



making sense of heritage

Ibstock Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Ref: 107580.01
February 2015



**Ibstock Road,
Ravenstone, Leicestershire**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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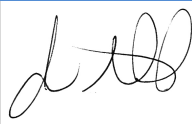
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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out an archaeological evaluation ahead of a development for residential housing on land at Ibstock Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire (hereafter 'the Site'). The evaluation area covers an area of c.7.1ha and comprises uncultivated grassland centred on NGR: 440600 313200.

Eleven 50m trenches were excavated to determine the archaeological potential of the Site and to inform any mitigation strategy prior to the impact of the development. Three additional trenches totalling 100m in length were also excavated at the request of the local planning authority, in order to further characterize archaeological features revealed in the initial trenches.

The evaluation revealed a concentration of archaeological features in the centre of the Site. The features mostly comprised linear ditches and a gully/truncated ditch, which presumably represented the truncated remains of field boundaries or drainage ditches. The only material evidence was a sherd of post-medieval pottery from the topsoil, but the pottery cannot be assumed to represent the date of the underlying features.

In light of the Iron Age and Romano-British archaeological remains c.30m south of the Site, it is likely that the ditches and pits represent peripheral agricultural activity of a similar date. The lack of any artefactual remains indicates that any settlement focus also lies to the south of the Site.

The project archive has been compiled according to the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and is fully cross-referenced and indexed. It is currently held by Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield under the project code **107580** and will be transferred to the Leicestershire Museum under a relevant accession number in due course.



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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting and are grateful in this regard. The Fieldwork was directed by Neil Dransfield with the assistance of Michael Keech. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Norton. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Richard Clark, local planning archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, for his involvement in the project.

The report was compiled by Neil Dransfield with contributions by Lorraine Mephram (finds). The illustrations were prepared by Alix Sperr.



Ibstock Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out an archaeological evaluation in advance of residential development on land at Ibstock Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire, centred on NGR: 440600 313200 (hereafter 'the Site'). The Site comprises uncultivated grassland (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The Site had been subject to a Desk Based Assessment (DBA; CgMs 2012) and fieldwalking (ULAS 2012), and geophysical survey (Phase Site Investigations 2012). As a result of this work an archaeological evaluation was requested by the Leicestershire Planning Archaeologist (LPA).
- 1.1.3 An approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; CgMs 2015) set out the strategy and methodology by which Wessex Archaeology carried out the works. All works undertaken conformed to the standards and guidelines for archaeology projects in Leicestershire, as well as current best practice and to the guidance outlined in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment ('MoRPHE'; English Heritage 2006), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standards and Guidance for archaeological evaluation (CIfA 2015a).

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is located on the southeast edge of the village of Ravenstone, and consists of a single field covering an area of c.7.1ha. The Site is gently undulating with a gradual slope westwards from c.146m OD to a watercourse at c.140m OD on the western boundary (CgMs 2015).
- 1.2.2 The Site comprises a parcel of land at the southern tip of Ravenstone village, and is bounded to the east by Melbourne Road/Ibstock Road and to the west by a seasonal watercourse, with fields to the south and houses to the north. A Public Right of Way (PROW) runs through the western edges of the Site (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology comprises Taporley siltstone, overlain by superficial deposits of glaciofluvial sand and gravel with a local environment previously dominated by lakes. The overlying superficial layers consist of mid Pleistocene glaciofluvial deposits - sand and gravel formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Alluvium is recorded along the western boundary of the Site (BGS) <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geology/obritain/home.html>.



2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following section summarises the Site's historical and archaeological background as presented in the WSI (CgMs 2015).

2.1.2 The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland showed that the Site is located in close proximity to a number of known archaeological sites, ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the medieval period. No known archaeological features relating to these periods are known within the Site's limits.

2.2 Prehistoric/Roman

2.2.1 Field walking has located prehistoric flint scatters close to the Site. Two Mesolithic scatters have been identified c.300m and c.500m south of the Site, close to the same watercourse that runs up the western boundary of the Site.

2.2.2 To the north of the village a pit alignment, probably dating to the early Iron Age, has been recorded on aerial photographs, providing clear evidence that the landscape was being divided up during this period. However, little evidence of Iron Age settlement has been recorded in the vicinity, although a few sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered during field walking, 300m northeast of the Site.

2.3 Roman

2.3.1 The Iron Age pottery was recorded within a larger Roman pottery concentration; a tight scatter of Roman pottery has also been recovered during fieldwalking immediately east of Melbourne Road, c.30m east of the southern boundary. Roman pottery has also been found c.100m east and 200m south of the Site.

2.4 Medieval

2.4.1 The Site lies 300m southeast of the medieval village core of Ravenstone and was presumably used as open agricultural land throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods.

2.5 Post-medieval and modern

2.5.1 Possible manuring scatters containing medieval and post-medieval pottery have been recorded by fieldwalking within the wider study area.

2.6 Previous archaeological work

2.6.1 A geophysical survey (Phase Site Investigations 2012) comprised a magnetic gradient survey of the full Site area. No anomalies indicative of significant subsurface archaeological features were identified in the survey. The survey data was dominated by a strongly variable magnetic background made up of isolated dipolar and positive responses associate with surface and near-surface gravel deposits. The majority of the anomalies identified in the survey were interpreted as relating to modern material/features, recent ploughing regimes, or geological/pedagogical variations.

2.6.2 The fieldwalking survey (ULAS 2012) proved mainly negative, revealing a single flint flake and a single sherd of Roman pottery, both located on the eastern edge of the Site. A low density of medieval and post-medieval pottery was identified across the entire survey area.



3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 General

3.1.1 The aims of the project were within the general parameters defined by the regional framework agenda (Cooper 2006, Knight *et al* 2012);

- *to record, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains observed;*
- *to assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological encountered;*
- *to assess the impact of the previous land use on the Site;*
- *to provide sufficient information to enable an informed decision to be made about the need for additional archaeological mitigation;*
- *to make available the results of the work and produce a Site archive for museum and local HER deposition.*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 The trial trenching was to comprise the excavation and archaeological investigation of eleven 50m trenches in order to allow examination of areas that would be affected by the consented development (i.e. built development areas, roads, landscaping, and allotment areas, but not areas retained as non-development land in the consented scheme). The trench locations took into account an existing public footpath crossing the Site (Trenches 1-11; **Figure 1**). Three additional trenches totalling 100m (Trenches 12-14) were excavated following discussions between CgMs and the LPA in order to further investigate revealed features.

3.3 Machine excavation

3.3.1 Topsoil, subsoil and gravel overburden were removed using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. The material was removed in a series of level spits down to the archaeological horizon at the upper level of the natural geology.

3.4 Hand excavation

3.4.1 Natural features were sampled sufficiently to establish their origin and to characterise any related human activity.

3.4.2 Archaeological features were hand excavated but the complete excavation of obviously modern features (land drains, modern services, disturbance) was not regarded as necessary.

3.5 Recording

3.5.1 All recording was undertaken 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).



3.5.2 All trenches were located in relation to the OS grid, and sections and elevations of archaeological features and deposits were drawn as necessary at 1:10 or 1:20 as necessary. All trenches were planned using GPS survey equipment.

3.5.3 Photographs were taken of all trenches and natural and archaeological features to produce a photographic record consisting of digital images to a resolution of at least 10 megapixel.

3.6 Specialist strategies

Artefacts

3.6.1 All finds were treated in accordance with relevant industry guidance (UKIC 2001; MGC 1991; English Heritage 2005, 2006), and the requirements of Leicestershire County Council.

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

Environmental

3.6.3 During the evaluation assumed worked flint was recovered and three environmental samples were taken in order to collect further worked artefacts. However, on analysis the flint was unworked and the samples are recommended for discard being from otherwise undated deposits.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Archaeological features were identified in Trenches 4, 5, 7, 12 and 13, the remaining trenches were devoid of archaeological features (Trenches 1-3, 6, 8-11 and 14). No dating material was recovered from any of the archaeological features. Summaries of the trenches can be found below with a full context inventory found as **Appendix 1**.

4.1.2 Within all the trenches natural silty sand was revealed between c.0.4m and c.0.6m below ground level and was overlain by a relic probable plough soil and the existing topsoil. Natural clay was also revealed in Trenches 9-11 in the southern part of the Site (**Figure 1** and **Plates 1-14**).

4.1.3 A modern machine cut was recorded within the southern end of Trench 6 and a similar feature in Trench 11 (**Figure 1**).

4.2 Trench 4

4.2.1 A sub-rounded pit was revealed in the western end of Trench 4 (404). The pit was 0.25m deep and 0.7m wide and filled with clayey sands (405 and 406). Shattered flint flakes were recovered from the fills but on analysis were seen to be naturally derived (**Figure 2**).

4.3 Trench 5

4.3.1 Two northeast-southwest aligned ditches (503 and 505), a southeast-northwest aligned gully (507) and a pit (509) were revealed in Trench 5 (**Figure 3**).

4.3.2 Ditches 503 and 505 were 0.2m deep and 0.7-0.8m wide, and were filled with clayey sands and silts (504 and 506). Gully 507 was similarly filled (508) but only 0.08 m deep



and 0.45m wide. Pit 509 was ovoid, 0.12m deep, 1.32m by 0.6m in area and filled with a clayey silt (510).

4.4 Trench 7

4.4.1 A southeast-northwest aligned ditch was revealed in the northern part of Trench 7 (**Figure 4**). Ditch 704 was 0.22m deep, 0.5m wide and filled with clayey sand (705 and 706).

4.5 Trench 12

4.5.1 Ditch 1205 was revealed in the centre of Trench 12, measuring 0.22m deep and 0.78m wide it was filled with a sandy silt (1204; **Figure 3**). A possible continuation of ditch 503 from Trench 5 was revealed to the north but not excavated.

4.6 Trench 13

4.6.1 A recut ditch (1307 and 1308) was revealed in the north of Trench 13 (**Figure 3**). Ditch 1308 was 0.19m deep and 0.8m wide and filled with a silty sand (1305). Ditch 1307 cut fill 1305 and was 0.35m deep and filled with a compact clayey silt (1306) below a silty sand (1304).

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

5.1.1 The only find recovered from the Site is a sherd of post-medieval pottery, a black-glazed redware bowl rim, from topsoil in Trench 1. This has not been retained.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 The evaluation revealed a concentration of archaeological features in the centre of the Site. The features mostly comprised linear features, which presumably represented the truncated remains of field boundaries or drainage ditches. The only material evidence was a sherd of post-medieval pottery from the topsoil, but the pottery cannot be assumed to represent the date of the underlying features.

6.1.2 The two northern linear features in Trench 5 were seen to extend to the west into Trench 12, and to the east into Trench 13. No features extended into Trench 14, but gully 507 may have passed to the north of the feature as it was similarly aligned to ditch 704 and both features are likely to represent the same feature.

6.1.3 It is likely that three boundary ditches were represented; a double ditched or recut boundary running northeast-southwest through Trenches 5, 12 and 13 and a northwest-southeast boundary through Trenches 5 and 7.

6.1.4 In light of the Iron Age and Romano-British archaeological remains c.30m south of the Site, it is likely that the ditches and pits represent peripheral agricultural activity of a similar date. The lack of any artefactual remains indicates that any settlement focus also lies to the south of the Site.



7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the Leicestershire County Council Museums. under an appropriate accession number. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

7.2 Preparation of archive

7.2.1 The complete Site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the Leicestershire Museum Service, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993, 1995; ClfA 2015b; 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. The physical archive comprises the following:

- *One file of paper records;*
- One disc of data consisting of digital photos.

7.3 Security copy

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.



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8.2 On-line resources

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>



9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1: Trench context tables

Trench 1		Dimensions: 50x 1.8m Max depth: 0.42m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
101	Topsoil – Mid brown grey compact clay silt with occasional well rounded small pebbles.	0-0.37
102	Subsoil – Mid yellow brown friable sandy silt with occasional sub angular medium sized stones.	0.37-0.42
103	Natural – Compact yellow orange silty sand with occasional medium sized sub angular stones and degraded sandstone. Patches of iron panning also visible.	0.42+

Trench 2		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.48m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
201	Topsoil – Mid brown grey compact clay silt with frequent grass rooting and frequent small well rounded stones.	0-0.3
202	Subsoil – Mid yellow brown friable sandy silt with occasional medium sized sub angular stones.	0.3-0.48
203	Natural – Yellow orange sandy silt with frequent sub angular medium sized stones, degraded sandstone and patches of iron panning.	0.48+

Trench 3		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.45m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
301	Topsoil – Mid brown grey compact clay silt with frequent well rounded small stones and grass rooting.	0-0.35
302	Subsoil – Friable mid yellow brown clay silt with frequent small sub angular stones.	0.35-0.45
303	Natural – Moderately compact mid brown orange sandy silt with frequent degraded sandstone, occasional medium sized sub angular stones and patches of iron panning.	0.45+

Trench 4		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.6m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
401	Topsoil – mid grey brown clay silt with occasional mid rounded pebbles.	0-0.37
402	Subsoil – Mid pink brown clay snad with occasional small to medium rounded pebbles.	0.37-0.6
403	Natural – Mid brown orange clay snad with frequent small to medium round pebbles and occasional large stones.	0.6+
404	Cut – A shallow squarish cut for a possible pit. Filled with 405 and 406.	0.5-0.75
405	Fill – Lower fill of 404.	0.65-0.75



Trench 4		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m
Context	Description	Max depth: 0.6m
		Depth (m)
406	Fill – Upper fill of 404.	0.5-0.65

Trench 5		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m
Context	Description	Max depth: 0.65m
		Depth (m)
501	Topsoil – Mid brown grey compact clay silt with occasional well rounded stones and frequent grass rooting.	0-0.3
502	Subsoil – mid yellow brown friable clay silt with occasional sub angular stones.	0.3-0.65
503	Cut – North east-south west aligned ditch.	0.65-0.87
504	Fill – Fill of 503.	0.65-0.87
505	Cut - North east-south west aligned ditch.	0.65-0.85
506	Fill – Fill of 505	0.65-0.85
507	Cut – South east-north west gully.	0.65-0.72
508	Fill – Fill of 508.	0.65-0.72
509	Cut of small pit.	0.65+
510	Fill – Fill of 509.	0.62-0.83
511	Natural – Compact yellow orange silty sand with frequent sub angular small stones and degraded sandstone.	0.62-0.83

Trench 6		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m
Context	Description	Max depth: 0.52m
		Depth (m)
601	Topsoil – Dark brown grey sandy silt with common small to medium rounded pebbles.	0-0.32
602	Subsoil – Light orange brown silty sand with common small to medium rounded pebbles and some shattered flint.	0.32-0.52
603	Natural – Mid brown orange sand with frequent small to medium pebbles and occasional large shattered flint fragments.	0.52+

Trench 7		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m
Context	Description	Max depth: 0.45m
		Depth (m)
701	Topsoil – Mid grey brown compact clay silt with occasional small well rounded pebbles and dense rooting.	0-0.3
702	Subsoil – Mid yellow brown friable sandy silt with frequent small sub angular stones.	0.3-0.45
703	Natural – Compact yellow orange sandy silt with frequent sub angular stones and degraded sandstone.	0.45+
704	Cut – East to west aligned ditch.	0.45-0.67
705	Fill – Lower fill of 704.	0.45-0.6
706	Fill – upper fill of 705	0.6-0.67



Trench 8		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.5m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
801	Topsoil - Dark brown grey sandy silt with occasional well rounded pebbles.	0-0.3
802	Subsoil – Light orange brown sandy silt with common small-medium sized rounded stones and some shattered flint.	0.3-0.5
803	Natural – Mid orange sand with frequent small-medium, and occasionally large, pebbles and shattered flint fragments.	0.5+

Trench 9		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.5m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
901	Topsoil - Dark brown grey sandy silt with occasional well rounded pebbles.	0-0.4
902	Subsoil – Mottled grey orange yellow clay sand with occasional small round stones - gleying.	0.4-0.5
903	Natural – Mottled pink grey light brown sandy clay subject to gleying and iron panning throughout. Has occasional large stones.	0.5+
904	Natural – Mid brown orange silty sand with frequent small-medium stones and one large cobble.	0.5+

Trench 10		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.45m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1001	Topsoil - Dark brown grey sandy silt with occasional well rounded pebbles.	0-0.3
1002	Subsoil – Mottled grey orange yellow clay sand with occasional small round stones - gleying.	0.3-0.4
1003	Natural – Mottled yellow grey sandy clay with occasional small-medium well rounded pebbles and rarer large rounded stones.	0.45+
1004	Natural – Mid brown orange silty sand with frequent small-medium rounded pebbles with occasional large rounded stones.	0.45+

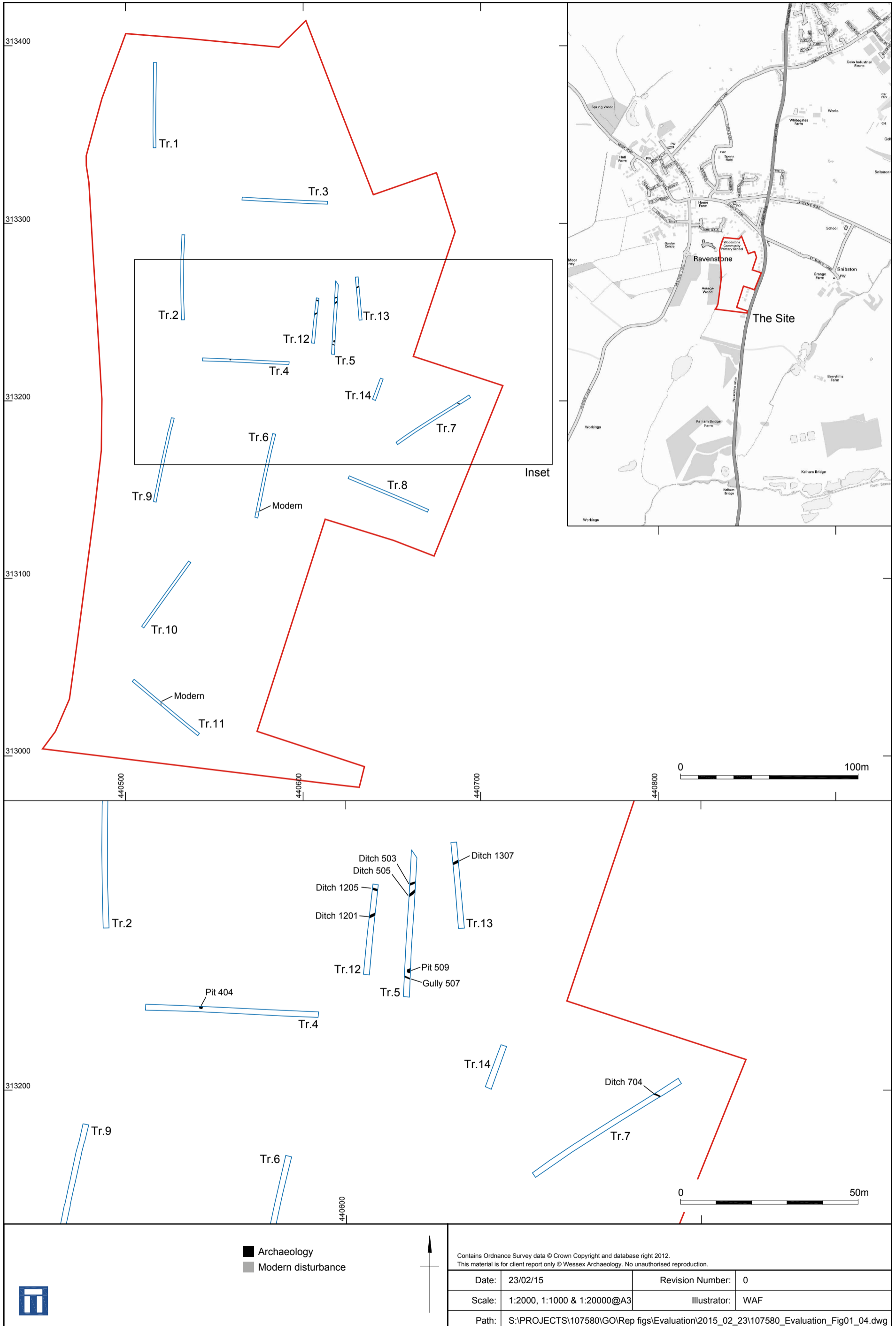
Trench 11		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.4m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1101	Topsoil - Dark brown grey sandy silt with rare well rounded pebbles.	0-0.3
1102	Subsoil – Mid orange brown clayey fine sand with occasional small-medium rounded pebbles.	0.3-0.4
1103	Natural – Yellow grey sandy clay, similar to that found in Trenches 9 and 10.	0.4+
1104	Natural – Mid brown orange silty sand with frequent small-medium rounded pebbles and occasional large cobbles.	0.4+



Trench 12		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.47m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1201	Topsoil – Mid brown grey compact silt with occasional well rounded stones and dense grass rooting.	0-0.4
1202	Subsoil – Mid yellow brown sandy silt with occasional medium sub angular stones.	0.4-0.47
1203	Natural – Compact yellow brown silty sand with occasional medium sub angular stones, degraded sandstone and patches of iron panning.	0.47+
1204	Fill – Fill of 1205.	0.47-0.69
1205	Cut – South west-north east aligned ditch.	0.47-0.69

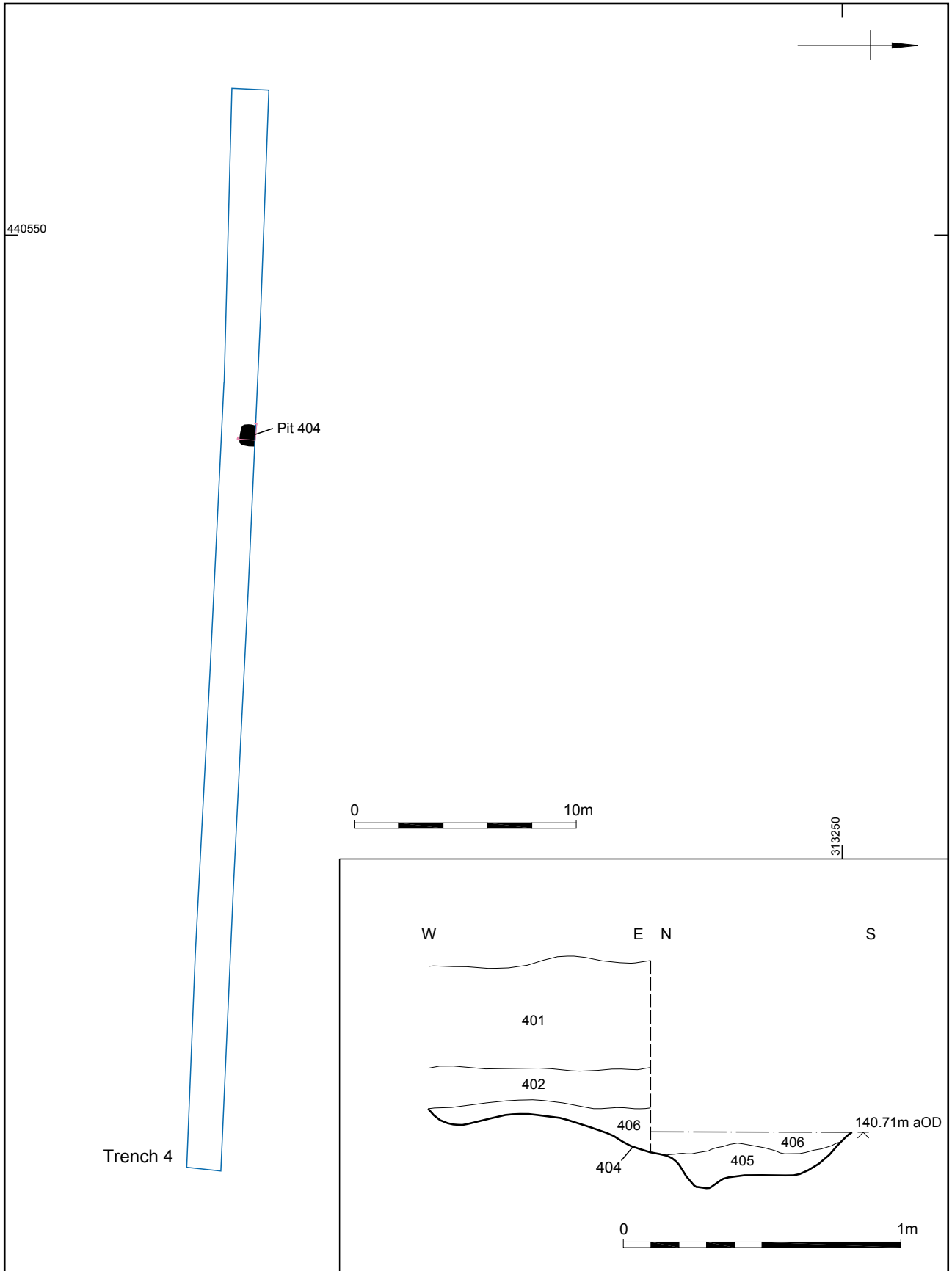
Trench 13		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.63m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1301	Topsoil – Compact mid brown grey clay silt with occasional well rounded small stones and dense grass rooting.	0-0.58
1302	Subsoil – Mid yellow brown friable sandy silty with occasional medium sized sub angular stones.	0.58-0.63
1303	Natural – Compact yellow orange silty sand with frequent patches of mottled grey clay, sub angular stones, degraded sandstone and patches of iron panning.	0.63+
1304	Fill – Fill of 1307.	0.63-0.87
1305	Fill – Fill of 1308.	0.63-0.82
1306	Fill – Fill of 1307.	0.87-0.97
1307	Cut – Cut of north west-south east aligned ditch. Filled with 1304 and 1306. Cuts 1307.	0.63-0.97
1308	Cut – Cut of shallow north east-south west aligned ditch. Filled with 1305 and cut by 1307.	0.63-0.82

Trench 14		Dimensions: 50 x 1.8m Max depth: 0.38m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
1401	Topsoil – Mid brown grey clay silt with occasional well rounded small stones and dense rooting.	0-0.32
1402	Subsoil – Mid yellow brown friable sandy silt with occasional medium sized sub angular stones.	0.32-0.38
1403	Natural – Grey orange silty sand with frequent patches grey mottled clay and sub angular stones, degraded sandstone and patches of iron panning.	0.38+



Site location and trench layout showing archaeology

Figure 1



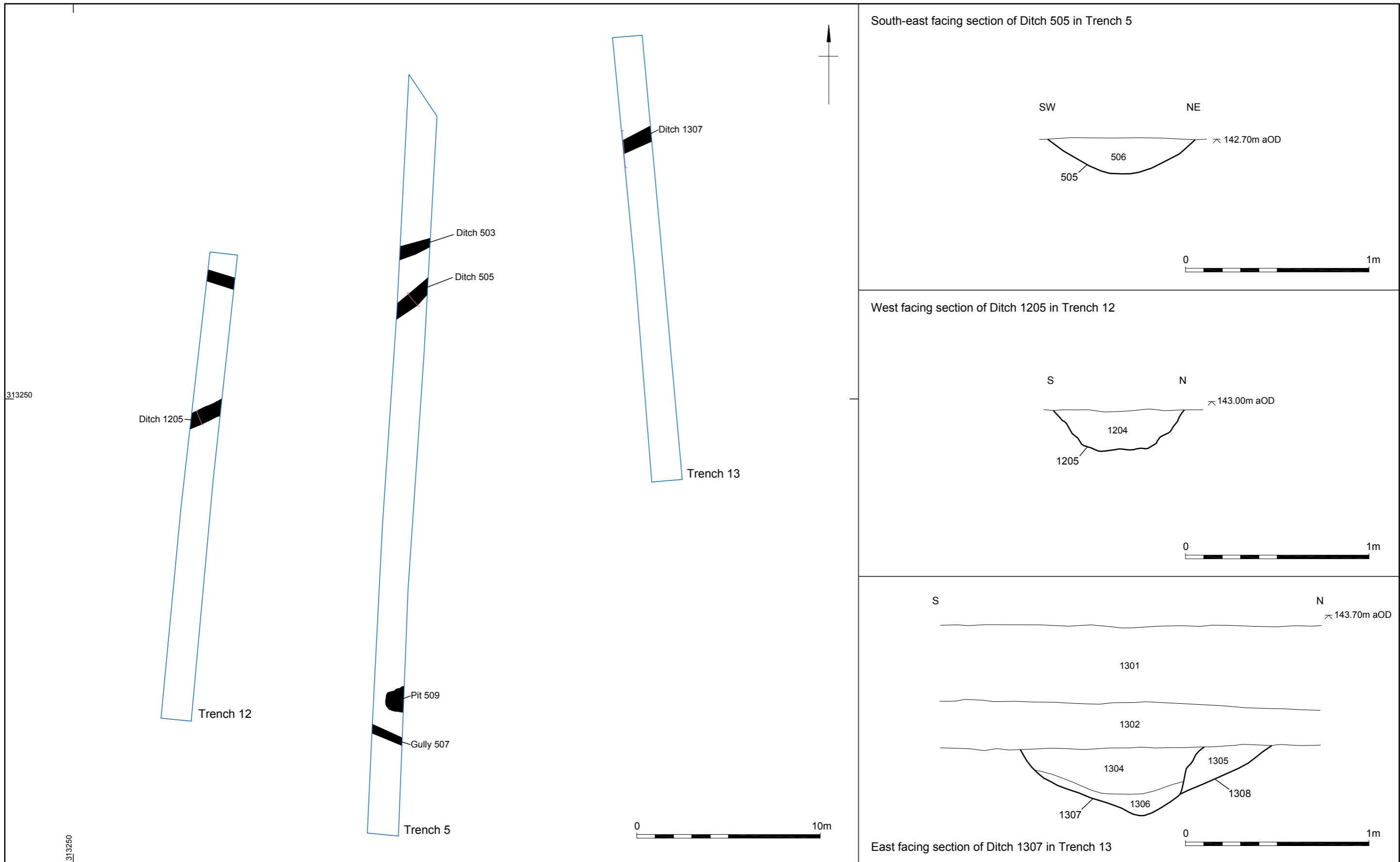
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Scale:	Plan 1:250 Section 1:20@A4	Illustrator:	WAF
Path:	S:\PROJECTS\107580\GO\Rep figs\Evaluation\2015_02_23\107580_Evaluation_Fig01_04.dwg		

Trench 4 plan and section

Figure 2

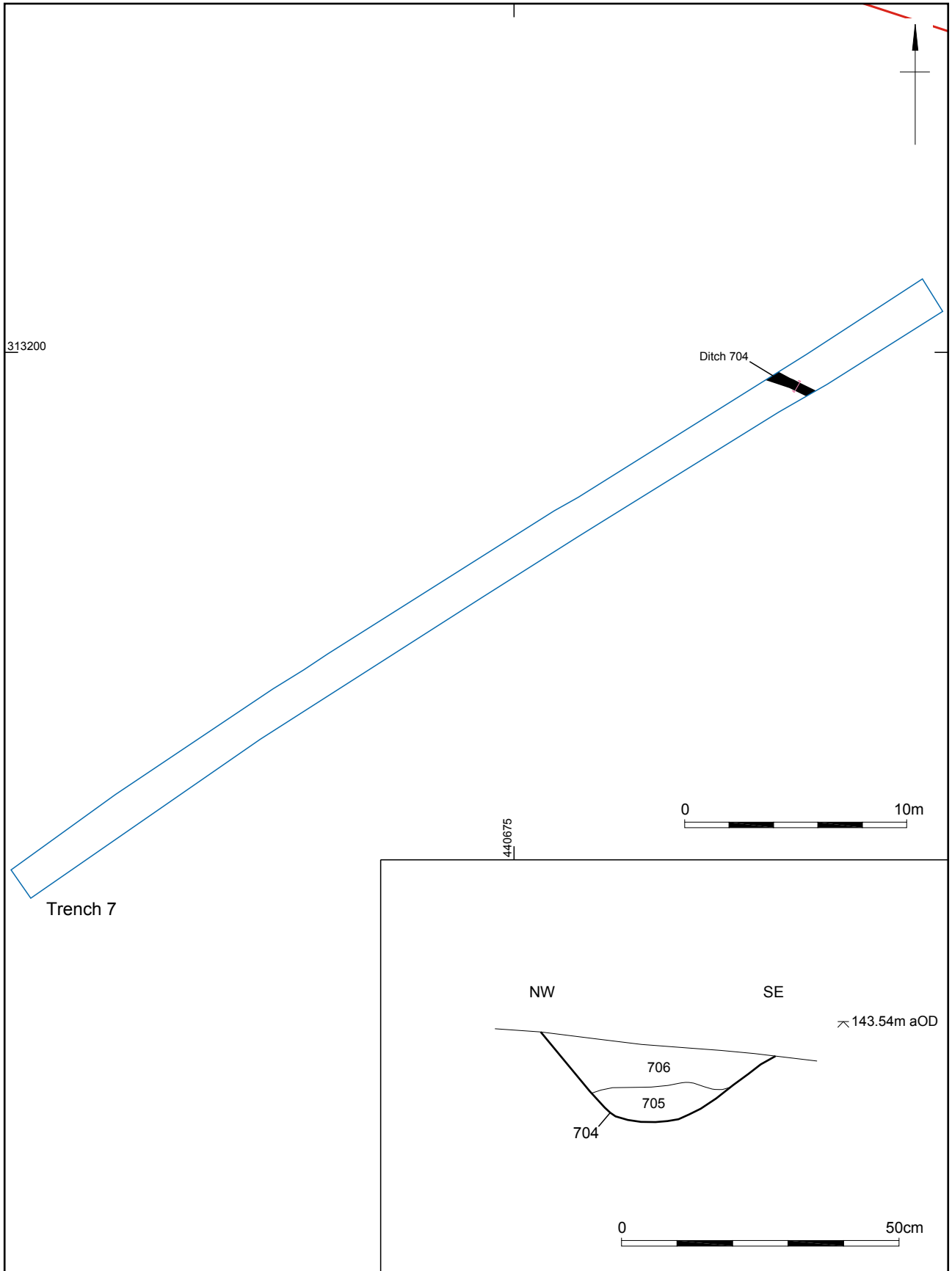



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Trenches 5, 12 and 13 plans and sections

Figure 3



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Trench 7 plan and section

Figure 4



Plate 1: Trench 1



Plate 2: Trench 2


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Plate 3: Trench 3



Plate 4: Trench 4


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Plate 5: Trench 5



Plate 6: Trench 6


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Plate 7: Trench 7



Plate 8: Trench 8


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Plate 9: Trench 9



Plate 10: Trench 10


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Plate 11: Trench 11



Plate 12: Trench 12



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Plate 13: Trench 13



Plate 14: Trench 14

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