



making sense of heritage

Post Office Lane Kempsey, Worcestershire

Archaeological Evaluation



Ref: 105250.01
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July 2014



**Post Office Lane
Kempsey, Worcestershire**

Archaeological Evaluation

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Figure 2: Plan of Trenches 1 and 3.

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Plate 1: South facing section of hedgerow **103**.

Plate 2: East facing shot of field boundary **303**.



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Archaeological Evaluation

Summary

The Site lies within land immediately south of Post Office Lane, with residential housing to the west, a thin stretch of woodland to the east and farmland to the south. The Site is currently in use as arable land and paddocks.

The Site has been subject to a Desk Based Assessment (DBA, CgMs 2014) and a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014). The DBA identified that a potential former Roman road ran along the line of Post Office Lane, although little other significant heritage assests or archaeological remains were close to the Site, other than those within the historic core of the village of Kempsey. The Site was postulated as being in agricultural use at the edge of the village. The geophysical survey of the Site produced little evidnce for archaeological remains. Following discussions between Mike Glyde of Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Cathy Patrick (CgMs), a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching was programmed.

A total of nine trenches were excavated. The trenches targeted geophysical anomalies as well as blank areas to test the interpretation and location of the anomalies. Out of the nine trenches, two produced archaeology – a former hedge row aligning with a linear geophysical anomaly in **Trench 1** and a former field boundary dating to the Post-medieval period.

The features identified in the trenches corresponded with geophysical anomalies, with no features identified through trenching that were not recorded through the geophysical survey. The evaluation suggests that the Site does not contain significant archaeological remains and that the geophysical survey is accurate and representative of the lack of archaeological remains within the Site.

The project archive has been compiled into a stable, fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with current guidelines (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992; UKIC 2001; Brown 2011). The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **105250**. The archive from the fieldwork will be deposited with an appropriate museum in due course under the HER Event Number WSM57542 and an Accession number which will be issued upon deposition. An OASIS form will be submitted at the time of deposition. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.



Post Office Lane Kempsey, Worcestershire

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Fieldwork was undertaken by Charlotte Firth, Chris Harrison, and Hannah Holbrook. The report was compiled by Chris Harrison and illustrations were prepared by Alix Sperr. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Chris Swales.



Post Office Lane Kempsey, Worcestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land off Post Office Lane, Kempsey, Worcestershire (hereafter 'the Site', centred on NGR 385705, 248907). The evaluation has been undertaken in advance of a planning application for a residential development of the Site.

1.1.2 The Site has been the subject of a Desk Based Assessment (DBA, CgMs 2014) and a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014). Following discussions between Mike Glyde of Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Cathy Patrick (CgMs), a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching was programmed to inform a planning application for new residential development. The evaluation work complied with current best practice (IfA 2010)

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site is located to the south of Post Office Lane on the eastern limit of Kempsey and covers 4.1ha of arable land centred at National Grid Reference 385705, 248907 (**Figure 1**). The Site is bounded to the south by farmland, to the west by housing, and arable land to the east. The Site is currently in use as a mix of arable land and horse paddocks.

1.2.2 The underlying geology comprises Siltstone of the Branscombe Mudstone Formation, overlain by superficial deposits of sand and gravel of the Holt Heath Sand and Gravel Member (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). Levels within the Site increase from the northern boundary (20m AOD) and towards the southwestern corner of the site (25m AOD).

2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical background

Introduction

2.1.1 The following section summarises the Site historical and archaeological background as presented in the DBA (CgMs 2014).

Prehistoric and Roman

2.1.2 No known prehistoric or Roman activity has been identified within the Site boundaries. However the Site does sit within a landscape that is known to contain prehistoric and Roman sites. A Bronze Age ring ditch has been identified 660m to the south and an Iron Age fort 650m to the west of the Site. A number of undated cropmarks to the south of the Site may also represent prehistoric activity.

- 2.1.3 Kempsey is believed to have been the site of a crossing of the River Seven dating to the Roman period and a possible Roman camp has been identified close to St. Mary's Church. Post Office Lane, along the northern boundary of the Site, has been postulated as a Roman road, although its origins may have been within the medieval period.

Saxon and medieval

- 2.1.4 There are no known heritage assets within the study area dating to the saxon or medieval period. Kempsey is mentioned in the Domesday Survey although the Site itself appears to be removed from the Saxon and medieval village. The Site is likely to have been outside of the historic core of the village and used as agricultural land. No evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation has been identified within the Site.

Post-medieval and modern

- 2.1.5 Within the Site are cropmarks that correspond to post medieval-modern field boundaries. The core of the village to the west would have been the focal point of activity within the post-medieval period, as shown by the cluster of post-medieval heritage assets located here.

2.2 Previous archaeological investigation

- 2.2.1 The Site has been subjected to a recent geophysical survey, the results of which have directed the placement of the trenching (**Figure 1**). However the character of the survey suggests that little archaeological remains, other than post-medieval field boundaries are present within the Site boundaries. A crook shaped anomaly may be earlier in date, although the anomaly was weak and may be geological. No evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation was identified in the survey.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The methodology for the evaluation can be found in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2014). Archaeology guidelines and procedures conform to industry best practice, as outlined in guidelines issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008a and IfA 2010), the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation (UKIC 2001) and the relevant local and regional frameworks.

3.2 Aims and objectives

- 3.2.1 The aims of the project were:

- *To record, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains observed;*
- *To provide sufficient information to enable an informed decision to be made about the need for additional archaeological mitigation;*
- *To investigate the crook shaped geophysical anomaly revealed by survey;*
- *To test the interpretation of the geophysical survey by excavating trial trenches in areas that are 'blank';*
- *To make available the results of the work.*



3.3 Trenching

- 3.3.1 The setting out of the evaluation trenches in accordance with the agreed Site plan (**Figure 1**), was within +or- 100mm using a survey grade GPS. The trenches were located in relation to the Ordnance Survey (OS) grid. The trenching comprised six 50m by 2m and three 25m by 4m trenches (see **Figure 1**).
- 3.3.2 Prior to any mechanical excavation each trench was scanned with a CAT to check for uncharted services.
- 3.3.3 Overburden was removed using a 13 tonne 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Topsoil/overburden was removed in a series of level spits down to the level of the natural geology or the first archaeological horizon, whichever was reached first.
- 3.3.4 Any identified features were hand cleaned, excavated and recorded in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's standard guidelines. Once the aims of the project had been met, the trenches were backfilled with the excavated material in reverse order.
- 3.3.5 All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded using Wessex Archaeology pro forma recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. The features were planned using a GPS and each excavated intervention was hand planned and located with respect to the Ordnance Survey Grid and Datum. A photographic record was made using 35mm film and digital images.

3.4 Finds

- 3.4.1 No finds were retrieved from the Site.

3.5 Environmental samples

- 3.5.1 No environmental samples were retrieved from the Site.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The following is a summary of the information held in the Site archive. Trench locations are shown on **Figure 1** and the recorded contexts are summarised in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.1.2 The Site occupies land that forms a wide and shallow valley that is aligned east west across the Site. The valley retains water during the winter, and renders the Site unusable. The northern and southern areas of the Site are slightly raised, sloping up from the valley.
- 4.1.3 A total of nine trenches were excavated. The trenches targeted geophysical anomalies as well as blank areas to test the interpretation and location of the anomalies. Out of the nine trenches, two identified features – a former hedge row aligning with a linear geophysical anomaly in Trench 1 and a former field boundary dating to the Post-medieval period.
- 4.1.4 The evaluation identified archaeological remains relating to post-medieval agricultural activity across the Site.
- 4.1.5 The results are presented below by period.

4.2 General Site stratigraphy

- 4.2.1 Typically the stratigraphy comprised mid greyish brown humic topsoil overlaying mid orangey brown subsoil. The subsoil was found to be deeper within the central part of Site, within the dip that ran from east to west across the Site. The Subsoil overlay natural deposits consisting of reddish brown clay and yellowish brown sands.
- 4.2.2 **Trenches 2 and 4-9** were all excavated to natural and revealed no archaeological remains. Areas of high magnetic disturbance may be attributed to geological variance. A linear geophysical anomaly targeted by **Trench 5** was uncovered and found to be a modern land drain.

4.3 Trenches with archaeology

Trench 1

- 4.3.1 **Trench 1** was located within the southwest corner of the Site, targeting a 'crook' shaped geophysical feature running from the south northwards, before curving westwards. The trench was excavated to natural at a depth of 0.45m which was mid-yellowish brown clay within the southern part of the trench and reddish brown clay in the north. Cut within the natural was a north to south aligned linear (**103; Figure 2, Plate 1**). The curve at the northern most part of the geophysical anomaly was not uncovered, but did mark a change in the natural between the sand and clay.
- 4.3.2 Linear **103** was excavated and was proven to have erratic sides and base caused by root activity, and was probably a former hedge. The fill of **103** was mid-greyish brown silty sand (**104**), and possibly derived from the topsoil. No finds were uncovered.

Trench 3

- 4.3.3 **Trench 3** was positioned in the western area of the Site and targeted a north south linear geophysical anomaly. **Trench 3** was excavated to natural, within which was cut a ditch (**303; Figure 2, Plate 2**) filled with mid-reddish brown silty clay containing modern pottery and glass (**304**).

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 The geophysical survey and trial trenching revealed evidence for agricultural remains of postmedieval origin. The land was particularly wet and boggy within the centre of the Site suggesting it may have been too wet for occupation.

5.2 Conclusions

- 5.2.1 The features identified in the trenches corresponded with geophysical anomalies, with no features identified through trenching that were not recorded through the geophysical survey. The evaluation suggests that the Site does not contain significant archaeological remains and that the geophysical survey is accurate and representative of the lack of potential archaeological remains surviving within the Site.

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Museum

- 6.1.1 The archive from the fieldwork will be deposited with an appropriate museum in due course under HER Event Number WSM57542 with an Accession number issued upon deposition. An OASIS form will be submitted at the time of deposition. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

6.2 Preparation of archive

- 6.2.1 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 the relevant museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2008b and 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 6.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the Site/HER Event Number, and a full index will be prepared. The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **105250**.

6.3 Discard policy

- 6.3.1 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.
- 6.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2011).

6.4 Security copy

- 6.4.1 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.

6.5 Archive

- 6.5.1 The project archive has been compiled into a stable, fully cross-referenced and indexed archive in accordance with current guidelines (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992; UKIC 2001; Brown 2011). The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **105250**.

6.6 Copyright

- 6.6.1 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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7.2 Online sources

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Context Descriptions

Trench No. 1	Dimensions: 50 x 2m Max depth: 0.7m	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
101	Topsoil and turf layer: Greyish brown sandy clay.	0-0.46
102	Natural: Reddish brown clay	0.46+
103	Cut: Hedgerow	0.46-0.7
104	Fill: fill of 103	0.46-0.7

Trench No. 2	Dimensions: 50 x 2m Max depth: 0.6m	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
201	Topsoil and turf layer: Greyish brown sandy clay.	0-0.3
202	Subsoil: Yellowish brown sandy clay.	0.3-0.43
203	Natural: Reddish brown clay	0.43+

Trench No. 3	Dimensions: 25 x 4m Max depth: 0.5m	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
301	Topsoil and turf layer: Greyish brown sandy clay.	0-0.36
302	Natural: Reddish brown clay	0.36+
303	Cut: modern field boundary	0.36+
304	Fill: fill of 303 – contained modern pottery and glass	0.36+

Trench No. 4	Dimensions: 50 x 2m Max depth: 0.6m	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
401	Topsoil and turf layer: Greyish brown sandy clay.	0-0.35
402	Natural: Reddish brown clay	0.35+

Trench No. 5	Dimensions: 25 x 4m Max depth: 0.6m	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
501	Topsoil and turf layer: Greyish brown sandy clay.	0-0.45
502	Natural: Reddish brown clay	0.45+

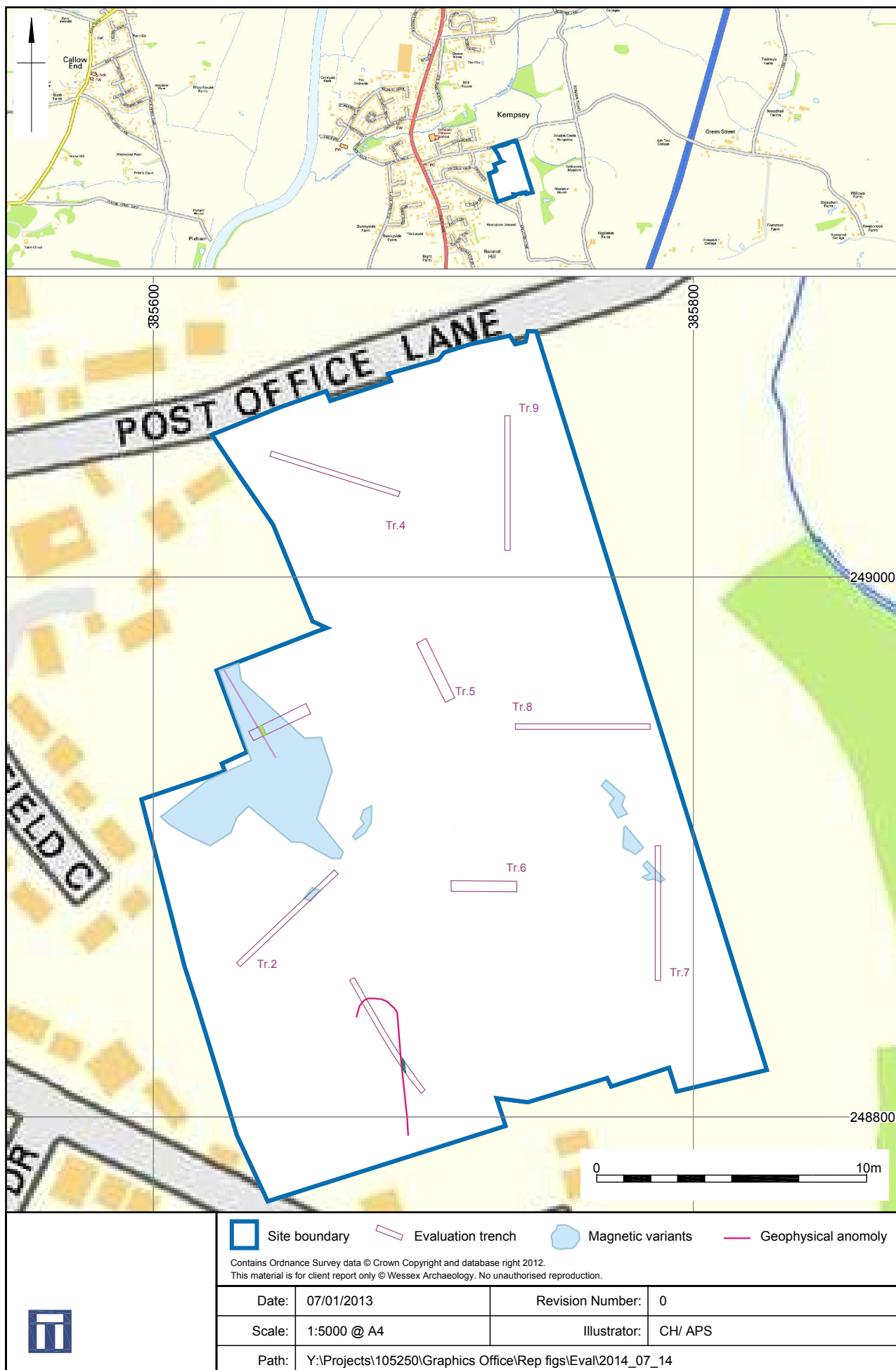
Trench No. 6	Dimensions: 50 x 2m Max depth: 0.52m	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
601	Topsoil and turf layer: Greyish brown sandy clay.	0-0.25
602	Subsoil: Yellowish brown sandy clay.	0.25-0.42
603	Natural: Reddish brown clay	0.42+



Trench No. 7	Dimensions: 50 x 2m Max depth: 0.66m	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
701	Topsoil and turf layer: Greyish brown sandy clay.	0-0.6
702	Natural: Reddish brown clay	0.6+

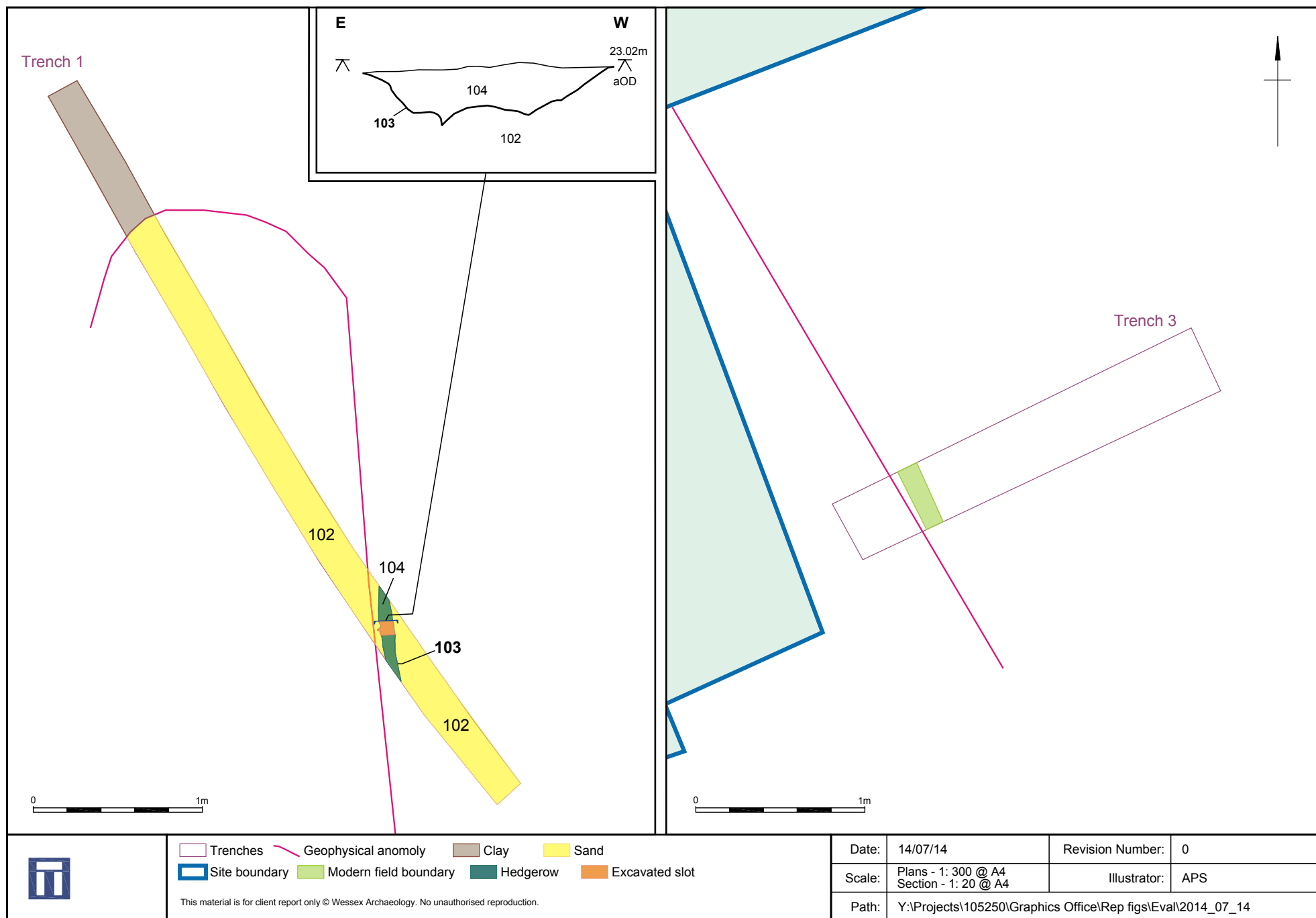
Trench No. 8	Dimensions: 50 x 2m Max depth: 0.6m	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
801	Topsoil and turf layer: Greyish brown sandy clay.	0-0.4
802	Subsoil: Yellowish brown sandy clay.	0.4-0.54
803	Natural: Reddish brown clay	0.54+

Trench No. 9	Dimensions: 50 x 2m Max depth: 0.6m	
Context	Description	Depth (m)
901	Topsoil and turf layer: Greyish brown sandy clay.	0-0.4
902	Natural: Reddish brown clay	0.4+



Site location and trench plan

Figure 1



Plan of Trenches 1 and 3


Figure 2



Plate 1: South facing section of hedgerow **103**



Plate 2: East facing shot of field boundary **303**

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