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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT SOUTH END CARAVAN PARK, WALNEY ISLAND, CUMBRIA

Alistair Robertson  
*MA(Hons)*

## PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

<i>Client</i>	MICHAEL MULGREW
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	SD 207 635 (SITE CENTRE)
<i>Address</i>	SOUTH END CARAVAN PARK WALNEY ISLAND CUMBRIA
<i>Council</i>	BARROW IN FURNESS
<i>Planning Ref No</i>	B12/2007/1500/JH/TP.11
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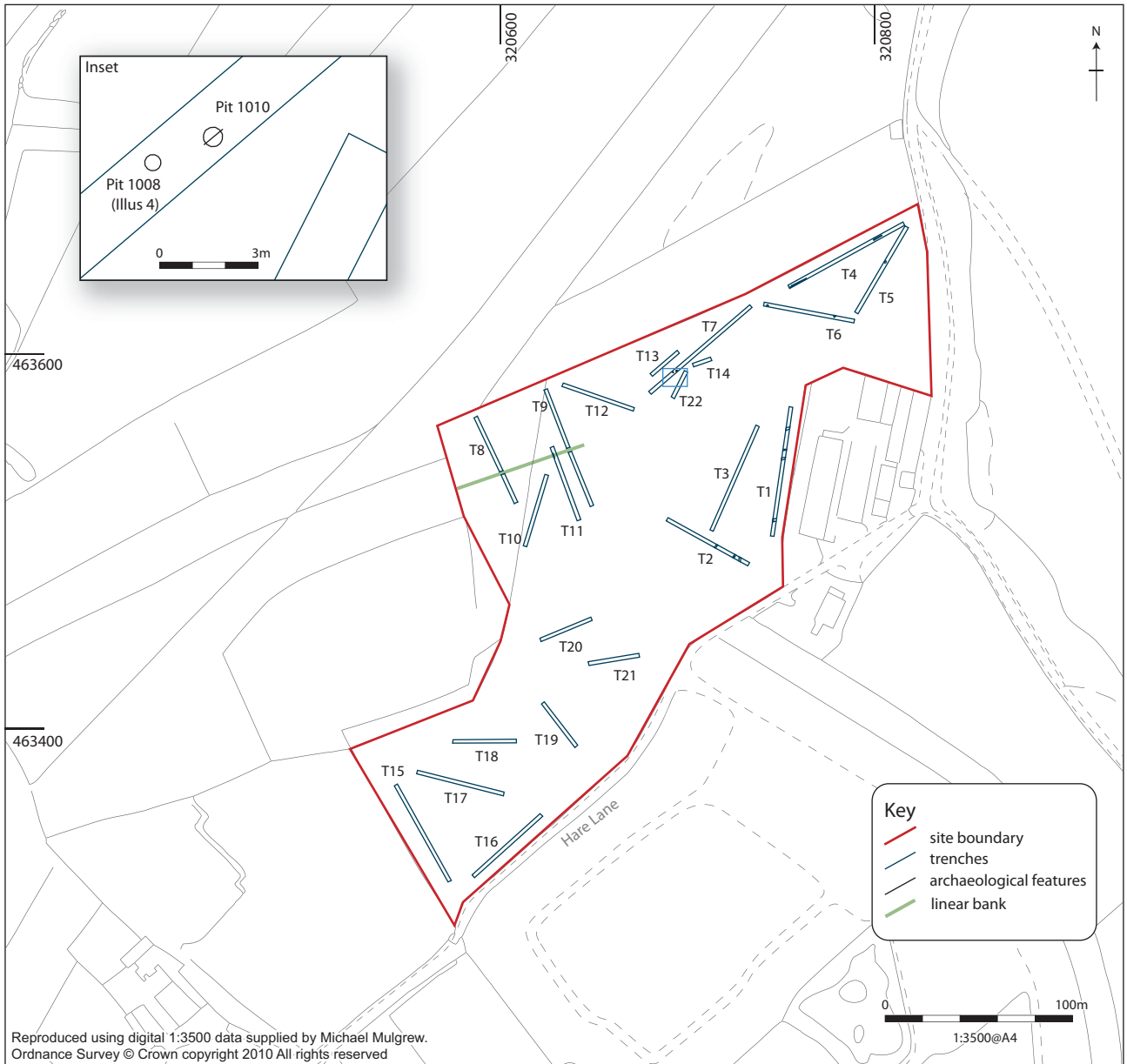
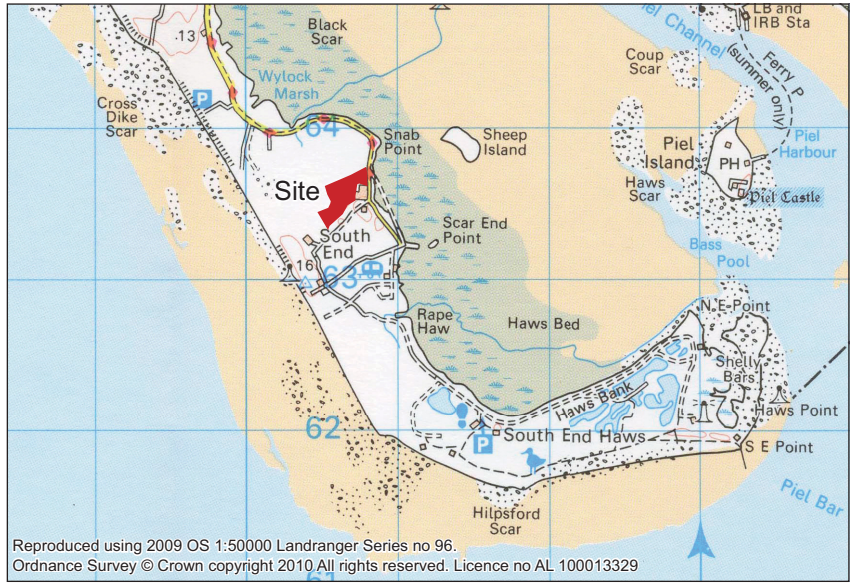
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**Illus 1**  
Location plan

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT SOUTH END CARAVAN PARK, WALNEY ISLAND, CUMBRIA

by Alistair Robertson

*An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of an extension to South End Caravan Park, Walney Island, Cumbria. A programme of trial trenching was undertaken totalling 1000m of linear trench, which equated to 5% of the proposed development site. Relatively few archaeological features were revealed during the work, with the majority taking the form of infilled furrows sealed beneath thin topsoil. A relict turf boundary bank was also recorded in the northwest of the site. These features appear to be the remnants of agricultural activity dating to at least the post- medieval period, though they may be medieval in origin. Two further features in the form of isolated pits containing charcoal- rich fills were encountered in Trench 7; located in a natural depression in the surface of geological deposits.*

*This relative paucity of archaeological features may be attributed in part to the fact that the soils appear to have undergone significant erosion, creating a consistently shallow soil profile: generally 0.4m. The long history of agriculture over the site may have truncated away a significant portion of the archaeological record through ploughing of the shallow soil.*

*The significance of the recorded features is assessed as low as is the archaeological potential of the site.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Headland Archaeology was commissioned by Bratherton Park Design Ltd on behalf of Michael Mulgrew to undertake an archaeological evaluation in response to a condition (No. 4) attached to planning permission granted for the extension and remodelling of South End Caravan Park, Walney Island (planning ref. B12/2007/1500/JH/TP.11). The programme of works incorporated a preliminary assessment of the Historic Environment Record (HER) followed by trial trenching on the development site that amounted to a 5% sample of the total area. A Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) was followed throughout the evaluation
- 1.2 The development lies within an area of archaeological potential as identified in three previous assessment reports by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA), which contained the results of desk based studies and walkover surveys (2003, 2007 & 2008). Archaeological monitoring and excavation carried out to the immediate west of the development site revealed the remains of medieval and later agricultural activity (NAA 2007).
- 1.3 The overall aims of the trial trenching were to establish whether any archaeological remains survived within the development area and if so to establish their nature

and extent to allow the design and agreement of an archaeological recording programme.

- 1.4 The trial trenching was carried out from 10th–12th August 2010.

## 2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site lies immediately north of the current location of South End Caravan Park on the east side of Walney Island, midway between Snab Point and Scar End Point (Illus. 1). The site is bounded to the east by the main coastal road, Mawflat Lane, and to the south by a road accessing the caravan park and farm buildings. The eastern limit of the site is demarked on the Ordnance Survey by a building labelled 'South End Bungalow'. The north and western extents are formed by fenced field boundaries.
- 2.2 The geology of the area comprises bedrock morphology of undifferentiated New Red Sandstones of the Permian and Triassic periods (BGS 1977). The drift geology is composed of alluvium, wind- blown sand and morainic deposits (BGS 1979). The natural topography of the site undulated gently, with a highpoint around the centre of the site from which the land gradually sloped downwards



**Illus 2**  
Rubble bund beyond Trench 21

to the east and west. At the time of fieldwork the land was under pasture and a substantial rubble bund, partially grassed over, was located in the middle of the site.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL

#### BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Archaeological evidence has established activity and habitation on Walney Island from the mesolithic through to the modern period. Lithic material was retrieved from fields and cliffs adjacent to South End Farm and fields adjacent to Trough Head. A microlith from Trough Head was dated to the mesolithic period while Bronze Age pottery was also recovered from the site (Barnes & Hobbes 1950). A number of small pits or gullies recorded during the 2008 walkover survey by NAA were identified eroding out of the western coast of Walney Island and are also considered to be prehistoric in origin.
- 3.2 Evidence for the Viking period is attested in the place name 'Walney,' which was recorded as 'Wagneia' in 1287 and thought to derive from the Old Scandinavian 'vogn'

and 'ey' meaning 'killer whale island' (Mills 1991). By the turn of the 13th century AD, a harbour had been established on Walney Island by Furness Abbey, founded in 1127, to promote its trade and produce. One of the monastic granges established by the Abbey and associated with the medieval agricultural expansion in the area is thought to have been sited near Biggar (Cottam 1928). To the immediate north of the development site, strip field systems first depicted on 19th century maps and still visible today are thought to be medieval in origin. Excavations undertaken in the area recorded the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation (NAA 2003).

- 3.3 In addition to field systems outlined in cartographic evidence, post medieval activity is further attested by the depiction of a lime kiln on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map at the location of the recently demolished farm buildings on the southeast boundary of the development site.
- 3.4 A series of quarry pits to the north of the site have been attributed to the modern period, while two brick structures on the adjacent eastern coastal fringe are thought to have been associated with Second World War coastal defences.



**Illus 3**  
Northeast facing shot of Trench 3

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Some 1000m of linear trench was excavated by machine during the evaluation, equating to a 5% sample of the development site. The indicative trench plan attached to the Written Scheme of Investigation was used to layout the trenches where practicable, however it was necessary to alter the locations and lengths of several due to a rubble bund in the middle of the site (Illus 2).

4.2 All trenches were individually numbered and then excavated using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator, fitted with a flat bladed ditching bucket. The machine was operated under continuous archaeological supervision and turf, topsoil and subsoil were removed down to clean geological deposits. Turf and topsoil were stored separately. Any potential features identified were hand cleaned and investigated appropriately. Archaeological features and deposits were hand excavated and recorded using standard archaeological methods and pro-forma record sheets. The excavated trenches and any archaeological contexts were recorded using a total station linked to an AutoCAD- based survey program related to the National Grid, as well as hand drawing where appropriate. Photographs

were taken using colour slide and black and white negative film, as well as digital. Sediment samples were collected from secure archaeological contexts for processing and assessment and given a unique number.

#### 5. RESULTS

5.1 A summary of the results is provided below. The trench register in Appendix 1 provides a description of individual trenches. The geological deposits generally comprised mottled orange and grey clay till with frequent small stone inclusions (Illus 3). This altered at the eastern extent of the site, in Trenches 4 and 5, where raised beach deposits were encountered (Illus 1 & 6).

5.2 The predominant archaeological features recorded across the site consisted of the remains of infilled linear furrows cut into the geological deposits. They were identified in the majority of trenches and were 1–1.5m wide with a depth of 0.1m. The alignment of the furrows reflected that of the current field boundaries and was mostly on a northeast-southwest axis. No finds were retrieved from any of the furrows. The topsoil sealing these features comprised mid brown loam which was on average 0.4m deep across the site.

5.3 In Trench 7, two shallow sub round pits [1008 and 1010] were identified in the southeastern half of the trench (Illus 1). Pit [1008] was 0.6m in length, 0.5m wide and 0.14m deep. It contained a basal deposit of light grey sandy silt [1007] which was 0.1m deep. This was sealed by a charcoal-rich fill [1006] which contained moderate inclusions of small sub-angular and rounded sandstones (Illus 4). Pit [1010] was located 1.5m northwest of [1008] and was 0.6m long, 0.4m wide and 0.05m deep. It was filled



**Illus 4**  
South facing shot of Pit [1008] in Trench 7



**Illus 5**  
West facing shot of boundary bank in Trench 11

by charcoal-rich sandy silt [1009], which also contained moderate inclusions of small sub-angular stones. Both pits were located in a depression in the natural topography, with the overlying topsoil the deepest recorded on the site at 0.7m depth. Post excavation wet sieving of bulk samples taken from the pit fills recovered no finds and mainly small fragments of charcoal. In order to ascertain whether there were further features associated with the pits, the trench layout was varied so that Trenches 13, 14 and 22 were excavated around Trench 7 to fully investigate the area (Illus 1). No associated features were recorded.

- 5.4 Trenches 8, 9 and 11 crossed a relict boundary bank still standing to a height of 0.4m above ground and running northeast-southwest. In section it was found to be 1.2m wide and consisted of yellow brown sandy loam sealed by turf (Illus 5). Modern ceramic field drains were also encountered in a number of trenches.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The trial trenching carried out on the development site revealed some archaeological features. The overall pattern was of furrows whose alignments reflect current field boundaries. Map evidence shows the majority of these boundaries are unchanged since the 19th century and presumably date to at least the post-medieval period, though some are thought to be of medieval origin. The linear bank encountered in the northwest part of the site follows a similar alignment to the furrows and surrounding strip field systems to the north, suggesting a similar date.
- 6.2 The two shallow pits recorded in Trench 7 appear to be isolated features as no associated archaeological remains were identified in surrounding trenches despite an increased sample in the vicinity. Post excavation analysis revealed no finds to indicate a date for the features, and no paleo-environmental material with potential to produce further information.

- 6.3 The soil profile recorded across the site was consistently shallow: generally 0.4m. The furrows suggested that the area has been cultivated since at least the post-medieval period and it is notable that a thicker plough soil has not accumulated. The most obvious explanation for the shallow topsoil is that the soils have undergone significant erosion, presumably being washed downslope towards the coastline. This is likely to be a contributing factor to the relative paucity of archaeological features, many of which may have been eroded away by continued ploughing through a shallow soil profile, with no accumulation to protect them. The shallow pits are likely to have been preserved as they were located within a depression in the surface of geological deposits and sealed by comparatively deep topsoil; therefore being better protected from erosion and agricultural activity.

- 6.4 The significance of the recorded features is assessed as low as is the archaeological potential of the site.



**Illus 6**  
Southwest facing shot of Trench 4 showing beach deposits



## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 – Site Registers

#### *Trench Register*

<b>Trench No.</b>	<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Length (m)</b>	<b>Average Depth (m)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	N-S	70	0.3	Plough furrows recorded in trench, aligned E-W. Generally 1.2–1.5m in width. One example [1003] was 1.4m wide and 0.1m deep.
2	NW-SE	70	0.3	Three furrows recorded in trench, all aligned N-S. One example [1005] was 0.7m wide and 0.08m deep.
3	NNE-SSW	60	0.5	Two furrows recorded in trench, aligned N-S.
4	NE-SW	70	0.4	One furrow recorded along length of trench, 0.6m wide. At NE end geology changes from mottled clay deposits to sand; reflecting a raised beach.
5	NNE-SSW	52	0.5	One possible oval shaped feature found to be a stone hole upon excavation. At NNE end geology changes from mottled clay deposits to sand; reflecting a raised beach.
6	NWW-SEE	50	0.3	No archaeological features recorded
7	NE-SW	70	0.6	Two sub-circular pits identified in a depression in the natural topography; [1008] and [1010]. Pit [1008] was 0.6m in length, 0.5m wide and 0.14m deep. It contained a basal deposit of light grey sandy silt [1007] which was 0.1m deep. This was sealed by a charcoal-rich fill [1006] which contained moderate inclusions of small sub-angular and rounded sandstones. Pit [1010] was located 1.5m northwest of [1008] and was 0.6m long, 0.4m wide and 0.05m deep. It was filled by charcoal-rich sandy silt [1009], which also contained moderate inclusions of small sub-angular stones.
8	NNW-SSE	50	0.4	No archaeological features recorded
9	NNW-SSE	64	0.3	Frequent furrows recorded in trench, aligned NE-SW. 1.3m average width, 0.1m average depth.
10	NNE-SSW	40	0.4	Two furrows recorded, aligned NE-SW. 1.4m wide and 5m apart.
11	NNW-SSE	40	0.4	Two furrows recorded, aligned NE-SW and 1.4m wide.
12	NWW-SEE	40	0.3	Two furrows recorded, aligned NE-SW and 1.2m wide. Plough scars also visible cut into surface of geological deposits.
13	NE-SW	20	0.4	One NE-SW furrow recorded and two ceramic field drains.
14	NEE-SWW	10	0.3	No archaeological features recorded
15	NNW-SSE	60	0.4	No archaeological features recorded. The cut for an active water pipe was identified traversing the trench.
16	NE-SW	50	0.4	No archaeological features recorded
17	E-W	48	0.5	No archaeological features recorded
18	E-W	34	0.3	One NE-SW furrow recorded, 1.4m wide and 0.08m deep.
19	NW-SE	30	0.4	Two furrows recorded, aligned NE-SW and 1.3m wide.
20	NEE-SWW	30	0.3	No archaeological features recorded
21	E-W	28	0.4	Three furrows recorded, aligned NE-SW. On average 1.5m wide and 0.05m deep.
22	NNE-SSW	14	0.3	No archaeological features recorded

### Context Register

Context No.	Area	Type	Description
1000	–	–	Top soil across site. Consisted of mid brown loam with frequent small stone inclusions.
1001	–	–	Natural across site. Generally comprised mottled orange and grey clay till with frequent small stone inclusions. Raised beach deposits were identified at the eastern limit of the site.
1002	Tr.1	Fill	Fill of plough furrow [1003]. Mid yellow/brown sandy silt. The fill was 1.80m in length and 1.38m wide, with a depth of 0.10m. There was an infrequent inclusion of sub-angular sandstone 10–40mm.
1003	Tr.1	Cut	Cut of plough furrow. The cut was linear with U shaped sides and a concave base, sloping at approximately 25 degrees. It was 1.80m in length and 1.38m wide with a depth of 0.10m.
1004	Tr.2	Fill	Fill of plough furrow [1005]. Mid yellow/brown sandy silt. The fill was 1.80m in length and 0.66m wide with a depth of 0.08m. There was an infrequent inclusion of sub-angular sandstone 10–40mm.
1005	Tr.2	Cut	Cut of plough furrow. A shallow U shaped linear with a concave base, sloping at approximately 25 degrees. The cut was 1.80m in length and 0.66m wide with a depth of 0.08m.
1006	Tr.7	Fill	Upper fill of pit [1008]. Black/dark grey sandy silt. The fill was 0.60m in length and 0.49m wide with a depth of 0.03m. There were moderate inclusions of sub-angular sandstone and charcoal 10–60mm.
1007	Tr.7	Fill	Lower fill of pit [1008]. Light blue/grey sandy silt. The fill was 0.60m in length and 0.49m wide with a depth of 0.11m. There was an infrequent inclusion of sub-angular sandstone.
1008	Tr.7	Cut	Cut of pit. The cut was a sub round plan with U shaped sides and a concave base, sloping at a 45 degree angle. It was 0.60m in length and 0.49m wide with a depth of 0.14m.
1009	Tr.7	Fill	Fill of pit [1010]. Black/dark grey sandy silt. There was moderate inclusions of sub-angular sandstone and charcoal 10–50mm.
1010	Tr.7	Cut	Cut of pit. The cut was a sub-round plan with U shaped sides and a concave base, sloping at a 25 degree angle.
1011	Tr.6	Fill	Fill of pit [1012]. Black clay. The fill was 1.30m in length and 0.82m wide with a depth of 0.12m. There were infrequent inclusions of sub-angular sandstone and charcoal 10–30mm.
1012	Tr.6	Cut	Cut of pit. The cut was a sub round plan with U shaped sides with a concave base, sloping at a 45 degree angle. It was 1.30m in length and 0.82m wide with a depth of 0.12m.
1013	Tr.6	Fill	Fill of pit cut [1014]. Mid blue/grey sandy silt. There were frequent inclusions of sub-angular sandstone and charcoal 10–80mm. It was 0.80m in length and 0.36m wide with a depth of 0.16m.
1014	Tr.6	Cut	Cut of pit. The cut was in an oval plan with U shaped sides and a concave base.
1015	Tr.5	Fill	Fill of pit cut [1016]. Black clay. There were infrequent inclusions of sub-angular sandstone and charcoal 10–30mm. The fill was 1.30m in length and 0.80m wide with a depth of 0.04m.
1016	Tr.5	Cut	Cut of pit. The cut was an oval plan with U shaped sides and a concave base, sloping at a 25 degree angle.
1017	Tr.11	Deposit.	Deposit forming a dyke running east – west. Mid yellow/brown sandy loam. There were moderate inclusions of sub-angular stones.

### Photographic Register

No.	C/S	B&W	DIGITAL	FACING	DESCRIPTION
1	36/1	36/1	1	–	Registration shot
2	35/1	35/1	2	N	Trench 1 (Post excavation.)
3	34/1	34/1	3	N	Trench 2 (Post excavation.)
4	33/1	33/1	4	E	Trench 3 (Post excavation.)
5	32/1	32/1	5	S	Trench 5 (Post excavation.)
6	31/1	31/1	6	W	Trench 4 (Post excavation.)
7	30/1	30/1	7	W	Trench 6 (Post excavation.)
8	29/1	29/1	8	N	Shot of rubble bund
9	28/1	28/1	9	W	Pit [1014] (Trench 6).
10	27/1	27/1	10	E	Pit [1012] (Trench 6).
11	26/1	26/1	11	N	Pit [1016] (Trench 5).

12	25/1	25/1	12	SE	Pit [1008] (Trench 7).
13	24/1	24/1	13	NW	Pit [1010] (Trench 7).
14	23/1	23/1	14	W	Plough furrow [1003]
15	22/1	22/1	15	W	Dyke [1017]
16	21/1	21/1	16	W	Trench 7
17	20/1	20/1	17	NW	Trench 14.
18	19/1	19/1	18	W	Trench 22.
19	18/1	18/1	19	E	Trench 13.
20	17/1	17/1	20	NW	Trench 12.
21	16/1	16/1	21	S	Trench 9.
22	15/1	15/1	22	S	Trench 11.
23	14/1	14/1	23	SW	Trench 10.
24	13/1	13/1	24	W	Trench 8
25	12/1	12/1	25	W	Trench 21
26	11/1	11/1	26	W	Trench 20.
27	10/1	10/1	27	S	Trench 19.
28	9/1	9/1	28	NW	Trench 18 (Post excavation).
29	8/1	8/1	29	N	Trench 17 (Post excavation).
30	7/1	7/1	30	W	Trench 16 (Post excavation).
31	6/1	6/1	31	N	Trench 15 (Post excavation).
32	5/1	5/1	32	E	Trench 21.
33	4/1	4/1	33	S	Work shot of trenches.
34	3/1	3/1	34	SE	Work shot of trenches.
35	2/1	2/1	35	E	Work shot of trenches.
36	1/1	1/1	36	W	Work shot of trenches.

### *Sample Register*

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<b>Sample No.</b>	<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
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1	1015	Sample from pit [1016]
2	1011	Sample from pit [1012]
3	1013	Sample from pit [1014]
4	1006	Sample from pit [1008]
5	1009	Sample from pit [1010]

### *Drawing register*

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<b>Drawing No.</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Plan</b>	<b>Description</b>
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1	x	-	East facing section of plough furrow [1003]
2	x	-	North facing section of plough furrow [1005]
3	x	-	North West facing section of pit [1008]
4	x	-	East facing section of pit [1014]
5	x	-	West facing section of pit [1012]
6	x	-	West facing section of dyke (1017)