

New Crematorium, Stretcholt, Bridgwater, Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation Report





**New Crematorium, Stretcholt, Bridgwater,
Somerset**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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New Crematorium, Stretcholt, Bridgwater, Somerset


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New Crematorium, Stretcholt, Bridgwater, Somerset

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SUMMARY

Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by the Westerleigh Group (the Client) through their project management advisors, Stride Treglown Management to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation of a site at Stretcholt, near Bridgwater, Somerset off the A38, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 330200, 144000.

In consultation with Steven Membrey of SHES, acting on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, a 5% sampling strategy of the Site equating to the excavation of an initial 11 trial trenches (25m x 2m) was undertaken.

The evaluation was carried out between the 3rd and the 5th of October. Although Romano-British finds were retrieved from the topsoil and some of the alluvial layers, no archaeological features or deposits were identified during the evaluation, and it is assumed that these finds were simply discarded by those working the land. It is considered possible that archaeological remains (more likely to be prehistoric) might survive on the Site, but at considerable depth and below the likely construction levels of the proposed development.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Wessex Archaeology is grateful to the Westerleigh Group for commissioning the evaluation. The advice and assistance provided by Steven Membrey of Somerset Historic Environment Services, who monitored the project on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, is duly acknowledged.

The project was managed by Richard Greatorex; evaluation fieldwork was carried out by Oliver Good, Simon Flaherty and Neil Fitzpatrick. The report was compiled by Oliver Good, the illustrations prepared by Linda Coleman and Richard Greatorex undertook the final edit.

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Figure 1 Site location and trench positions

Figure 2 Representative Sections 201 and 701

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by the Westerleigh Group (the Client) through their project management advisors, Stride Treglown Management to undertake an archaeological trial trench evaluation of a site at Stretcholt, near Bridgwater, Somerset off the A38, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 330200, 144000 (hereafter referred to as the Site; see **Figure 1**).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located (see **Figure 1**) at NGR 330200, 144000 along the western side of the A38 (Pawlett Road). The Site is bounded to the north by fields set to pasture, to the west by farm buildings and to the south by Sloway Lane.
- 1.2.2 The Site is relatively flat and set to pasture. The Site lies approximately 1km south of the Huntspill River at approximately 6m above Ordnance datum (aOD). The drift geology of the Site comprises estuarine alluvium.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The Site lies centrally within the Pawlett Level and both east and west of the A38, pottery finds of the Romano-British period have been recovered, predominantly spanning the 2nd – 4th centuries AD, with a heavier emphasis on the later period.
- 2.1.2 In terms of the later medieval and post-medieval periods, the evidence appears to provide a similar picture, with find spots both east and west of the A38 and again predominantly comprising pottery sherds some medieval examples of which have been glazed. One metal inscribed disc has also been recovered.
- 2.1.3 However all of the above would appear to confirm that the area, at least since the Romano-British period, has been exploited for agriculture with human activity/settlement closely focussed on the higher ground. It is however possible that earlier remains are sealed by the deep alluvial sediments.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Archaeological Field Evaluation

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological field evaluation were to :

- clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be threatened by development.
- identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site.
- assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- the production of a report which will present the project information in sufficient detail to allow interpretation without recourse to the project archive. This will facilitate judgements on the status of the archaeological resource and allow the formulation of an appropriate response ('a mitigation strategy') to the impact of the proposed development on any surviving archaeological deposits, if required.

4 METHOD STATEMENT

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following methodology was proposed in order to meet the aims and objectives of the fieldwork. All works were carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the 'Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 1999) excepting where they were superseded by statements made below.

4.2 Evaluation strategy

4.2.1 In consultation with Steven Membery of SHES, acting on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, up to a 5% sampling strategy of the Site equating to the excavation of an initial 11 trenches (25m x 2m) was undertaken. Once the trenches were opened a site monitoring meeting was held to determine whether further trenching was required as a contingency,

4.3 Fieldwork

4.3.1 Prior to machine excavation, the trench locations were scanned by Wessex Archaeology using a cable tracing device.

4.3.2 All overburden (topsoil and subsoil) was carefully removed by a 16 ton mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or natural geology, whichever was encountered first.

4.3.3 All machine work was under taken with constant archaeological supervision.

4.3.4 Stripped material was visually examined for archaeological material and a metal detector was used to enhance artefact recovery.

- 4.3.5 In each trench a representative section, not less than 1m in length, of deposits through each trench from ground surface to the top of the natural geology was recorded.
- 4.3.6 All recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and recording system. Details of Wessex Archaeology's recording system are available on request.
- 4.3.7 Trench locations were surveyed using a GPS and tied in to the Ordnance Survey.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Archaeological Features

- 5.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered during the evaluation. Although trenches were excavated to at least 1m depth, bedrock archaeology was not encountered. Alluvial deposits were encountered in each of the trenches.

5.2 Deposits

- 5.2.1 In each trench the highest deposit was dark grey/brown topsoil, which capped a series of alluvial deposits. In the northern end of **Trench 3** the topsoil contained modern building debris including bricks, concrete lumps and modern ceramics. **Trench 3** also contained a disused modern field boundary (**Figure 1**), which was visible prior to machining, running across the Site on a southwest-northeast alignment.
- 5.2.2 Below the topsoil were various alluvial deposits, which were identified consistently through out the trenches, with only a slight variation in the deposits between the trenches in the central and southern parts of Site and those trenches in the northern end (**Figure 2**). The deposits varied from mid blue/grey to mid brown in colour. These variations are thought to represent different periods of flooding and subsequent stabilisation. A summary of the trench profiles and stratigraphic sequences encountered are presented below in **Appendix 1**.

6 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

6.1 Finds

- 6.1.1 The evaluation yielded very few finds, deriving from topsoil and alluvial deposits in four of the trenches excavated (**Trenches 2, 4, 5 and 8**; see **Table 1**).
- 6.1.2 Datable finds comprise the five sherds of pottery, all of which are of Romano-British date. These include coarse oxidised ware, Black Burnished ware (BB1) and Oxfordshire colour coated ware. The only diagnostic piece is the rim from a shallow 'dog dish' in BB1, of 2nd century AD date or later; this sherd came from alluvial deposit **805**.
- 6.1.3 Other finds comprise a large piece of lias limestone from deposit **203**, unworked but possibly utilised for building material; and four pieces of

animal bone. One of the latter (from topsoil **501**) is possibly worked or utilised - this is a sheep/goat radius with usewear surface polish on one side. There are no other signs of working, but one end is broken, and the piece is of uncertain function and date.

Table 1: All finds by material type (number / weight in grammes)

Context	Animal Bone	Pottery	Stone
203		1/5	1/4330
404	3/3		
501	1/20		
805		4/28	
TOTALS	4/23	5/33	1/4330

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 No archaeological remains were recorded in any of the excavated trenches (**Figure 1**) during the course of the evaluation, which suggests that the potential for archaeological features on the Site is very low. Although Romano British finds were recovered from topsoil and the alluvium, it is likely that these are associated with the farming of the levels during that period. It is unlikely that the environment has changed much since then. Concentrated Romano-British settlement (apart from isolated farms on higher ground), was generally focussed further west towards Cannington and Comwich.

7.1.2 If any remains should be present on site (probably prehistoric) it is likely that they only survive at depth covered by the deep build-up of alluvium. At such a depth it is unlikely that any remains would be impacted upon by the current development.

7.2 Environmental Sampling

7.2.1 No environmental samples were taken.

8 ARCHIVING

8.1 Archive

8.1.1 The project archive has been prepared to the standards set out in *Management of Archaeological Projects*, Appendix 3 (EH 1991) and in accordance with procedures outlined in *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (MGC 1992) and the requirements of the recipient museum (Taunton: Museum Accession code TTNCM:?). The written archive is on clean, stable materials, and is suitable for photocopying. The materials used are of the standard recommended in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Evaluation Archives for Long-term Storage* (Walker 1990).

8.1.2 Details of the Site will be submitted online to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) database, a copy of this will be included as an Appendix to the report.

9 REFERENCES

English Heritage [EH], 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Institute for Archaeologists 2008, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation

Museum and Galleries Commission [MGC], 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*

Walker, K, 1990, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Evaluation Archives for Long-term Storage*

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1: Trench profiles

NGR = national grid reference; MaOD = metres above Ordnance Datum (Newlyn); BGL = below ground level

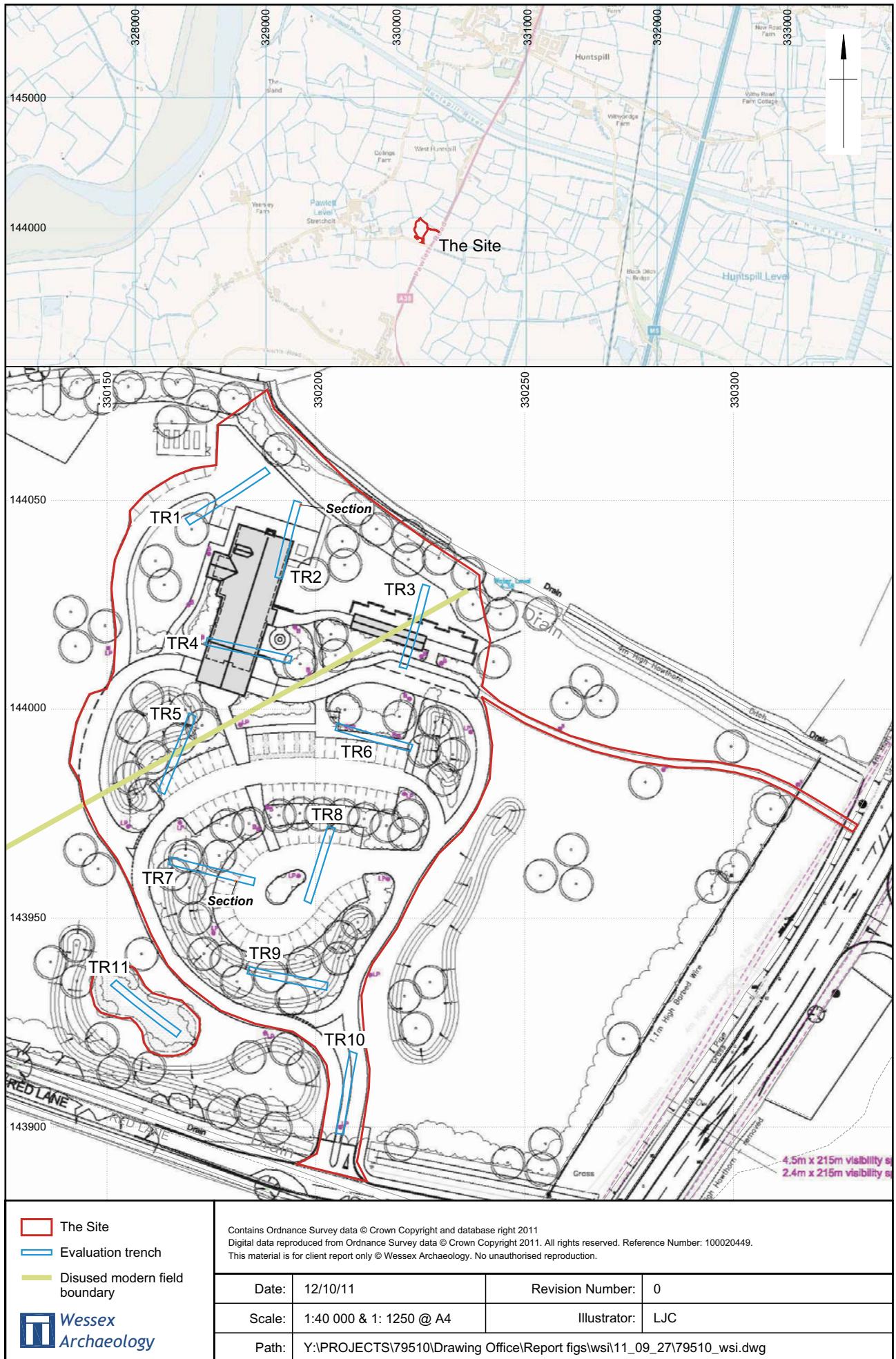
Trench 1	NGR co-ords: North: 330189.241 144057.760 South: 330168.066 144044.137	MaOD: 5.5m 5.4m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1.40 m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
101	Topsoil: Mid greyish black silty clay, very few inclusions. Heavily Bioturbated (fine roots)	0 – 0.26
102	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey silty clay, 70% clay, moderate manganese, slightly bioturbated by grassy roots. Alluvial clay layer	0.26–0.50
103	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey brown silty clay, 70% clay, sparse/moderate manganese flecking. Very firm deep alluvium.	0.50-1.40
Trench 2	NGR co-ords: North: 330196.111 144051.197 South: 330190.273 144028.274	MaOD: 5.4m 5.5m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1.40 m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
201	Topsoil: Mid greyish black silty clay, very few inclusions. Heavily Bioturbated (fine roots)	0 – 0.24
202	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey silty clay, 70% clay, moderate manganese, slightly bioturbated by grassy roots. Alluvial clay layer	0.24–0.58
203	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey brown silty clay, 70% clay, sparse/moderate manganese flecking. Very firm deep alluvium.	0.58-1.40
Trench 3	NGR co-ords: North: 330226.897 144031.119 South: 330220.367 144008.605	MaOD: 5.2m 5.2m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1.20 m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
301	Topsoil: Mid greyish black silty clay, Heavily Bioturbated (fine roots), rare modern CBM inclusions (<0.20m)	0 – 0.29
302	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey silty clay, 70% clay, moderate manganese, slightly bioturbated by grassy roots. Alluvial clay layer. Diffuse horizon with 303 Very compact layer	0.29-0.69
303	Alluvial: Dark bluish brownish grey silty clay, 70% clay, sparse/moderate manganese flecking. Very compact, diffuse horizons with 302 but clear horizons with 304	0.69-0.96
304	Alluvial: Dark bluish brownish grey silty clay, 70% clay,	0.96-1.20

	very compact with clear horizons.	
Trench 4	NGR co-ords: North: 330172.468 144016.630 South: 330196.537 144011.261	MaOD: 5.5m 5.6m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1.16 m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
401	Topsoil: Mid greyish black silty clay, Heavily Bioturbated (fine roots).	0 – 0.23
402	Alluvial: Light-Mid greyish brown silty clay, 65% clay, common manganese. Diffuse horizon with 403 Very compact alluvial layer.	0.23-0.43
403	Alluvial: Mid bluish greyish brown silty clay, 70% clay, common manganese flecking. Very compact, diffuse horizons with 402 but clear horizons with 404 .	0.43-0.85
404	Alluvial: Mid pinkish grey brown silty clay, 70% clay, very compact with clear horizons and rare manganese inclusions	0.85-1.16
Trench 5	NGR co-ords: North: 330171.665 144001.904 South: 330162.635 143978.862	MaOD: 5.5m 5.5m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1.33 m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
501	Topsoil: Mid greyish black silty clay, Heavily Bioturbated (fine roots).	0 – 0.24
502	Alluvial: Light-Mid greyish brown silty clay, 65% clay, quite common manganese. Diffuse horizon with 503 Very compact alluvial layer.	0.24-0.64
503	Alluvial: Mid pinkish greyish brown silty clay, 70% clay, common manganese inclusions. Very compact, diffuse horizons with 502 and 504 .	0.64-1.08
504	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey brown silty clay, 70% clay, very compact with slightly diffuse horizon with 503 and rare manganese inclusions.	1.08-1.33
Trench 6	NGR co-ords: North: 330202.757 143996.403 South: 330226.530 143989.810	MaOD: 5.6m 5.2m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1.40 m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
601	Topsoil: Mid greyish black silty clay, Heavily Bioturbated (fine roots).	0 – 0.23
602	Alluvial: Light-Mid greyish brown silty clay, 65% clay, quite common manganese. Sparse modern CBM inclusions. Diffuse horizon with 603 Very compact alluvial layer.	0.23-0.57
603	Alluvial: Mid pinkish greyish brown silty clay, 70% clay,	0.57-0.94

	common manganese inclusions. Very compact, diffuse horizons with 602 and 604 .	
604	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey brown silty clay, 75% clay, very compact with slightly diffuse horizon with 603 and rare manganese inclusions.	0.94-1.40
Trench 7	NGR co-ords: North: 330163.529 143964.078 South: 330187.384 143958.201	MaOD: 5.5m 5.4m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1.30 m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
701	Topsoil: Mid greyish black silty clay, Heavily Bioturbated (fine roots).	0 – 0.27
702	Alluvial: Light-Mid greyish brown silty clay, 65-70% clay, quite common manganese. Clear horizons, very compact alluvial layer.	0.27-0.60
703	Alluvial: Light bluish greyish brown silty clay, 65-70% clay, common manganese inclusions. Very compact and clear horizons.	0.60-0.74
704	Alluvial: Mid pinkish greyish brown silty clay, 70% clay, very compact with clear horizon and common manganese inclusions.	0.74-1.05
705	Alluvial: Dark bluish grey silty clay, no manganese inclusions very compact and clear horizons.	1.05-1.15
706	Alluvial: Light greyish bluish brown silty clay very compact alluvial layer with common manganese inclusions.	1.15-1.30
Trench 8	NGR co-ords: North: 330204.330 143973.826 South: 330197.005 143951.129	MaOD: 5.5m 5.5m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1.10 m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
801	Topsoil: Dark greyish brown silty clay, Heavily Bioturbated (fine roots) and quite loose.	0 – 0.22
802	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey silty clay, 65-70% clay, Clear horizons, very compact alluvial layer.	0.22-0.50
803	Alluvial: Mid brownish grey with a bluish hue silty clay, 65-70% clay, moderate manganese inclusions. Very compact and clear horizons.	0.50-0.66
804	Alluvial: Mid orangey brown with bluish grey mottles silty clay, 70% clay, very compact with sparse manganese inclusions and clear horizons.	0.66-0.75
805	Alluvial: Mid greyish brown silty clay, common manganese inclusions and rare sub angular sandstone (>0.20m). Very compact and clear horizons.	0.75-1.03
806	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey silty clay very compact alluvial layer with very few inclusions.	1.03-1.10

Trench 9	NGR co-ords: North: 330180.714 143938.275 South: 330205.271 143933.276	MaOD: 5.5m 5.4m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
901	Topsoil: Dark greyish brown silty clay, quite friable with heavy bioturbated (fine roots) and contains very few inclusions.	0 – 0.23
902	Alluvial: Mid bluish grey silty clay, 65-70% clay, very compact with moderate manganese alluvial layer.	0.23-0.43
903	Alluvial: Mid brown with bluish mottles silty clay, 65-70% clay, very compact, common manganese inclusions and very diffuse horizons.	0.43-0.68
904	Alluvial: Light bluish brown silty clay very compact with rare manganese flecks.	0.68-0.79
905	Alluvial: Mid-light bluish brown silty clay, common manganese inclusions, very compact and clear horizons.	0.79-1.00m
Trench 10	NGR co-ords: North: 330209.382 143919.777 South: 330205.357 143895.838	MaOD: 5.5m 5.5m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
1001	Topsoil: Mid greyish black silty clay, quite friable with heavy bioturbated (fine roots) and contains very few inclusions.	0 – 0.27
1002	Alluvial: Mid greyish brown silty clay, 65% clay, very compact with moderate manganese alluvial layer.	0.27-0.52
1003	Alluvial: Light greyish brown silty clay, 70% clay, very compact, moderate manganese and sub angular sandstone inclusions.	0.52-0.70
1004	Alluvial: Light bluish grey brown silty clay very compact with sparse manganese inclusions.	0.70-0.89
1005	Alluvial: Mid pinkish grey brown silty clay with moderate manganese inclusions, very compact and clear horizons.	0.89-1.00m
Trench 11	NGR co-ords: North: 330150.258 143935.559 South: 330169.341 143920.648	MaOD: 5.5m 5.5m
Dimensions	25m by 1.9m; 1.18m maximum depth	
Context Number	Description	Depth BGL (m)
1001	Topsoil: Mid greyish black silty clay, quite friable with heavy bioturbated (fine roots), quite loose and contains very few inclusions.	0 – 0.22
1002	Alluvial: Light-mid grey brown silty clay, 65% clay, very compact with moderate manganese and rare sub angular sandstone (>0.40m). Diffuse horizons with 1003 and clear horizons with 1001 .	0.22-0.61

1003	Alluvial: Light bluish grey brown silty clay, 70% clay, very compact with moderate manganese flecks.	0.61-0.75
1004	Alluvial: Mid pinkish grey brown silty clay, 70% clay, very compact with common manganese and very rare sandstone inclusions. Diffuse horizon with 1003 and a clear horizon with 1005 .	0.75-1.00
1005	Alluvial: Dark bluish grey silty clay, 75% clay, rare manganese inclusions, very compact and clear horizons.	1.00-1.07m

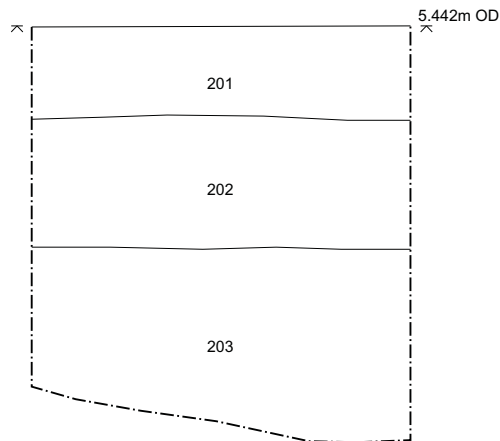


Site and trench location plan

Figure 1

TR2
N

S



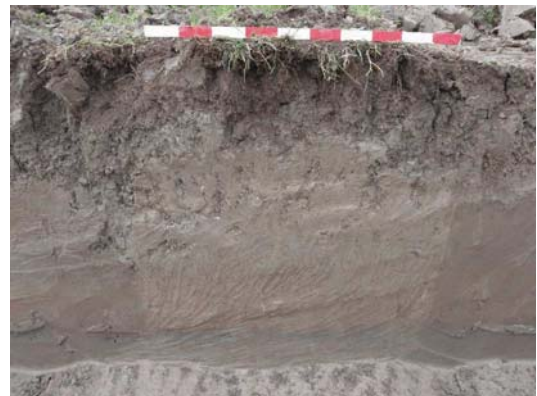
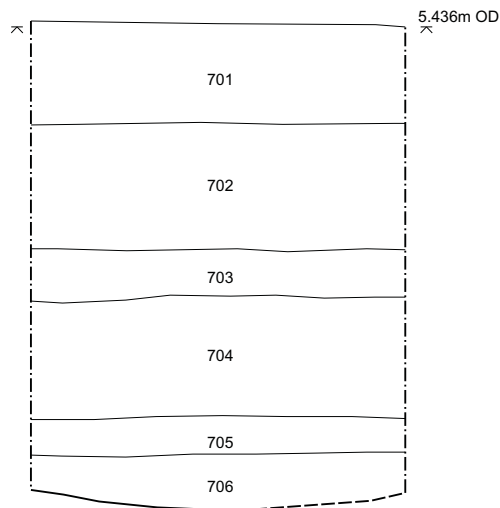
West facing representative section of trench 2



TR7

E

W



North facing representative section of trench 7

- The Site
- Evaluation trench
- Disused modern field boundary



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Scale: 1:40 000 & 1: 1250 @ A4

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