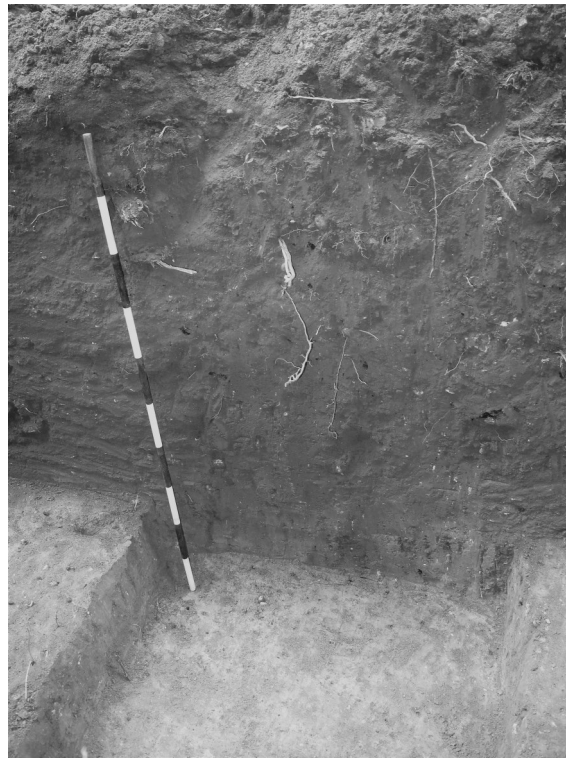


**18 Sandhurst Road,  
Kingsholm, Gloucester**

**Report on Archaeological Evaluation**

Gloucester City Council Planning Ref: 19/00292/FUL

NGR SO 83464 19711



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**Avon Archaeology Limited**  
Bristol: July 2019



## SUMMARY

*An Archaeological Evaluation was carried out by Avon Archaeology Limited in June 2019 on land at No. 18 Sandhurst Road, Kingsholm, Gloucester. The evaluation excavated a single 5 x 1.4m trench. The project was requested by the archaeological officer for Gloucester City Council, in order to mitigate for the fact that a conditioned Watching Brief, which was intended to monitor groundworks during construction of an extension to Number 18 Sandhurst Road, was unfortunately not implemented.*

*The project was designed to explore the depositional sequence of the site, characterise the archaeological potential of the site, and test for the presence or absence of archaeology, particularly in the context of the Kingsholm Roman Legionary Fort, within in which the site falls.*

*The trench was excavated to a maximum safe depth of 1.2m. In a change to the intended location it was excavated to the north of the extension, running east to west. No archaeological features were present with the excavated material comprising largely mixed post-medieval made ground. Two sherds of abraded pottery, probably medieval in date, were recovered from a buried subsoil towards the base of the trench.*

*It was also noted that the site is approximately 1.2m higher than the surrounding street level, which could indicate that the ground has been raised.*

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Avon Archaeology Limited wishes to acknowledge the assistance given during the project by the following: Andrew Armstrong, City Archaeologist for Gloucester.

## NOTES

Whereas Avon Archaeology Limited have taken all care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AAL	Avon Archaeology Ltd
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum
NGR	National Grid Reference
OS	Ordnance Survey

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This report details the results of an Archaeological Evaluation carried out by Avon Archaeology Limited at No. 18 Sandhurst Road, Kingsholm, Gloucester. The project was requested by the archaeological officer for Gloucester City Council, and was required in order to discharge a planning condition attached to an application to construct a two story extension to the property (application ref: 19/00292/FUL).

The planning condition required that an archaeological Watching Brief was maintained during the development groundworks. Unfortunately this was not implemented. In response the archaeological officer of Gloucester City Council required this Evaluation Project to discharge the condition.

## **2 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site lies approximately 0.9km north of the centre of Gloucester (centred on NGR SO 83464 19711). It is bound by St Oswald's Road to the north, by the rear gardens of No. 63 Tewkesbury Road to the east, by No. 16 Sandhurst Road to the south, and to the west by Sandhurst Road. Topographically the site lies at approximately 12.5m aOD.

The solid geology underlying the site consists of Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (undifferentiated) – Mudstone. It is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 185 to 204 million years ago during the Jurassic and Triassic periods when the local environment would have been one of warm shallow lime-mud rich seas. Superficial sands and gravel (Cheltenham Sand and Gravel) deposits seal the solid geology. They were formed up to 3 million years ago in the quaternary period and generally comprise coarse to fine grained materials (BGS).

Kingsholm was designated a Conservation Area (conservation Area No. 13) in 2006/7 to recognise the distinctive architectural and historic character of the whole area.

## **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND DOCUMENTARY BACKGROUND**

The sheer quantity of information relating to the history of the city of Gloucester, much of it underpinned by the results of archaeological work, is such that what is presented here can, almost by definition, represent only the most summary account of the most salient points.

The early history of Gloucester is defined by its origins as a Roman town, itself originating as a legionary fortress. The strategic importance of a river crossing, and the need for a command point in the general area which could control access to it, was recognised early on during the Roman conquest and pacification of lowland Britain; this, at least, seems clearly to be the imperative behind the establishment of a legionary fortress at Kingsholm, slightly to the north of Gloucester, perhaps as early as the late 40s or early 50s AD (Wacher 1995, 150).

There is a suggestion, indeed, that the choice of this specific site for this early fortress may owe something to the presence of a pre-existing late Iron Age settlement, but the indications are extremely vague, and if such a settlement did exist at Kingsholm, its nature and extent are entirely problematic (Hurst 2005, 299). It seems also to have been the case that the western defences of the Kingsholm fort were sited very close to the eastern bank of the former course of the Severn (McWhirr 1981, 11-12).

By the mid 60's AD, a legionary fortress had been established on the site which was later to become the *colonia* of Glevum, and it is likely that the Kingsholm site was abandoned by this time (McWhirr 1981, 14), although Hurst has suggested recently that there may have been a military presence on the Gloucester site before the Kingsholm fort ceased to operate (Hurst 2005, 299, fn7). The new fort at Gloucester enclosed an area of just over 17ha, and was provided with defences consisting entirely of earthen ramparts and ditches. Surprisingly little is known about the internal nature of the fortress, although in terms of general layout and the provision and design of barrack blocks, gates, *principia* and ancillary buildings, it seems in essence to have conformed to the 'standard' Roman model, so far as this can be defined (McWhirr 1981, 14-19; de la Bedoyere 2001, 40-85).

The life of the fortress as a military installation was, however, relatively short, for it seems to have lost that function by, at the latest, the late 70s AD, and thereafter supported civilian occupation at a fairly low level, until its formal elevation to the status of *colonia*, or colony for retired army veterans, probably during the short rule of the Emperor Nerva (96-98AD).

In the late first or early second century, a narrow stone wall, probably intended to act as little more than a revetment, was cut into the front of the old fortress rampart along its entire circuit, and this marked the first phase in 'monumentalising' the defences of the civilian town. Barrack blocks were eventually replaced with dwellings and other buildings, although to date, the plan of only a single large town house, of mid second century date, is known with any certainty, on a site at Berkeley Street (Wacher 1995, 156-157). It is nonetheless clear that the second century was a time of extensive rebuilding and expansion, and that some of this was achieved by the amalgamation of a number of previously separate, smaller plots.

The proposed development lies just over 200m from the northern boundary of the Kingsholm fortress. A Roman bank and ditch were recorded during previous work along the western side of Sandhurst Road, as was Roman occupation between Nos. 5 and 17 Sandhurst Road. No. 18 Sandhurst Road is surrounded by a large number of Roman artefact find spots, and two Roman burials have been discovered within 10m to the north. There is also a Roman cemetery located on the south side of Denmark Road, approximately 450m south east. Romano British activity is well-attested in the area; everything from remains of structures, to ditches and pits, pottery, glass coins and other metal objects have been found in the vicinity (see [www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk) or [www.kypwest.org.uk](http://www.kypwest.org.uk) for more information) .

Archaeological evaluations have been carried out close to the site in recent years on the Civil Service Community Sports Ground (Cotswold Archaeology 2012 and 2014), the rear garden of No. 102 Kingsholm Road (Heaton 2016), and the rear garden of No. 96 Kingsholm Road (Heaton 2018). All three sites produced evidence of post medieval gravel extraction, represented by numerous, broad, flat based pits. Significant amounts of Romano British pottery and other artefacts were retrieved from the backfill of the pits. The presence of the residual Roman material attests to the existence of Roman activity, which may have been impacted upon by the subsequent quarrying during the post medieval/modern periods.

Available maps show gradual development along the route of Sandhurst Road, which was only fully lined with buildings from the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The site is shown on maps as open land and an allotment until it was divided into the current plots and housing built along Sandhurst Road, *circa* 1930.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The original archaeological planning condition required a Watching Brief to be maintained during development groundworks. Unfortunately the groundworks were undertaken without archaeological monitoring, which resulted in the Archaeological Officer for Gloucester City Council imposing a retrospective evaluation of the site. A single trench was excavated in order to characterise any archaeological deposits or features which may have been damaged or destroyed during the development.

The standards and guidelines set out in MoRPHE (Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment), and the relevant guidelines issued by the Institute for Archaeology, were followed during the project.

The trench was opened using a mechanical excavator to the first significant archaeological or geological deposit. The Avon Archaeology Limited single context recording system (AAL,

2013) was used to create written records of all features and stratigraphic units. Provision was made for plans and sections to be drawn at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10, however, in practice, the trench was planned and located using a survey grade GPS unit, which was also used to take levels.

## 5 RESULTS

### Introduction

The evaluation trench was opened and excavated primarily by machine, under close archaeological supervision. The trench was then cleaned by hand and a small, hand-excavated intervention was made at the base of the trench.

Refer to **Appendix 1** for the Table of Contexts.

### Description

A natural clay substrate, context (103), was reached at a minimum depth of 1.2m from the top of the current ground level, approximately 11.35m aOD. This was overlain by a dark yellowish brown sandy clay deposit, context (102), which had a diffuse interface with the underlying natural geology. Two sherds of abraded medieval pottery were recovered from this deposit.

Overlying context (102) was a homogenous deposit, approximately 650mm thick, composed of mid greyish brown sandy silt, context (101). No finds were recovered from this deposit. This was in-turn overlain by modern topsoil and turf.

## 6 FINDS

Two sherds of abraded pottery were recovered during the excavation, from context (102). The sherds appear to derive from the same vessel: wheel made of an unglazed, light orange fabric. The external surface has a sooty residue. It was probably a medieval cooking vessel. (Dr Alejandra Gutierrez, pers comm).

Context	Weight	Description
102	12	Unglazed, heavily abraded. Probably medieval
102	6	Unglazed, heavily abraded. Probably medieval



## **7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The evaluation revealed little interesting archaeology. The lowest archaeological deposit encountered, context (102), probably represents a buried agricultural soil, which predated the construction of the surrounding housing. The overlying context, (101), undoubtedly relates to the construction of No. 18 Sandhurst Road, and most likely reflects a single dumping episode to level the site prior to the construction of the property.

It is unlikely that the development has impacted upon any significant archaeological features or deposits, as the foundations did not extend below the depth to which the archaeological trench was excavated, within which no significant archaeology was encountered.

It remains possible that archaeological features survive at a greater depth, or elsewhere on the site.

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## APPENDIX 1

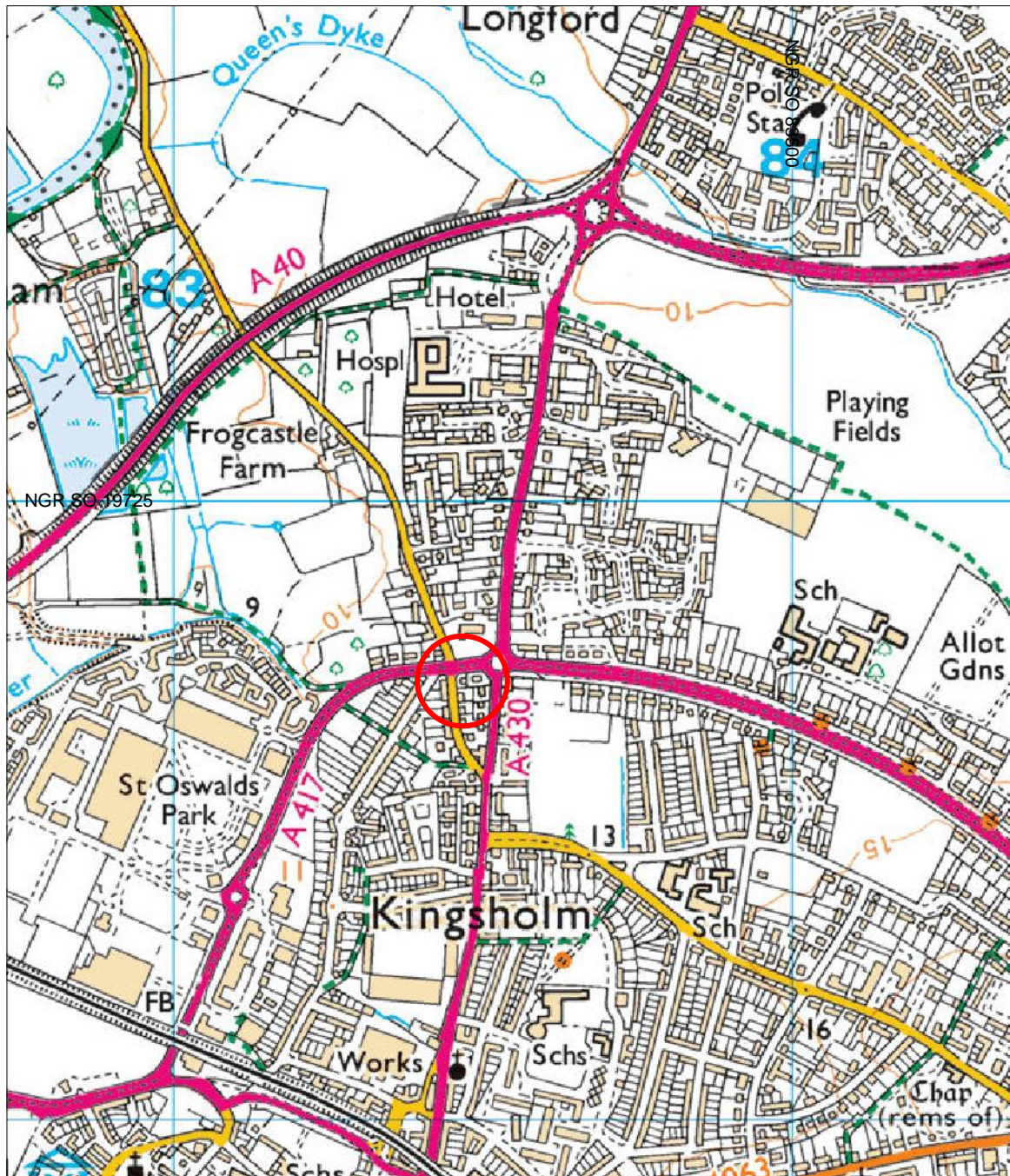
### Table of Contexts

<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>
100	Deposit	Dark brown, soft sandy silt, considerable root action. Identified as topsoil. Throughout the trench	0.31m thick
101	Deposit	Mid grey brown sandy silt. Dump levelling deposit, c. 1920s/1930s. Throughout the trench.	0.65m thick
102	Deposit	Dark yellowish brown, sandy clay. Buried subsoil. Throughout the trench	0.18m thick
103	Deposit	Mid yellowish brown, clay. Natural substrate	N/A

Figure 1



Site Location Map



Not to Scale



Figure 2



Site Plan with Location of the Archaeological Trench

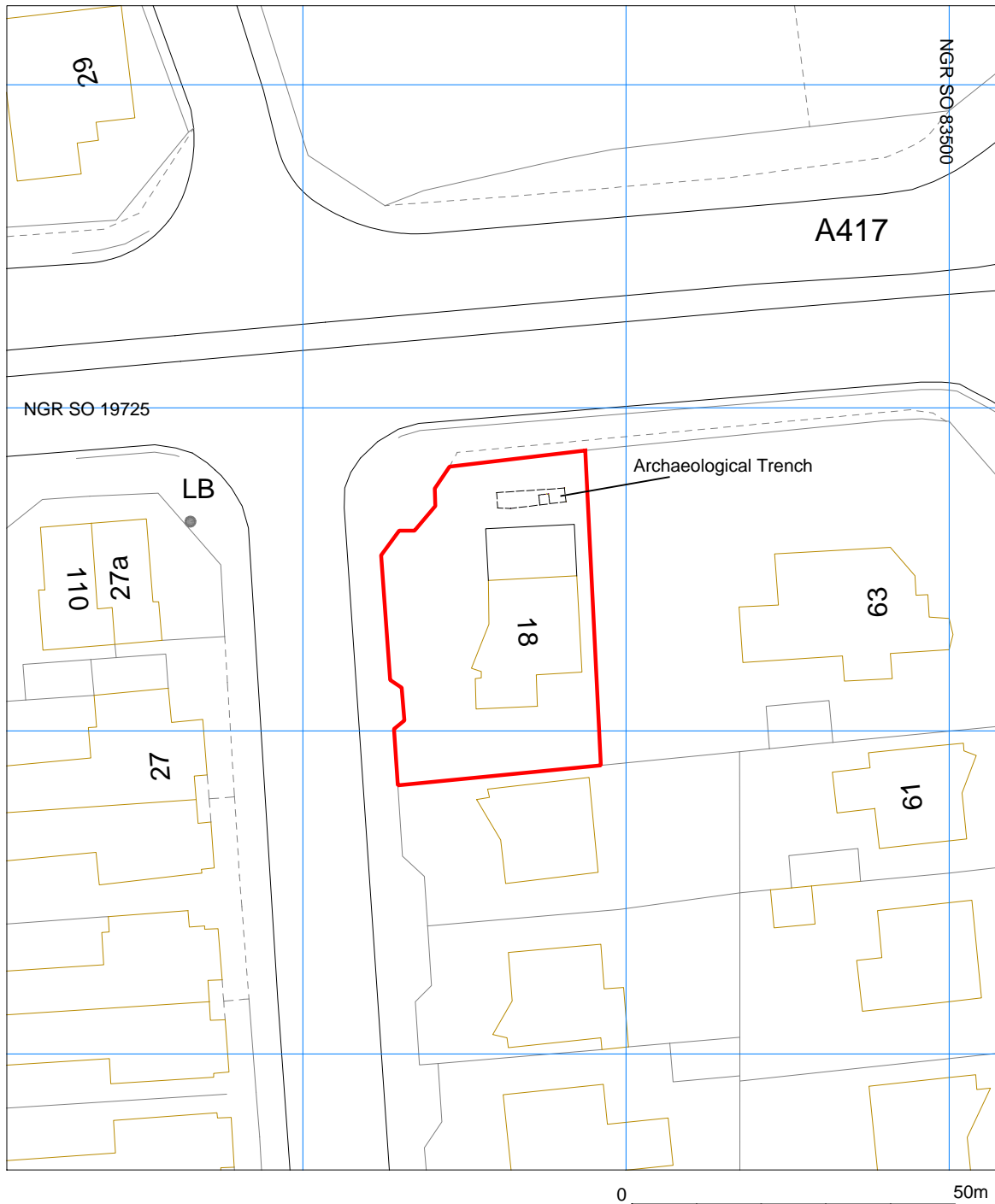


Figure 3

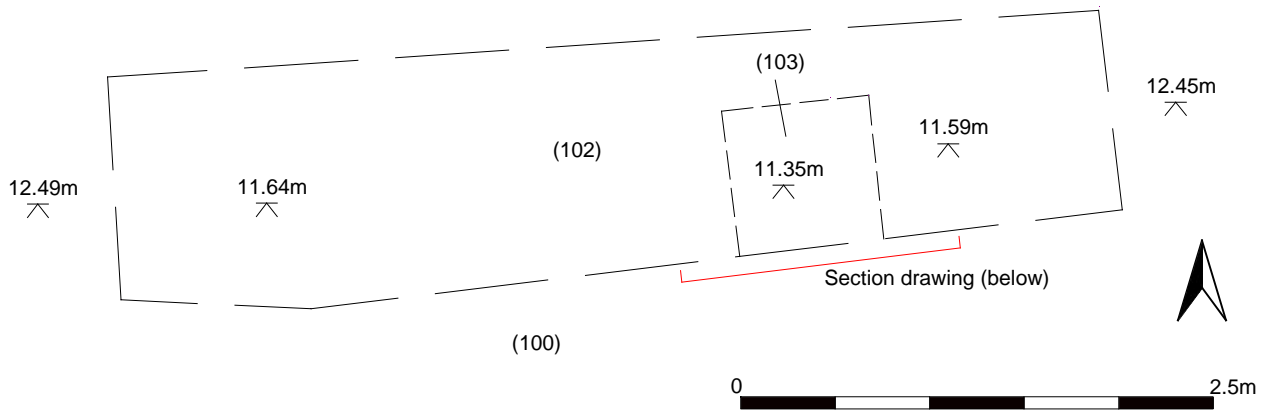
Plan and Photographs of the Trench



Plate 1: Looking south-west at the trench



Plate 2: Looking north-east at the trench



North-west Facing Section, Drawing and Photograph



Plate 3

