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Percy Throwers Garden Centre Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Ref: 101321.02
January 2014



**Percy Throwers Garden Centre
Shrewsbury, Shropshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

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Percy Throwers Garden Centre, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Archaeological Evaluation

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Percy Throwers Garden Centre, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Archaeological Evaluation

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake a programme of archaeological trial trenching on land at Percy Throwers Garden Centre, Oteley Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire (hereafter 'the Site'), centered on NGR 350030 310128.

A desk based assessment established that there was little or no potential for prehistoric, Saxon or medieval archaeological evidence, but some potential for sub-surface Roman deposits (CgMs 2012). A subsequent geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2013) identified some anomalies that were considered likely to be of archaeological interest.

The evaluation consisted of the excavation of four trenches targeted over anomalies identified by the geophysical survey, and to test 'blank' areas.

The evaluation revealed two features of 18th or 19th century origin, and showed the other anomalies to be variations in the natural geology.

The archive is currently stored at Wessex Archaeology's Sheffield office and will be deposited with Shropshire Museum in due course.



Percy Throwers Garden Centre, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Archaeological Evaluation

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Rob Smith in this regard. Fieldwork was carried out by Sam Fairhead with the assistance of John Buttery, and the report was compiled by Sam Fairhead with illustrations by Chris Swales.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Chris Swales, and monitored for Shropshire County Council (SCC) by Andy Wigley.



Percy Throwers Garden Centre, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake a programme of archaeological trial trenching on land at Percy Throwers Garden Centre, Oteley Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire (hereafter 'the Site').

1.1.2 A desk based assessment established that there was little or no potential for prehistoric, Saxon or medieval archaeological evidence, but some potential for sub-surface Roman deposits (CgMs 2012). A subsequent geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2013) identified some anomalies that were considered likely to be of archaeological interest.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site was located on land immediately south of Percy Throwers Garden Centre, centred on NGR 350030 310128. The Site was bordered to the south by the A5, and by fields to the east and west.

1.2.2 The Site was located at 79m aOD and the underlying geology consisted of sandstone of the Bayston-Oakwood Formation with overlying glaciofluvial sand and gravel deposits.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following is summarised from the desk-based assessment (CgMs 2012).

2.1.2 Approximately 800m to the north of the Site, two rectilinear cropmark enclosures are in evidence, of a type which have been demonstrated by excavation to represent the remains of Iron Age or Romano-British farmsteads.

2.1.3 A road-side settlement was discovered at Meole Brace immediately prior to the construction of the A5 Shrewsbury By-Pass in the early 1990s. The settlement lies c.700m west of the Site. Excavations determined that the Roman road had been built in the mid-to late 1st century AD and was likely to have been the military road from the legionary fortress at Wroxeter, to the forts of Forden Gaer and Caersws.

2.1.4 There are no recorded sites of Saxon/medieval date close to the Site.

2.1.5 The first detailed map of the Site from 1807 (unknown origin) indicates that the majority of the fields both within and surrounding the Site were still largely given over to pasture. The



Ordnance Survey 1954 edition indicates the presence of an old mine shaft immediately to the north-west of the Site.

2.2 Recent investigations in the area

2.2.1 A geophysical survey was carried out by Wessex Archaeology in 2013. Anomalies were identified representing three possible pits and a possible enclosure.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The general aims of the project were:

- *to identify the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits within the Site;*
- *to determine the extent, condition, character, significance and date of any archaeological deposits encountered;*
- *to accurately record any revealed archaeological deposits;*
- *to recover artefacts disturbed by the Site works;*
- *to prepare a comprehensive archive, record and report of any archaeological deposits disturbed by the Site works;*
- *to aid the production of a mitigation strategy for the Site (if necessary).*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of four trenches (**Figure 1**). The trenches were located by means of a RTK GPS system and tied into the OS grid (within 0.1m). All four trenches were 30m in length and targeted geophysical anomalies or tested 'blank' areas.

3.2.2 The location of all trenches was scanned using a CAT to check for uncharted services.

3.2.3 Topsoil or overburden was removed using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Topsoil was removed in a series of level spits down to the level of the upper archaeological horizon, or the level of the natural geology, whichever was reached first.

3.2.4 All trenches were hand-cleaned (if necessary) to clarify the extent of any revealed archaeological remains. Where archaeological features and deposits were encountered, excavation was carried out by hand. A sufficient sample of each layer/feature type was excavated in order to establish the date, nature, extent and condition of the archaeological remains.

3.2.5 Archaeological features and deposits were investigated and stratigraphically excavated by hand. The percentage of any feature or group of features excavated was dependent on a number of factors. These included the achievement of the aims and objectives, the significance or potential of the archaeological features/deposits, the stratigraphic record, health and safety considerations, and the requirements of Shropshire County Council (SCC).

3.2.6 All excavation and recording was undertaken by qualified archaeologists employed by Wessex Archaeology. Archaeological remains encountered were recorded, and where necessary excavated in accordance with current industry best practice (IfA 2008).



Features of whatever origin requiring clarification were cleaned by hand and recorded in plan at an appropriate scale.

3.3 Monitoring

3.3.1 The Site was monitored for SCC by Andy Wigley.

3.4 Recording

3.4.1 All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded using Wessex Archaeology pro forma recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. A stratigraphic matrix was compiled to record the relationships between features and deposits (including those within 'blank' trenches).

3.4.2 All trenches were located in relation to the OS grid, and other plans, sections and elevations of archaeological features and deposits were drawn as necessary at 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate. All drawings were made in pencil on permanent drafting film.

3.4.3 The spot height of all principal features and levels was calculated in metres relative to OD, correct to two decimal places. Plans, sections and elevations were annotated with spot heights as appropriate.

3.4.4 Photographs were taken of archaeological features to produce a photographic record consisting of 35mm monochrome prints and digital images (at least 10 megapixel) supplement the photographic record.

3.5 Specialist strategies

Artefacts

3.5.1 Finds were treated in accordance with the relevant guidance (UKIC 2001; MGC 1991; English Heritage 2005, 2006), except where these are superseded by statements made below.

3.5.2 All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, except those from features or deposits of obviously modern date. No finds were, however, discarded without the prior approval of the Curator.

3.5.3 All retained artefacts were, as a minimum, washed, weighed, counted and identified. Any artefacts requiring conservation or specific storage conditions were dealt with immediately in line with First Aid for Finds (Watkinson & Neal 1998). Other conservation needs were assessed by Wessex Archaeology's Conservator.

3.5.4 All artefacts were recorded by context, with summary listing of artefacts by category to provide simple quantification. Artefacts were analysed and reported by specialists.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Only two features were observed, both likely of 18th or 19th century origin. Other geophysical anomalies were variations in the natural geology.

4.1.2 The topsoil across the Site was a mid-brown silty loam to an average depth of 0.35m below ground level (bgl). Directly underlying this, the natural geology consisted of light



yellowish-brown sandy clay, with a pinkish hue in places, and common coarse gravel inclusions.

4.2 Trench 1

4.2.1 One feature was observed in Trench 1, a roughly circular pit, **1003**, 2m in diameter with vertical sides and backfilled with mixed yellowish brown and grey clay with common coal inclusions, **1004**. Excavation of the feature was halted at 1.2m bgl for safety reasons (**Plate 1**).

4.3 Trench 2

4.3.1 A very similar feature, **2003**, was observed in Trench 2, partially protruding from the section, and apparently of a similar size to **1003**. The sides were also vertical and the fill, (**2005**) was identical to **1004**. However, **2003** contained a red brick structure (**2004**), found at 0.9m bgl. This structure consisted of a single curving skin of unfrogged red bricks, mirroring the curve of the pit side, with clay packed around the outer edge (**Figure 2, Plate 2**).

4.4 Trenches 3 and 4

4.4.1 No features of archaeological significance were observed in these trenches.

5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A single brick was retained from structure **2004**. The brick was unfrogged and handmade of a coarse, slightly sandy fabric. Size, form and fabric suggest a date probably within the 18th or early 19th century.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 The two features (**1003** and **2003**) observed are most likely contemporary with one another, based on the similarity of the backfills. No brick structure was observed in **1003**, though one may exist at a lower depth.

6.1.2 The purpose of **1003** and **2003** was not immediately apparent, though it seems likely that they were related to nearby coal mining and may have formed wells or shafts.

6.1.3 Both features match up with anomalies identified by the geophysical survey, other anomalies were explained by variations in the natural geology.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Shropshire Museum. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on



completion of the project, [accession code TBC]. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

7.2 Archive

- 7.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Shropshire Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared.

7.3 Discard policy

- 7.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in Selection, Retention and Dispersal (SMA 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

7.4 Security Copy

- 7.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



8 REFERENCES

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9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1: OASIS form

Project details

Project name	Percy Throwers Garden Centre
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (hereafter 'the Client') on behalf of Cranford (Shrewsbury) Ltd Garden, Leisure Group Ltd and Waitrose Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological trial trenching on land at Percy Throwers Garden Centre on Oteley Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire (hereafter 'the Site'), centered on NGR 350030 310128. The evaluation consisted of the excavation of four trenches targeted over anomalies identified by the geophysical survey, and to test 'blank' areas. The evaluation revealed two features of 18th or 19th century origin, and showed the other anomalies to be variations in the natural geological deposits.
Project dates	Start: 06-01-2014 End: 10-01-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	101321 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Monument type	PITS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	SHROPSHIRE SHREWSBURY AND ATCHAM SHREWSBURY Percy Throwers Garden Centre
Postcode	SY2 6QW
Study area	24.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 50030 10128 52.6861899697 -2.73932219364 52 41 10 N 002 44 21 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0.31m Max: 0.35m
Project creators	



Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator CgMs Consulting Ltd.
Project design originator CgMs
Project director/manager Chris Swales
Project supervisor Sam Fairhead
Project archives
Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient Shropshire Museum Service
Digital Contents "none"
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Text"
Paper Archive recipient Shropshire Museum Service
Paper Contents "none"
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Diary","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"
Project bibliography 1
Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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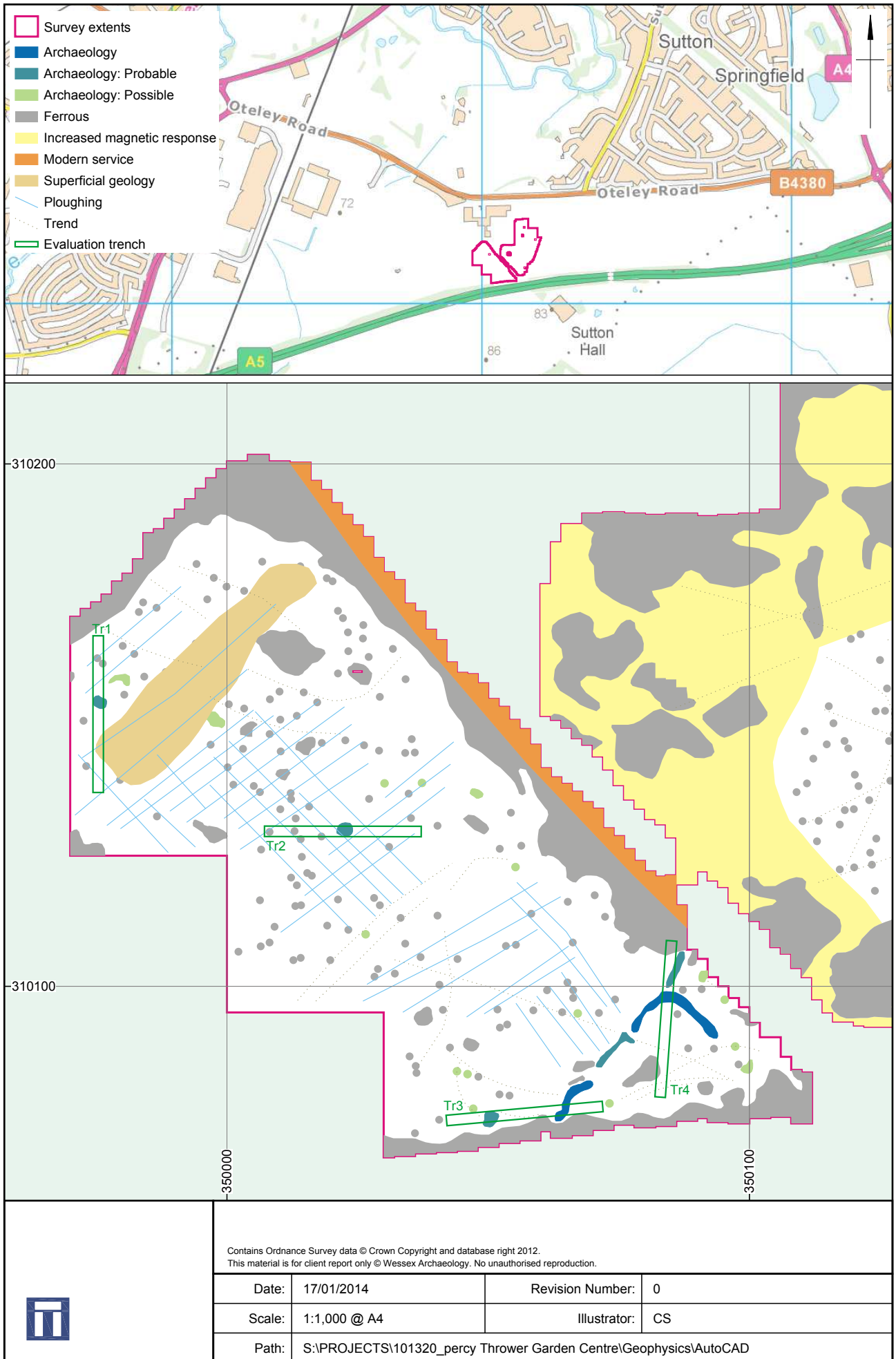
9.2 Appendix 2: Context descriptions

	Trench 1	Max depth:0.49m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1001	Topsoil, mid brown silty loam	0-0.33m
1002	Natural, light brown sandy clay with common medium to coarse gravel inclusions	0.33m+
1003	Cut, possible well or shaft	0.33-0.9m
1004	Fill, backfill of 1003 , mixed grey and yellow clay with moderate coal and rare gravel inclusions	0.33-0.9m

	Trench 2	Max depth:0.72m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
2001	Topsoil, mid brown silty loam	0-0.31m
2002	Natural, light brown sandy clay with moderate medium to coarse gravel inclusions	0.31m+
2003	Cut, possible well or shaft	0.31-0.9m
2004	Structure, curving single skin red brick structure forming wall of possible well or shaft.	0.9m+
2005	Fill, backfill of 2003 , mixed grey and yellow clay with moderate coal and rare gravel inclusions.	0.31-0.9m

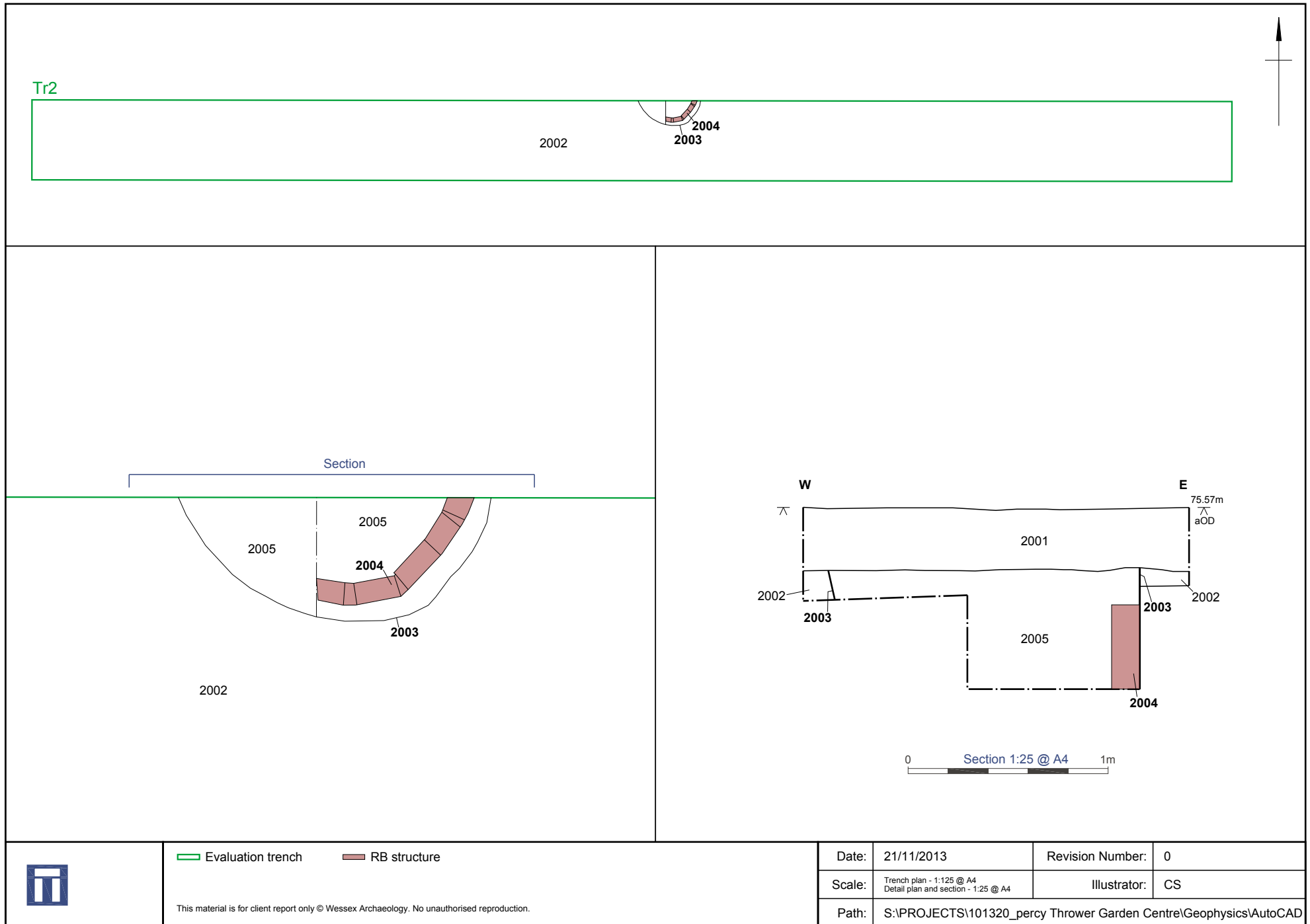
	Trench 3	Max depth:0.38m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
3001	Topsoil, mid brown silty loam	0-0.35m
3002	Natural, light yellowish-brown sandy clay with a pinkish hue and moderate medium gravel inclusions	0.35m+

	Trench 4	Max depth:0.35m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
4001	Topsoil, mid brown silty loam	0-0.35m
4002	Natural, light yellowish-brown sandy clay with a pinkish hue and rare medium gravel inclusions	0.35m+



Site and trench locations overlain on geophysics interpretation

Figure 1



South facing section and plan of feature 2004


Figure 2



Plate 1: Oblique view of **1003** from southwest



Plate 2: Overhead view of **2003**

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