

Sandstone Road, Wincobank, Sheffield

Report on an Archaeological Evaluation



Aerial photography of Wincobank Camp, Iron Age hillfort in 1962
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Contents

Executive Summary	2
1 INTRODUCTION.....	3
2 BACKGROUND.....	5
3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	7
4 METHODOLOGY.....	7
5 RESULTS.....	11
5.1 Trench 1.....	11
5.2 Trench 2.....	12
5.3 Trench 3.....	14
5.4 Trench 4.....	17
5.5 Trench 5.....	18
5.6 Trench 6.....	20
6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	23
7 PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT.....	24
8 STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY.....	24
9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	24
10 REFERENCES.....	25
APPENDIX I: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS.....	27

List of Figures

Figure 1: General site location.....	4
Figure 2: Site plan and location of the archaeological trial trenches.	10
Figure 3: Trench 1, looking north-west (scale 2 x 1m).....	11
Figure 4: Sample section through the northern end of trench 1, looking north-east (scale 1m).....	12
Figure 5: Trench 2, looking north-west (scale 2 x 1m).....	13
Figure 6: Sample section through the northern end of trench 2, looking north-east (scale 2m).....	13
Figure 7: Trench 3, looking north-west (scale 2 x 1m).....	15
Figure 8: Sample section through the northern end of trench 3, looking north-east (scale 2m).....	16
Figure 9: Southern end of trench 3, looking north (scale 2 x 1m).....	16
Figure 10: Trench 4, looking north-west (scale 2m x 1m).....	17
Figure 11: Section through trench 4 with land drain ditch, looking north-east (scale 1m).....	18
Figure 12: Trench 5, looking north-west (scale 2m x 1m).....	19
Figure 13: Detail of service trench [503], looking north-east (scale 1m).....	19
Figure 14: Trench 6, looking north-west (scale 2 x 2m + 1m across the trench).....	21
Figure 15: Northern side of the south-west facing section through trench 6 (scale 2m).....	21
Figure 16: Detail of ditch [607], looking north (scale 2m).....	22
Figure 17: Detail of ditch [604], looking north-east (scale 2m).....	22

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2011 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by DLP Planning Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Sandstone Road, Wincobank Sheffield, in order to ascertain the archaeological potential of the site, in particular relating to the presence, condition and potential of the Roman Ridge. This is a poorly-understood, but iconic linear bank and ditch monument which runs across a portion of South Yorkshire, and was postulated to run across the site. The topography and vegetation on the site partially limited the pre-arranged programme of evaluation trenches and, through agreement with SYAS, the final evaluation comprised six trenches, varying from 12 to 25 metres in length, which provided a representative sample across the site, and ensured that should remains of the Roman Ridge survive, they would be noted.

The archaeological evaluation trenches did not uncover any significant archaeological features or deposits, other than modern service trenches and land drains as well as a modern ditch of unknown character. A substantial made-ground layer was present within the central section and along the north-western side of the site. The made-ground was homogenous and devoid of any finds (except for modern plastic bags), and appears to have been deliberately selected to re-landscape the area. This might have taken place when the houses or reservoir, located immediately to the north-west of the site, were constructed in the 20th century.

Based on the results of the evaluation work, there is no indication of the Roman Ridge earthwork within the Sandstone Road site. Due to the extensive 20th century remodelling of the area, it is not possible to state definitively whether the Roman Ridge once crossed the site and has been completely removed by later interventions, or whether the route of the monument lies further to the north-west or south-east. However, from the observed stratigraphy, it is more likely that the Roman Ridge never crossed the site, as one would expect some ephemeral evidence to remain, albeit heavily truncated.

1 INTRODUCTION

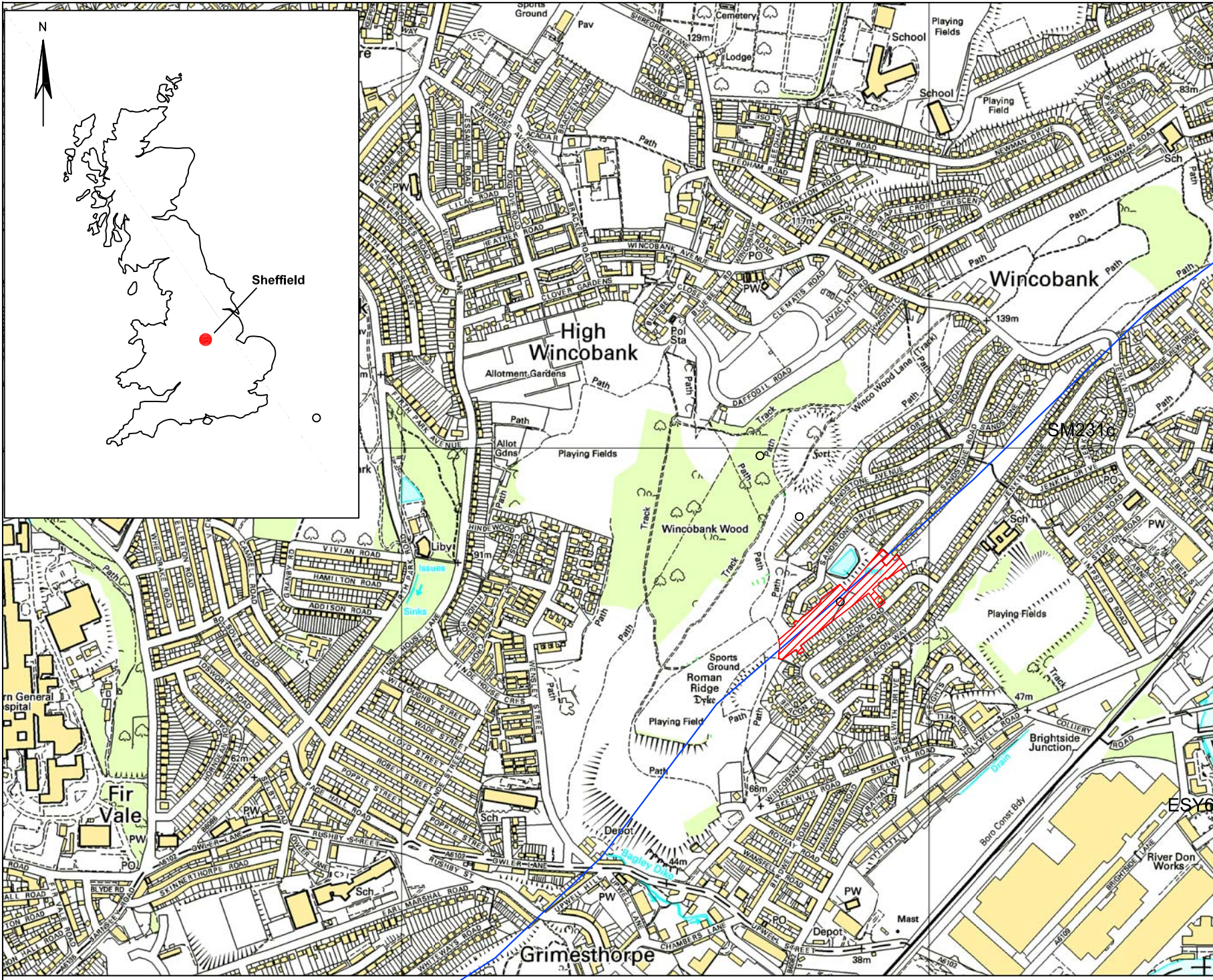
1.1 The site lies to the north of Beacon Road and to the south-west of Sandstone Road in the Wincobank area of Sheffield (NGR SK 3782 9075, Fig. 1), approximately 250 metres south of the Scheduled Monument of Wincobank Hillfort (SM13375) and along the proposed line of the Roman Ridge, which is in places a substantial linear earthwork. There is a Scheduled portion of the monument 250 metres to the north-east (SM231c and 231d). A previous archaeological evaluation on the site recovered no archaeological deposits or finds (Gething 1993).

1.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by DLP Planning Ltd and Investates to undertake an archaeological evaluation. An updated archaeological assessment (Davies 2011) synthesised recent publications on the Roman Ridge, including Cronk (2004a and 2004b) and Boldrini (1999), which have re-highlighted this monument and ascribed either a later prehistoric or post-Roman (early medieval) date. Baseline data and the projected route of the Roman Ridge suggest that there is potential for below-ground archaeological features to survive at the site. The presence of Roman and Prehistoric remains in the wider study area, both scheduled and non-designated assets, indicate the potential for later prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and activity. During the medieval and post-medieval periods there is less known activity. It was considered likely, from the information available to the initial assessment that the route of the Roman Ridge runs through the site.

1.3 In order to fully assess the significance of heritage assets within the site, South Yorkshire Archaeology Service required that an archaeological trial trenching evaluation be undertaken. This is in line with PPS5 Policy HE 6.1 which states that ‘where desk-based assessment is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation’ is required (DCLG 2010, 6).

1.4 The proposed site covers a rectangular parcel of land approximately 400 metres north-east to south-west by 75 metres north-west to south-east. The site is a grassed, steeply-sloping hillside bounded by playing fields, modern housing and a late 19th century reservoir at an elevation of roughly c. 110 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD). There has evidently been extensive modification to the land around the site through these post-medieval and modern developments.



1.5 The underlying geological deposits in the Wincobank area are Lower Coal Measures (Westphalian A), whilst the ridge that runs across the area comprises Silkstone Rock with an outcrop of bedded Parkgate Rock Sandstone to the south-east of Wincobank Hill (British Geological Survey). The solid geology is overlain by free-draining, slightly acid loamy soils (National Soils Resources Institute).



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Site Code: Sandstone Rd
 Drawing Ref:
 Scale: As shown

Figure 1
 Site Location

Key:
 Roman Ridge Proposed Line
 Site Boundary

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Ordnance Survey data if applicable
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2 BACKGROUND

2.1 A series of comprehensive desk-based assessments have been produced which have examined the historical and archaeological background of the site (Cronk 2004a; 2004b; Boldrini 1999; Davies 2011). These have included cartographic regression analysis and discussed the results of documentary studies of the historical evolution of the site. The most recent desk-based assessment was produced by ARS Ltd as the initial stage of this work (Davies 2011) and included assessment of the aerial photographic evidence for the site.

2.2 The Roman Ridge is a long linear earthwork that runs for some ten miles along the Don Valley from Sheffield, north-east to Kimberworth. At Kimberworth the earthwork splits into a northern arm running towards Swinton and Mexborough, and a southern arm running towards Kilnhurst. At its western extent the monument is simple and abuts against the steep-sided Don valley, whilst in the flatter countryside outside Kimberworth it becomes a double earthwork, probably to compensate for the topography (Gething 1993). The purpose of the monument is not definitively known but similar archaeological features are frequently interpreted as either defensive barriers or symbolic territory markers. No secure dating has been obtained from the remains of the monument but a later prehistoric or early medieval date is considered the most likely (McNeil pers. comm.). The monument is no longer continuous as an extant feature for portions of its length, including within the study area. This is probably due to later industrial activity. Around the study area there are two extant sections to the east of Sandstone Close (MSY231c/d), and the monument has also been mapped to the west.

2.3 The Roman Ridge has been extensively investigated by a number of antiquarians and archaeologists. A desk-based assessment undertaken by ArcHeritage provides a detailed survey of the antiquarian and early archaeological exploration of the ridge (Stenton 2011). It is worth noting that an early antiquarian, Samuel Mitchell, suggested that the ‘fortified defensive earthwork’ had been constructed by the inhabitants of Wincobank Hillfort (Mitchell 1855), whilst the first modern interpretation of the monument by Armitage suggested that the lack of an Anglo-Saxon or Viking name for the ridge indicated that the early medieval peoples did not construct the ridge and did not know who did (Armitage 1897, 40-41).

2.4 A number of small excavations have taken place along the line of the extant portions of the Roman Ridge away from the present study area. Notable excavations by Ashbee (1957) demonstrated that the monument consists of a bank and a ditch separated by a berm to slow erosion, with the feature showing a high degree of uniformity in its construction. This led Ashbee to surmise that the ridge was ‘never more than a thrown up and ordered line of spoil from a ditch’ with a uniformity of construction that indicated that the feature was ‘the work of one engineer at one period (Ashbee 1957, 262-265). However, excavations by Atkinson (1994) revealed a flat-based ditch re-cut as a ‘U-shaped’ ditch below the line of the Ridge ditch itself. Boldrini (1999, 24) postulates that this might mean that the Roman Ridge followed the line of an earlier boundary, perhaps indicating a multiple phase monument of some complexity, although this has not been substantiated by other interventions.

2.5 Cumberpatch (1999, 12) suggested that “a later prehistoric date is perhaps marginally to be favoured over a post-Roman date [for the ridge] but only extensive further excavation of the monument is likely to resolve the matter”.

2.6 Boldrini (1999, 26) collates the existing evidence from two separate radiocarbon dates. However, due to the uncertainty of the context from which the samples were taken, he recommends to ignore them. Boldrini (1999) notes that Preston’s interpretation of the

monument has influenced all subsequent interpretations, with the banked side of the ditch representing the defence of the upland territory from the middle Don valley. Preston favoured a post-Roman date with the monument defining the southern boundary of the Kingdom of Elmet from the Kingdom of Mercia. In contrast, Boldrini notes that the suggestion that the ridge is pre-Roman and actually served as a barrier for the Brigantes tribe in the face of the Roman advance has received less advocacy. In conclusion, Boldrini notes that many interpretations of the ridge have assumed a uniform date for the monument and that this may need reappraisal. Furthermore, far from being a boundary, Boldrini, poses the question that this monument might have instead acted as a land enclosure adjacent to the Don valley, a notion perhaps supported by the fact that if the monument was constructed to delineate a 'special space' then why is it only a single earthwork for some of its length? (Boldrini 1999, 29). Although Boldrini favours a date during the Roman/Brigantian interaction for the monument, he has flagged the important issues that not only might the Roman Ridge be a multi-period monument, but also that the function may not be seen as purely a functional boundary.

2.7 Most recently, Cronk (2004a) has undertaken a detailed walkover survey of the Roman Ridge. In relation to the Wincobank stretch of the ridge, Cronk (2004a, 47) suggests that the now levelled 'camp' situated adjacent to the ridge at this point may suggest that the features were contemporary. However, on the matter of whether the Roman Ridge travelled along the hillside by the reservoir (the site) or followed an alternative route to the Iron Age camp, Cronk is uncertain (Cronk 2004a, 56). Concluding on the Wincobank stretch of the ridge, Cronk states that "even if the line of the dyke could be proved beyond doubt, this would not necessarily throw any light on who built it or why" (2004a, 56).

2.8 A number of isolated Roman findspots in the study area, such as coins, provide further indications of concentrated activity in the study area at this date.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to provide sufficient information for informed decisions to be made regarding:

- the presence or absence of archaeological features
- an assessment of their significance and importance in line with PPS5 (Planning for the Historical Environment) (CLG 2010) and Scheduled Monument Consent
- the likely impact of development upon any such features
- the appropriate mitigation of the development's impact upon those remains

3.2 More specifically, the principal aim was to establish any evidence for the projected line of the putative antique dyke, known as the 'Roman Ridge'.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 A detailed project design was prepared by ARS Ltd and agreed with SYAS. The evaluation involved the excavation of six trenches located across the site, aiming to target the projected potential line of the Roman Ridge (Fig. 2). The proposed location of trenches 2 and 3 had to be slightly modified due to the presence of Japanese knotweed. Moreover, it was initially designed to excavate seven trenches, however, due to the difficulties of the terrain, only six trenches were excavated and so the proposed trenches 6 and 7 were amalgamated. The fieldwork methodology comprised the following:

4.2 All elements of the archaeological evaluation were carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Evaluation* (2010) and with the IfA Code of Conduct (IfA 2008).

4.3 The trench was machine-stripped under continuous archaeological supervision to the first archaeological horizon in successive level spits, or to a level where it was possible to assess the presence or absence of archaeological features. A toothless bucket was used. The location of each trench was accurately recorded in relation to the Ordnance Survey national grid.

4.4 Each trench was cleaned by hand to allow the identification and planning of archaeological features. Where archaeological features appeared to be absent, sufficient work was done to demonstrate this. Each trench was planned at an appropriate scale: 1:20 where complex deposits were present or 1:50 in areas of lesser complexity (to be omitted if the trench is completely blank). One representative long section of each trench was produced. Sections and profiles of each feature sampled were drawn at 1:10 or 1:20, depending on the size of the feature. Spot levels relative to ordnance datum in metres were taken as appropriate. All features were investigated - discrete features were to be half-sectioned in the first instance; linear features were sampled a minimum of 20% along their length (each sample section to be not less than 1m), or a minimum of a 1m sample section, if the feature was less than 10m long.

4.5 Identified archaeological features were to be sampled by manual excavation to allow their date, nature and degree of survival to be ascertained. Any sampling strategy to be used was to be discussed and agreed with SYAS. Provision was allowed to establish whether earlier features/surfaces are sealed beneath later levelling layers. All features investigated were recorded in plan and section and all finds recovered retained for analysis.

4.6 All identified archaeological features were accurately fixed using an EDM/Total Station, surveying in either the planning baselines or the features themselves.

4.7 The site archive includes plans and sections at an appropriate scale, a photographic record, and full stratigraphic records on recording forms/context sheets. Each context is recorded on pro-forma records which include the following: character and contextual relationships; detailed description (dimensions and shape; soil components, colour, texture and consistency); associated finds; interpretation and phasing as well as cross-references to the drawn, photographic and finds registers. Each context is recorded on an individual record.

4.8 A photographic record was maintained including photographs of all significant features and overall photographs of each area or trench. All images were taken in black and white print, colour slide and digital format, and contained a graduated photographic scale. The main photographic archive comprises 35mm b/w SLR print film and 35mm colour slides, supplemented by digital SLR (minimum 7 megapixels).

4.9 All stratified finds were collected by context or, where appropriate, individually recorded in three dimensions. Unstratified finds were only collected where they contributed significantly to the overall objectives or were of particular intrinsic interest.

4.10 No features had the potential to yield palaeoenvironmental evidence. The agreed methodology was to have been: Where features had the potential to contain palaeoenvironmental or datable remains, a sampling strategy was to be adopted in order to extract necessary samples to answer key research questions about the deposits. Where deposits had the potential to contain palaeoenvironmental remains or datable material, the entire fill, or a representative sample of larger deposits, was to be floated. Flotation of all feature fills with organic content was to be undertaken on site employing graduated brass sieves, with 500 μ as the smallest fraction. This strategy and approach was to be refined dependent on on-site conditions. Provision was made available for recovery, processing and suitable assessment/analysis. It was considered likely that environmental sampling was to be most usefully employed on this site in relation to primary ditch deposits in regards to the Roman Ridge. In this instance the above strategy was deemed sufficient to identify botanical macrofossils and charred remains in order to inform on both human activity and the palaeoenvironment from the time of the monument. The strategy also aimed to address the date of the monument through recovery of suitable charred samples.

4.11 Samples were to be assessed by a suitable specialist with provision for further analysis as required. Specialist advice on the collection of industrial residues was to be sought, in the event that such deposits were encountered, and their strategies implemented. The advice of the English Heritage Scientific Adviser was to be followed in relation to all scientific sampling strategies.

4.12 All retained finds and palaeoenvironmental samples were treated in accordance with the English Heritage guidance document *A Strategy for Care and Investigation of Finds (1995)* and the UKIC's document *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage*.

4.13 Provision was to be made for additional specialist advice, e.g. for finds analysis, conservation and scientific dating, should this have been required.

4.14 Finds of 'treasure' were to be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures.

4.15 No grave cuts or human remains were discovered on site. In this event, the methodology would have been as follows: Grave cuts were to be sampled through hand excavation to determine the presence/absence, depth and preservation of the uppermost burials, before being initially left in situ. Where excavation of human remains was deemed necessary, a license was to be obtained from the Ministry of Justice and work carried out under appropriate environmental health regulations and, if appropriate, in compliance with the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendments) Act 1981.

4.16 Disarticulated human bone was to be quantified, characterised and retained for assessment.

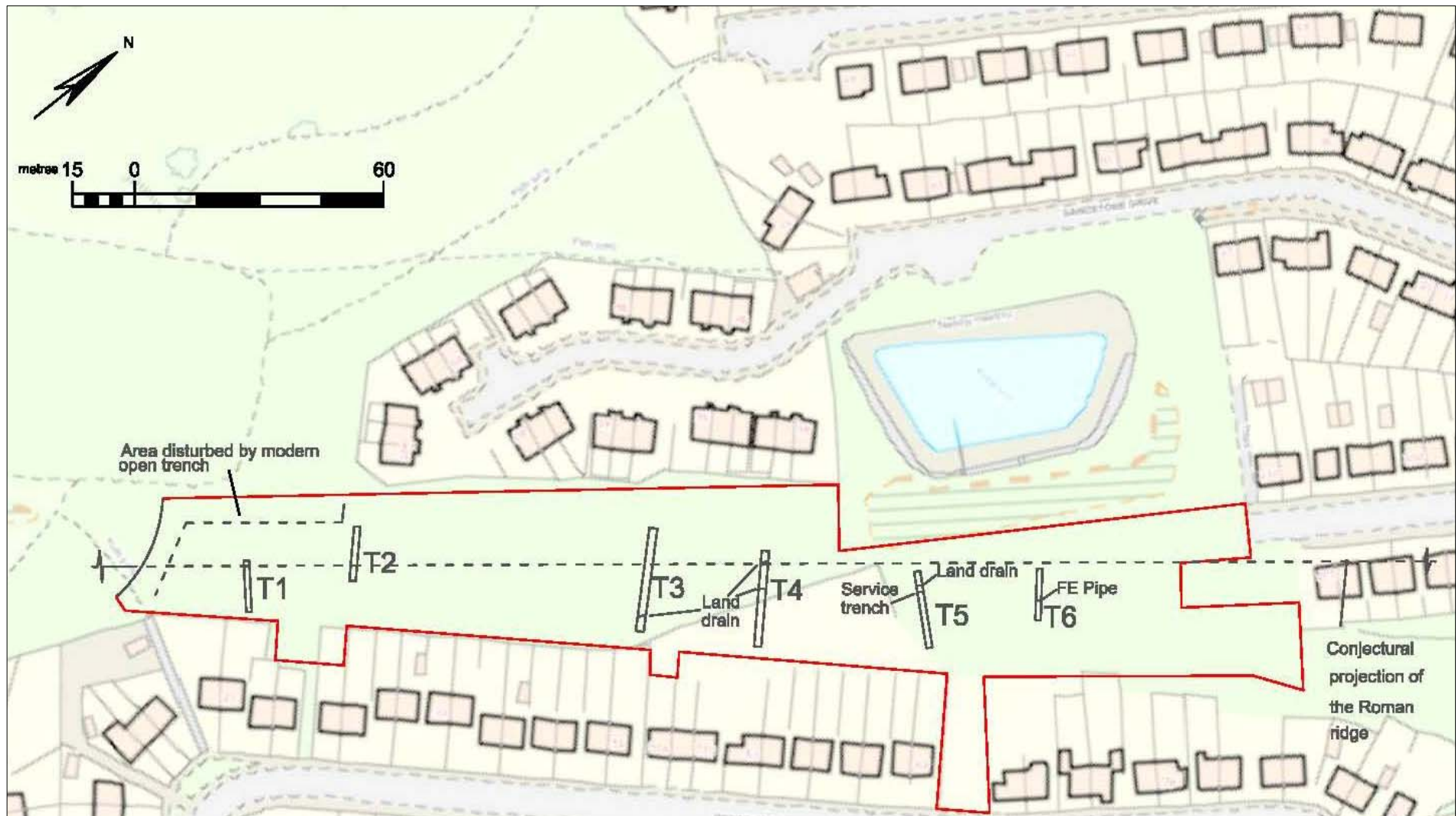


Figure 2: Site plan and location of the archaeological trial trenches

5 RESULTS

Detailed summary of the trench records, including plans and sections, is presented in Appendix 1. The location of the trial trenches is shown on the site plan (Fig. 2).

5.1 Trench 1

5.1.1 Trench 1 measured *c.* 12.20 metres in length (NW/SE), 1.60 metres in width (NE/SW) and reached an overall depth of 0.50 metres. The trench was located across the south-western end of the site, between a boundary wall to the south-east and an open 'L'-shaped excavated trench/ditch to the north-west (Figs 3 and 4).

5.1.2 The stratigraphic sequence consisted of a layer of topsoil (101), consisting of a dark brownish grey firm silty clay with few small sandstones and frequent root penetration; and yielded an overall thickness of *c.* 300mm. One fragment of white-ware pottery of modern date was retrieved from this layer. The topsoil overlay the natural sub-stratum (102), composed of light mottled greyish/brownish yellow hard silty clay with frequent manganese specks and iron pan.

5.1.3 The natural sub-stratum was partially reduced (250mm deep) in order to test its physical structure. The trench inclined a maximum of 1.50 metres towards the south-east. The horizon of the natural sub-stratum was encountered at 111.40m AOD (NW end) and 108.90m AOD (SE end). No archaeological features or deposits were revealed within this trench.



Figure 3: Trench 1, looking north-west (scale 2 x 1m)



Figure 4: Sample section through the northern end of trench 1, looking north-east (scale 1m)

5.2 Trench 2

5.2.1 Trench 2 measured *c.* 12 metres in length (NW/SE), 1.60 metres in width (NE/SW) and reached a maximum depth of 2.40 metres at the north-western end and 350mm at the south-eastern end of the trench. The trench was located across the site approximately 25 metres north-east of trench 1 (Figs 5 and 6).

5.2.2 The stratigraphic sequence consisted of a substantial made-ground layer (201) composed of small to medium angular sandstones within a hard mid brown silty clay, with frequent roots and occasional plastic bags. One modern ceramic plug or bottle top was retrieved from this context. The made-ground layer overlay a thin layer of buried topsoil (202), with an overall thickness of 150mm, which in turn overlay the natural sub-stratum (203) composed of mid yellowish hard clay with frequent manganese specks and iron pan. A small fragment of modern ceramic sherd was found.

5.2.3 The natural sub-stratum was partially reduced (100mm deep) in order to test its physical structure. A deeper sondage was cut four metres from the south-eastern end of the trench to a maximum depth of 750mm. The trench inclined towards the south-east. The horizon of the natural sub-stratum was encountered at 115.35m AOD (NW end) and 109.16m AOD (SE end). No archaeological features or deposits were revealed within this trench.



Figure 5: Trench 2, looking north-west (scale 2 x 1m)



Figure 6: Sample section through the northern end of trench 2, looking north-east (scale 2m)

5.3 Trench 3

5.3.1 Trench 3 measured *c.* 25 metres in length (NW/SE), 1.60 metres in width (NE/SW) and reached a maximum depth of 1.80 metres at the north-western end and 650mm at the south-eastern end of the trench. The trench was located across the site approximately 70 metres north-east of trench 2 (Figs 7 – 9).

5.3.2 The stratigraphic sequence was similar to trench 2, which consisted of a substantial made-ground layer (301) composed of small to medium angular sandstones within a hard mid brown silty clay, covering most of the north-western half of the trench, and another made-ground layer (302) to the south-east which in turn overlay a topsoil layer (303), with an overall thickness of 200mm. The topsoil overlay the natural sub-stratum (305), composed of medium angular sandstone rubble within a sandy matrix, covering most of the north-western half of the trench. There was a layer of subsoil (304) or colluvium deposit within the south-east end of the trench, composed of hard mid brown clay with frequent charcoal flecks over the natural sub-stratum. A land drain was encountered at approximately 4.50 metres from the south-eastern end of the trench and within the subsoil layer. No trench cut for the drain pipe was discernable.

5.3.3 The natural sub-stratum was partially reduced (100mm deep) in order to test its physical structure. A deeper test was undertaken half way along the length of the trench to a maximum depth of 750mm; and an even deeper sondage was excavated towards the south-eastern end of the trench as the compaction of the natural became fairly loose and thus it was decided that a thorough investigation of its formation was required. This south-eastern test reached a maximum depth of 1 metre. The trench inclined towards the south-east. The horizon of the natural sub-stratum was encountered at 106.62m AOD (NW end) and 102.20m AOD (SE end). No significant archaeological features or deposits were revealed within this trench.



Figure 7: Trench 3, looking north-west (scale 2 x 1m)



Figure 8: Sample section through the northern end of trench 3, looking north-east (scale 2m)



Figure 9: Southern end of trench 3, looking north (scale 2 x 1m)

5.4 Trench 4

5.4.1 Trench 4 measured *c.* 23 metres in length (NW/SE), 1.60 metres in width (NE/SW) and reached an overall depth of 500mm. The trench was located across the site approximately 26 metres north-east of trench 3 (Figs 10 and 11).

5.4.2 The stratigraphic sequence consisted of a layer of topsoil (401) with an overall thickness of 300mm which in turn overlay the natural sub-stratum (402) composed of sandstone bedrock. A fragment of modern ceramic sherd was found within the topsoil. A land drain was encountered at approximately 2 metres from the north-west end within the topsoil layer. No trench cut for the drain pipe was discernable. Another land drain was uncovered towards the centre of the trench. This was within a SW/NE linear ditch [404] containing a ceramic pipe and backfilled clay (403) which cuts the natural sub-stratum and reached a depth of 103.10m AOD.

5.4.3 The natural sub-stratum was partially reduced (100mm deep) in order to test its physical structure. The trench inclined towards the south-east. The horizon of the natural sub-stratum was encountered at 106.10m AOD (north-west end) and 100.85m AOD (south-east end). No significant archaeological features or deposits were revealed within this trench.



Figure 10: Trench 4, looking north-west (scale 2m x 1m)



Figure 11: Section through trench 4 with land drain ditch, looking north-east (scale 1m)

5.5 Trench 5

5.5.1 Trench 5 measured *c.* 18.40 metres in length (north-west to south-east), 1.60 metres in width (NE/SW) and reached an overall depth of 1 metre. The trench was located across the site approximately 37 metres north-east of trench 4 (Figs 12 and 13).

5.5.2 The stratigraphic sequence consisted of a topsoil layer (501) which overlay a thin layer of made-ground (502) which in turn overlay a substantial layer of subsoil (507) or colluvium deposit within the south-east end of the trench. This subsoil or colluvial layer was composed of hard mid brown clay with frequent charcoal flecks overlying the natural sandstone bedrock (508). A land drain was encountered at approximately 2.50 metres from the south-eastern end of the trench. This was within a south-west to north-east linear ditch [505] containing a ceramic pipe and backfilled clay (506) which cuts the natural sub-stratum and reached a maximum observed depth of 105.65m AOD.

5.5.3 A substantial south-west to north-east aligned linear ditch [503] containing a service pipe and backfilled gravel and hardcore (504), which cut the natural sub-stratum and reached a depth of 104.40m AOD, was also uncovered within the north-western side of the trench

5.5.4 The natural sub-stratum was partially reduced (*c.* 100mm deep) in order to test its physical structure. The trench inclined towards the south-east. The horizon of the natural sub-stratum was encountered at 106.20m AOD (north-west end) and 103.80m AOD (south-east end). No significant archaeological features or deposits were revealed within this trench.



Figure 12: Trench 5, looking north-west (scale 2m x 1m)



Figure 13: Detail of service trench [503], looking north-east (scale 1m)

5.6 Trench 6

5.6.1 Trench 6 measured *c.* 12 metres in length (north-west to south-east), 1.60 metres in width (north-east to south-west) and reached an overall depth of 2 metres. The trench was located across the site approximately 16 metres north-east of trench 5 (Figs 14 – 17).

5.6.2 The stratigraphic sequence consisted of a topsoil layer (601) which overlay a substantial layer of made-ground (602) with an overall thickness of 750mm. The made-ground overlay a layer of subsoil (612) or colluvium deposit within the south-east end of trench, composed of hard mid brown clay with frequent charcoal flecks over the natural sub-stratum (613).

5.6.3 Two ditches, running across the trench, were revealed during the excavation. These were partially excavated by mechanical means as hand excavation was not possible due to their unsafe depth (between 1.2 to 2.5 metres below the ground level). Ditch [604] was a large south-west to north-east linear feature filled by (603) composed of a mixed brownish yellow firm clay and sandstone rubble within mid greyish brown sandy matrix. The ditch also contained an iron pipe and produced one small piece of slag. This trench truncated a parallel smaller ditch [607] with a flat base and fairly straight side. Ditch [607] was filled by (605) and (606). Its primary fill (606) was excavated by hand as it initially appeared to have been formed as a result of an early silting up process. Its excavation, however, produced a small piece of modern white-ware pottery sherd and the soil, consisting of black soft sandy silt, contained clear remnants of modern hydrocarbon fuel contamination, as indicated by a distinctive smell. The retrieval of the modern pottery and investigation of the fill within the feature was undertaken under supervision of Jim McNeil of the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.

5.6.4 The deep test excavation within Trench 6 enabled examination of the underlying geology which consisted of several strata, including layers of clay (608), (609), (610), (611) and (613); a seam of coal (614) and the lower sub-stratum was composed of medium angular sandstone brash within a loose sandy matrix.

5.6.5 The trench inclined towards the south-east. The horizon of the uppermost natural sub-stratum was encountered at 107.25m AOD (north-west end) and 105.30m AOD (south-east end). No significant archaeological features or deposits were revealed within this trench, except for the modern ditches/service trenches aforementioned.



Figure 14: Trench 6, looking north-west (scale 2 x 2m + 1m across the trench)



Figure 15: Northern side of the south-west facing section through trench 6 (scale 2m)



Figure 16: Detail of ditch [607], looking north (scale 2m)



Figure 17: Detail of ditch [604], looking north-east (scale 2m)

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 The archaeological evaluation at Sandstone Road, Wincobank, Sheffield, aimed to target the proposed line of the Roman Ridge. The topography and vegetation on the site partially limited the pre-arranged programme of evaluation trenches and, through agreement with SYAS, the final evaluation comprised six trenches, varying from 12 to 25 metres in length, which provided a representative sample across the site, and ensured that should remains of the Roman Ridge survive, they would be noted.

6.2 The archaeological evaluation trenches did not uncover any significant archaeological features or deposits, other than modern service trenches and land drains as well as a modern ditch of unknown character. A substantial made-ground layer was present within the central section and along the north-western side of the site. The made-ground was homogenous and devoid of any finds (except for modern plastic bags), and appears to have been deliberately selected to re-landscape the area. This might have taken place when the houses or reservoir, located immediately to the north-west of the site, were constructed in the 20th century.

6.3 The underlying geological sub-stratum was encountered in all excavated trenches, varying from clay to sandstone bedrock with further variations, including coal seams and sandstone rubble within a sandy matrix. The upper horizon of the natural sub-stratum sloped down four to six metres towards the south-east throughout the entire site.

6.4 Based on the results of the evaluation work, there is no indication of the Roman Ridge earthwork within the Sandstone Road site. Due to the extensive 20th century remodelling of the area, it is not possible to state definitively whether the Roman Ridge once crossed the site and has been completely removed by later interventions, or whether the route of the monument lies further to the north-west or south-east. However, from the observed stratigraphy, it is more likely that the Roman Ridge never crossed the site, as one would expect some ephemeral evidence to remain, albeit heavily truncated.

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9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank those involved in the project for their help and advice, especially Roy Tamblin and Jeff Franks of Investates, Katrina Hulse of DLP Planning Ltd and Jim McNeil of the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.

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APPENDIX I: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS

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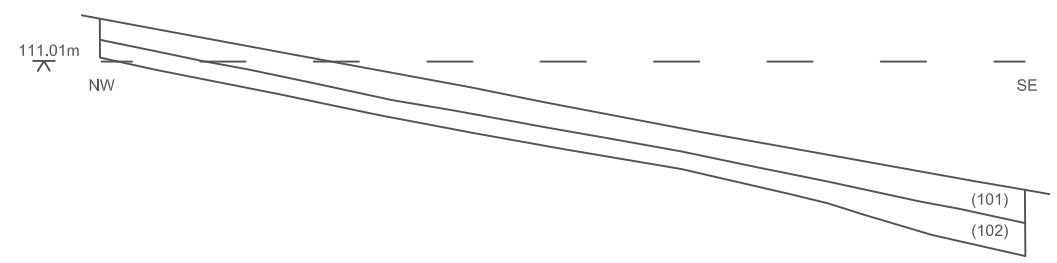
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Figure 18: Plans and Sections of Trenches 1 and 2

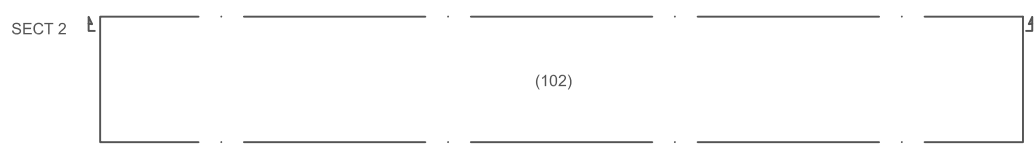
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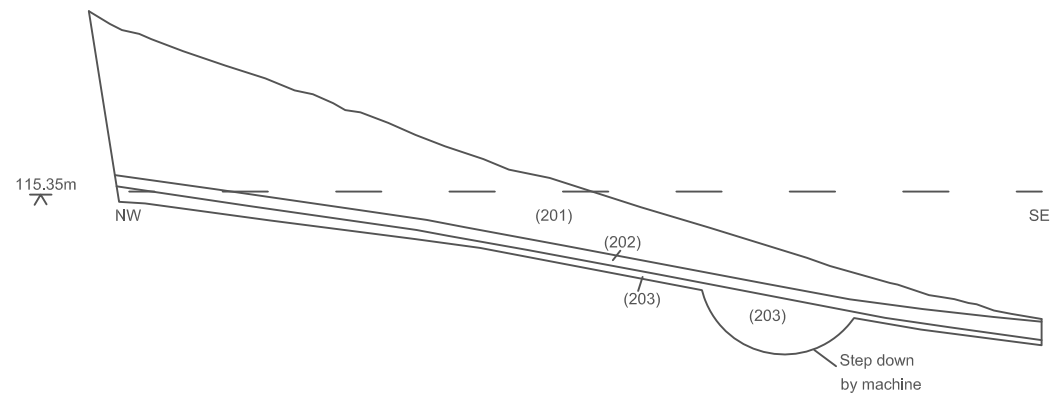


Section 2

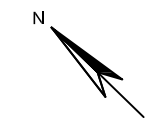
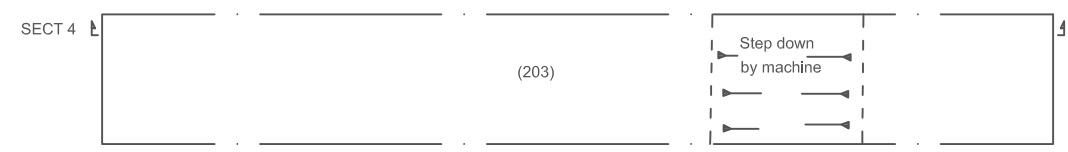


Trench 1

Section 4



Trench 2



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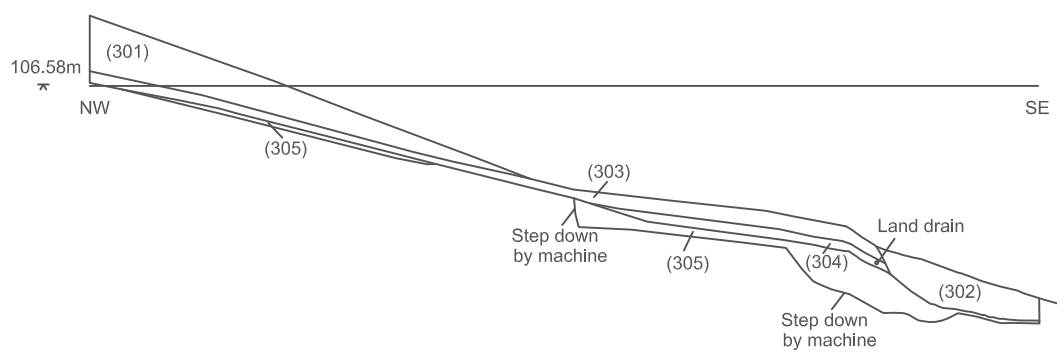
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Figure 19: Plans and Sections of Trenches 3 and 4

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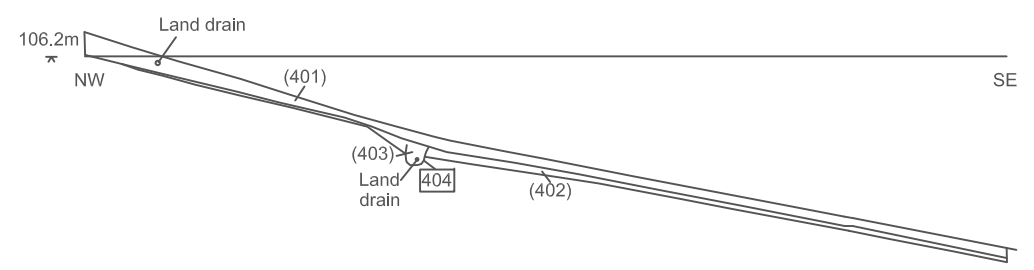
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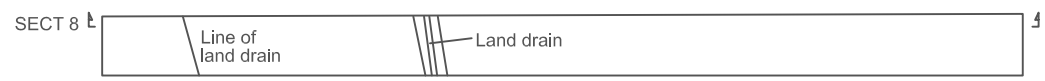
Section 6



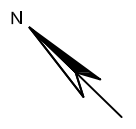
Trench 3

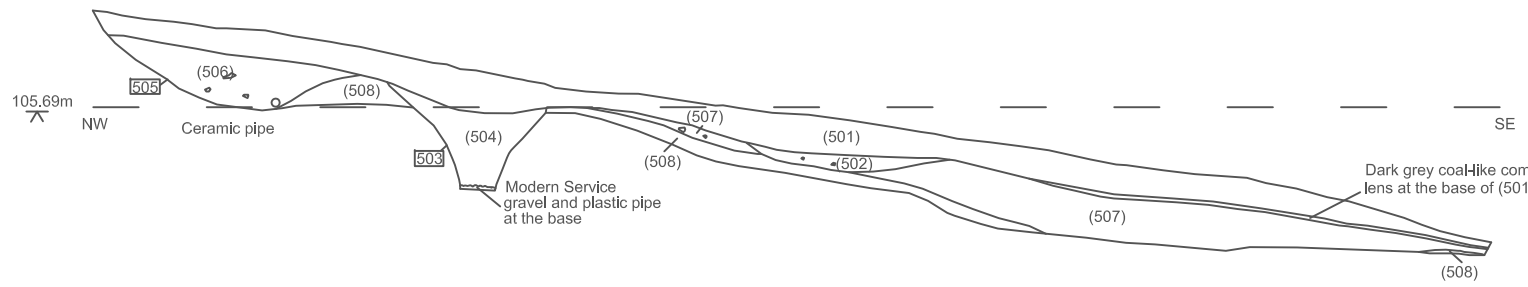


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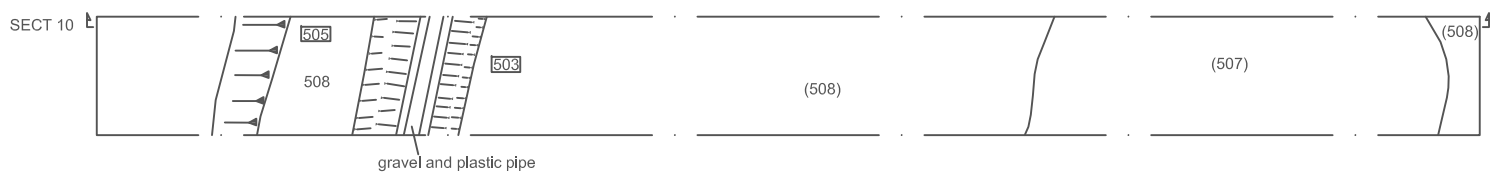


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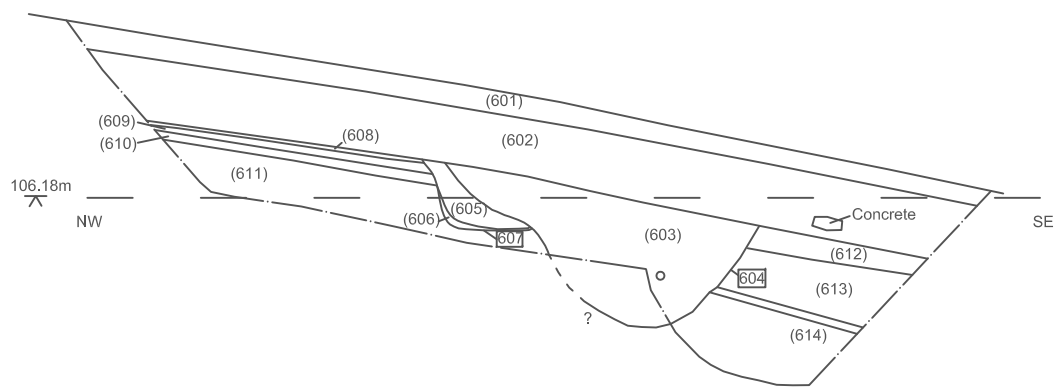


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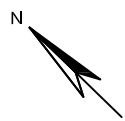
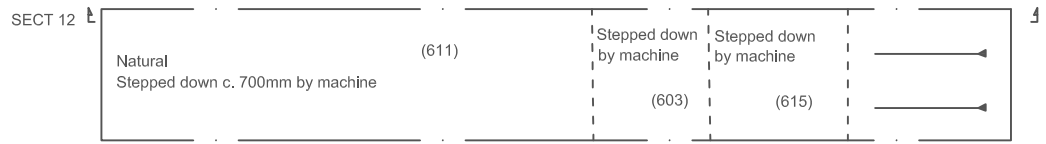


Trench 5

Section 12



Trench 6



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Figure 20: Plans and Sections of Trenches 5 and 6

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CONTEXT REGISTER

TRENCH 1

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
101	Topsoil, dark brownish grey firm silty clay with few small sandstones and frequent root penetration. 1 white-ware pottery sherd	Overburden
102	Undisturbed sub-stratum, light mottled greyish/brownish yellow hard silty clay with frequent manganese specks and iron pan	Natural

TRENCH 2

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
201	Made-ground layer, small to medium angular sandstones within a hard mid brown silty clay, with frequent roots and occasional plastic bags. 1 ceramic plug	Overburden
202	Topsoil, dark brownish black hard silty clay with frequent charcoal flecks. 1 modern white-and-blue pottery sherd	Overburden
203	Undisturbed sub-stratum, mid yellowish hard clay with frequent manganese specks and iron pan	Natural

TRENCH 3

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
301	Made-ground (northern area), small to medium angular sandstones within a hard silty mid brown clay with frequent roots	Overburden
302	Made-ground (southern area)	Overburden
303	Topsoil, dark brownish grey firm silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks	Overburden
304	Subsoil, mid brown firm silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and small stones	Undated/post medieval?
305	Undisturbed sub-stratum, medium angular sandstone rubble within a sandy matrix	Natural

TRENCH 4

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
401	Topsoil, dark brownish grey firm silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks. 1 modern white-and-blue pottery sherd	Overburden
402	Undisturbed sub-stratum, sandstone bedrock	Natural
403	Ceramic land drain and clay backfill	Modern
404	SW/NE linear ditch of drain	Modern

TRENCH 5

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
501	Topsoil, dark brownish grey firm silty clay	Overburden
502	Made-ground, dark grey firm silty clay with frequent fragments of ceramic building material (CBM)	Overburden
503	Fill of [504], had core and gravel with a silty clay matrix and a plastic service pipe within the basal section of ditch	Modern
504	N-E/S-W rectilinear service trench	Modern
505	Fill of [506], mixed grey and black silty clay with frequent small angular sandstones, ceramic pipe within the basal section of ditch	Modern
506	N-E/S-W rectilinear land drain ditch	Modern
507	Subsoil, mid brown firm silty clay	Undated/post medieval?
508	Undisturbed sub-stratum, sandstone bedrock	Natural

TRENCH 6

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
601	Topsoil, dark brownish grey firm silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and small stones	Overburden
602	Made-ground, mixed mid brown soft silty clay and sand with frequent small sandstones	Overburden
603	Fill of [604], mixed brownish yellow firm clay and sandstone rubble within mid greyish brown sandy matrix. 1 slag	Modern
604	SW/NE linear service trench, cuts (605) and (606)	Modern
605	Upper fill of [607], mottled yellow and grey firm clay	Modern
606	Primary fill of [607], black soft sandy silt, diesel smell, 1 white-ware pottery sherd	Modern
607	SW/NE linear ditch, straight sided and flat base, filled by (605) and (606), truncated by [604]	Modern
608	Thin sub-stratum of hard yellow clay. NW area of trench	Natural
609	Thin sub-stratum of hard grey clay. NW area of trench	Natural
610	Thin sub-stratum of firm reddish brown clay. NW area of trench	Natural
611	Sub-stratum hard yellow clay. NW area of trench	Natural
612	Subsoil/colluvium deposit within the SE end of trench, composed of hard mid brown clay with frequent charcoal flecks	Undated/post medieval?
613	Sub-stratum hard yellow clay. Equivalent to (611) within SE side of trench	Natural
614	Sub-stratum coal seam	Natural
615	Sub-stratum medium angular sandstone rubble within a loose sandy matrix	Natural