Wessex Archaeology



Maidstone Studios, Bearstead, Maidstone, Kent

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Ref: 84890.01 April 2012



Archaeological Evaluation Report

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* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL



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Archaeological Evaluation Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was appointed by CgMs Consulting, to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land at Maidstone Studios, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent, located at National Grid Reference (NGR) 577924 156486 (hereafter the Site). The evaluation comprised the excavation of eight trial trenches. The fieldwork was conducted from the 26th to the 30th of March 2012.

The Site is bounded to the east by New Cut Road, to the south by grounds belonging to Pegasus Place, to the west by a thin corridor of woodland and to the north by a field set to pasture. The local geology for the footprint of the Site comprised sands derived from the Folkestone Beds overlying Gault Clay. The Site was relatively flat and lies at approximately 66m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and had clearly been affected by landscaping undertaken during and subsequent to the construction of the television studios.

The car park area through which several of the evaluation trenches were originally to be located was approximately 1.5m below the surrounding ground level, indicative therefore of considerable truncation in this area.

The evaluation trenches revealed little evidence of archaeological activity, with only a single undated ditch, **407**, being identified in **Trench 4**. It is however notable, that although this ditch had been truncated; it still measured some 3.5m in width suggesting therefore it may have formed a major boundary. Three very small fragments of heavily abraded flint tempered pottery of Late Bronze Age date were recovered from the subsoil of **Trench 4**, though with the amount of landscaping evident throughout the Site this could easily have come from elsewhere on the Site, or even from outside of the Site.

The previous construction and landscaping within the Site has clearly had a severe impact on the survival of archaeological features. The paucity of unstratified artefacts from the overburden would appear to support the assumption that truncation has been extensive, but may also indicate that prior to the existing development; archaeological activity was of low density. On the basis of the evaluated areas, the observations indicate that the potential for the survival archaeological remains within the rest of the Site is very low.

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Duncan Hawkins in this regard.

The fieldwork was directed by Dave Britchfield with the assistance of Marie Kelleher and Lisa McCaig. The report was prepared by Rob De'Athe and the illustrations by Daniel Jackson. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Richard Greatorex, who also edited this report.



Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Limitedf to undertake a programme of trial trench evaluation within the footprint of the former Maidstone Television Studios (centered on National Grid Reference (NGR) 577924 156486; hereafter referred to as the Site). The trial trenches were located to avoid access roads and services such as fibre optic cables (see Figure 1). The evaluation was aimed at providing archaeological information to help inform the planning process.
- 1.1.2 The original proposal was the excavation of seven trial trenches each measuring 30m x 1.8m. The fieldwork was conducted from the 26th to the 30th of March 2012.

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is bounded to the east by New Cut Road, to the south by grounds belonging to Pegasus Place, to the west by a thin corridor of woodland and to the north by a field set to pasture. The local geology for the footprint of the Site comprises sands derived from the Folkestone Beds overlying Gault Clay. The Site, which today is relatively flat and lies at approximately 66m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), has clearly been truncated by landscaping undertaken during and subsequent to the construction of the television studios.
- 1.2.2 A car park through which several of the evaluation trenches were to be implemented was found to lie below the surrounding planted ground. The difference In height between the landscaped car park (average 62m aOD) and the surrounding area (average 64m aOD) was pronounced with height differences of up to 2m.



1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Prehistoric

- 1.3.1 Whilst there are no known below ground archaeological remains within the immediate vicinity of the Site, there are numerous records of find spots to the north-east, the majority of which are prehistoric. A Mesolithic core is recorded as a find spot some 3km east of the Site.
- 1.3.2 There are a number of find spots approximately two kilometres to the northeast on the Ashford Road dating to the Bronze Age. At one site a planoconvex knife and scraper were recovered (High Falcon House), at another an arrowhead (48 Ashford Road), and at Hock Hill a looped and socketed axe head.

Roman

1.3.3 At Roseacre Lane some two kilometres to the east of the Site, five Romano-British pottery vessels were recovered (from the Fullers Earth Quarry) dating between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

Medieval

1.3.4 At Cross Keys, some three kilometres to the east of the Site, a medieval arrowhead was recovered.

Post-Medieval

1.3.5 There are many late medieval and post-medieval listed buildings within the parish of Bearsted.

1.4 Archaeological Potential

1.4.1 It was believed the impact from the construction of the current buildings on Site; together with the landscaping that had occurred in the recent past, that the potential for archaeological remains to be present on Site in the areas covered by the evaluation trenches was low.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were:
 - To identify and record the general nature of any remains present.
 - To confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
 - To confirm and map the extent any remains.
 - To record through preservation by record any remains encountered.
 - To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
 - To determine the potential of the Sites to provide environmental and or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.



3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The following methodology was proposed in order to meet the aims of the evaluation. All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WA 2012) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2009).

3.2 Service location and existing trees

3.2.1 Prior to and during excavation, the trenches were scanned to verify the absence of any underground services using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT). Service plans provided by CgMs Consulting clearly showed the location of services beneath the Site including two existing fibre optic cables. The Site was surrounded by mature oak trees which were particularly prevalent in the northern, north-western and central areas. The trees and corresponding root exclusion zones had been indicated on the supplied plans to negate damage to them. It is understood the trees are to be retained.

3.3 Fieldwork

- 3.3.1 Due to the presence of the known services and extant trees a Site meeting with Duncan Hawkins of CgMs Consulting was organised to agree an appropriate strategy which would safeguard the root systems of the trees to be retained and avoid the services listed above. The meeting took place on Monday 26th March 2012. Following the meeting and inspection of the Site it was decided that due to the level of truncation observed in the car park areas and the constraints presented by the trees that the trenches would be relocated. This approach ensured that no vegetation was damaged and the fibre optic cables were avoided.
- 3.3.2 Consequently, the decision was taken to excavate eight trenches rather than the proposed seven and to adapt the trenches as appropriate. The eight trenches corresponded with the agreed sampling percentage (see **Figure 1**).
- 3.3.3 All the trenches were moved into grassed area away from the car park with Trenches 2 and 4 implemented in the north-eastern corner of the Site. Trench 3 was shortened and placed in a grassed area in the centre of the car park. Trenches 1 and 5 were installed in the central eastern area of the Site with Trenches 6 and 7 moved slightly to the east of their original settings into grassed area. The additional trench, Trench 8, was excavated in the south-eastern part of the Site.
- 3.3.4 All trenches were excavated with a 360° wheeled mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Machining continued to the first recognisable archaeological horizon or the underlying geological deposits, whichever was encountered first.
- 3.3.5 The machine excavated arisings were stored adjacent to the trench and spoil heaps were routinely inspected for artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest.



- 3.3.6 All trenches were marked out on the ground using a Global Positioning System (GPS) prior to the commencement of work.
- 3.3.7 All trenches, on agreement with the Archaeological Officer for Kent County Council, were backfilled on completion of the archaeological recording. Recording
- 3.3.8 All recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system.
- 3.3.9 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) were undertaken. The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights.
- 3.3.10 Photographs were taken as appropriate, providing a record of excavated trenches to illustrate their location and context, and images of the site overall. The photographic record comprises digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.
- 3.3.11 All interventions were surveyed using a GPS tied into the Ordnance Survey.

3.4 Health and Safety

- 3.4.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety regulations 1992 and Health and Safety in Field Archaeology 1997, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.
- 3.4.2 A Health and Safety Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology (2012), which was read and understood by all staff attending the site before groundwork commenced.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section presents the results of the Archaeological Evaluation. Detailed descriptions of the contexts recorded are included in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.1.2 **Figure 1** presents the site and the trench locations. **Figure 2** provides a close up of **Trench 4** with associate plates. **Figure 3** provides a close up of **Trench 6** with plates indicating modern disturbance.

4.2 Stratigraphic Sequence

- 4.2.1 Light grey brown topsoil with evidence of frequent rooting and rare subrounded pebbles overlay dark yellow/red silt/sand/clay subsoil in all the trenches. The natural comprised a very compacted light to mid yellow sand with evidence of rooting throughout (**Figure 2**, **Plate 3**). Occasional natural sandstone fragments were also encountered within the natural.
- 4.2.2 **Trench 1 (TR1)** was located in the central eastern area of the Site and was orientated broadly north-south. The trench measured 20m x 1.8m and was



- excavated to a depth 1.04m below ground level (bgl) where natural ground was identified. No archaeological features were present within the trench.
- 4.2.3 **TR2** was excavated 30m to the north of **TR1** and was shortened to a length of 3.6m x 1.8m and orientated roughly east-west along its longest axis. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.65m bgl where the natural was encountered. No archaeological features were present within the trench.
- 4.2.4 **TR3** was located 38m to the west of **TR2** and measured 1.9m x 1.9m. The natural was encountered at a depth of 0.90m bgl within this trench. No archaeological features were observed.
- 4.2.5 **TR4** was positioned some 29m to the north of **TR2** in the north-eastern part of the Site. The trench was aligned north-west/south-east and measured 15m x 1.8m (**Figure 2**). The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.06m bgl. A ditch and a possible natural feature were identified within the central and southern parts of the trench respectively. Ditch **407** was aligned broadly north-east/south-west and measured 3.5m in width. The width of the feature meant that a perpendicular hand excavated investigatory slot could not be implemented. Therefore two opposing sections were excavated to allow a profile of the ditch to be recorded.
- 4.2.6 The ditch exhibited shallow concave sides and a concave base and was 0.25m in depth (**Figure 2**, **Plate1**). The ditch contained a single fill **408** which was characterised by dark red brown silt/sand with rare flint inclusions and vary rare charcoal flecks and has been interpreted as a colluvial deposit. No artefacts were recovered from the deposit; however, three abraded fragments of Late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from the subsoil **403** in this trench.
- 4.2.7 The possible natural features **405** was orientated on a similar alignment to **407** and measured 1m in width (**Figure 2**, **Plate 2**). The feature had a flat base and straight shallow sides. Only 0.07m survived of the feature which contained a single fill **406**. This deposit was characterised by mid brown orange/yellow silt/sand with rare flint pebble inclusions. The feature contained evidence of a substantial amount of rooting and may be the remnants of a hedge line.
- 4.2.8 **TR5** was positioned some 14m to the west of **TR1** and was aligned broadly east-west. The trench measured *c*.10m x 1.8m. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.76m bgl where natural was encountered. No archaeological features were identified within the trench.
- 4.2.9 **TR6** was located 61m to the south-west of **TR5** and was aligned roughly north-south (**Figure 3**). The trench measured *c*.10m in length and 1.8m in width and was machined to a depth of 0.74m bgl where natural was encountered. The trench was stepped in plan once a concrete below ground obstruction was encountered. The topsoil within the trench had been imported for the purposes of landscaping and this overlay a made ground hardcore layer **602** (**Figure 3**, **Plate 6**). Natural was observed in the trench which had been cut into by the hardcore layer **602**. Overlying **602** was concrete path **604**; also located within the trench was a concrete foundation **605** (**Figure 3**, **Plates 4** & **5**). It would appear that the trench had uncovered an area previously utilised as a site compound probably during the



construction works to erect the extant buildings to the west of the car park area. No features of an archaeological nature were recorded within the trench.

- 4.2.10 **TR7** was located 13m to the south-west of **TR6** and measured 12.6m x 1.8m. The trench was aligned north-east / south-west and was machined to a depth of 0.71m bgl where natural was encountered. The same imported landscape topsoil was identified as in **TR6** overlying **702** a hardcore rubble layer which is the same material as **602** in **TR6**. No archaeological features were recorded within the trench.
- 4.2.11 **TR8** was located some 30m to the east of **TR7** and was orientated north-east/south-west. The trench measured 17.5m x 1.8m and was machined to a depth of 0.87m bgl. A sondage was excavated in the southern end of the trench where disturbance was evident to ensure no archaeological deposits were masked by the disturbance. No archaeological features were present within the trench. Two modern service trenches and a salt glazed modern pipe were identified within the trench aligned north-east/south-west and east-west.

5 FINDS

5.1.1 Three very small fragments of abraded flint tempered Late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from the subsoil of **Trench 4**.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL

6.1.1 No features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1.1 The evaluation trenches have revealed scant evidence of archaeological remains with only a single undated ditch 407 having been identified in Trench 4. It is evident that this feature had been truncated; the remains of the ditch measured some 3.5m in width suggesting that originally the feature would have been substantial in scale and may have formed a major boundary. Abraded fragments of Late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from the subsoil of Trench 4, though in view of landscaping across the Site these could easily have been brought in from elsewhere. No other artefacts were identified during the course of the evaluation.
- 7.1.2 The previous construction and landscaping within the Site boundary are likely to have removed any surviving archaeological features that might have been present prior to the construction of the existing structures. The lack of any background unstratified artefacts would suggest that any activity would have been of a low density. On the basis of this observation the potential for the survival of archaeological remains within the evaluated Site is considered very low.



8 ARCHIVE

8.1 Preparation and Deposition

8.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's *Guidelines for Archive Preparation* and in accordance with *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage* (Walker 1990) and following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995). On completion of the project, the archive will be deposited with the County Museum Service or similar repository to be agreed with the Archaeological Officer for Kent County Council.

8.2 Archive

- 8.2.1 Following the fieldwork the archive and all artefacts were subsequently transported to Wessex Archaeology's Rochester office where they were processed and assessed for this report. The accompanying documentary records from the archaeological works have been compiled into a stable fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with Appendix 6 of Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).
- 8.2.2 The contents of the project archive, comprises an A4 ring-bound file containing the following (as further detailed in **Appendix 1**):
 - 8 Trench Record Sheets
 - 4 Photographic Records
 - Day Book (5 sheets)
 - A copy of the WSI
 - A copy of the RA
- 8.2.3 The project archive including plans, photographs and written records are currently held at Wessex Archaeology's Rochester office under the site code **84890**. The project archive will be deposited with an appropriate local museum in the Kent area. As no artefactual evidence was recovered no agreement from the landowner is required in relation to the deposition of the archive.

8.3 Copyright

8.3.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. The recipient museum, however, will be granted an exclusive license for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profit making, and conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003.

8.4 Security Copy

8.4.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National



Monuments Record Centre (NMR) (English Heritage) in Swindon; a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records at the appropriate local museum, and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2011 *Geological map data.* [Online] Available at: http://www.bgs.ac.uk/GeoIndex/geology.htm

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*. London, English Heritage

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SMA 1995 *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive*. Society of Museum Archaeologists

Walker K. 1990 Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage. UKIC Archaeology Section

Wessex Archaeology, 2012, *Maidstone Studios, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation.* Unpublished client report. Reference – T15866.01

Wessex Archaeology, 2012, *Maidstone Studios, New Cut Roiad, Bearsted, Kent Risk Assessment for a Trail Trench evaluation.* Unpublished client report. Reference – 84890.02



APPENDIX 1: ARCHIVE INDEX

File No.	NAR Cat.	Details	Format	No. Sheets
1	-	Index to Archive	A4	1
1	-	Project Specification	A4	12
1	В	Day Book (photocopy)	A4	5
1	В	Trial trench records	A4	8
1	В	Context Record Sheets	A4	34
1	В	Survey Data Index	A4	-
1	В	Survey Data Print-out	A4	1
1	В	Site Graphics	A4	10
1	В	Site Graphics	A3	-
1	D	Photographic Register	A4	4
1	D	CD-Rom – digital photo's	-	
1	E	Environmental Sample Register	A4	-
1	E	Environmental Sample Records	A4	-
FINDS		None		·



APPENDIX 2: TRENCH SUMMARY TABLES

All archaeological deposits/features shown in **bold** All (+) indicate deposits/features not fully excavated 'Depth' equals depth from present ground surface

Context	Descr	iption: Trench 1	Depth (max)
101	Layer	Topsoil: Light grey brown silty clay with frequent root disturbance. Rare sub- rounded stones 0.04- 0.08m size, rare modern ceramic building material (CBM)	0.0-0.22m
102	Layer	Subsoil: Dark yellowish red silty sand, occasional rooting and rare small sub-rounded stones, sandstones and sub angular flints	0.22- 0.64m
103	Layer	Natural: Light brownish yellow silty sand. Occasional rooting, rare sandstone inclusions	0.64- 1.04m(+)

Context	Descr	Description: Trench 2		
201	Layer	Topsoil: Mid grey brown slity clay with frequent rooting, occasional small sub angular flint and modern rubbish, CBM	0.0-0.18m	
202	Layer	Subsoil: Dark yellowish red silty clay with frequent root disturbance resulting in grey brown silt mottles. Charcoal, rubbish, sub angular flints and CBM inclusions	0.18- 0.45m	
203	Layer	Natural: Light yellowish red sandy clay, occasional rooting	0.45- 0.65m(+)	

Context	Descr	Description: Trench 3	
301	Layer	Topsoil: Mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent rooting, rare sub angular & sub rounded stones & CBM	0.0-0.32m
302	Layer	Made ground: Mid grey brown with light yellow brown clay patches with common gravel inclusions, rare CBM	0.32m- 0.44m
303	Layer	Subsoil: Mid yellowish red silty sand with rare sub rounded stone inclusions and occasional rooting	0.44- 0.65m
304	Layer	Natural: mid yellowish red with blue-grey mottles, clay with rare rooting	0.65- 0.89m(+)

Context	Descr	iption: Trench 4	Depth (max)
401	Layer	Topsoil: Mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent rooting, rare small sub rounded stones and CBM	0.0-0.19m
402	Layer	Subsoil: Mixed mid brown & mid yellowish red sandy silt, rare small sub rounded stones and frequent rooting	0.19m- 0.35m
403	Layer	Subsoil: mid yellowish brown silty sand, frequent rooting and rare pot inclusions. Similar to 402	0.35- 0.61m
404	Layer	Natural: Mid yellowish red silty sand, rare sub rounded & sub angular stones, rare rooting	0.61- 1.06m(+)



405	Cut	Cut: Possible natural feature filled with 406 , frequent root disturbance	0.68- 0.75m
406	Fill	Fill: Primary fill, mid brownish yellow silty sand. Rare sub angular stones disturbed by frequent rooting	0.68- 0.75m
407	Cut	Cut: Possible ditch N-S aligned 3m wide shallow ditch filled with 408	0.88- 1.06m
408	Fill	Fill: Primary fill, dark reddish brown silty sand. Occasional root disturbance, rare small sub angular flints and rare small sub rounded pebbles. Rare charcoal flecks.	0.88- 1.06m

Context	Descr	Description: Trench 5		
501	Layer	Topsoil: Mid reddish brown clayey silt, small sub angular stones, rare chalk flecks, frequent rooting	0.0-0.36m	
502	Layer	Subsoil: Light yellowish brown silty sand with rare small sub angular stones and frequent rooting	0.36- 0.70m	
503	Layer	Natural: Mid yellowish red sand, rare small & large fragments of sandstone, occasional rooting	0.70m (+)	

Context	Descr	iption: Trench 6	Depth (max)
601	Layer	Topsoil: Mid- dark brown silty clay with occasional rooting	0.0-0.42m
602	Layer	Made ground: Yellowish grey silty sand within 80% crushed hardcore & modern building debris	0.42- 0.74m
603	Layer	Natural: Light yellowish red silty sand with occasional fragments of solid sandstone	0.74m (+)
604	Layer	Made ground: Structural concrete (pathway)	0.31- 0.36m
605	Layer	Made ground: Structural concrete (foundation)	0.32m (+)

Context	Descri	ption: Trench 7	Depth (max)
701	Layer	Topsoil: Mid- dark grey brown silty clay with occasional rooting	0.0-0.35m
702	Layer	Made ground: yellowish grey silty sand within 80% crushed hardcore and modern building debris	0.35- 0.69m
703	Layer	Natural: Light yellowish red silty sand with occasional fragments of solid sandstone	0.69m (+)
704	Layer	Natural: Light reddish yellow silty sand with occasional fragments of solid sandstone	0.71m (+)

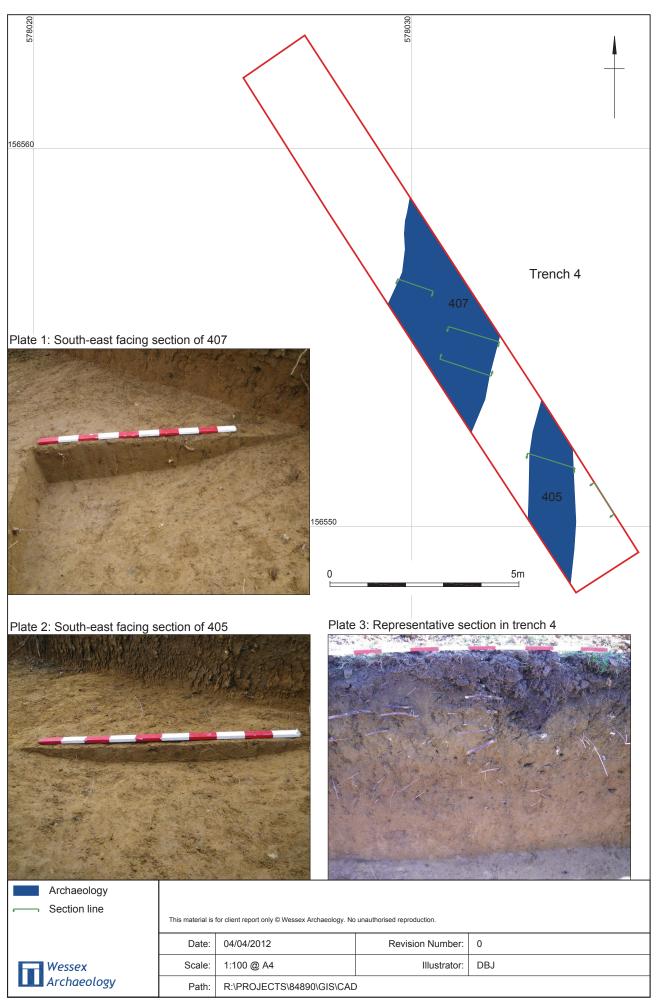
Context	Descr	Description: Trench 8	
801	Layer	Topsoil: Mid- dark grey brown silty sand with occasional rooting	0.0-0.27m
802	Layer	Subsoil: Dark yellowish red silty sand with occasional- rare rooting	0.27- 0.41m
803	Layer	Natural: Light yellowish brown silty sand with occasional small sub angular flints	0.41-0.87m



804 L	Layer	Natural: Laminated green- yellowish red silty san with rare sandstone inclusions	0.87- 1.72m (+)
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Site location and trench plan



Trench 4: plan and photographs



Trench 6: plan and photographs





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