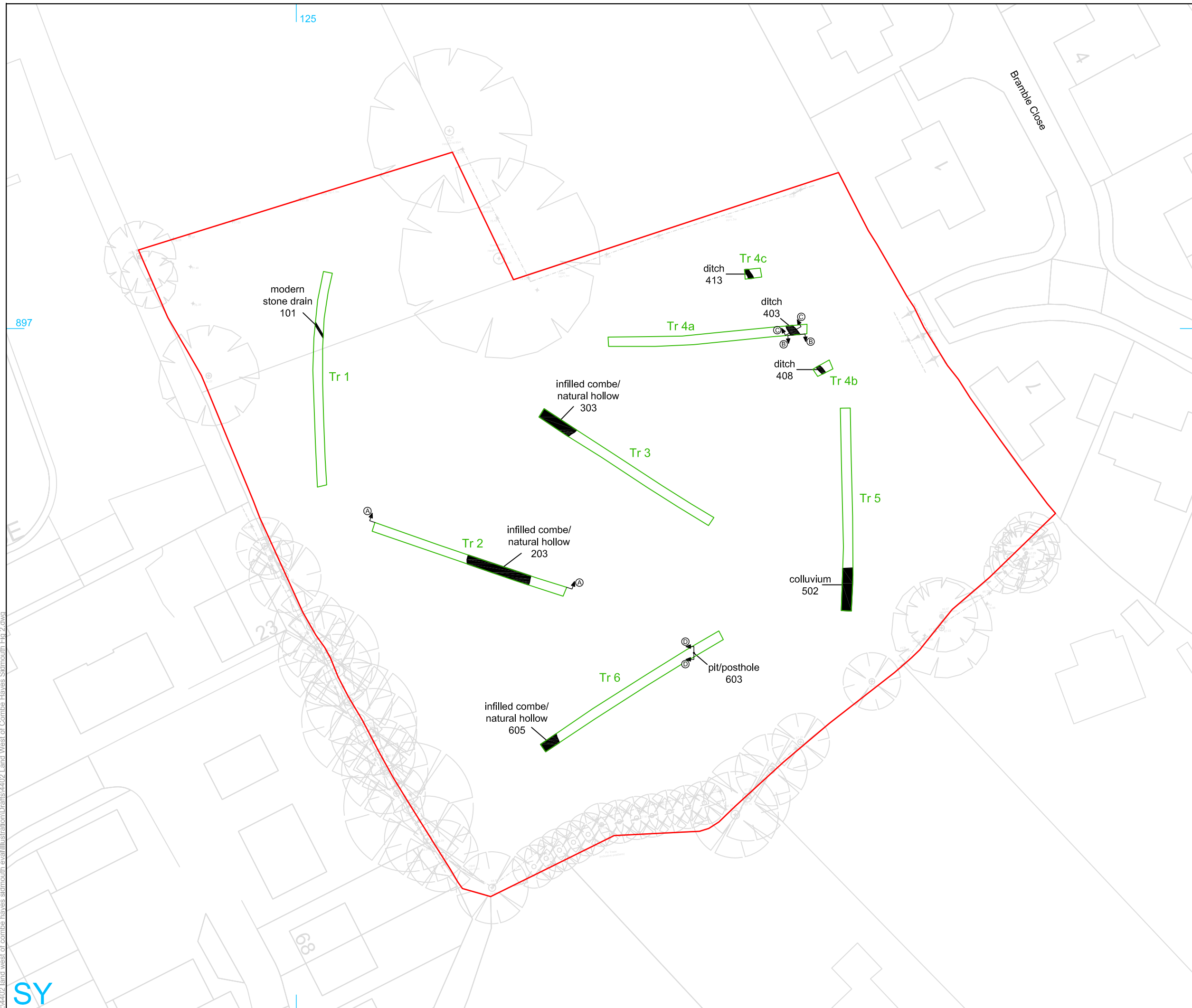
FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

PROJECT NO. 4402 DATE 05-08-2013
DRAWN BY DJB REVISION 00
APPROVED BY PJM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1



- ▬ site
- ▬ evaluation trench
- ▬ archaeological feature



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PROJECT TITLE
 Land West of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth Devon

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan, showing archaeological features

PROJECT NO.	4402	DATE	05-08-2013	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY	DJB	REVISION	00	2
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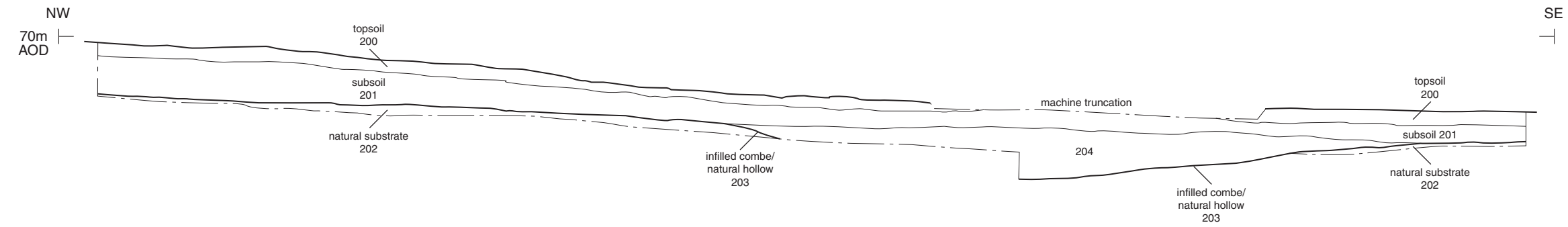
P:\4402 land west of combe hayes sidmouth evaluation\Illustration\Drafts\4402 Land West of Combe Hayes Sidmouth Fig 2.dwg



Trench 2, plan



Trench 2, Section AA



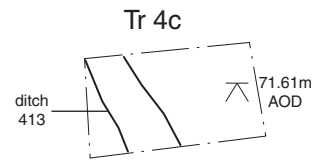
Infilled combe/natural hollow 203, looking north-west (scales 1m)

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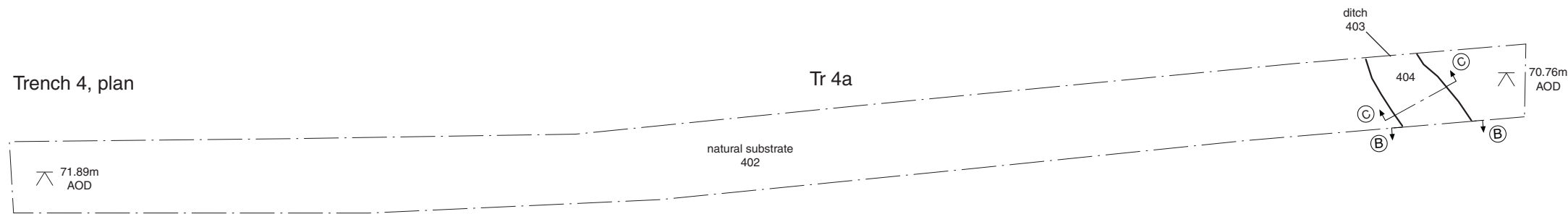
PROJECT TITLE
Land West of Combe Hayes, Sidmouth Devon

FIGURE TITLE
Trench 2: plan, section and photograph

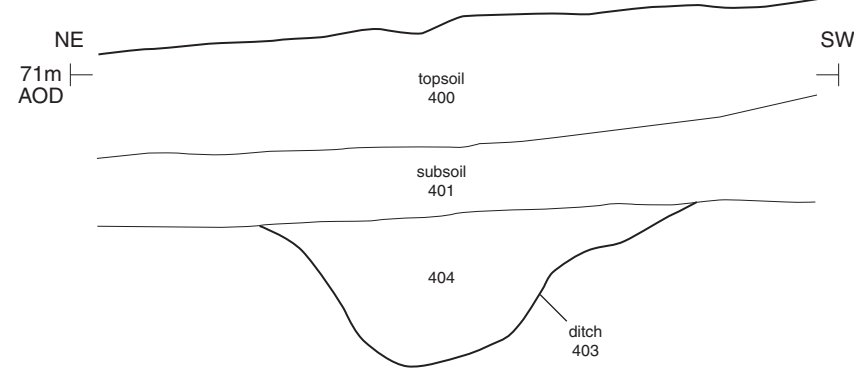
PROJECT NO. 4402	DATE 05-08-2013	FIGURE NO.
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APPROVED BY PJM	SCALE@A3 1:100	



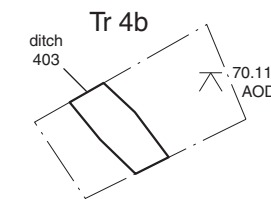
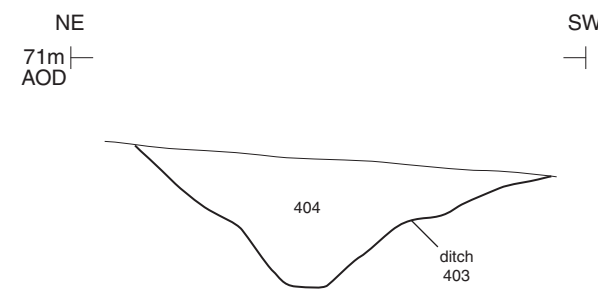
Trench 4, plan



Trench 4, Section BB



Trench 4, Section CC



Ditch 403, looking south (scale 1m)

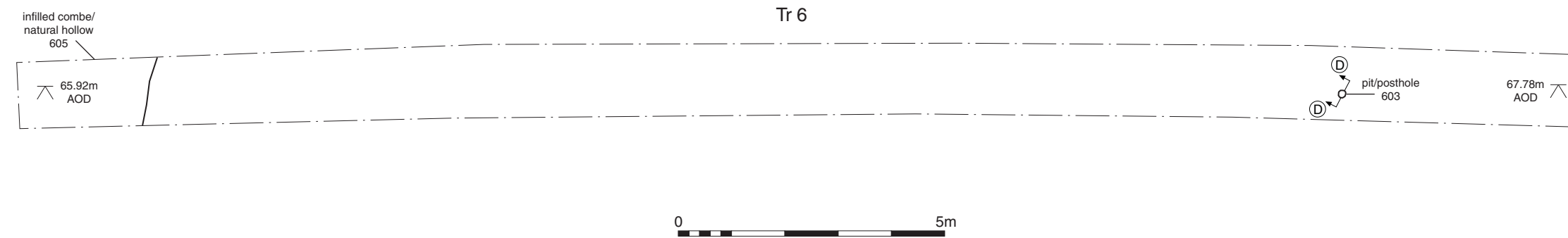
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PROJECT TITLE
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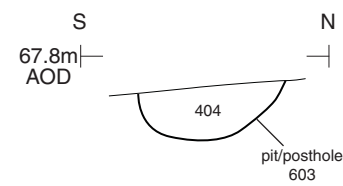
FIGURE TITLE
Trench 4: plan, sections and
photograph

PROJECT NO. 4402 DATE 05-08-2013 FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY DJB REVISION 00
APPROVED BY PJM SCALE@A3 1:100 & 1:20 4

Trench 6, plan



Trench 4,
Section DD



Pit/posthole 603, looking south-south-west (scale 0.1m)