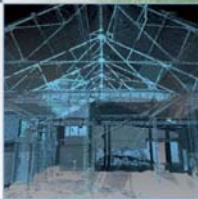


New houses west of Reid Terrace, Portgordon, Moray

Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

28th July 2017

AOC Project Number: 70167



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

New houses west of Reid Terrace, Portgordon, Moray

Archaeological Evaluation

Data Structure Report

On Behalf of:	Grant and Geoghegan Grant Lodge Birnie Elgin IV30 8SW
Planning Reference	16/01899/PE
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NJ 39150 63970 (centred)
AOC Project No:	70167
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Date of Fieldwork:	17th – 19th July 2017
Date of Report:	28th July 2017
Oasis No:	aocarcha1-291879

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Contents

	Page
SUMMARY	3
1.0 INTRODUCTION	4
2.0 BACKGROUND	4
3.0 OBJECTIVES	7
4.0 METHODOLOGY	7
5.0 RESULTS	9
6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	10
7.0 REFERENCES	13

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Proposed housing development
- Figure 2: Location of the development site boundary
- Figure 3: Site plan showing the location of the evaluation trenches and archaeological features
- Figure 4: Extract from the 1902 2nd Edition 6-inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey map, with field boundary demarcated (NLS 2017)

List of Plates

- Plate 1: Panorama shot looking northwest over the north field of the development area
- Plate 2: Record shot of natural stratigraphy, southwest facing section of Trench13
- Plate 3: Record shot of iron pan in the natural sandy subsoil
- Plate 4: Mid-excavation image of pits [1203] (right) and [1205] (left)
- Plate 5: Mid-excavation image of pits [1501] (left) and [1503] (right)
- Plate 6: Looking west over field boundary [401/501/1701]
- Plate 7: Looking southeast over drainage ditch [101/301]

Appendices

- Appendix 1 List of Trenches
- Appendix 2 List of Photographs
- Appendix 3 List of Contexts
- Appendix 4 List of Finds
- Appendix 5 List of Samples
- Appendix 6 Drawing Register
- Appendix 7 Section Drawings

SUMMARY

This report details the findings of an archaeological evaluation carried out in advance of the construction of a new housing development west of Reid Terrace, Portgordon, Moray. The evaluation was requested in order to inform developers of the archaeological potential of the site prior to development.

Fieldwork was carried out between 17th – 19th July 2017 and eighteen trenches were excavated. The remains of five possible pits were identified, along with a field boundary and a large drainage ditch. No other archaeological remains were uncovered.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation (planning reference 16/01899/PE) was required by Grant and Geoghegan with respect to the construction of 45 new houses (12 affordable) and associated works west of Reid Terrace, Portgordon (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2 The site lies within the administrative area of Moray Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by the Aberdeenshire Archaeological Service (ACAS). A programme of trial trenching across the site was specified in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology* (2011) in order to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains which may have been present within the development area.
- 1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken between 17th – 19th July 2017 where eighteen trenches were evaluated across the development site. The remains of five possible pits, a drainage ditch, and a field boundary were identified. Plough marks appeared periodically across the site.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The development site is located on agricultural land situated immediately west of Reid Terrace, Portgordon at NJ 39150 63970 (centred) (**Figure 2; Plate 1**). Portgordon is in Moray, 2.5 miles southwest of Buckie and approximately 14 miles east of Elgin. Portgordon was established in 1797 on the south coast of the Moray Firth.
- 2.2 The requirement for a 7-10% archaeological evaluation arose due to the development area being adjacent to an area where crop marks had been identified on aerial imagery. Several ring ditches, pits and other indeterminate crop marks have been recorded, suggesting probable prehistoric activity (Moray SMR site NJ36SE0025). Further instances of crop marks have been recorded in the wider landscape around the site. The proposed development area at present consists of improved farmland that has remained undeveloped. As such there was considered to be good potential for in situ or plough truncated archaeological remains to have survived sub-surface.



Plate 1: Panorama shot looking northwest over the north field of the development area

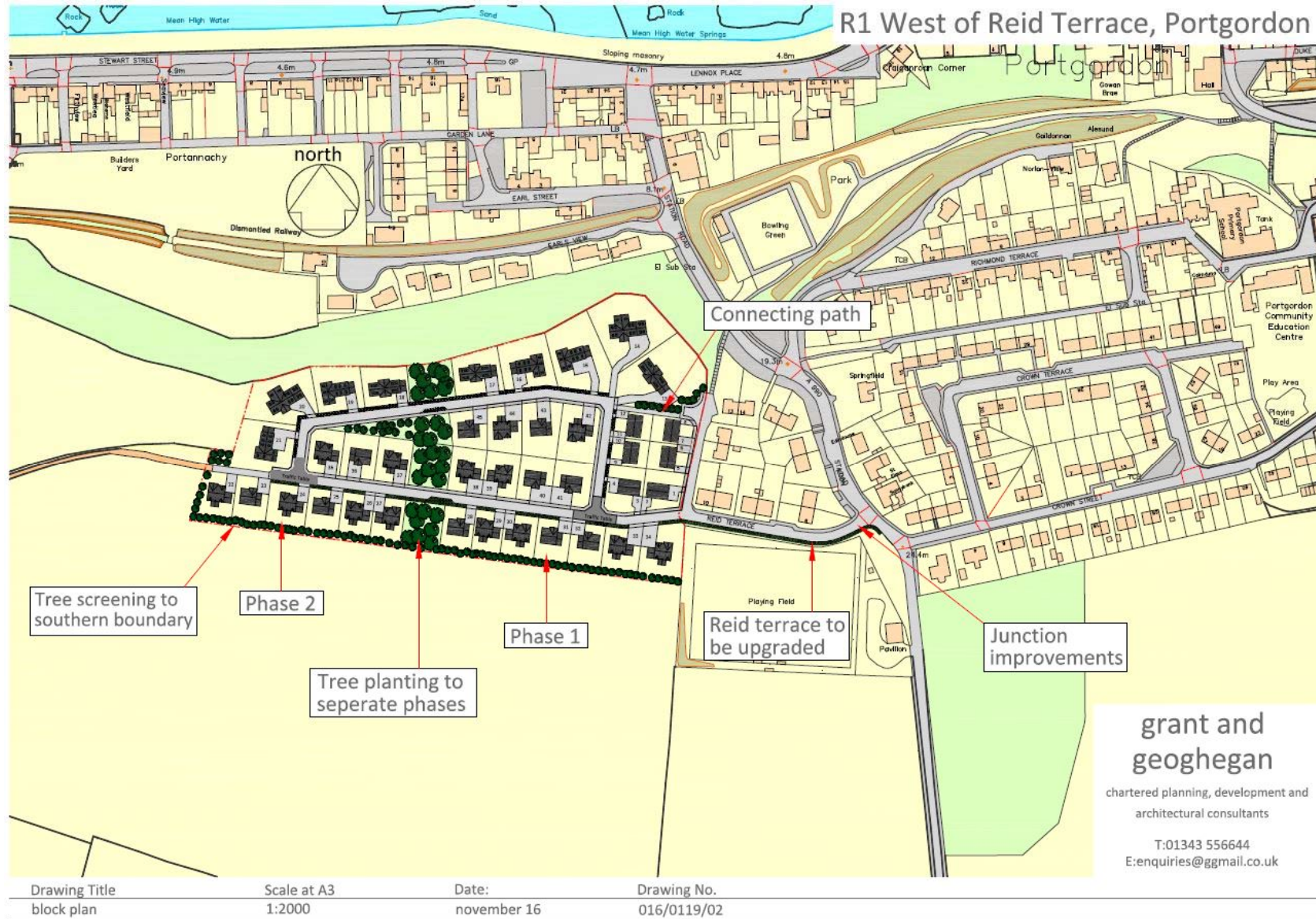


Figure 1: Proposed housing development (plan provided by Grant and Geoghegan)

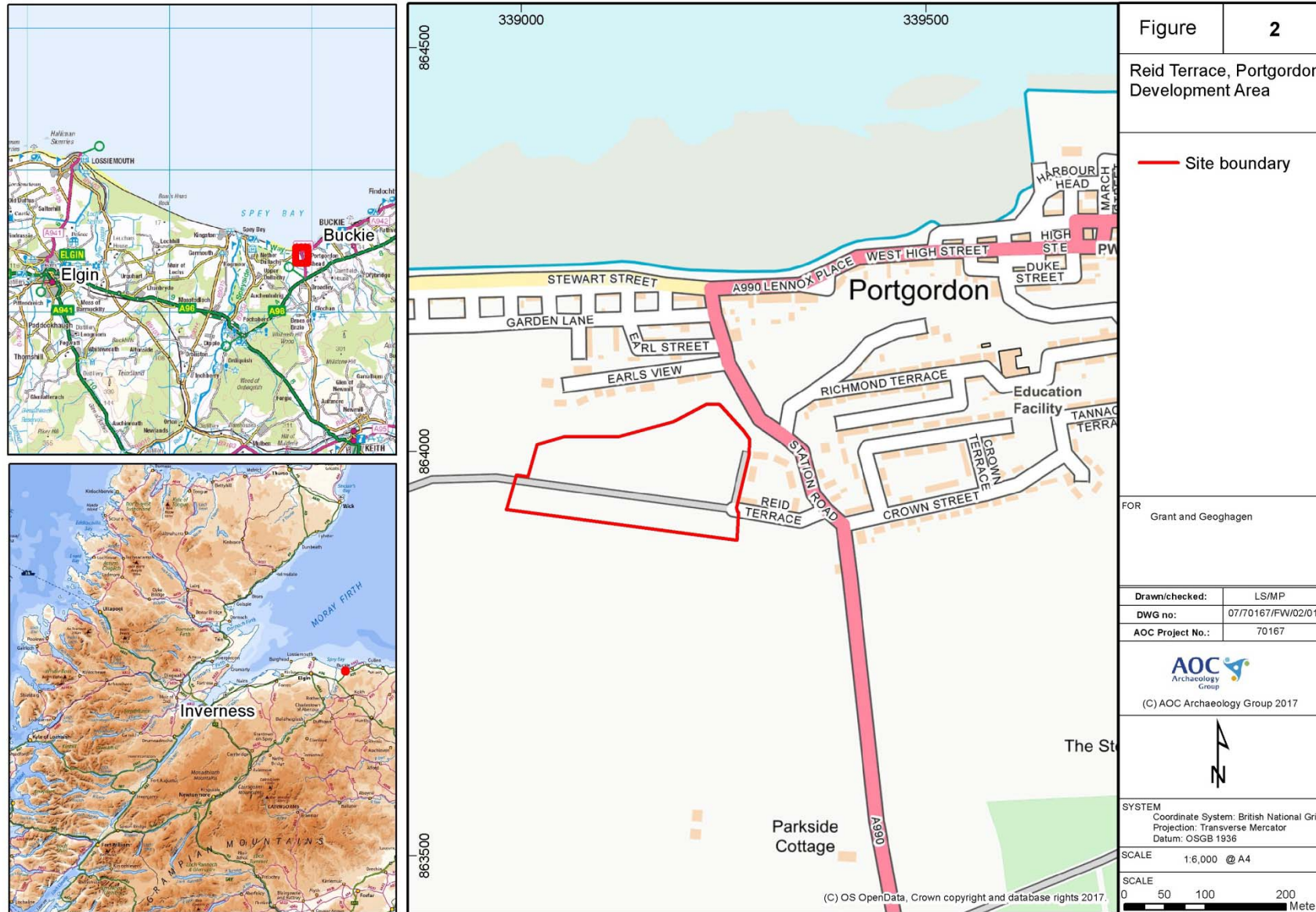


Figure 2: Location of the development site boundary

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists* (CIfA) defines an archaeological evaluation as ‘a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land...field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate (2014 (a)).’
- 3.2 The aims of the archaeological works were:
- i) To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area
 - ii) To remove by hand any overburden in order to expose the archaeological deposits
 - iii) To excavate, sample and record any features or to propose arrangements for their safeguarding, where possible
 - iv) To sample deposits for post-excavation work, including environmental analysis and dating
 - v) To make recommendations for further measures necessary to mitigate the impact of the development
 - vi) To make recommendations for post-excavation work

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 Due to the potential for archaeology to be present within the development area, an archaeological trial trenching evaluation was required to determine the archaeological baseline of the development site. The development area was evaluated by excavating trenches of varying sizes across the site (**Figure 3; Appendix 1**), all of which were backfilled after completion.
- 4.2 The planning requirements specified that the trial trench evaluation cover a minimum of 7-10% of the development area. Nineteen trenches comprising 2600 m² were proposed to cover 7.8% of the development area (Peteranna & Stirling 2017). There were no known sites to target within the current site boundary based on the desk-based assessment, and the trench locations and length were subject to change once ground conditions were assessed. Overhead power lines and a ripening barley field acted as constraints and the trenching plan was altered accordingly. Eighteen trenches were excavated covering 2830m² - a total of 8.5% of the total development.
- 4.3 An archaeologist directed digging by a 22-tonne mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m wide straight-edged bucket in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site. All work was carried out in accordance with the *CIfA Code of Conduct* (2014 (b)).

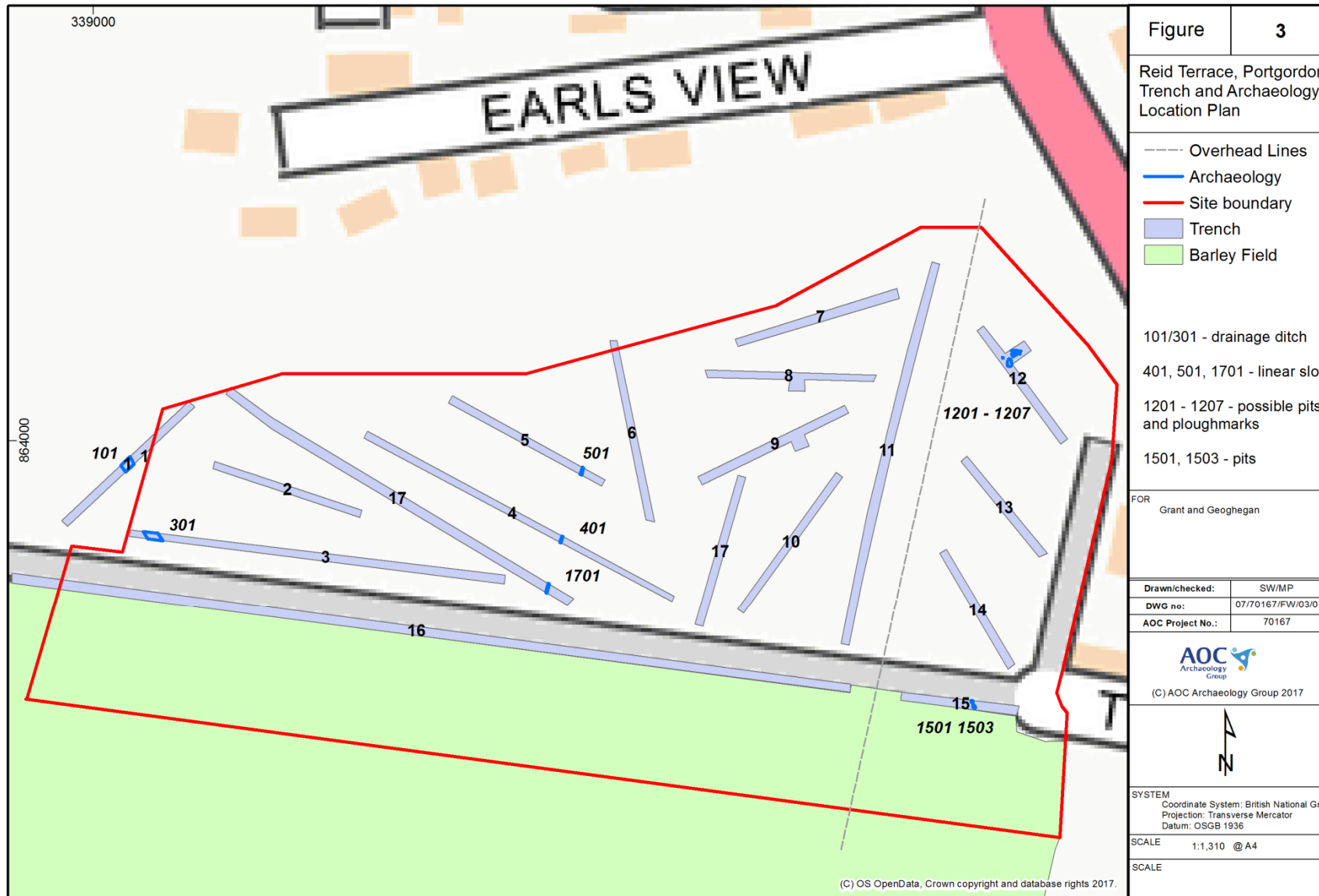


Figure 3: Site plan showing the location of the evaluation trenches and archaeological features

- 4.4 All features of archaeological significance were excavated by hand in order to establish the date, nature, extent and state of preservation of the deposits. Archaeological features and deposits were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and section drawings were drawn at a scale of 1:10. The trench locations, including findspots and feature locations, were plotted using a Trimble Geo-XR Rover capable of centimetre accuracy. The archaeological fieldwork was recorded using high resolution digital photography in order to record the process as well as any features or finds of interest.

5.0 RESULTS

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out between 17th – 19th July 2017, Conditions were dry and sunny and visibility was good. There were constraints for trench placement caused by the presence of overhead electricity lines and a ripening barley field on the south side of the road
- 5.2 The site comprised pastoral farmland (**Plate 1**) and the plough soil averaged between 0.3 – 0.4m deep, with deeper areas along the roadside and towards the east and west extents of the development area. The land itself was relatively flat with some small hilly areas towards the west. The underlying subsoil (002) consisted of mixed sands with areas of extensive iron panning present, particularly in the eastern half of the site (**Plate 3**). A trial pit was excavated at the southeast end of Trench 13 to examine the stratigraphy of the natural. An earlier strata of natural sand – (003) (**Plate 2**) – contained some clay, and if this prevented the drainage of water from the layer above it may account for the interesting iron pan formation across the site.
- 5.3 The majority of the trenches did not contain any archaeological features. In total, eight features of archaeological evidence were uncovered. Full details of these can be found in **Appendix 3**.
- 5.3 Trench 12 contained the remains of three possible pits – [1201], [1203] and [1205] (**Plate 4**), the last of which had been truncated by a plough mark [1207] that contained a fragment of C19 pottery – SF01. The amorphous and sometimes indistinct cuts and nondescript fills of these features indicate that they may be of natural and not of archaeological provenance. Trench 15 contained two pits, [1501] and [1503], the former of which had been partially overlain by the trench edge. There were no hand-retrieved artefacts/ecofacts from the pits, which are of unknown age and function (**Plate 5**).
- 5.4 A shallow linear slot that appeared in Trenches 4, 5 and 17 was interpreted tentatively as the remains of an early 20th century field boundary (**Plate 6**), first identified on the 1902 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map (NLS 2017; **Figure 4**). Although there was no datable information recovered to confirm this interpretation, it does appear in the same location as the boundary shown in the map.
- 5.5 A large clay and stone filled ditch present in Trench 1 and 3, following the base contour of a small hillock towards the cliff edge, was interpreted as a drainage ditch (**Plate 7**). The landowner recalls augmenting this in the past.

- 5.6 Ephemeral plough marks were noted across the site, generally in an east-west alignment.
- 5.7 There were no further indications of archaeology present within the proposed development area.

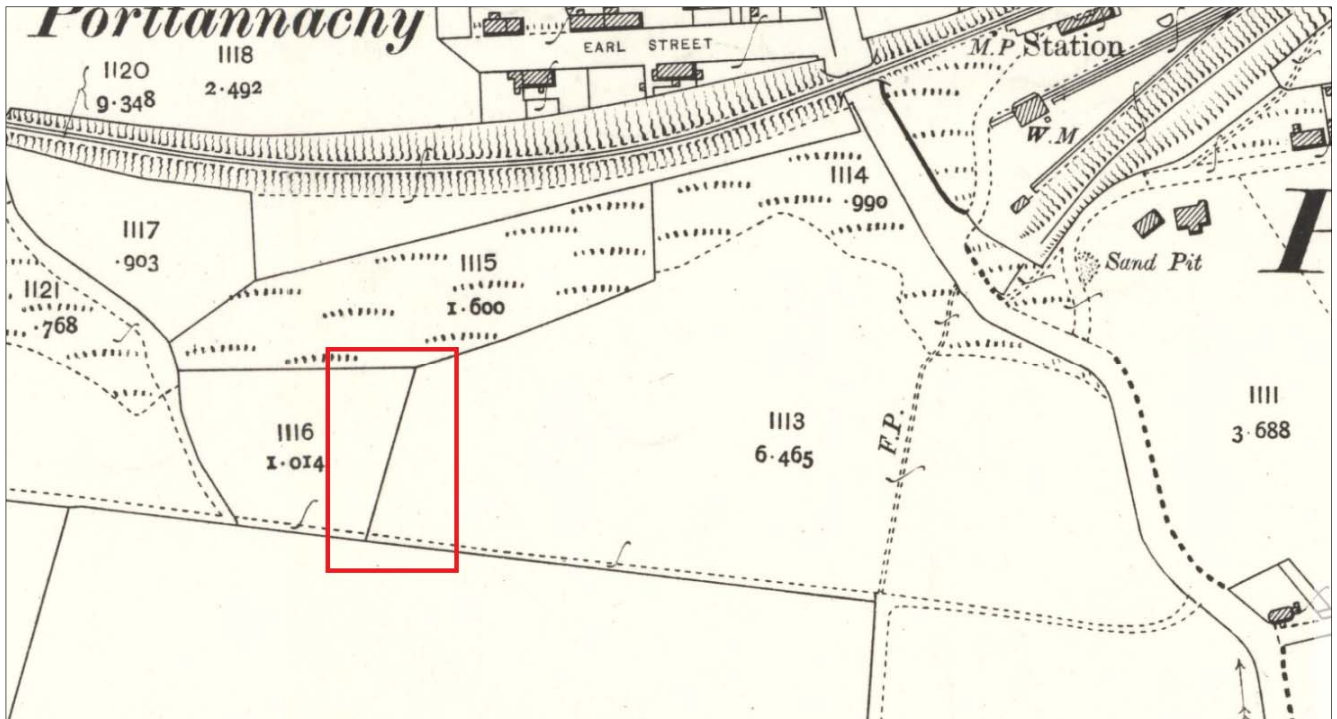


Figure 4: Extract from the 1902 2nd Edition 6-inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey map, with field boundary demarcated (NLS 2017)

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The archaeological evaluation at the development site identified five small pits, three of which may be natural features – [1501], [1503] and [1505]. The two pits identified south of the road, [1501] and [1503] are of archaeological significance. The remaining two features, a possible field boundary and drainage ditch, are likely relatively recent features.
- 6.2 While there were no other indications of archaeology present over the remainder of the site, it seems most likely that the area around the location of [1501] and [1503] has the most archaeological potential. The landscape conditions are also promising for containing archaeological potential. Due to the access constraints in this south field limiting the evaluation, an archaeological watching brief in this area is recommended to ensure that any surviving archaeology is recorded during development.



Plate 2: Record shot of natural stratigraphy, southwest facing section of Trench13, note the first pale yellow sand horizon (002) and the grey clay-rich sand horizon (003) underlying



Plate 3: Record shot of iron pan in the natural sandy subsoil



Plate 4: Mid-excavation image of pits [1203] (right) and [1205] (left)



Plate 5: Mid-excitation image of pits [1501] (left) and [1503] (right)



Plate 6: Looking west over possible field boundary [401]



Plate 7: Looking southeast over drainage ditch [101/301]

7.0 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014 (a). *Standards and guidance: Archaeological evaluation.*

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Appendix 1 List of Trenches

Trench No.	Size and Alignment	Area (m2)	Topsoil depths (m)	Subsoil Description	Features
1	50m NE-SW	100	0.32 (SW) 1.1 (mid) 0.45 (NE)	Pale yellow-grey sand, some mottling. Dips down in the middle of the trench where a natural gully has formed, and where 101 has been placed.	Drainage ditch 101, same as 301
2	50m NW-SE	100	0.36 (NW) 0.41 (mid) 0.39 (SE)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident.	None
3	112m E-W	224	0.68 (E) 0.55 (mid) 1.2 (W)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident. Dips down towards W of trench into natural gully where field 301 has been placed.	Drainage ditch, same as 101
4	110m NW-SE	220	0.55 (SE) 0.48 (mid) 0.48 (NW)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident.	Linear slot 401, same as 501 and 1701
5	50m NW-SE	100	0.39 (NW) 0.27 (mid) 0.30 (SE)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident.	Linear slot 501, same as 401 and 1701
6	42m N-S	84	0.50 (N) 0.32 (mid) 0.28 (S)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident.	None
7	50m WSW-ENE	100	0.3 (WSW) 0.35 (mid) 0.38 (ENE)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with lots of iron panning evident.	Plough marks E-W aligned
8	50m E-W	100	0.32 (E) 0.4 (mid) 0.39 (W)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident.	None
9	50m NE-SW	100	0.37 (NE) 0.28 (mid) 0.50 (SW)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident.	None
10	50m NNE-SSW	100	0.30 (NNE) 0.32 (mid) 0.68 (SSW)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident.	None

Trench No.	Size and Alignment	Area (m2)	Topsoil depths (m)	Subsoil Description	Features
11	119m NNE-SSW	238	0.80 (SSW) 0.30 (mid) 0.38 (NNE)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident.	None
12	40m NNW-SSE	80	0.30 (SSE) 0.28 (mid) 0.30 (NNW)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with some iron panning evident.	1201 pit, 1203 pit, 1205 pit, 1207 plough marks
13	38m NNW-SSE	76	0.60 (SSE) 0.47 (mid) 0.34 (NNW)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with lots of iron panning evident.	None
14	38m NNW-SSE	76	0.80 (SSE) 0.44 (mid) 0.30 (NNW)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with lots of iron panning evident.	None
15	35m E-W	70	1.2 (E) 1.0 (mid) 0.95 (W)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with lots of iron panning evident.	1501 pit, 1503 pit
16	255m E-W	510	1.0 (E) 0.89 (mid) 0.80 (W)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with lots of iron panning evident.	None
17	120m NW-SE	240	0.26 (NW) 0.40 (mid) 0.65 (SE)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with lots of iron panning evident.	Linear slot 1701, same as 401 as 501
18	45m N-S	90	0.28 (N) 0.35 (mid) 0.88 (S)	Mixed yellow, grey and orange sands with lots of iron panning evident.	None

Appendix 2 List of Photographs

Photo No.	Trench No.	Feature No.	Description	Direction Facing	Taken By	Date
1	T14	-	Record photo of the underlying natural	NE	SW	17/07/2017
2	T14	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	NW	SW	17/07/2017
3	-	-	Panorama across the E half of the N field	WNW-NW	SW	17/07/2017
4	T13	-	Record shot of the natural soil stratigraphy in an ad-hoc test pit at SE end of trench	NE	SW	17/07/2017
5	T13	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	NNW	SW	17/07/2017
6	T12	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	SSE	SW	17/07/2017
7	T12	-	Record shot of natural feature	SSE	SW	17/07/2017
8	T12	-	Record shot/panorama of possible feature 1203 (right) and 1205 (left)	ESE	SW	17/07/2017
9	T11	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	S	SW	17/07/2017
10	T7	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	SW	SW	17/07/2017
11	T8	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	WSW	SW	17/07/2017
12	T9	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	SW	SW	17/07/2017
13	T10	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	SW	SW	17/07/2017
14	T4	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	NW	SW	17/07/2017
15	T6	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	N	SW	18/07/2017
16	T6	-	Record shot of the natural, note the iron panning 'marbling' the sand	E	SW	18/07/2017
17	T5	501	N-facing section of possible field boundary	S	SW	18/07/2017
18	T5	501	S-facing section of field boundary	N	SW	18/07/2017
19	T5	501	Post-excavation shot of slot through linear slot 501	WNW	SW	18/07/2017
20	T5	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	NW	SW	18/07/2017
21	T3	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	E	SW	18/07/2017
22	T3	301	Record shot of drainage drain	E	SW	18/07/2017
23	T1	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	SW	SW	18/07/2017
24	T2	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	WNW	SW	18/07/2017
25	T12	1201	Pre-excavation shot of feature	SE	SW	18/07/2017
26	T12	1201	NW-facing section of pit	SE	SW	18/07/2017
27	T12	1203	Pre-excavation shot of feature	NNE	SW	18/07/2017
28	T12	1203	SSW-facing section of pit	NNE	SW	18/07/2017
29	T12	1205, 1207	Pre-excavation shot of pit 1205 truncated by plough mark 1207	E	SW	18/07/2017
30	T12	1205	W-facing section of pit	E	SW	18/07/2017
31	T12	1205, 1203	Record shot of features post-sectioning, 1205 (left) and 1203 (right)	NNE	SW	18/07/2017
32	T15	1503, 1501	Pre-excavation shot of pits 1503 (left) and 1501 (right)	WSW	SW	19/07/2017
33	T15	1501	S-facing section of pit	N	SW	19/07/2017
34	T15	1501	S-facing section of pit	N	SW	19/07/2017
35	T15	1501, 1503	Record shot of pits post-sectioning, 1501 (left) and 1503 (right)	ENE	SW	19/07/2017
36	T15	1503	WSW-facing section of pit	ENE	SW	19/07/2017
37	T15	1503	WSW-facing section of pit	ENE	SW	19/07/2017

Photo No.	Trench No.	Feature No.	Description	Direction Facing	Taken By	Date
38	T16	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	W	SW	19/07/2017
39		-	Panorama across site, post trenching	W-E	SW	19/07/2017
40	T15	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	E	SW	19/07/2017
41	T17	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	NW	SW	19/07/2017
42	T18	-	Post-excavation shot of trench	N	SW	19/07/2017

Appendix 3 List of Contexts

Context No.	Type	Description	Fill Of	Filled By	Interpretation	Same As
001	Deposit	Turf-covered dark brown sandy silt, very few small stones.	-	-	Topsoil	-
002	Deposit	Mixed and mottled silty sands, ranging from pale yellow to vibrant orange and brown. Areas of intense iron pan and soil discolouration, particularly towards the east half of the development site. Lensing of sand evident in profile.	-	-	Immediate underlying natural. Lensing of sand indicative of windblown events.	-
003	Deposit	Grey clayey sand. Underlying the immediate natural SAN 002.	-	-	Natural stratigraphy of the site, underlying the first subsoil horizon 002. Clay content of this may be the cause of the iron panning in the upper horizon of natural as water cannot drain as freely.	-
101	Cut	Cut for curvilinear feature 101. A large drainage ditch for agricultural purposes that appears to follow base contour of small hillock NNW-SSE. 2m wide. Landowner recalls enhancing this feature as a drainage ditch. Unexcavated.	-	102	A natural gully that has been enhanced as a drainage ditch, leading water to the cliff side.	301
102	Fill	Fill of 101: brown and grey sandy clay with large rounded and subrounded stones throughout. Water percolating up from below.	101	-	Fill of large drainage ditch.	-
301	Cut	Cut for curvilinear feature 301. A large drainage ditch for agricultural purposes, continuing into T1 as 101. 4m wide and N-S aligned, follows base contour of hillock. Landowner recalls enhancing this feature as a drainage ditch. Unexcavated.	-	302	A natural gully that has been enhanced as a drainage ditch, leading water to the cliff side.	101

Context No.	Type	Description	Fill Of	Filled By	Interpretation	Same As
302	Fill	Fill of 301: brown and grey sandy clay with large rounded and subrounded stones throughout. Water percolating up from below.	301	-	Fill of large drainage ditch.	-
401	Cut	Cut for linear feature 401. 0.3-0.4m wide and 0.22m deep (truncated somewhat), aligned NNE-SSW. Steep-sided U-shape in profile with very sharp and clean edges.	-	402	Linear slot, likely field boundary.	501
402	Fill	Fill of 401: mid-reddish brown sandy silt fill, very clean. Hints of lensing in the profile.	401	-	Fill of linear slot 401	-
501	Cut	Cut for linear feature 501. 0.4m wide, aligned NNE-SSW. 0.37m deep. Steep-sided U-shape in profile with very sharp and clean edges.	-	502	Linear slot, likely field boundary.	401
502	Fill	Fill of 501: mid-reddish brown sandy silt fill, very clean. Hints of lensing in the profile.	501	-	Fill of linear slot 501.	-
1201	Cut	Cut for subcircular feature. 0.19m x 0.15m NW-SE. 0.10m deep. U-shaped profile.	-	1202	Pit feature, possibly natural feature.	-
1202	Fill	Fill of 1201: dark brown-black sandy clay, very dense and somewhat compact. Possibly degraded charcoal within, though none seen. Otherwise very clean.	1201	-	Fill of feature 1201 - possibly degraded vegetation and/or subsoil affected by iron panning.	-
1203	Cut	Cut for somewhat amorphously shaped feature. 1.6m x 1.2m at widest point, NNW-SSE. 0.15m deep at deepest point. Gently rounded profile.	-	1204	Pit feature, possibly natural feature.	-
1204	Fill	Fill of 1203: somewhat compact dark brown clayey sand. A few small rounded stones up to 0.03m long (<2%). Otherwise clean. Some lensing visible in the profile.	1203	-	Fill of feature 1203 - possibly degraded vegetation and/or subsoil affected by iron panning.	-
1205	Cut	Cut for suboval feature. 1.0m x 0.48m N-S. 0.05 m deep. Very shallow profile, fairly flat based with somewhat rounded edges. Feature cut by plough mark 1207.	-	1206	Pit, possibly natural feature. Truncated by plough mark 1207.	-
1206	Fill	Fill of 1205: somewhat compact dark brown clayey sand. Very clean.	1205	-	Fill of feature 1205 - possibly degraded vegetation and/or subsoil affected by iron panning.	-

Context No.	Type	Description	Fill Of	Filled By	Interpretation	Same As
1207	Cut	Cuts for series of plough marks. 4 linear cuts ranging between 0.10 - 0.25m wide, aligned E-W. One plough mark bisects possible pit 1205. This plough mark contained a fragment of a treacleware tea pot SF01.	-	1208	Plough marks.	-
1208	Fill	Fill of 1207: dark brown sandy silt.	1207	-	Fill of plough marks.	-
1501	Cut	Cut for likely suboval feature. Partially overlain by trench to N. Exposed dimensions 0.6m x 0.5m N-S. Somewhat rounded steep-sided profile curving slightly onto flattish base. Located 0.4m N of 1503.	-	1502	Pit of unknown age and function.	-
1502	Fill	Fill of 1501: grey silty sand with a few small dark patches (possibly degraded charcoal?). Some small rounded pebbles up to 4cm long (<5%), and some lensing evident in profile. Subsoil below the feature is very hard and iron-panned. Very similar to 1504.	1501	-	Fill of pit.	-
1503	Cut	Cut for suboval pit. 1.1m x 0.6m N-S. 0.18m deep, comparatively shallow profile to 1501. Gently sloping sides in profile onto a flattish base. Located 0.4m S of 1501.	-	1504	Pit of unknown age and function.	-
1504	Fill	Fill of 1503: grey silty sand with a few small dark patches that have a white 'aura' - podsolisation around roots perhaps? Some small rounded pebbles up to 4cm long (<5%), and some lensing evident in profile. Subsoil below the feature is very hard and iron-panned. Very similar to 1502.	1503	-	Fill of pit.	-
1701	Cut	Cut for linear feature 1701. 0.4m wide, aligned NNE-SSW. 0.28m deep. Steep-sided U-shape in profile with very sharp and clean edges.	-	1702	Linear slot, likely field boundary.	401, 501
1702	Fill	Fill of 1701: mid-reddish brown sandy silt fill, very clean. Hints of lensing in the profile.	1702	-	Fill of linear slot 1701.	-

Appendix 4 List of Finds

Find No.	Context No.	Material	Description	Finder	Date
1	1208	Ceramic	The in-built base of a treacleware/ Rockingham ware teapot spout	SW	18/07/2017

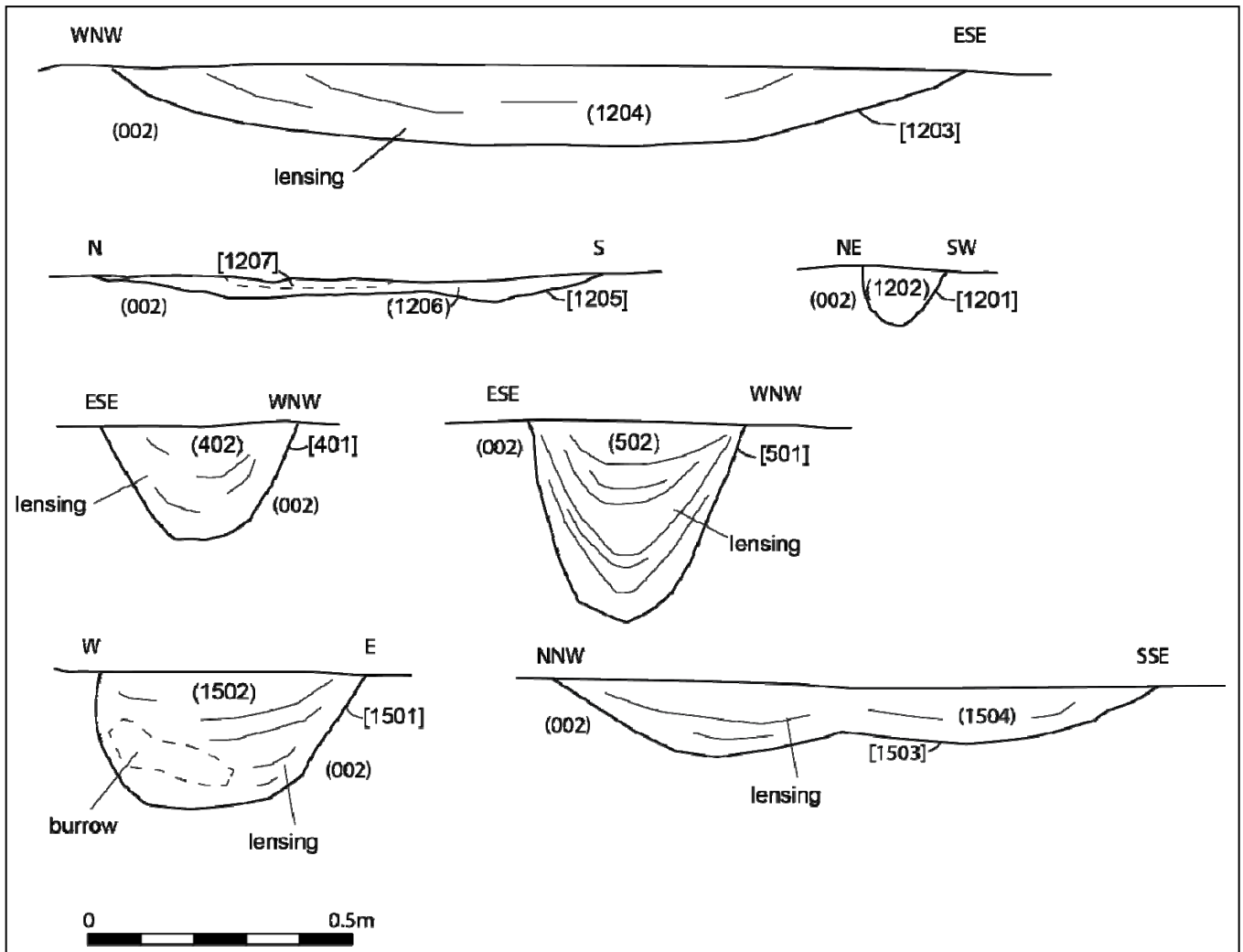
Appendix 5 List of Samples

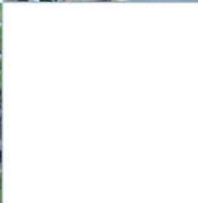
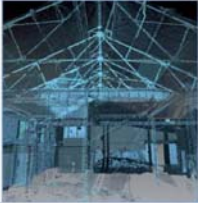
Sample Context No.	Size	Notes
1202	1 bucket	None
1204	1 bucket	None
1206	1 bucket	None
1502	1 bucket	None
1504	1 bucket	None

Appendix 6 Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Feature No.	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
1	401	NNE-facing section	1:10	18/07/17	SW
2	501	NNE-facing section	1:10	18/07/17	SW
3	1201	NW-facing section	1:10	18/07/17	SW
4	1203	SSW-facing section	1:20	18/07/17	SW
5	1205	W-facing section	1:10	18/07/17	SW
6	1501	S-facing section	1:10	19/07/17	SW
7	1503	WSW-facing section	1:10	19/07/17	SW

Appendix 7 Section Drawings





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