



HERONTREE NORTH RANGE, BELLERBY MOOR, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Archaeological Investigations





**HERONTREE NORTH RANGE,
BELLERBY MOOR,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

Archaeological Investigations

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Archaeological Investigations

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**HERONTREE NORTH RANGE,
BELLERBY MOOR,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

Archaeological Excavation

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Carillion Civil Engineering to carry out a programme of archaeological investigations on Bellerby Moor, off Whipperdale Bank, Leyburn, North Yorkshire at grid reference SE 08690 93306. The Site lies on Bellerby Moor and is located on Defence Estates land in the Catterick Training Area. Planning approval has been granted by Richmondshire District Council for the construction of a new 600m small arms firing range at the Site (planning decision ref: 1/78/658-/FULL).

The Site was investigated by field survey and geophysical survey carried out by the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group (SWAAG) and the MOD Environmental Science Group respectively. Three areas (Areas 1-3) of potential were identified for further investigation; these areas were thought to contain the remains of Bronze Age clearance cairns and trackways. The investigations comprised three stages of work; a sample excavation to establish the archaeological potential of the Site, followed by more extensive excavation and, finally, a watching brief during construction.

The archaeological investigations have confirmed that features in Areas 1 and 3, identified as Bronze Age clearance cairns by non-intrusive field survey, were natural accumulations of stones resulting from erosion and movement due to environmental and topographical conditions. The watching brief confirmed that the distribution of stones was extensive and continuous across the moor rather than in discrete areas or archaeological features. The possible burnt mound feature in Area 3 was also a natural feature.

The southern hollow-way identified in Area 1 may be post-medieval or older as it was overlain by colluvium which was present across the rest of the Site, while the northern hollow-way is thought to be modern as it cut through this colluvium. Two possible trackways across the Site were found to be waterlogged and there is evidence that they form seasonal streams that issue into the larger water courses to the north and west of the site.

The archive from the works is currently retained by Wessex Archaeology and will be deposited with Richmondshire Museum in due course.

**HERONTREE NORTH RANGE,
NELLERBY MOOR,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

Archaeological Excavation

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Carillion Civil Engineering for commissioning the project. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Phil Abramson of the DOI for his help and advice.

Andrea Burgess managed the project for Wessex Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Neil Dransfield, Mike Hartwell, James Thomson, Chris Harrison and Grace Corbett. Analysis and report compilation was by Grace Corbett with illustrations by Chris Breeden. Dave Norcott provided specialist geological and geo-archaeological advice.

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group for their interest in the project and, in particular, to SWAAG members Gill Savage, David Metcalfe, David Brooks and Shirley Gale for their assistance and contributions during the fieldwork.

**HERONTREE NORTH RANGE,
BELLERBY MOOR,
NORTH YORKSHIRE****Archaeological Investigations****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Carillion Civil Engineering to carry out a programme of archaeological investigations on Bellerby Moor, off Whipperdale Bank, Leyburn, North Yorkshire at grid reference SE 08690 93306 (hereafter 'the Site'; **Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The Site lies on Bellerby Moor and is located on Defence Estates land in the Catterick Training Area. Planning approval has been granted by Richmondshire District Council for the construction of a new 600m small arms firing range at the Site (planning decision ref: 1/78/658-/FULL). The Site lies in an area of archaeological interest and, in accordance with national Planning Policy Statement 5 (DCLG 2010; now superseded), an archaeological condition was attached to planning consent. Condition 4 of the decision reads:

No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

1.1.3 The investigations comprised three stages of work:

- Stage 1: a sample excavation to establish archaeological potential
- Stage 2: more extensive excavation of Area 1
- Stage 3: a watching brief during topsoil stripping

1.1.4 All work was carried out in line with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2012) which was produced in line with a brief provided by the DIO Historic Environment Advisor (DIO 2012) and current industry best practice (IfA 2008a).

1.2 The Site, Location and Geology

1.2.1 The Site is located on Bellerby Moor, off Whipperdale Bank, 3.5km northwest of the town of Leyburn in North Yorkshire, NGR SE 08690 93306 (**Figure 1**). The new firing range will lie between a number of active and decommissioned small arms ranges on the moor. The development footprint covers 14ha of undulating land at 320m above Ordnance Datum.

1.2.2 The Site lies within the eastern end of the 'Lovely Seat to Stainton Moor' Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The groundcover at the time of work was short grass and heather and included patches of blanket bog.

- 1.2.3 The underlying bedrock geology is mapped as Crow Cherts (a sequence of chert, cherty limestone, limestone and mudstone in very variable proportions) beneath superficial deposits of Devensian Diamicton Till (British Geological Survey 1:50,000).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological understanding of the Site prior to the investigations is described in the 'Archaeological Significance Statement and Recommendation for Archaeological Investigation' (DIO 2012), which is summarised below.

2.2 Desk-based Assessment

- 2.2.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment of the proposed range area was undertaken as part of the Environmental Appraisal process (Halcrow Group 2008). All of the 23 archaeological sites identified by the assessment, with the exception of those relating to former mining industry, fell outside the boundary of the proposed development.

2.3 Site Surveys

- 2.3.1 The Site was further investigated by field survey and geophysical survey carried out by the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group (SWAAG) and the MOD Environmental Science Group respectively.
- 2.3.2 The field survey identified two discrete clusters of four or five cairns (**Figure 2**, SWAAG nos 3, 4, 7-10, 18-20, 21) a possible burnt mound (no 11) and several trackways (nos 13, 15, 22) within the footprint of the proposed range. The cairns were visible as low, grass-covered mounds, up to 4m in diameter and 0.4m in height, with stones protruding through the turf covering. These were interpreted by SWAAG as agricultural field clearance in the Bronze Age period (c.2200 - 800 BC) but a burial function was also not discounted. The possible burnt mound was visible as a discrete area of heather and rushes at the north-eastern end of the site and considered to be of prehistoric date, although a natural origin, such as a spring head, was also possible. Three east-west trackways were identified, comprising lines of ditches or ruts created by wagons running to and from mine shafts visible to the west of the development area. One such mine shaft was also present within the site.
- 2.3.3 A magnetometer survey was carried out over a 4ha sample (c.28%) of the Site. The survey identified occasional isolated ferrous anomalies, linear anomalies that correspond with a vehicle track and a further, subtle, linear anomaly of unknown origin. The results indicated that the potential for significant buried features being present within the area of proposed development is low.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General

3.1.1 The investigations comprised a staged scheme of work designed to:

- evaluate, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
- inform the preparation of an appropriate strategy to mitigate the loss of archaeological remains during construction;
- carry out such works as required to fully record any archaeological remains that will be affected by development; and
- carry out assessment and analysis as required to report the results of the investigations in full.

3.2 Stage 1: Sample Excavation

3.2.1 The aims of the sample excavation were:

- to evaluate the presence/absence, location, extent of archaeological remains at the Site;
- to determine the phasing and degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;
- to determine the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual, stratigraphic or other evidence;
- to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains; and
- to inform the scope and aims of subsequent stages of investigation.

3.3 Stage 2: Detailed Excavation

3.3.1 The aims of the detailed excavation were:

- to further investigate and record the location, extent, character, condition, phasing and date of significant archaeological remains identified during Stage 1;
- to inform the scope and aims of subsequent stages of investigation;
- to assess/analyse the resulting stratigraphic, artefactual and environmental data as required to interpret the results of the excavation and to place these results in an appropriate archaeological or historical context;
- to prepare an archive and a report of the results.

3.4 Stage 3: Watching Brief

3.4.1 The aims of the watching brief were :

- to investigate and record the location, extent, character, condition, phasing and date of any significant archaeological remains revealed or disturbed during construction;
- to integrate the resulting records, artefacts and samples into the post-excavation assessment/analysis programme for reporting and archiving.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Archaeological investigations at Herontree North Range were undertaken in accordance with a WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2012), prepared in accordance with current industry best practice (English Heritage 1991 and 2006; IfA 2008a, 2008b). A full methodology was detailed in the WSI and will not be repeated in full here.

4.2 Stage 1: Sample Excavation

4.2.1 Sample excavation was carried out in three areas identified and agreed with the DIO Historic Environment Advisor during a site visit on the 13th February 2012 (**Figure 2**).

- Area 1 – Sample excavation of two cairns and both of the linear earthwork features
- Area 2 – Sample excavation of the possible burnt mound
- Area 3 – Sample excavation of one cairn

4.3 Stage 2: Detailed Excavation

4.3.1 It was agreed that if significant archaeological remains are identified during Stage 1, the excavation areas would be expanded to include other features in the cairn groups.

4.3.2 Detailed excavations were carried out in **Area 1**, no significant archaeological remains were encountered in **Area 2** and **3** therefore no further archaeological work was carried out in these areas.

4.4 Stage 3: Watching Brief

A watching brief was carried out during the removal of topsoil and peat for the range construction.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Area and excavation locations are shown on **Figures 2-3**. The following sections provide a summary of the information held in the site archive. Lists of the observed features and contexts for each area are contained in **Appendix 1**, and referred to in the text as bold numbers.

5.2 Area 1 (Figures 2-4)

5.2.1 The group of features identified by SWAAG within **Area 1** consisted of a number of putative clearance cairns (**Figure 2**, SWAAG nos 3, 4, 7-10), two bell pit mine shafts (nos 5, 6) and two raised linear earthwork banks (nos 1, 2). Area 1 lay in low vegetation towards the head of a shallow valley which sloped down from northwest to southeast towards a shallow bowl which formed **Area 2**. This appears to lie towards the visible head of a small stream, Park Gill. The whole Site lay at the head

of the larger Black Beck valley formed by Whit Fell to the north and Loft Skew to the west/southwest.

- 5.2.2 A 24m long slot (**Figures 3-4**) was excavated through the raised linear bank (SWAAG nos 1 and 2) and extended a further 12m to the south to examine a potential cairn (SWAAG no 4) and the ground make up to the south. The trench revealed two hollow-ways (**1002** and **1003**; **Figures 3-4, Plate 1**). Hollow-way **1002** was a modern feature which had filled with a thin layer of grey clayey sand containing small to medium stones, immediately overlain by the recent peaty topsoil (**1005**). Hollow-way **1003** had filled with a 0.2m thick layer of grey silty sand containing medium to large sub angular and sub-rounded stones. The deposit and hollow-way were then sealed by 0.5m thick layer of soft light yellowish brown colluvium (**1008**) which was overlain by the thin peat topsoil. The colluvium contained frequent medium to large sub-angular and sub-rounded stone throughout. The hollow-ways were visible at the surface and appeared to extend to the east, gradually rising along the shelf of the shallow valley and continuing along the line of an extant footpath. The hollow-ways possibly continue to the west to form the current access track and may have been in use during the lifetime of the nearby bell pits.
- 5.2.3 Located 4m south of hollow-way **1003** was a line of large stones **1020** (**Figures 3-4**) which was evident on the ground surface in plan. Excavation revealed that these stones were irregularly deposited but well-consolidated and were contained within the colluvium deposit. On the uphill, northern, side of the stones was a concentration of smaller stones which appeared to have built up against the northern edge, probably due to the colluvial process.
- 5.2.4 The line of stones **1020** was traceable in plan and appeared to continue into a putative cairn (SWAAG no 4). This feature was selected for examination and a small quadrant was excavated along with a topsoil strip to expose the stones, and this was later extended during Stage 2 (**Figure 3, Plate 2**). The excavation revealed a substantial accumulation of stones (**1021**) that were aligned southwest to northeast forming a linear mound of stones that gradually petered out towards the edges into the normal distribution of large stones seen within the colluvium across the Site. Several of the stones were removed and were found to lie within the homogeneous colluvium deposit (**1008**), often with no physical contact with the layer of stones beneath.
- 5.2.5 The stone bank formed by contexts **1020** and **1021** appeared to extend from two bell pits outside of the development footprint (**Figure 2**, SWAAG nos 5, 6), and curve around to the east, to form a shelf around the northern edge of the shallow valley. It is considered that an accumulation of very large stones had built up here, probably transported from Whit Fell, and smaller stones had subsequently banked up behind the larger accumulation.
- 5.2.6 A further possible cairn (SWAAG no 7) was also excavated in **Area 1** (**Plate 3**). The excavations revealed that; similar to **1021** and **1020**, an accumulation of smaller stones had banked up, uphill and behind, much larger stones and that the stones extended beyond the putative feature within the colluvium. It was also seen that the stones lay within the homogeneous colluvium deposit that covered the whole of **Area 1**.

5.3 Area 2 (Figures 2-3)

5.3.1 **Area 2** lay at the eastern end of the shallow valley formed by **Area 1**, and appeared as a flattish bowl within the landscape. A discreet area of dense vegetation within this area was identified as a potential burnt mound (SWAAG no 11) and was targeted for examination.

5.3.2 A small test pit was excavated in the centre of the area to reveal a 0.25m layer of mid grey wet sandy clay deposit beneath the peaty topsoil (**Plate 4**). These deposits sealed a light yellow and grey mottled gleyed clay which had formed in the natural depression. No archaeological features were identified within **Area 2**.

5.4 Area 3 (Figures 2-3)

5.4.1 The features for investigation within **Area 3** were a number of putative clearance cairns (**Figure 2**; SWAAG nos 18–21) and a Tufa mound (no 37). These features lay close to an existing north-east to southwest aligned stone wall which probably relates to the Bellerby Deer Park boundary. At the time of the investigation the wall had been demolished and trees had been cleared from a wooded area to the southeast of the wall. The features had been partially damaged by machine activity.

5.4.2 The above-ground elements of the tufa mound had been removed during site preparation works. A tufa is a limestone, formed by the precipitation of calcium carbonate minerals from water saturated with those minerals. It can be deposited in many different alluvial environments; in this case around a seep or spring, forming a 'spring apron' and emerging through a layer of peat. The tufa will either have built up along with the rise in ground level (due to peat formation), or may have formed more recently, after peat deposition if the spring became active at a later date. It is a natural rather than archaeological feature and no archaeological activity was present in the vicinity.

5.4.3 One of the possible clearance cairns (SWAAG no 19) was selected for investigation. It was found to consist of a low mound of modern peaty topsoil containing a modern spent gun cartridge. Within this deposit were a number of large angular stones which were very roughly dressed and some unworked stones (**Plate 5**). This pile of stones was one of a number of similar piles that lay along the extant stone wall and is likely to represent stones left for construction or repair of the wall. An uprooted tree in the northeastern half of this feature may indicate that the apparent dome of material was caused by the action of roots.

5.5 Watching Brief

5.5.1 Topsoil stripping within the footprint of the proposed range was monitored by an archaeologist. The construction work was carried out by bulldozers and mechanical excavators and identification of archaeological features was difficult (**Plate 6**).

5.5.2 The watching brief recorded a similar stratigraphy to that of the archaeologically excavated areas. Natural limestone was seen forming rises in the landscape while glacial till deposits were seen in the dips. Above these deposits was colluvial subsoil containing medium and large stones. The stones were extensive and not isolated to certain areas, confirming that the occurrence, frequency and distribution of stones observed during the sample excavations was a natural rather than archaeological phenomenon. The colluvium was sealed by a thin layer of peaty topsoil.

- 5.5.3 Two trackways (**Figure 2; SWAAG nos 13, 15**) were inspected during the watching brief. In general these linear features were entirely waterlogged with streams running through them and it is possible that they were created by water erosion. A review of satellite imagery suggests that some of these features form seasonal streams that issue into the larger water courses to the north and west of the Site. No evidence of archaeological activity was identified and it is possible that these linear features were natural in origin, used as trackways during dry months, and became waterlogged forming seasonal stream beds during wet periods.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary of Presence and Survival within the Site

- 6.1.1 The archaeological investigations have confirmed that features in **Areas 1 and 3**, identified as Bronze Age clearance cairns by non-intrusive field survey, were natural accumulations of stones resulting from erosion and movement due to environmental and topographical conditions. The watching brief confirmed that the distribution of stones was extensive and continuous across the moor rather than in discrete areas or archaeological features. The possible burnt mound feature in **Area 3** was also a natural feature.
- 6.1.2 The southern hollow-way identified in **Area 1** may be post-medieval or older as it was overlain by colluvium which was present across the rest of the Site, while the northern hollow-way is thought to be modern as it cut through this colluvium.
- 6.1.3 Two possible trackways across the Site were waterlogged and there is evidence that they form seasonal streams that issue into the larger water courses to the north and west of the site.

7 ARCHIVE

7.1 Location and Deposition

- 7.1.1 The project archive has been compiled into a stable, fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with Appendix 6 of Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991) and Archaeological archives – a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation (IfA 2008b; Archaeological Archives Forum 2007). The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code 84490. It is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with Richmondshire Museum under an accession code to be confirmed.

7.2 Copyright

- 7.2.1 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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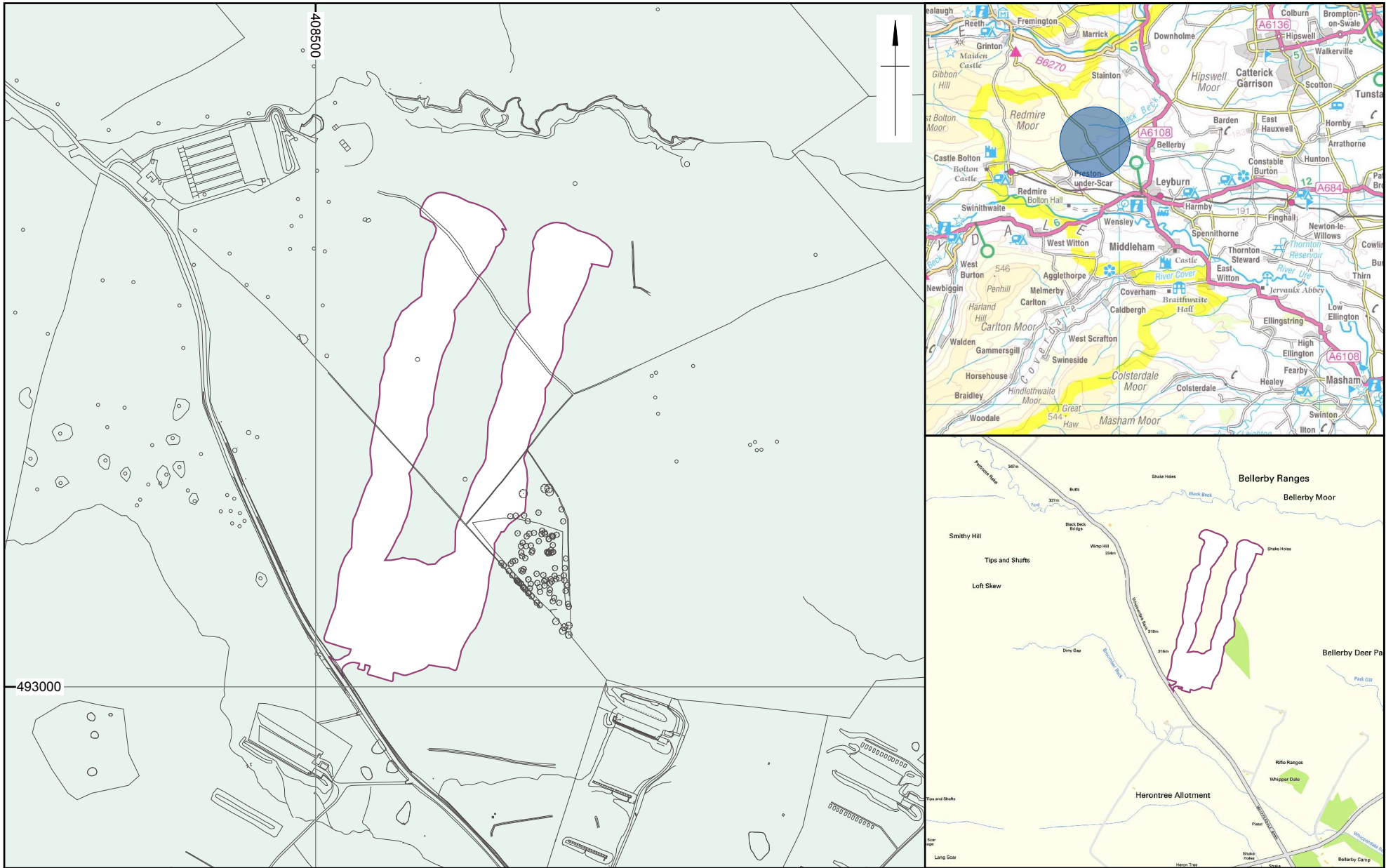
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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area 1			
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth bgl (m)
1002	Linear earthwork formed from north bank of SWAAG feature 1 and south bank of SWAAG feature 2. The linear had concave sides and a curved base	Hollow-way	0.5
1003	Shallow hollow depression, 4.3m wide with concave sides and a very shallow concave base, not visible in plan. Located 3m south of 1002	Hollow-way	0.4
1004	Mid-orange clayey sand with frequent sandstone fragments ranging from 0.7x0.4x0.2 to 0.4x0.3x0.2	Natural sand with clay and glacial erratics	
1005	Dark grey brown clayey silt	Peaty moorland/topsoil	0.05-0.2
1006	Mid-grey clayey sand with moderate stones of varying sizes. Overlain by peat 1005	Primary fill of hollow-way 1002	0.05
1007	Mid-grey silty sand with common medium to large stones	Primary fill of hollow-way 1003	0.2
1008	Light yellow-brown loam with occasional large stones	Possible colluvium	0.5
1013	Dark brown silty peat layer	Topsoil	0.0-0.1
1014	Mid-brown sandy silt with frequent medium to large stones (1021)	Colluvium	0.1-0.5
1015	Light greyish brown sandy clay	Natural	0.5+
1016	Dark brown silty peat	Topsoil	0.0-0.07
1017	Mid-yellowish brown sandy silt	Colluvium	0.4-0.7
1018	Mixed stones and boulders, sandstone, limestone and mudstone, rounded through to angular. Contained within 1017	Stones within colluvium, deposited by natural means	0.4-0.7
1019	Light orange brown clayey sand with moderate stones and gravel	Natural	0.7+
1020	Line of large stones, laid in an apparent line and presses in to colluvium 1008	Possible stone bank to south edge of hollow-way 1003 although may be natural	
1021	Medium to large stones within colluvium	Stones	0.1-0.5

Area 2			
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth bgl (m)
1009	Peat	Topsoil	0.0-0.1
1010	Mid-grey soft sandy clay with occasional medium to large sub-angular stones	Subsoil	0.1-0.26
1011	Light yellow and mottled grey sandy caly	Natural	0.26+

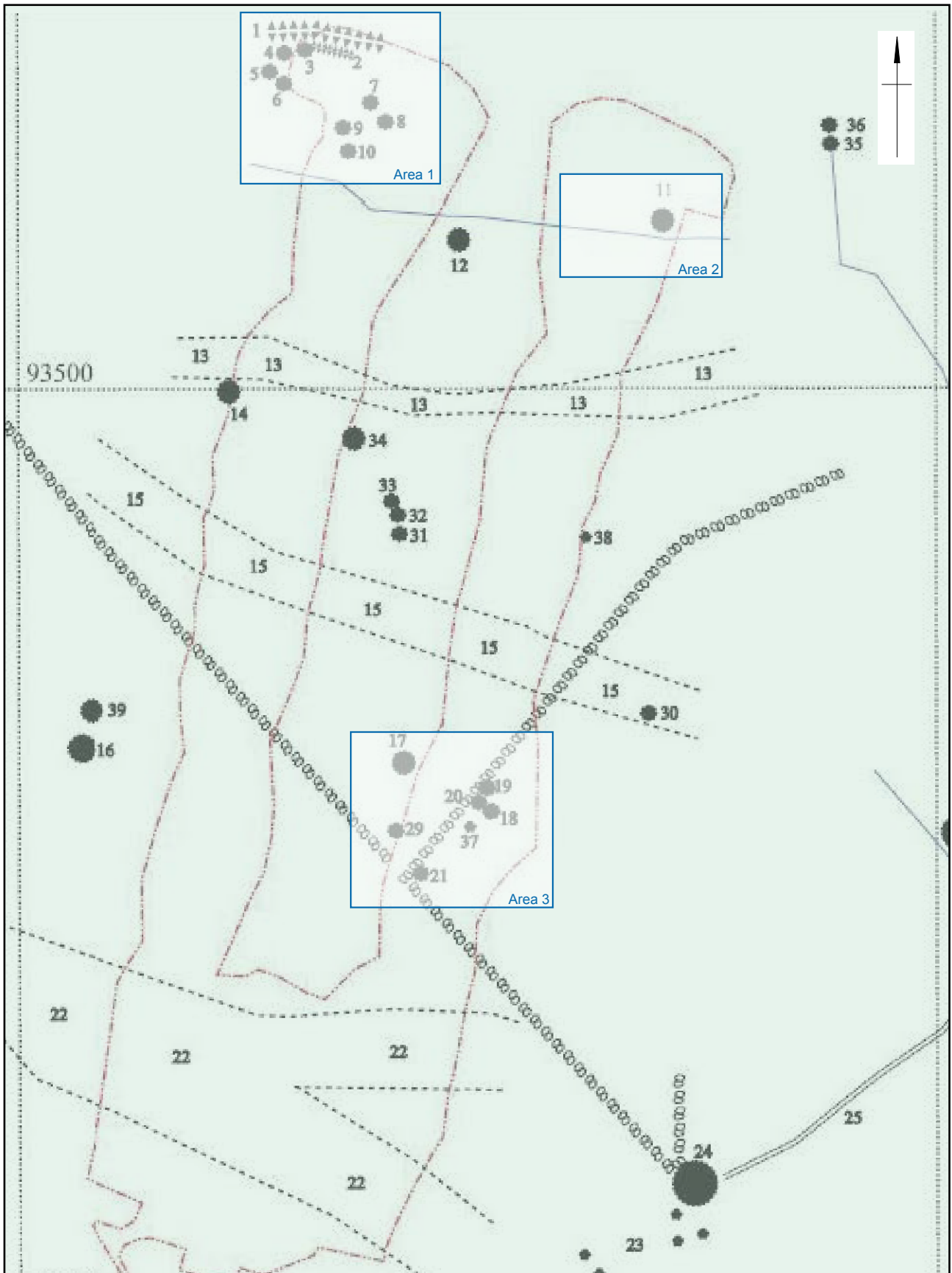
Area 3			
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth bgl (m)
1000	Irregular pile of stones to the immediate east of extant dry stone wall. Stones are roughly dressed and shaped, with some other unworked stones	Likely associated with the dry stone wall to the west	0.4
1001	Dark orangey brown sandy silt overlying 1000	Topsoil	0.0-0.4



	Site location Site boundary	Date:	21/02/2012	Revision Number:	0
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Site location

Figure 1



Sample excavation areas

Basemapping based on illustrations by SWAAG
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Plan showing results of non-intrusive survey and Areas 1-3

Figure 2



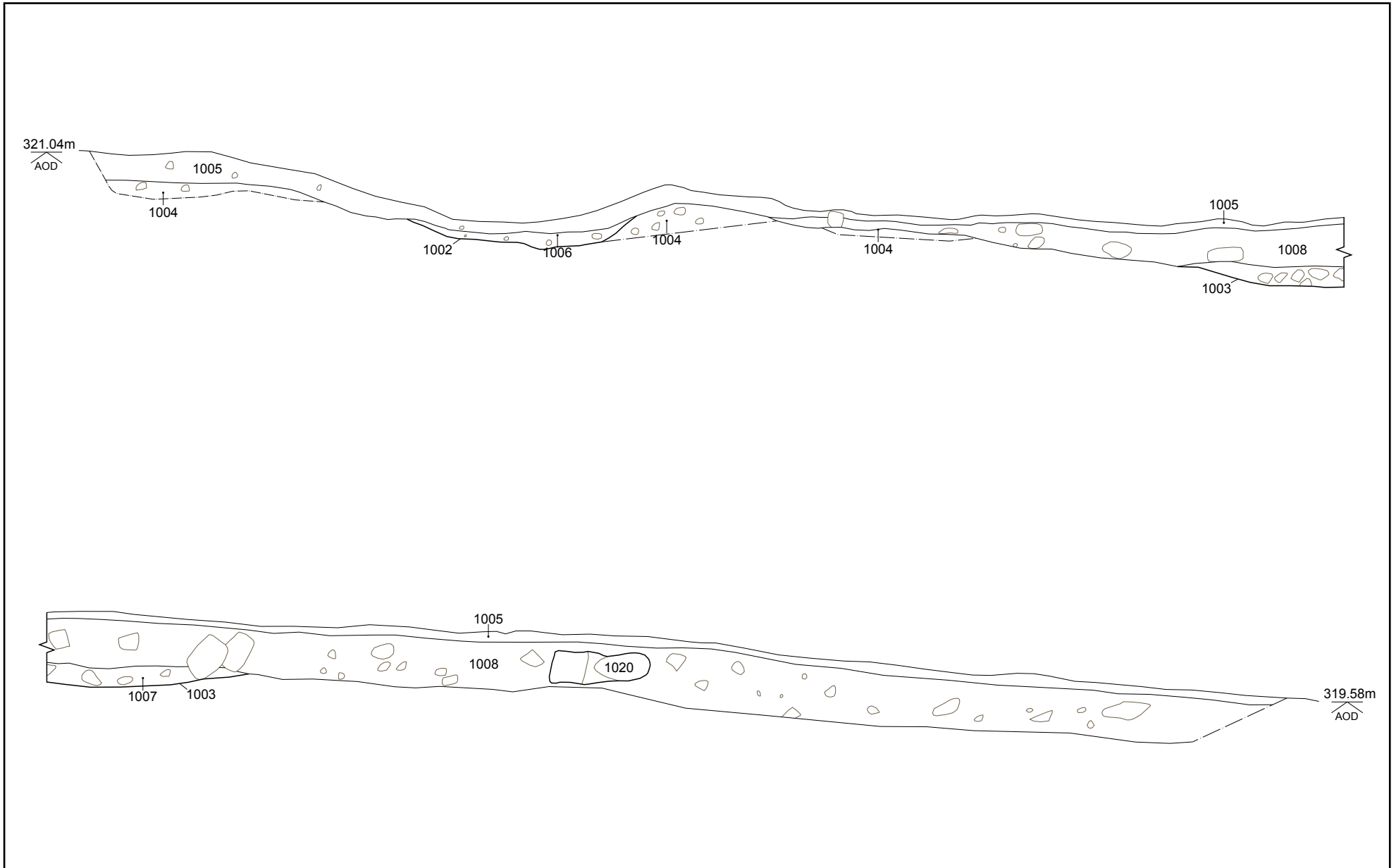
Extent of earthwork (based upon SWAAG plan of feature locations)
 Site boundary


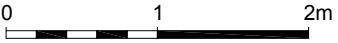
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Plan of excavated features in Area 1

Figure 3



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				Path:	Y:\Projects\Herontree North Range\Drawing Office\Report Figs\WS\ly-m-d\Herontree North Range_figs.dwg		

Northeast to Southwest facing section through features 1002 & 1003

Figure 4



Plate 1: Hollow-ways **1002** and **1003** (SWAAG No's 1 and 2).



Plate 2: Natural feature **1020** (SWAAG No.4).

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Plate 3: Natural feature (SWAAG No.7).



Plate 4: Natural feature (SWAAG No.11)

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Plate 5: Natural feature (SWAAG No.19).



Plate 6: Stripping of topsoil.

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