



LONGNOR SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS, STAFFORDSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation





**LONGNOR SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS,
STAFFORDSHIRE**

Archaeological Evaluation

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**LONGNOR SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS,
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Archaeological Evaluation

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LONGNOR SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS, STAFFORDSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by MWH Global to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching at the site of a new sewage treatment works (STW) at Longnor, Staffordshire, (hereafter the 'Site'; NGR 408915, 364603). The Site is located within the Peak District National Park. The development includes construction of a Rotating Biological Contactor (RBC), an access road and associated drainage works. A sewer pipe will run from the existing Severn Trent Water building in Longnor to the proposed Site, with a further small section of pipe leading from the Site to the River Manifold.

An earthwork survey was initially carried out at the Site in September 2010 to inform development proposals; this was subsequently updated in October 2011 (Wessex Archaeology 2010 and 2011). Planning permission was granted for the development with a condition for further archaeological investigation. Following consultation with the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) Senior Conservation Archaeologist, a programme of archaeological trial trenching was agreed in order to establish the archaeological significance of earthworks at the Site.

The majority of the possible earthworks targeted by the evaluation were found to be formed of sterile, probably re-deposited, natural clays. The earthworks in Trenches 4, 5 and 6 are most likely the result of the re-deposition of material during the canalisation of the River Manifold to the immediate south. One of the previously identified earthworks, in Trench 7, was shown to be the continuation of an extant field boundary to the north. The only deposit of potential interest was an undated peaty deposit observed below a sterile clay earthwork ridge in Trenches 5 and 6. This may be a remnant of buried soil pre-dating the earthworks or be associated with a former watercourse observed to the north of the trenches. Artefacts recovered, including a mixed assemblage of post-medieval/ modern pottery, were from topsoil and modern disturbance only. No archaeological features or deposits of interest were found in the trenches (1, 2 and 8) targeting blank areas.

It is considered that the evaluation strategy of earthwork survey followed by targeted trial trenches was appropriate, and that the results provide a fair and accurate reflection of the archaeological potential of the Site. This report will be updated with the results of specialist assessment of the artefacts recovered in due course.

The site archive will be stored at Wessex Archaeology's Sheffield office until all archaeological work on the Site has been completed. It will be integrated into a single consolidated and indexed archive, and deposited with an appropriate museum.

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STAFFORDSHIRE**

Archaeological Evaluation

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank MWH Global for commissioning the project and is grateful to Ian Webster in this regard.

Fieldwork was undertaken by Sam Fairhead and Ashley Tuck. The report was researched and compiled by Sam Fairhead with illustrations by Chris Swales. The sample was processed by Nicki Mulhall and assessed by Dr Chris J. Stevens. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Richard O'Neill.

LONGNOR SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS, STAFFORDSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by MWH Global (hereafter 'the Client') to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching at the site of a new sewage treatment works (STW) at Longnor, Staffordshire (hereafter 'the Site'; NGR 408915, 364603) (**Figure 1**). The Site is located within the Peak District National Park.

1.1.2 An earthwork survey was initially carried out at the Site in September 2010 to inform development proposals; this was subsequently updated in October 2011 (Wessex Archaeology 2010 and 2011). The development includes construction of a Rotating Biological Contactor (RBC), an access road and associated drainage works (**Figure 1**). A sewer pipe will run from the existing Severn Trent Water building in Longnor to the proposed Site, with a further small section of pipe leading from the Site to the River Manifold.

1.1.3 Planning permission was granted for the development with a condition for further archaeological investigation. Following consultation with the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) Senior Conservation Archaeologist, a programme of archaeological trial trenching was deemed necessary in order to establish the significance of the archaeological features at the Site.

1.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the trenching was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (2012), and was submitted to the PDNPA Senior Conservation Archaeologist for approval prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

1.2 The Site, Location and Geology

1.2.1 The Site encompasses an area of approximately 0.97 hectares and is located approximately 300m south from the centre of the village of Longnor and immediately north of the River Manifold (**Figure 1**). Buxton Road (B5053) lies on the western side of the Site.

1.2.2 The northern end of the Site sits at approximately 278m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) from there it slopes south to the base of the slope at 257m aOD.

1.2.3 The Site lies within three distinct fields with low-lying dry-stone walls, thick hedge or small streams as boundaries. The current use of the fields is for grazing.

1.2.4 The bedrock geology is composed of Kinderscoutian Longnor sandstones of the Carboniferous period overlain by a superficial geology of alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey 1978).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Previous Work

2.1.1 The Site has been previously been subject to an earthwork survey carried out by Wessex Archaeology (2010 and 2011), the results of which are summarised below.

2.2 Earthwork Survey

2.2.1 A number of shallow earthworks were recorded across the Site. These appear to represent remnants of ridge and furrow ploughing, and field boundaries associated with enclosures that were in existence before the River Manifold was canalised in the late 18th/ early 19th century. A single square earthwork measuring 15m x 12m suggests a possible platform for a structure.

2.2.2 It was concluded that although the earthworks recorded on the Site are types represented elsewhere in the region, the direct association of these earthworks with the canalisation of the river makes them significant in a local context.

3 AIMS AND SCOPE OF WORK

3.1 General

3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation were:

- To evaluate, as far as was reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.
- To obtain sufficient information to advise the Client how best to reduce the impact of the development upon archaeological remains.
- To determine the potential of the archaeology of the Site to address regional research priorities.

3.2 Trial Trenching

3.2.1 The specific aims of the trial trenching were :

- To record the presence/absence, location, extent of archaeological remains at the Site.
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual, stratigraphic or other evidence.
- To determine the condition, state of preservation and wider historic significance of the remains.
- To determine the phasing and degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To prepare an archive and a report of the results.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The methodology of the evaluation was detailed in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2012), prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists (2008a, 2008b) and agreed with the PDNPA in advance of Site works.

4.2 Trench Locations

4.2.1 The trial trenches were located over existing earthwork features to characterise their type and date, and also in 'blank' areas in order to evaluate the footprint of the development areas.

Trench	Size (m)	Rationale
1	10 x 2	To test a 'blank' area
2	5 x 2	To test a 'blank' area
3	10 x 2	To test possible archaeological feature
4	20 x 2	To test possible archaeological feature
5	10 x 2	To test possible archaeological feature
6	10 x 2	To test probable archaeological feature
7	10 x 2	To test probable archaeological feature
8	10 x 2	To test a 'blank' area

4.3 Fieldwork

4.3.1 All mechanical excavation was carried out in such a manner as to avoid or minimise damage to any archaeological remains. The machine was fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and operated under direct archaeological supervision. Machining ceased at the first archaeological horizon or natural geological deposits, whichever were encountered first. All spoil was scanned for artefacts, which were recorded and retained unless of clearly modern (i.e. 20th or early 21st century) origin. A single sample was taken for environmental assessment.

4.3.2 The stratigraphy of each trench was recorded even if no archaeological deposits were identified. Full written and drawn records of all trenches were made in accordance with best archaeological practice.

4.3.3 All archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system. This written record is hierarchically based and centred on the context record. Each context record fully describes the location, extent, composition and relationship of the subject and is cross-referenced to all other assigned records. Unique context numbers were used across all stages of work at the Site and not repeated.

4.3.4 A full photographic record was maintained using digital photography and where necessary colour transparencies and black and white negatives (on 35mm film). The photographic record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features as well as the methods employed to achieve the development.

4.4 Reinstatement

4.4.1 The trenches were backfilled with arisings following the evaluation.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following section is a summary of the information held in the Site archive. Trench locations are shown in **Figure 1**. Observed deposits for each trench are summarised in **Appendix 1** and referred to in the text in bold.

5.2 Natural Deposits and Soil Sequence

5.2.1 Topsoil extended 0.17m - 0.38m below ground level (bgl). Subsoil, where observed, extended 0.25m - 0.68m bgl. The natural geology, observed 0.3m – 1.03m bgl, consisted of firm sandy clay ranging in colour from light yellowish brown to light grey. The topsoil in Trenches 1 (**101**), 4 (**400**) and 8 (**800**) produced artefactual material (see Section 6 below).

5.3 Trench 1

5.3.1 Trench 1 measured 10m by 2m and was located to test an apparently blank area at the western end of the Site. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

5.4 Trench 2

5.4.1 Trench 2 measured 5m by 2m and also tested a blank area, to the north of Trench 1. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

5.5 Trench 3

5.5.1 Trench 3 measured 10m by 2m and was targeted over a possible archaeological feature defined by a slight rise in ground level. Trench 3 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m.

5.5.2 Patches of modern disturbance (**304/ 305**) were observed in the eastern half of the trench, accounting for the slight rise in ground level. A mixed group of pot-medieval/ modern pottery and modern glass were recovered from the disturbance **305**.

5.6 Trench 4

5.6.1 Trench 4 measured 20m by 2m and was the largest of the eight trenches, targeted over a possible building platform and an adjacent circular earthwork located immediately north of the River Manifold (**Figure 2**). Trench 4 was typically 0.4m deep but reached a maximum depth of 0.8m.

5.6.2 No archaeological features or deposits were observed, only a sequence of sterile, possibly re-deposited, natural layers **402 - 404** (**Figure 2; Plate 1**). The possible platform and adjacent earthwork are probably the result of the re-deposition of sterile natural deposits during the canalisation of the River Manifold immediately to the south.

5.7 Trenches 5 and 6

5.7.1 Trenches 5 and 6 were located across an earthwork ridge running north-south through the eastern side of the Site (**Figure 3**). The trenches both measured 10m by 2m.

5.7.2 Below the subsoil was sterile, possibly re-deposited, clay **502/ 602** extending to a maximum depth of 0.9m bgl (slightly higher in Trench 6), where a thin layer of peat or peat-like material **503/ 603** was encountered (**Figure 3; Plate 2**). The peat **503/ 603** in turn overlay a further deposit of sterile clay **504/ 604**, possibly natural in origin. No artefactual evidence was recovered from the peaty material and an environmental sample was taken from the deposit for further assessment (see Section 7 below).

5.7.3 The trenches are on the line of a former watercourse visible in the field to the north of the trenches and this may explain the presence of peaty material. Alternatively it may simply be a remnant of buried soil predating the earthworks. The overlying clay may be re-deposited, perhaps from the canalisation of the River Manifold immediately to the south.

5.8 Trench 7

5.8.1 Trench 7 measured 10m by 2m and was located across a possible archaeological earthwork at the east end of the Site. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m.

5.8.2 The earthwork comprised silty clay forming a bank **702** approximately 2.5m wide and 0.33m high (**Figure 4; Plate 3**). The bank is the continuation of a field boundary extant to the north of the trench.

5.9 Trench 8

5.9.1 Trench 8 measured 10m by 2m and was the most northerly trench, located to test a blank area. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.3m. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

6 ARTEFACTS

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 Artefacts were mostly recovered from topsoil deposits and are summarised by context in **Appendix 2**.

6.2 Pottery

6.2.1 A mixed assemblage of post-medieval/ modern (provisionally dated 17th-19th century) pottery was recovered from Trenches 1 (**101**), 3 (**305**) 4 (**400**) and 8 (**800**). One fragment of uncertain date was recovered from Trench 3 (**305**).

6.3 Other finds

6.3.1 Fragments of modern glass from Trench 3 (**305**), clay tobacco pipe stems from Trenches 4 (**400**) and 8 (**800**), and animal bone from Trench 8 (**800**) were also recovered.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLE

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 A single bulk sample of around 10 litres was taken from a peaty clay (503) with occasional fine sand and occasional fine rootlets and weak blocky structure. The layer appears therefore to be an immature/ incipient soil formed in alluvium. While seen in other Trenches the sample was recovered from Trench 5 (503), and lies at around 0.9m to 1m below ground level.

7.2 Waterlogged plant remains

7.2.1 A sub-sample of 1 litre was taken from the bulk sample and processed for the recovery and assessment of waterlogged remains. Laboratory flotation was undertaken with flots retained on a 0.25mm mesh and residue on a 0.5mm mesh. The larger fraction (>5.6mm) was sorted, weighed and discarded. The flot was visually inspected under a x10 to x40 stereobinocular microscope to determine if waterlogged material occurred. Where waterlogged material was present, preliminary identifications of dominant taxa were conducted and are presented below. Nomenclature follows that of Stace (1997).

7.2.2 Waterlogged survival within the deposit is very poor, although occasional seeds of rush (*Juncus* sp) were seen with some fragments of unburnt wood and occasional small charcoal fragments. There is also some evidence for iron mineralisation of roots.

7.2.3 It should be noted that rush seeds are very small and have a very fresh appearance, raising the possibility that they may be intrusive. However, the layer appears to be well sealed and lies at some depth.

7.3 Potential

7.3.1 There is little potential for any further work on the material from this layer. At this depth e.g. 1m below ground level, waterlogged preservation appears very poor. Should further similar, but deeper/ more organic deposits be encountered then further waterlogged/bulk sampling is recommended. It is also recommended that a monolith is taken through this and/or similar layers if they are encountered within further investigations to provide a more detailed sedimentary description.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Summary of Results

8.1.1 The majority of the possible earthworks targeted by the evaluation were found to be formed of sterile, probably re-deposited, natural clays.

8.1.2 The earthworks in Trenches 4, 5 and 6 are most likely the result of the re-deposition of material during the canalisation of the River Manifold to the immediate south. One of the previously identified earthworks, in Trench 7, was shown to be the continuation of an extant field boundary to the north. The only deposit of potential interest was an undated peaty deposit observed below a sterile clay earthwork ridge in Trenches 5 and 6. This may

a remnant of buried soil pre-dating the earthworks or be associated with a former watercourse observed to the north of the trenches. Artefacts, including a mixed assemblage of post-medieval/ modern pottery, were only recovered from topsoil and modern disturbance.

- 8.1.3 No archaeological features or deposits of interest were found in the trenches (1, 2 and 8) targeting blank areas.
- 8.1.4 This report will be updated with the results of specialist assessment of the artefacts recovered in due course.

9 ARCHIVE AND COPYRIGHT

9.1 Archive

- 9.1.1 The site archive will be prepared in line with Museums and Galleries Commission (1992) and United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (2001) guidelines and the requirements of the recipient museum.
- 9.1.2 The archive will be stored at Wessex Archaeology's Sheffield office until all archaeological work on the Site has been completed and then integrated into a single consolidated and indexed site archive. The complete archive will then be deposited with an appropriate museum.

9.2 Copyright

- 9.2.1 This report, and the archive generally, may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

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APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No. 1		Dimensions:10x1.8m Max depth: 0.5m
Context	Description	Depth (m) bgl
101	Mid greyish-brown silty loam, charcoal flecks. Post-medieval/ modern pottery. Topsoil.	0-0.25
102	Mid brown silty clay, grey mottling and orange flecks. Very rare coarse gravel. Subsoil.	0.25-0.5
103	Orange-brown sandy clay, grey mottling. Natural.	0.5+

Trench No. 2		Dimensions:5x1.8m Max depth: 0.4m
Context	Description	Depth (m) bgl
201	Dark grey silty loam, rare fine gravel. Topsoil.	0-0.3
202	Light yellowish-brown sandy clay, grey mottling. Natural.	0.3+

Trench No. 3		Dimensions:10x1.8m Max depth: 0.5m
Context	Description	Depth (m) bgl
301	Mid greyish-brown silty loam, rare fine gravel and charcoal. Topsoil.	0-0.25
302	Light orange-brown silty clay, charcoal flecks and very rare coarse gravel.	0.25-0.5
303	Mid orange sandy clay, rare coarse gravel and small cobbles. Natural.	0.5+
304	Irregular modern disturbance	
305	Fill of [304]. Dark silty clay and large cobbles. Mixed Post-medieval/ modern pottery and modern glass.	

Trench No. 4		Dimensions:20x1.8m Max depth: 0.8m
Context	Description	Depth (m) bgl
400	Dark brown clayey silt. Post-medieval/ modern pottery and clay pipe. Topsoil.	0-0.38
401	Light grey silty clay (west of trench only). Subsoil.	0.3-0.45
402	Orange/grey mottled clayey sand. Sterile. Re-deposited? Natural?	0.25-0.5
403	Dark brownish-grey clay. Sterile. Material sealed by (402) further west. Re-deposited? Natural?	0.3-0.6
404	Dark grey clay. Sterile. Re-deposited? Natural?	0.4-0.7
405	Yellow clay. Natural at east end of trench forming slope.	0.35+

Trench No. 5		Dimensions:10x1.8m Max depth: 1.1m
Context	Description	Depth (m) bgl
500	Mid brown silty loam. Topsoil.	0-0.2
501	Sandy layer, oranges and greys, very rare charcoal.	0.2-0.68
502	Light grey clay. Re-deposited natural?	0.68-0.9
503	Organic peat/peat-like layer. Dark reddish-brown	0.9-1.03
504	Dark grey homogenous clay. Natural.	1.03+

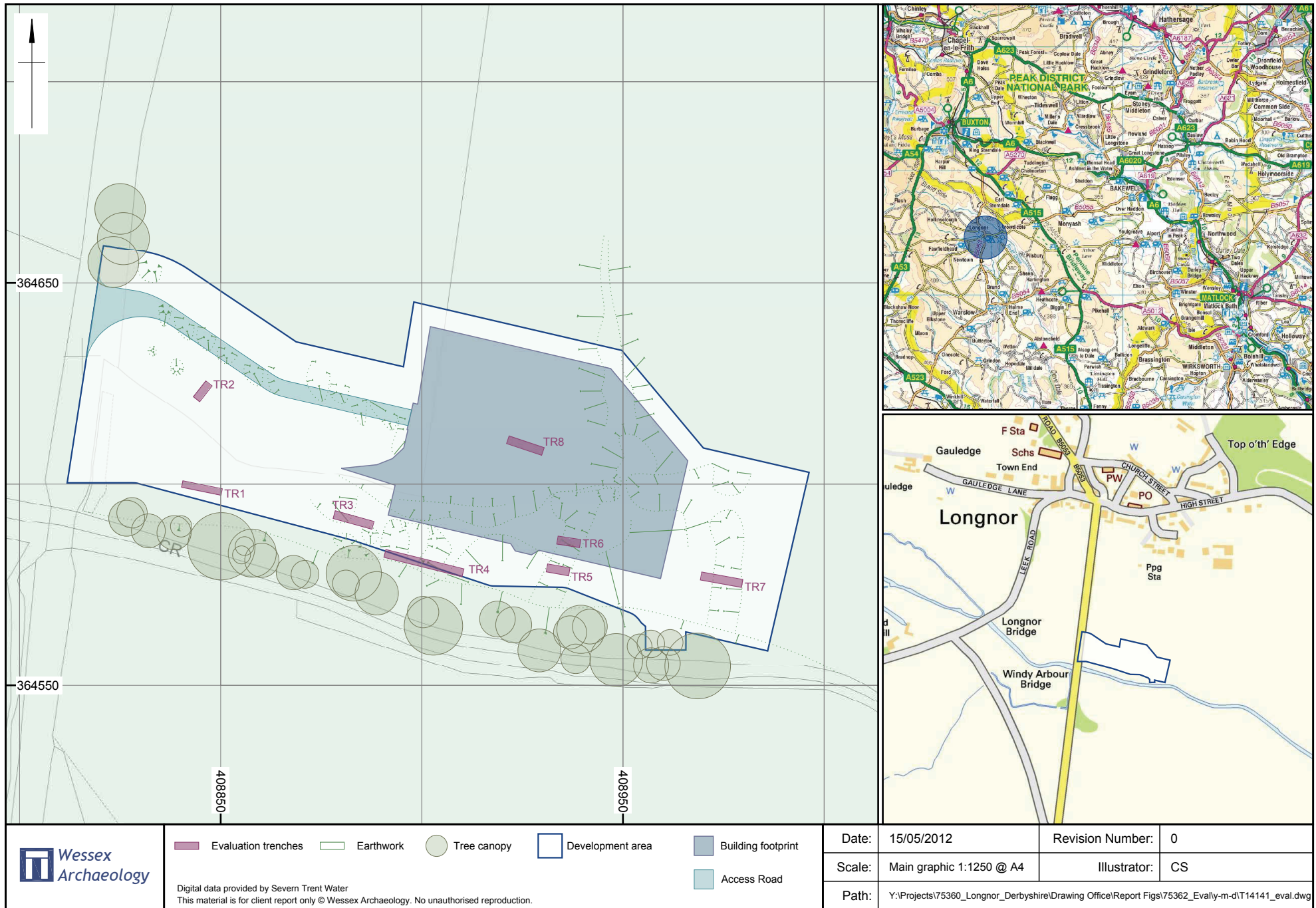
Trench No. 6		Dimensions:10X1.8m Max depth:1m
Context	Description	Depth (m) bgl
600	Mid brown silty loam. Topsoil.	0-0.24
601	Sandy layer, oranges and greys, very rare charcoal.	0.24-0.5
602	Light grey clay. Re-deposited natural?	0.5-0.7
603	Organic peat/peat-like layer. Dark reddish-brown.	0.7-0.97
604	Dark grey homogenous clay. Natural.	0.97+

Trench No. 7		Dimensions:10x1.8m Max depth:0.5m
Context	Description	Depth (m) bgl
701	Mid greyish-brown silty loam, rare charcoal and fine gravel. Topsoil.	0-0.3
702	Light orange-brown silty clay, darker orange mottling. Subsoil. Forms a bank approximately 2.5m wide. Field boundary.	0.17-0.5 at centre of bank.
703	Light orange-brown sandy clay. Natural.	0.5+

Trench No. 8		Dimensions:10x1.8m Max depth:0.4m
Context	Description	Depth (m) bgl
800	Greyish-dark brown sandy silt. Post-medieval/ modern pottery, clay pipe, animal bone and coal. Topsoil.	0-0.3
801	Yellow sandy clay, grey mottling. Natural.	0.3+

APPENDIX 2: ARTEFACTS

Context	Trench	Type	No	Wgt (g)	Comments
101	1	Pottery	4	112	Post-med/ modern pottery; mixed wares
305	3	Glass	1	2	Clear vessel fragment
305	3	Pottery	5	114	Post-med/ modern pottery; mixed wares including brown and salt glazed stoneware
400	4	Clay pipe	1	1	Stem fragment
400	4	Pottery	4	136	Post-med/ modern pottery; mixed wares including brown and salt glazed stoneware and Blackware?
800	8	Animal bone	1	1	Burnt bone fragment
800	8	Clay pipe	2	2	Stem fragments
800	8	Pottery	4	172	Post-med/ modern pottery; mixed wares including stoneware, Cistercian ware/ Blackware?, hand painted? sherd

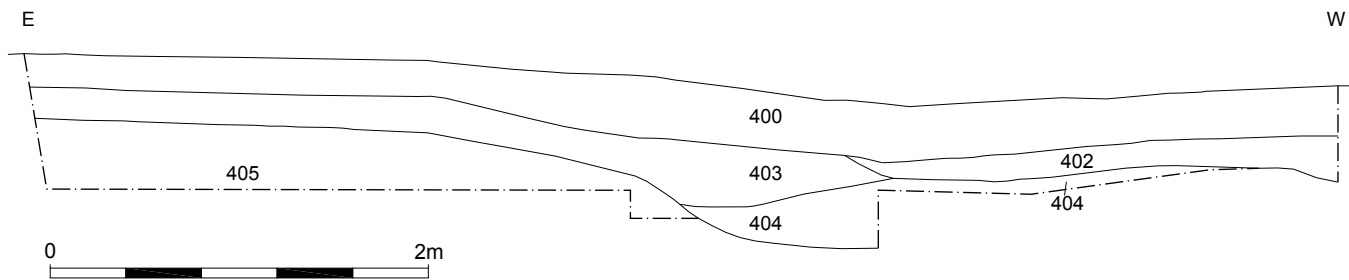
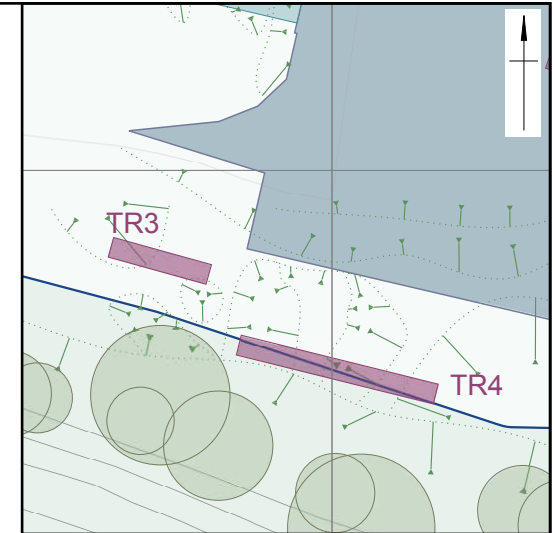


Site location and trench plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 4, representative section, from the north.



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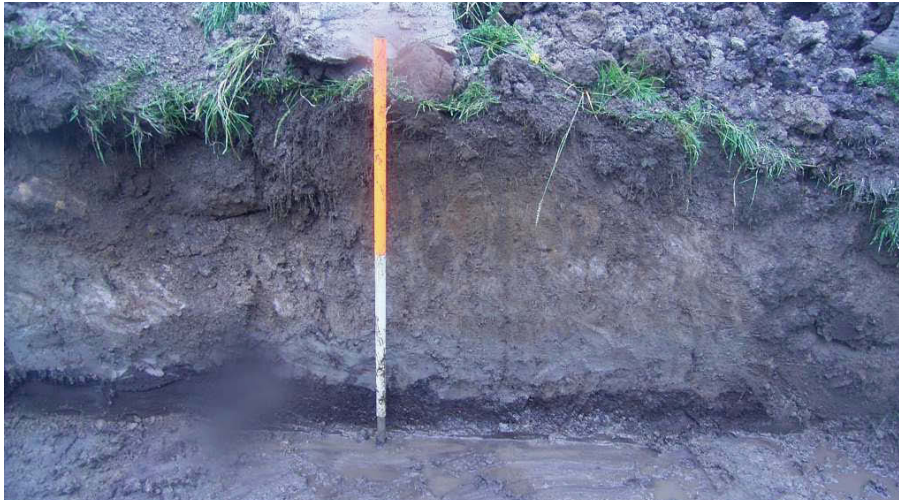


Plate 2: Trench 5, representative section, from the south.

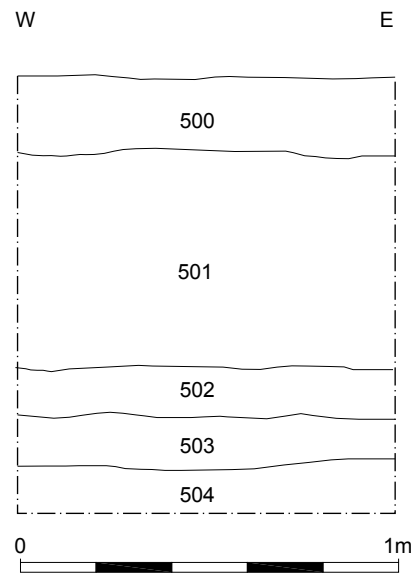
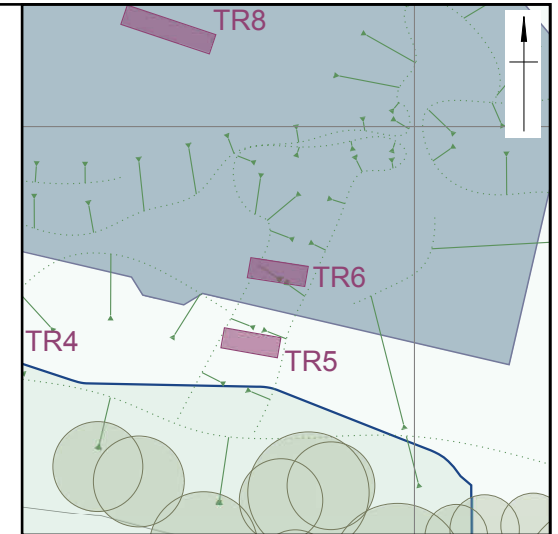
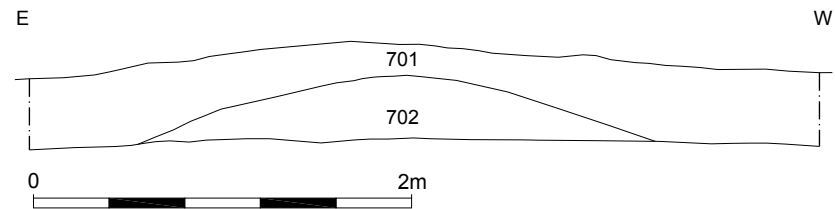
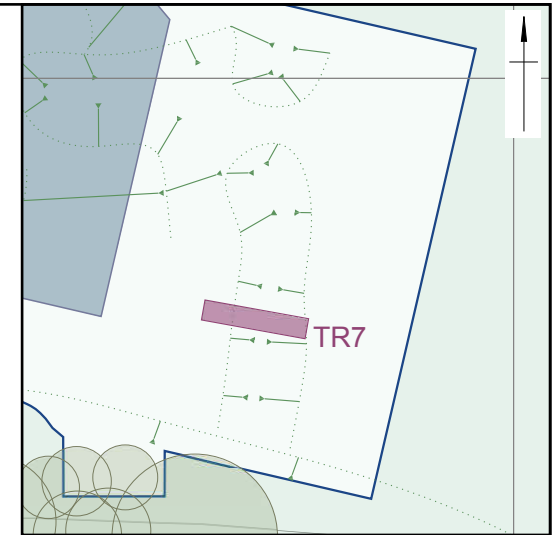




Plate 3: Trench 7, representative section, from the south.





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