



making sense of heritage

Land off Stanton Road and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



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May 2015



Land off Stanton Road and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Land off Stanton Road and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire

Evaluation Report

Contents

Summary.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	vi
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Project background	1
1.2 The Site.....	1
1.3 Topography.....	1
1.4 Geology.....	2
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	2
2.1 Introduction	2
2.2 Medieval.....	2
2.3 Post medieval	2
2.4 Conservation areas.....	2
3 METHODOLOGY.....	3
3.1 General	3
3.2 Machine excavation	3
3.3 Hand excavation	3
3.4 Recording.....	3
3.5 Finds	4
3.6 Environmental samples.....	4
4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	4
4.1 General	4
5 RESULTS	4
5.1 Introduction	4
5.2 General stratigraphy.....	4
5.3 Pits in Trench 2	5
5.4 Boundary ditch in Trenches 7 and 8	5
5.5 Gullies in Trench 12	5
5.6 Ditch in Trench 13.....	5
5.7 Features in Trenches 14, 16 and 17	5
5.8 Ditch terminus in Trench 18	6



5.9	Modern ditch in Trench 19	6
6	FINDS	6
6.1	General	6
7	ENVIRONMENTAL.....	7
7.1	Introduction	7
7.2	Charred plant remains and wood charcoal	7
7.3	Further potential	8
8	DISCUSSION.....	10
8.1	Summary.....	10
8.2	Conclusions	10
9	STORAGE AND CURATION.....	11
9.1	Museum	11
9.2	Preparation of archive.....	11
9.3	Discard policy.....	11
9.4	Security copy	11
10	REFERENCES.....	12
10.1	Bibliography	12
10.2	Online sources	13
11	APPENDICES.....	14
11.1	Appendix 1: Context descriptions.....	14
11.2	Appendix 2: OASIS form.....	20

Tables

Table 1	Environmental data
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Figures

Figure 1	Site location and trench plan
Figure 2	Plan of Trench 2 and section of pit 204 cut by pit
Figure 3	Plan of Trench 8 and section of ditch 804
Figure 4	Plan of Trench 12
Figure 5	Plan of Trench 13 and section of 1304
Figure 6	Plan of Trench 14 with sections of pit 1407 and ditches 1404 and 1409
Figure 7	Plan of Trench 17 with sections of ditch 1706 with re-cut 1708 and gully 1704
Figure 8	Plan of Trench 16 and section of gully 1604
Figure 9	Plan of Trench 18
Figure 10	Plan of Trench 19

Plates

Front Cover	Pit 204 working shot from east
Plate 1	Pit 204 cut by pit 207 from east
Plate 2	Ditch 704 from west
Plate 3	Ditch 804 from east
Plate 4	Gully 1205 from west
Plate 5	Gully 1207 from east



Plate 6	Ditch 1304 from west
Plate 7	Pit 1406 from south
Plate 8	Ditch 1404 from south
Plate 9	Ditch 1409 from south
Plate 10	Ditch 1706 from north
Plate 11	Gully 1704 from north
Plate 12	Gully 1604 from north
Plate 13	Ditch terminus 1804 and possible natural feature 1809
Plate 14	Modern ditch 1904 from north



Land off Stanton Road and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire

Evaluation Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey UK Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land off Stanton Road (NGR SJ 75557 07698) and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road (NGR SJ 75328 07415), near Shifnal, Shropshire.

The work follows on from previous Desk-Based Assessment (CSa Environmental Planning, 2013) and Geophysical Survey (Stratascan 2014). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, Wessex Archaeology 2015), outlining a methodology for the evaluation, was submitted to, and approved by, the Shropshire Council Archaeology Service (SCAS), prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

A limited number of archaeological features were identified in approximately half the trenches (12 out of 20). Dating evidence was scarce, limited to a single piece of perforated Early Bronze Age Beaker vessel. The Early Bronze Age pot from a pit in **Trench 2** was abraded and likely residual; however, the small pit was itself cut into an earlier larger sub-circular pit, and the likelihood is that these pit features are of prehistoric date. An environmental sample from the smaller pit contained charred hazel nut shells, common in Bronze Age and later assemblages, and a small fragment of metallurgical debris. Both features contained rich assemblages of wood charcoal.

Pits, gullies and ditches were identified elsewhere on site, many of which had a common type of fill suggesting that they belong to the same phase; however, the majority of features lacked dateable evidence and informative environmental material. Evaluation on the adjacent site to the south-east (Wessex Archaeology 2015b) also revealed a limited number of undated linear features on north to south and north-west to south-east alignments, however the feature fills on that site were more varied (Wessex Archaeology 2015b).

Undated ditches were seen in **Trenches 7** and **8** which are likely to be parts of a single boundary ditch. An environmental sample from the ditch in **Trench 7** contained an assemblage of wood charcoal and a small fragment of metallurgical debris. Undated ditches in **Trench 14** and **17** are also likely form a single feature, and correlate with a negative anomaly which the geophysical report interpreted as a possible archaeological earthwork feature, bank or modern plastic service. One north-east to south-west ditch in **Trench 19** contained modern material and a further north-east to south-west ditch in **Trench 14** roughly correlated with a geophysical anomaly interpreted as a field boundary present on available historic mapping 1840-1954 (Stratascan 2014). Undated gullies were observed in **Trenches 12, 16** and **17** and undated ditches in **Trenches 13** and **18**.

The correlation of the results of the evaluation with those of the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014) was poor. Most features identified were in areas where no geophysical anomalies were detected. With the exception of the Bronze Age pit in **Trench 2**, the dating of the majority of features observed is unclear. The absence of material evidence suggests these features are not associated with settlement and are most likely medieval or post-medieval agricultural features of little archaeological significance.



The archive of the archaeological evaluation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **108000**. It is likely that the project archive will be deposited at Shropshire Museum in due course. An OASIS form, ID number **wessexar1-206956** has been provisionally completed and will be finally submitted at the time of deposition.



Land off Stanton Road and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire

Evaluation Report

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey Uk Ltd. and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to them in this regard. The assistance of the Archaeology Service (Historic Environment Team) at Shropshire Council is also acknowledged. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Richard O'Neill. Fieldwork was directed by Laurence Savage, and undertaken by Laurence Savage and Lucy Reddin. This report was written by Ashley Tuck, and illustrated by Chris Breeden and Alix Sperr. The finds were assessed by Lorraine Mephram and the environmental samples processed and analysed by Ellen Simmons.



Land off Stanton Road and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire

Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd. (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land off Stanton Road (NGR SJ 75557 07698) and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road (NGR SJ 75328 07415), near Shifnal, Shropshire, hereafter 'the Site', (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The Site is proposed for residential development and has been subject to archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (CSA Environmental Planning 2013) and a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014). Following this work and discussions with Shropshire Council Archaeology Service (SCAS) Historic Environment Team, it was agreed that a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching would be required to confirm the nature of the geophysical anomalies.
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing the methodology for the evaluation, was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (2015a), and was submitted to, and approved by, SCAS in advance of fieldwork commencement. All work was carried out in accordance with current industry guidance provided by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a - 2014c).
- 1.1.4 A concurrent evaluation was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology on land adjacent to the southern section of the Site, for JJ Gallagher Limited, and the results of this work are detailed in a separate report (Wessex Archaeology 2015b).

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is split into two areas (**Figure 1**). The northern area adjacent to Stanton Road is a single parcel of arable land bounded to the west by further arable land, to the east, south-east and south-west by industrial developments, and to the south by a small area of woodland.
- 1.2.2 The southern area, to the north of Wolverhampton Road, is a single arable field, bounded to the south and west by residential developments, to the north by a railway line and to the east by further arable land.

1.3 Topography

- 1.3.1 Both parts of the Site are fairly level, with the north part at 88m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and the southern part sloping down to the north-west from 98m to 83.5m aOD.



1.4 Geology

- 1.4.1 The bedrock geology across the Site comprises sandstone of the Bridgnorth formation. Glaciofluvial sands and gravels are recorded as superficial deposits across most of the Site, with areas of till in the south-east and south-west. A band of alluvium is recorded running down the western edge of the southern area of Site (British Geological Survey viewer <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The following section summarises the archaeological background of the Site provided in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2015a), and derived from the Desk-Based Assessment (CSa Environmental Planning 2013).

2.2 Medieval

- 2.2.1 Shifnal is recorded in the 11th century and the north-south aligned street through the town, which lies approximately 500m to the west of the Site, is likely to be of pre-13th century date. During the medieval period the northern area is likely to have been part of an agricultural landscape of open fields surrounding the medieval settlement. Ridge and furrow earthworks are recorded from aerial photographs within the fields south of the railway. A deer park is recorded in 1369 within the southern part of the present day settlement of Shifnal although it is not known whether this extended into the Site.

2.3 Post medieval

- 2.3.1 The Shrewsbury & Birmingham Railway forming the northern boundary of the southern area was built in 1848. A stream running south to feed a fishpond is recorded as being present on late 19th century Ordnance Survey mapping directly north-west of the northern area. However, this feature was not marked on the consulted Ordnance Survey map of 1881. A brickfield with a 19th century brick kiln is recorded approximately 175m to the north-east. The Smithfield Cattle Market is recorded approximately 200m to the west. A school is recorded on the 1840 Shifnal tithe map approximately 100m to the west. A possible ornamental canal is marked immediately adjacent to the Site on the 1840 Shifnal tithe map and this is referred to on an 1882 Ordnance Survey map as a fishpond with a boat house. This feature lies within the former grounds of the 19th century Park House, now covered by housing. The Coalport Works, a wire mill and chain works of 19th century and later date, is recorded approximately 150m to the east of southern area. A former toll house is recorded approximately 300m to the west of the southern field.

2.4 Conservation areas

- 2.4.1 The Shifnal and Shifnal Broadway Conservation Areas are located approximately 375m to the west of the Site. A number of listed buildings are included within these conservation areas and further listings exist outside of them. In addition the Grade II* listed Aston Hall is located approximately 250m to the north of the Site, and the Grade II listed Uplands is located approximately 350m to the south-west of the Site.



3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 General

3.1.1 The detailed methodology for the work can be found in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2015a). A 2% sample of the Site was excavated, requiring 20 50m long evaluation trenches across the two areas. **Trenches 1-9** were excavated in the northern area, with **Trenches 10-20** dug in the southern area. **Trench 2** was extended to clarify the nature of potential prehistoric activity.

3.2 Machine excavation

3.2.1 Topsoil was removed using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Topsoil and overburden were 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.

3.2.2 All spoil was scanned with a metal detector, however no artefacts were recovered using this technique.

3.3 Hand excavation

3.3.1 Surfaces were cleaned when necessary to allow inspection and to define the extent of any archaeological features and deposits. Archaeological features were hand excavated but the complete excavation of features was not regarded as necessary for the evaluation, and care was taken not to compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits, which may be deemed suitable for preservation by record or preservation in situ. However, excavation was sufficient to understand and record the full stratigraphic sequence, down to naturally occurring deposits.

3.3.2 The following minimum sample-excavation strategy was employed:

- *50% of discrete features/deposits;*
- *Minimum 20% of all linear features, with a minimum section-width of 1m;*
- *Other features and deposits (such as walls and floors) will be excavated sufficient to meet the aims of the evaluation.*

3.3.3 Written and drawn records were made of the stratigraphy within the trench, even if no archaeological deposits were identified. Full written and drawn records of all excavated contexts were made in accordance with best archaeological practice. Archaeological deposits that were not excavated were recorded to the maximum extent possible.

3.3.4 Records include overall Site plans. All archaeological features were related to Ordnance Survey datum and to the National Grid. Survey was undertaken using an RTK GPS system.

3.4 Recording

3.4.1 All deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering 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 will be cross-referenced to all other assigned records. Context numbers used in the evaluation have not been repeated.



3.4.2 A photographic record was maintained using 35mm monochrome film and digital images. The photographic record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features.

3.5 Finds

3.5.1 All finds were treated in accordance with relevant industry guidance (Watkinson and Neal 1998; English Heritage 2005; ClfA 2014b) and the requirements of SCAS. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained (except unstratified or clearly modern material) and taken to Wessex Archaeology offices in Sheffield for further work.

3.6 Environmental samples

3.6.1 All sealed and stratified archaeological contexts were considered for standard environmental sampling. Bulk soil samples for plant macro-fossils, small animal and fish bones and other small artefacts were taken from appropriate well-sealed and dated/datable archaeological deposits. The collection and processing of environmental samples was undertaken in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 2011). Further detail is provided in **Section 7** below.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 General

4.1.1 The aims of the project were:

- *to confirm or otherwise the results of the existing geophysical survey;*
- *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; and,*
- *to make available the results of the work.*

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the information held in the Site archive, with a full list of context numbers and context descriptions contained in **Appendix 1**.

5.2 General stratigraphy

5.2.1 Most commonly the natural geological substrate was variations of yellow or red sand sometimes with pink-red clay inclusions (e.g. **103**), which was seen in **Trenches 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 18** and **20**. The second most common type of natural was variations of red pink clay or sandy clay sometimes with gravel pockets or yellow-white mottling (e.g. **903**), as seen in **Trenches 2, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17** and **19**. Angular sandstone bedrock (**1504**) was also seen in **Trench 15**.



5.2.2 Subsoil (e.g. **102**) was present in all trenches and was variable. Subsoil depths ranged from 0.05m to 0.15m except for **Trench 3** where the subsoil (**302**) was 0.25m deep.

5.2.3 Topsoil in the northern area was relatively uniform and ranged from 0.3m-0.4m in depth, except in **Trench 18** where it was 0.25m thick.

5.3 Pits in Trench 2

5.3.1 A pit (**204**, **Figure 2**, **Plate 1**), sub-circular (1.6m by 1.3m) in plan and 0.42m deep, was present in **Trench 2**. Pit **204** had two fills; a reddish brown basal secondary fill (**205**) and a grey pink sandy clay upper secondary fill (**208**). Fill **205** contained a rich assemblage of wood charcoal (see **Section 7** below).

5.3.2 Cut through pit **204** was a second smaller pit, **207**, 0.9m in diameter and 0.21m deep. **207** was filled with dark grey silty sand (**206**) and produced the only find from the Site, a single piece of perforated Early Bronze Age beaker vessel (see **Section 6** below). The abraded nature of the pottery suggests the material may be residual in a later context. Charred hazel nut shells, common in Bronze Age and later assemblages, were present in the fill (**206**) along with a small fragment of metallurgical debris and a rich assemblage of wood charcoal (see **Section 7** below).

5.3.3 The function of the pits was unclear from the excavated evidence but a prehistoric date for the features seems likely given the material present.

5.4 Boundary ditch in Trenches 7 and 8

5.4.1 A boundary ditch was seen continuing through **Trenches 7** and **8**. In **Trench 7**, this boundary ditch (**704**, **Plate 2**) was 1.18m wide and 0.42m deep with a gentle concave profile, and had three fills. The basal primary fill was yellowish red silty sand (**705**), below a yellowish grey silty sand secondary fill (**706**) and an upper secondary fill of blackish red silty sand (**707**). Fill **707** contained a relatively large number of wood charcoal fragments, vitrified charcoal; and a small fragment of metallurgical debris (see **Section 7** below). In **Trench 8**, the ditch (**804**, **Figure 3**, **Plate 3**) was a similar size, 1.1m wide and 0.36m deep and was similarly gently concave. **804** had two fills, a basal primary fill of brownish red silty sand (**805**) and an upper secondary fill of yellowish grey silty sand (**806**).

5.5 Gullies in Trench 12

5.5.1 Two parallel gullies ran northwest-southeast across **Trench 12**. **1205** (**Figure 4**, **Plate 4**) was 0.56m wide by 0.2m deep and was filled with dark grey silty sand (**1204**). **1207** (**Plate 4**) was roughly the same dimensions as **1204** (0.5m wide and 0.15m deep) and with an identical fill (**1206**).

5.6 Ditch in Trench 13

5.6.1 A wide shallow (2.95m wide and 0.38m deep) ditch was present in **Trench 13** (**1304**, **Figure 5**, **Plate 6**). There were two fills: **1305** was a basal primary fill of yellowish grey silty clay, overlain by a secondary fill, **1306**, dark grey silty sand.

5.7 Features in Trenches 14, 16 and 17

5.7.1 A pit, **1407** (**Figure 6**, **Plate 7**), was located at the north west end of **Trench 14**. **1407** was 0.8m by 1m and 0.5m deep and was filled with dark greyish red silty sand (**1406**).



- 5.7.2 South-east along **Trench 14**, a shallow ditch (**1404**, **Figure 6**, **Plate 8**) 1m wide and 0.15m deep ran north-east to south-west across the trench. The fill of this linear feature was light grey silty sand (**1405**). The ditch roughly correlates with a geophysical anomaly interpreted as a field boundary present on available historic mapping 1840-1954 (Stratascan 2014).
- 5.7.3 Continuing south-east, a second north-east to south-west ditch, **1409**, was seen. This ditch also appeared in **Trench 17** as **1706**. **1409** had four fills, greyish red loam basal primary fill (**1410**), light greyish white silty sand secondary fill (**1411**), blackish grey sandy silt secondary fill (**1412**) and reddish black silty sand secondary fill (**1413**). In **Trench 17** the ditch that aligns with **1409** was **1706** (**Figure 7**, **Plate 10**), 1.94m wide and 0.34m deep and with a single secondary fill of dark grey sandy silt (**1707**). However, **1706** appeared to have been recut with a small gully **1708** (0.5m by 0.12m deep) on its south-eastern side, filled with dark grey silty sand (**1709**). The ditch correlates with a negative anomaly which the geophysical report interpreted as a possible archaeological earthwork or bank or modern plastic service (Stratascan 2014).
- 5.7.4 A small (0.65m wide by 0.16m deep) gully (**1704**, **Figure 7**, **Plate 11**) was also present in **Trench 17**, with a dark grey silty sand fill (**1705**). A similar small (0.5m wide and 0.12m deep) gully (**1604**, **Figure 8**, **Plate 12**), ran along the length of **Trench 16**, petering out within the trench at its southern end. Gully **1604** had a dark grey silty sand fill (**1605**).

5.8 Ditch terminus in Trench 18

- 5.8.1 A ditch terminus (**1804**, **Figure 9**, **Plate 13**) was present in **Trench 18**, 1.3m wide and 0.55m deep and filled with **1805**, a compact mid-dark brown silty sand. This ditch terminus was contained completely within a second feature (**1809**). **1809** may represent the original cut of **1804**, although it is more likely that it is the boundary of a patch of transformed natural. Contained within **1809** was **1807**, loose orange grey sand with horizontal laminations of red sand 0.02m thick approximately every 0.2m. These laminations suggest that this deposit (**1807**) is non-anthropogenic, although it is possible that they have been introduced into the deposit by leeching or some other process, or are the result of alluvial deposition or similar. Fill **1807** most likely represents a patch of transformed natural created by pedological processes related to the presence of ditch terminus **1804**.

5.9 Modern ditch in Trench 19

- 5.9.1 A ditch was found with modern Ceramic Building Material (CBM) in **Trench 19** (**1904**, **Figure 10**, **Plate 14**) Ditch **1904** was 0.7m wide and 0.24m deep and filled with dark grey silty sand.

6 FINDS

By Lorraine Mepham

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 A single sherd of pottery (weighing 19g) was the only find recovered from the Site, from the fill (**206**) of pit **207**. This is a body sherd from an Early Bronze Age Beaker vessel, in a grog-tempered fabric, with impressed comb-tooth decoration. The sherd is small and heavily abraded (and therefore possibly residual in this feature), and the overall decorative



scheme is uncertain. In addition, the sherd has a post-firing perforation, drilled from the external surface.

- 6.1.2 Perforated Beaker sherds are not common, but a few examples are known, for example a body sherd from the Hamel, Oxford (Palmer 1980, fig. 3, no. 7). The function of the perforation is unknown.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL

By Ellen Simmons

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Six bulk samples, of between ten and forty litres in volume were taken from undated linear feature fill **707**, prehistoric (Early Bronze Age or later) pit fill **206**, earlier (prehistoric) pit fill **205**, undated pit fill **1413**, undated ditch terminus **1805** and undated ditch fill **1410**. The samples were taken in order to evaluate the presence and preservation of palaeo-environmental remains. The samples were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and wood charcoal.

7.2 Charred plant remains and wood charcoal

- 7.2.1 The bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods using a water separation machine. Floating material was collected in a 300µm mesh, and the remaining heavy residue retained in a 1mm mesh. The flot and heavy residue were air dried. The residues were scanned for metallurgical debris such as hammer scale, using a large magnet and the > 2mm fraction of the heavy residue was fully sorted for organic remains and artefacts, weighed and then discarded. Where no potential for the recovery of < 2mm artefacts, such as fish bone or beads was noted, the < 2mm fraction of the heavy residue was also then weighed and discarded.
- 7.2.2 The samples were assessed in accordance with English Heritage guidelines for environmental archaeology assessments (Jones, 2011). The main aim of this assessment was to determine the concentration, diversity, state of preservation and suitability for use in radiocarbon dating, of any archaeobotanical material present within the samples. A further aim was to evaluate the potential of this material to provide evidence for the function of the contexts, the economy of the site or for the nature of the local environment.
- 7.2.3 A preliminary assessment of the samples was made by scanning under a low power binocular microscope (x7-x45) and recording the abundance of the main classes of material present. This data is recorded in **Table 1**. Preliminary identification of plant material was carried out by comparison with material in the reference collections at the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield and various reference works (e.g. Cappers et al, 2006). Cereal identifications and nomenclature follow Jacomet (2006). Other plant nomenclature follows Stace (2010).
- 7.2.4 Low to moderate proportions of intrusive roots were present in the samples. No charred crop remains were present although a small number of relatively well preserved wild or weed plant seeds were present in **Sample 2** from undated linear feature fill **707**, **Sample 3** from prehistoric (Early Bronze Age or later) pit fill **206** and **Sample 4** from (prehistoric) pit fill **205**. A small number of poorly preserved hazel nutshell fragments were also present in prehistoric (Early Bronze Age or later) pit fill **206**. Wood charcoal fragments were

abundant in **Samples 2, 3 and 4**. Preservation was relatively good with little evidence for vitrification, although some fragments appeared to be affected by mineralisation.

- 7.2.5 **Sample 2** from linear feature fill **707** contained a relatively low proportion of intrusive roots and over one hundred charcoal fragments greater than 2mm in size. Over one hundred vitrified charcoal fragments greater than 2mm in size were also present, along with one fragment of metallurgical debris around 2mm in size. Less than five charred bramble seeds (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) were present.
- 7.2.6 **Sample 3** from prehistoric (Early Bronze Age or later) pit fill **206** contained no intrusive roots and over five hundred charcoal fragments greater than 2mm in size. One fragment of metallurgical debris around 2mm in size was present, along with less than five fragments of vesicular indeterminate material. Around two fragments of charred hazel nutshell, two small culm nodes, one fragment of parenchyma (undifferentiated plant storage tissue), one goosefoot seed (*Chenopodium* sp.), two bramble seeds (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and two ivy-leaved speedwell seeds (*Veronica hederifolia*) were present.
- 7.2.7 **Sample 4** from earlier (prehistoric) pit fill **205** contained no intrusive roots and well over five hundred charcoal fragments greater than 2mm in size. Less than five charred ivy-leaved speedwell seeds (*Veronica hederifolia*) were present. Less than ten fragments of vesicular indeterminate material were also present.
- 7.2.8 **Sample 5** from undated pit fill **1413** contained a relatively low proportion of intrusive roots and just less than fifty charcoal fragments greater than 2mm in size. Just over ten fragments of vitrified charcoal were also present.
- 7.2.9 **Sample 7** from undated ditch terminus **1806** contained a moderate proportion of intrusive roots and less than ten charcoal fragments greater than 2mm in size. Just over ten fragments of vitrified charcoal were also present.
- 7.2.10 **Sample 8** from undated ditch fill **1410** contained no intrusive roots and just over fifty fragments of charcoal greater than 2mm in size.

7.3 Further potential

Charred plant remains

- 7.3.1 No charred cereal grains were present in the samples. The small number of charred hazel nutshell fragments present in pit fill **206** would be consistent with a Bronze Age date for this deposit. Remains of hazel nutshell are common in prehistoric charred plant assemblages although they may also be present in assemblages of a later date.
- 7.3.2 The small assemblage of wild or weed plant seeds present in **Samples 2, 3 and 4** includes taxa commonly associated with fertile disturbed soils such as ivy leaved speedwell and goosefoot. These seeds may have originated from a number of sources such as crop weeds, kindling and roofing or flooring material. Charred bramble seeds were also present in **Samples 2 and 3**. These may be representative of food but may also have been charred accidentally along with wood collected as fuel.
- 7.3.3 No further analysis of the charred plant remains assemblage would be recommended due to the low quantities of material present.
- 7.3.4 No charred plant remains suitable for radiocarbon dating were present.



Wood charcoal

- 7.3.5 Wood charcoal was present in low to moderate quantities in **Sample 5** from undated pit fill **1413**, **Sample 7** from undated ditch terminus **1805** and **Sample 8** from undated ditch fill **1410**. The low proportion of wood charcoal present in these samples suggests that domestic or other activities involving fire were not being carried out in the vicinity during the deposition of these fills. A rich assemblage of over five hundred wood charcoal fragments greater than 2mm in size was however present in **Sample 4** from (prehistoric) pit fill **205**, with predominantly ring porous taxa being represented, and in **Sample 3** from prehistoric (Early Bronze Age or later) pit fill **206**, with both diffuse and ring porous taxa being represented. A relatively rich assemblage of over one hundred wood charcoal fragments greater than 2mm in size was present in **Sample 2** from undated linear feature fill **707**, with both diffuse and ring porous taxa being represented. Vitrified charcoal was abundant in **Sample 2** and single fragments of metallurgical debris around 2mm in size were also present in **Samples 2** and **3**, possibly indicating high temperature burning. Vitrified charcoal may however form due to number of different causes apart from high temperature burning.
- 7.3.6 A sufficient quantity of wood charcoal fragments to be suitable for further analysis was present in **Sample 4** from (prehistoric) pit fill **205** and **Sample 3** from (Early Bronze Age or later) pit fill **206**. Identification of at least one hundred >2mm charcoal fragments using high power microscopy would enable further investigation of the charcoal assemblage composition and therefore the utilisation of the local environment for fuel. No further analysis of the wood charcoal assemblage present in **Sample 2** from linear feature fill **707** as this deposit is, at present, undated.
- 7.3.7 At least three fragments of roundwood greater than 4mm in size, which would be suitable for use in radiocarbon dating, were present in **Sample 2** from linear feature fill **707**. The moderate proportion of intrusive roots and relatively low proportion of charred material present in **Sample 2** however increases the likelihood of charred material present in this deposit being intrusive. One fragment of roundwood greater than 2mm in size was present in **Sample 4** from pit fill **205**. The low proportion of intrusive roots and high proportion of charred material present in **Sample 4** reduces the likelihood of charred material present in this deposit being intrusive.

Table 1. Environmental data

Samples				Ble 1Flot							
Feature	Context	Sample	Vol. Ltrs	Flot (ml)	% roots	Charred Plant Remains				Charcoal >4/2mm	Other
						Grain	Chaff	Other	Comments		
0704	0707	2	40	50	25			C	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	12/136	vitrified charcoal (A**) Metallurgical debris (C)
0204	0206	3	20	25	0			B	<i>Corylus avellana</i> nutshell Perenchyma. < 2mm culm node <i>Chenopodium</i> sp. <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. <i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	36/>500	Metallurgical debris (C) vesicular indeterminate material (C)
0204	0205	4	40	150	0			C	<i>Veronica</i>	400/>500	vesicular



									<i>hederifolia</i>		indeterminate material (B)
1409	1413	5	10	150	25					3/38	vitified charcoal (A)
1804	1805	7	40	10	40					1/7	vitified charcoal (A)
1409	1410	8	30	5	0					3/64	

Key: A*** = exceptional, A** = 100+, A* = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = < 5.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1 Summary

8.1.1 A limited number of archaeological features were identified in approximately half the trenches (12 out of 20). Dating evidence was scarce, limited to a single piece of perforated Early Bronze Age Beaker vessel.

8.1.2 The Early Bronze Age pot from pit **204** in **Trench 2** was abraded and likely residual; however, the small pit was itself cut into an earlier larger sub-circular pit, and the likelihood is that these pit features are of prehistoric date. An environmental sample from the smaller pit contained charred hazel nut shells, common in Bronze Age and later assemblages, and a small fragment of metallurgical debris. Both features contained rich assemblages of wood charcoal.

8.1.1 Pits, gullies and ditches were identified elsewhere on site, many of which had a common type of fill suggesting that they belong to the same phase; however, the majority of features lacked dateable evidence and informative environmental material. The alignment of the linear features varied between north-west to south-east, north to south and north-east to south-west. Evaluation on the adjacent site to the south-east (Wessex Archaeology 2015b) also revealed a limited number of undated linear features on north to south and north-west to south-east alignments, however the feature fills on that site were more varied (Wessex Archaeology 2015b).

8.1.2 Undated ditches were seen in **Trenches 7** and **8** which are likely to be parts of a single boundary ditch. An environmental sample from the ditch in **Trench 7** contained an assemblage of wood charcoal and a small fragment of metallurgical debris. Undated ditches in **Trench 14** and **17** are also likely form a single feature, and correlate with a negative anomaly which the geophysical report interpreted as a possible archaeological earthwork feature, bank or modern plastic service. One north-east to south-west ditch in **Trench 19** contained modern material and a further north-east to south-west ditch in **Trench 14** roughly correlated with a geophysical anomaly interpreted as a field boundary present on available historic mapping 1840-1954 (Stratascan 2014). Undated gullies were observed in **Trenches 12, 16** and **17** and undated ditches in **Trenches 13** and **18**.

8.2 Conclusions

8.2.1 The correlation of the results of the evaluation with those of the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014) was poor. Most features identified were in areas where no geophysical anomalies were detected. With the exception of the Bronze Age pit in **Trench 2**, the dating of the majority of features observed is unclear. The absence of material evidence suggests these features are not associated with settlement and are most likely medieval or post-medieval agricultural features of little archaeological significance.



9 STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

- 9.1.1 The archive of the archaeological evaluation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **108000**. It is likely that the project archive will be deposited at Shropshire Museum in due course.
- 9.1.2 An OASIS form, ID number **wessexar1-206956** has been provisionally completed and will be completed at the time of deposition.

9.2 Preparation of archive

- 9.2.1 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 Shropshire Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013). All archive elements will be marked with the accession code, and a full index will be prepared.

9.3 Discard policy

- 9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in Selection, Retention and Dispersal (Society of Museum Archaeologists 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.
- 9.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2011).

9.4 Security copy

- 9.4.1 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.



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10.2 Online sources

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11 APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1: Context descriptions

Trench 1		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
101	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.4
102	Subsoil: mid yellow brown sandy silt	0.4-0.45
103	Natural: yellow sand with occasional pink-red clay	0.45+

Trench 2		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
201	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.35
202	Subsoil: mid red brown silty sand	0.35-0.45
203	Natural: yellow sand	0.45+
204	Cut: pit, pear-shaped in plan, 4mx1m and 0.5m deep.	0.45-0.87
205	Fill of 204: reddish brown fill	0.45-0.87
206	Fill of 207: dark grey silty sand with pottery sherd	0.45-0.66
207	Cut: pit contained entirely within pit 204. 1.6m by 0.9m by 0.21m deep.	0.45-0.66
208	Fill of 204: grey pink sandy clay	0.45-0.8

Trench 3		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
301	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.35
302	Subsoil: mid brown silty sand	0.35-0.6
303	Natural: yellow orange sand with occasional pink-red clay	0.6+

Trench 4		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
401	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.4
402	Subsoil: mid brown sandy silt	0.4-0.5
403	Natural: red sand	0.5+



Trench 5		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
501	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.4
502	Subsoil: mid brown clayey sand	0.4-0.5
503	Natural: pink red clayey sand	0.5+
504	Natural: yellow sand	0.5+

Trench 6		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
601	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.35
602	Subsoil: red brown sand	0.35-0.45
603	Natural: red sand	0.45+

Trench 7		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
701	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.3
702	Subsoil: light brown sandy silt	0.3-0.4
703	Natural: yellow orange sand	0.4+
704	Cut: EW ditch 1.18m wide, 0.42m deep	0.4-0.82
705	Fill of 704: yellowish red silty sand primary fill	0.4-0.82
706	Fill of 704: yellowish grey silty sand secondary fill	0.4-0.82
707	Fill of 704: blackish red silty sand secondary fill	0.4-0.82

Trench 8		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
801	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.3
802	Subsoil: mid brown sandy silt	0.3-0.45
803	Natural: patchy yellow and red sand	0.45+
804	Cut: NE-SW ditch 1.1m wide by 0.36m deep	0.45-0.81
805	Fill of 804: brown red silty sand primary fill	0.45-0.81



806	Fill of 804: yellowish grey silty sand	0.45-0.81
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Trench 9		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
901	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.3
902	Subsoil: light yellow brown silty sand	0.3-0.4
903	Natural: red-pink sandy clay fading to orange pink in the east	0.4+

Trench 10		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1001	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.3
1002	Subsoil: light yellow brown sandy silt	0.3-0.4
1003	Natural: mottled yellow and red sand	0.4+
1004	Natural: pink red sandy clay	0.4+

Trench 11		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1101	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy loam	0-0.3
1102	Subsoil: light yellow brown sandy silt	0.3-0.45
1103	Natural: grey-white and yellow sand	0.45+

Trench 12		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1201	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy loam	0-0.3
1202	Subsoil: mid yellow brown silty sand	0.3-0.4
1203	Natural: yellow sand	0.4+
1204	Fill of 1205: dark grey silty sand secondary fill	0.4-0.6
1205	Cut: SE-NW gully 0.56m wide by 0.2m deep	0.4-0.6
1206	Fill of 1207: dark grey silty sand secondary fill	0.4-0.55
1207	Cut: SE-NW gully 0.5m wide by 0.15m deep	0.4-0.55



Trench 13		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1301	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy loam	0-0.3
1302	Subsoil: mid brown sandy silt	0.3-0.4
1303	Natural: white-grey and yellow sand	0.4+
1304	Cut: NW-SE ditch 2.95m wide by 0.38m deep	0.4-0.78
1305	Fill of 1304: yellowish grey silty clay primary fill	0.4-0.78
1306	Fill of 1304: dark grey silty sand secondary fill	0.4-0.78

Trench 14		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1401	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy loam	0-0.3
1402	Subsoil: mid brown sandy silt	0.3-0.45
1403	Natural: pink red clay with gravel pockets	0.45+
1404	Cut: NE-SW ditch 1m wide and 0.15m deep	0.45-0.6
1405	Fill of 1404: light grey silty sand secondary fill	0.45-0.6
1406	Fill of 1407: dark grey red silty sand secondary fill	0.45-0.95
1407	Cut: pit 0.8m by 1m, 0.5m deep	0.45-0.95
1408	VOID	
1409	Cut: NE-SW ditch, lines up with 1707	0.45-0.95
1410	Fill of 1409: greyish red loam primary fill	0.45-0.95
1411	Fill of 1409: light greyish white silty sand secondary fill	0.45-0.95
1412	Fill of 1409: blackish grey sandy silt secondary fill	0.45-0.95
1413	Fill of 1409: reddish black silty sand secondary fill	0.45-0.95

Trench 15		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1501	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy silt	0-0.3
1502	Subsoil: grey brown silty sand	0.3-0.45



1503	Natural: yellow red sand	0.45+
1504	Bedrock: angular sandstone	0.45+

Trench 16		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1601	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy loam	0-0.3
1602	Subsoil: mid yellow brown silty sand	0.3-0.55
1603	Natural: pink red clay with gravel pockets	0.55+
1604	Cut: NS gully 0.5m wide and 0.12m deep	0.55-0.67
1605	Fill of 1604: dark grey silty sand secondary fill	0.55-0.67

Trench 17		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1701	Topsoil: mid grey brown clay loam	0-0.3
1702	Subsoil: mid yellow brown sandy clay	0.3-0.45
1703	Natural: mottled pink-red and white-yellow clay	0.45+
1704	Cut: NE-SW gully 0.65m wide by 0.16m deep	0.45-0.61
1705	Fill of 1704: dark grey silty sand secondary fill	0.45-0.61
1706	Cut: NE-SW ditch 1.94m wide by 0.34m deep. Lines up with ditch in Trench 4	0.45-0.79
1707	Fill of 1706: dark grey sandy silt	0.45-0.79
1708	Cut: re-cut of ditch 1706. NE-SW gully 0.5m wide by 0.12m deep	0.45-0.57
1709	Fill of 1708: dark grey silty sand secondary fill	0.45-0.57
1710	Fill of 1707: light greyish white silty sand secondary fill	0.45-0.79
1711	Fill of 1707: yellowish brown primary fill	0.45-0.79

Trench 18		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1801	Topsoil: mid brown clay sand	0-0.25
1802	Subsoil: yellow brown sand	0.25-0.35
1803	Natural: yellow cream sand	0.35+



1804	Cut: NS ditch terminus c.1.5m wide, 0.55m deep	0.55-1.1
1805	Fill of 1804: mid-dark brown and orange-brown silty sand with 1% stones	0.55-1.1
1806	VOID	
1807	Fill of 1809: orange grey sand with laminations of red sand 0.02m deep every 0.2m or so	0.55-1.2
1808	VOID	
1809	Cut: probably boundary of transformed natural, may be original cut of ditch terminus 1804 . 1m wide, 0.7m deep	0.55-1.2

Trench 19		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
1901	Topsoil: mid grey brown clay loam	0-0.3
1902	Subsoil: yellow brown sandy clay	0.3-0.4
1903	Natural: mottled pink-red and yellow-white clay	0.4+
1904	Cut: modern ditch. NE-SW, 0.7m wide by 0.24m deep	0.4-0.64
1905	Fill of 1904: dark grey silt sand secondary fill. Modern?	0.4-0.64

Trench 20		
Context	Description	Depth (m BGL)
2001	Topsoil: mid grey brown sandy loam	0-0.35
2002	Subsoil: mid yellow brown sandy silt	0.4-0.5
2003	Natural: yellow sand with occasional pink-red clay patches	0.5+



11.2 Appendix 2: OASIS form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-206956

Project details

Project name	Land off Stanton Road and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd. and JJ Gallagher Ltd. to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land off Stanton Road (NGR SJ 75557 07698) and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road (NGR SJ 75439 07370), near Shifnal, Shropshire. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, Wessex Archaeology 2015) was submitted to, and approved by, Shropshire Council Archaeology Service, prior to the commencement of fieldwork. Limited archaeology was identified across the Site and dating evidence was scarce. The only dating evidence recovered was a single perforated sherd of Early Bronze Age beaker pot recovered from a pit in the northern area. The pot was abraded and likely residual in a later context; however, the small pit was itself cut into an earlier larger sub-circular pit, and the likelihood is that the features are of prehistoric date. Pits, gullies and ditches were identified elsewhere on site; however, the majority of features lacked dateable evidence and informative environmental material and most likely represent medieval or post-medieval agricultural features. The results of this evaluation did not correlate strongly with the previous geophysical survey of the site (Stratascan 2014). Most of the archaeological features encountered during the evaluation were located in areas where the geophysical survey did not detect any anomalies.
Project dates	Start: 11-02-2015 End: 24-02-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	108000 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type	DITCHES Uncertain
Monument type	PITS Uncertain
Monument type	PIT Bronze Age
Significant Finds	POTTERY Bronze Age
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches"",""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Housing estate
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16



Position in the planning process Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country England
Site location SHROPSHIRE BRIDGNORTH SHIFNAL Land off Stanton Road and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire
Postcode TF11 8SD
Study area 19.00 Hectares
Site coordinates SJ 75557 07698 52.6660970652 -2.3614741117 52 39 57 N 002 21 41 W Point
Site coordinates SJ 75439 07370 52.6631428311 -2.36319466359 52 39 47 N 002 21 47 W Point
Height OD / Depth Min: 83.50m Max: 98.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator Wessex Archaeology
Project design originator Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager R. O'Neill
Project supervisor Laurence Savage
Type of sponsor/funding body Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd. and Gallagher Homes Ltd.

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Shropshire Museum Service
Physical Contents "Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient Shropshire Museum Service
Digital Contents "none"
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"



Paper Archive recipient	Shropshire Museum Service
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Diary", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

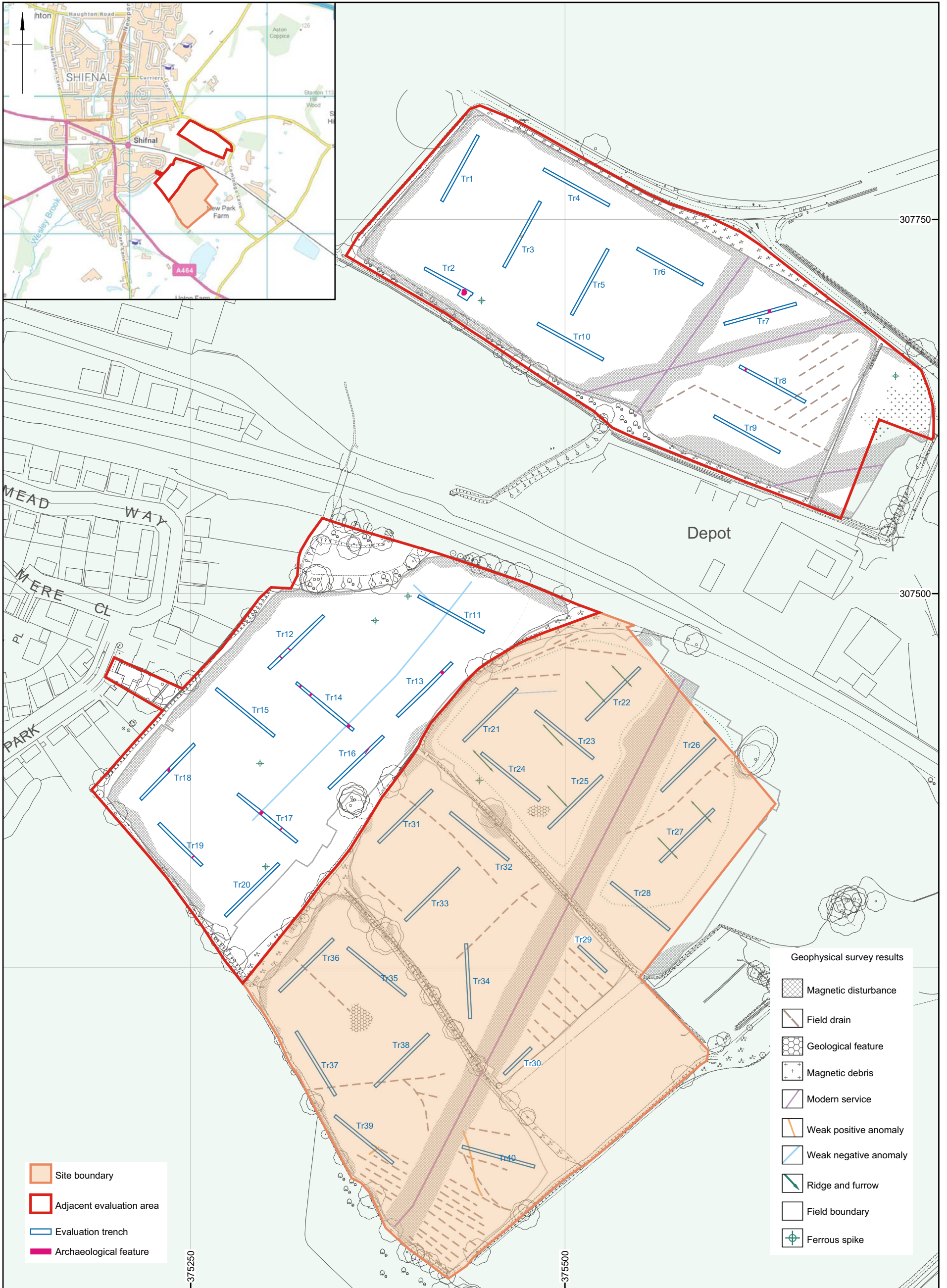
Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land off Stanton Road and Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire: Evaluation Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Tuck, A.
Other bibliographic details	108000.02
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Sheffield
Description	A4 comb bound laser printed report

Project bibliography 2

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land to the North of Wolverhampton Road, Shifnal, Shropshire: Evaluation Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Tuck, A.
Other bibliographic details	108000.03
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Sheffield
Description	A4 comb bound laser printed report

Entered by	Richard O'Neill (r.oneill@wessexarch.co.uk)
Entered on	14th April 2015

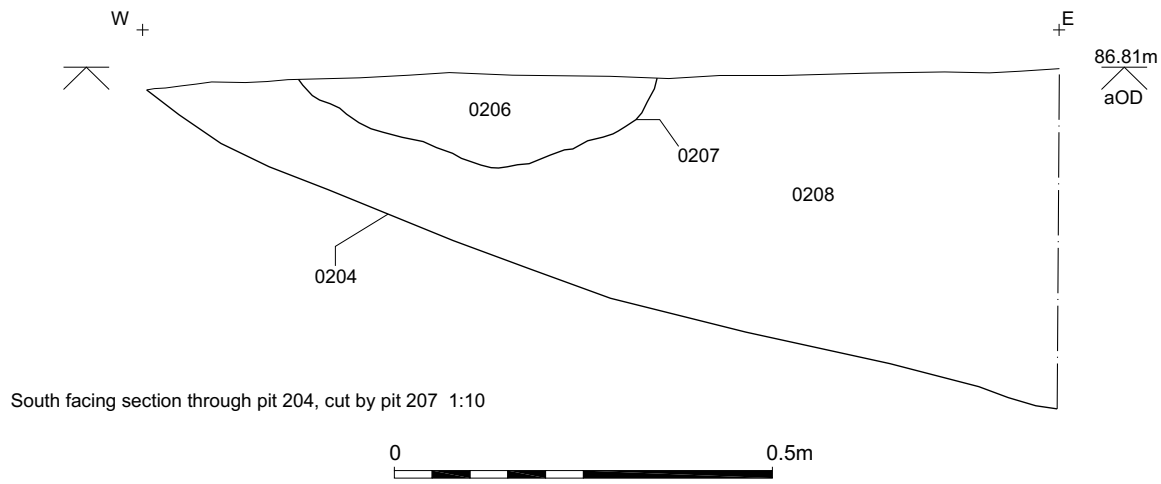
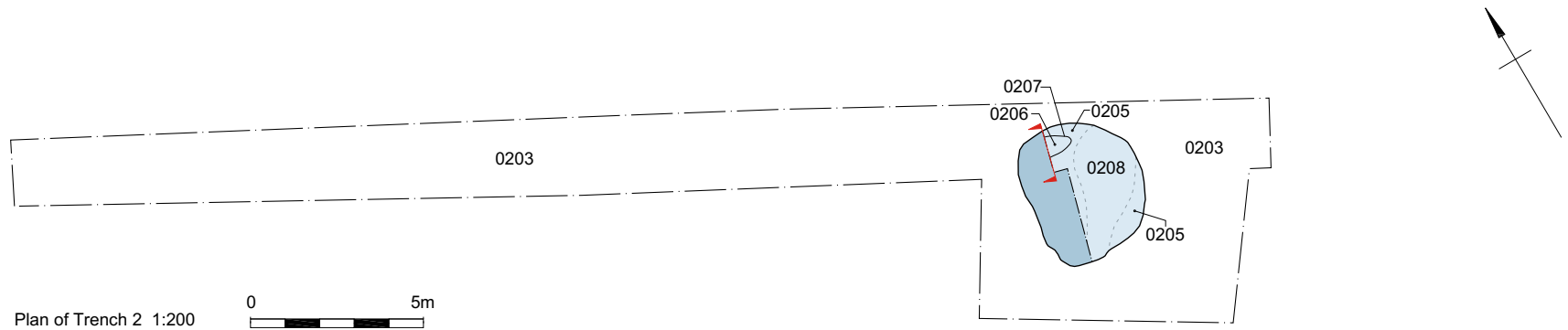


Geophysical survey data provided courtesy of Alan Thomas Archaeology and Planning Solutions
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Scale:	Main graphic - 1:3000 @ A3	Illustrator:	CB
Path:	Y:\Projects\108000\Graphics Office\Rep figs\Eval\2015_03_24\108000.02		

Site and trench plan

Figure 1



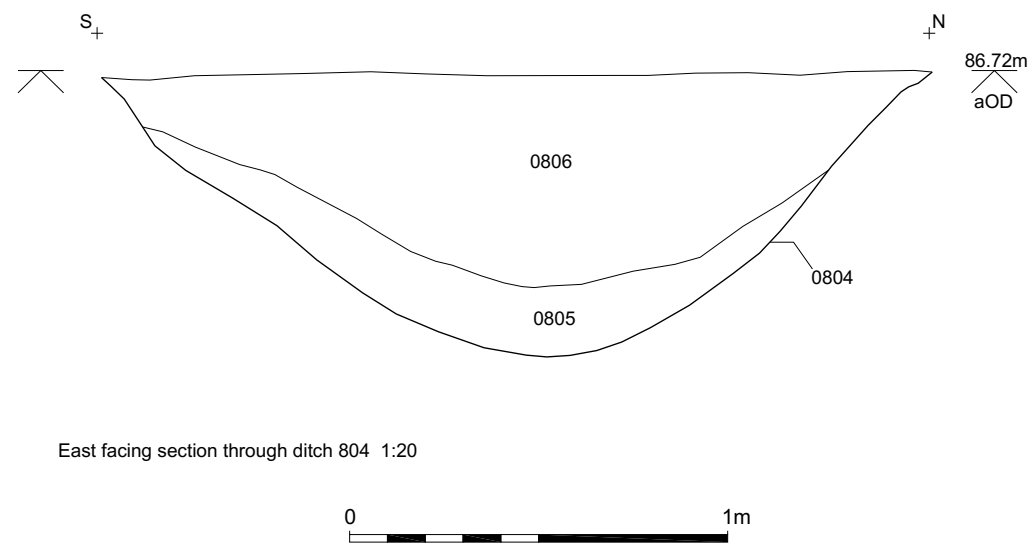
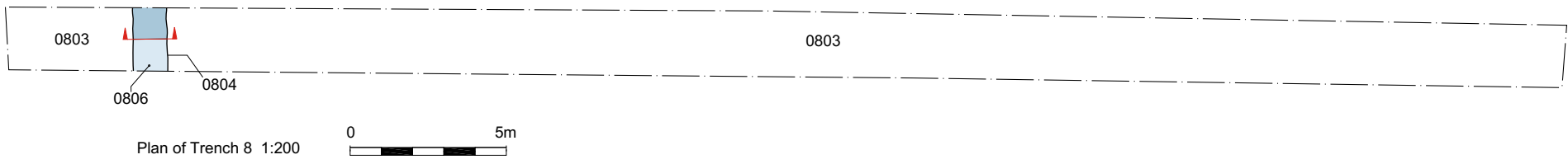
Archaeology
 Excavation

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Date:	02/04/2015	Revision Number:	1.0
Scale:	As described @ A4	Illustrator:	APS
Path:	Y:\Projects\108000\Graphics Office\Rep figs\Eval\2015_03_24\108000.02		

Plan of Trench 2 and section of pit 204 cut by pit 207

Figure 2



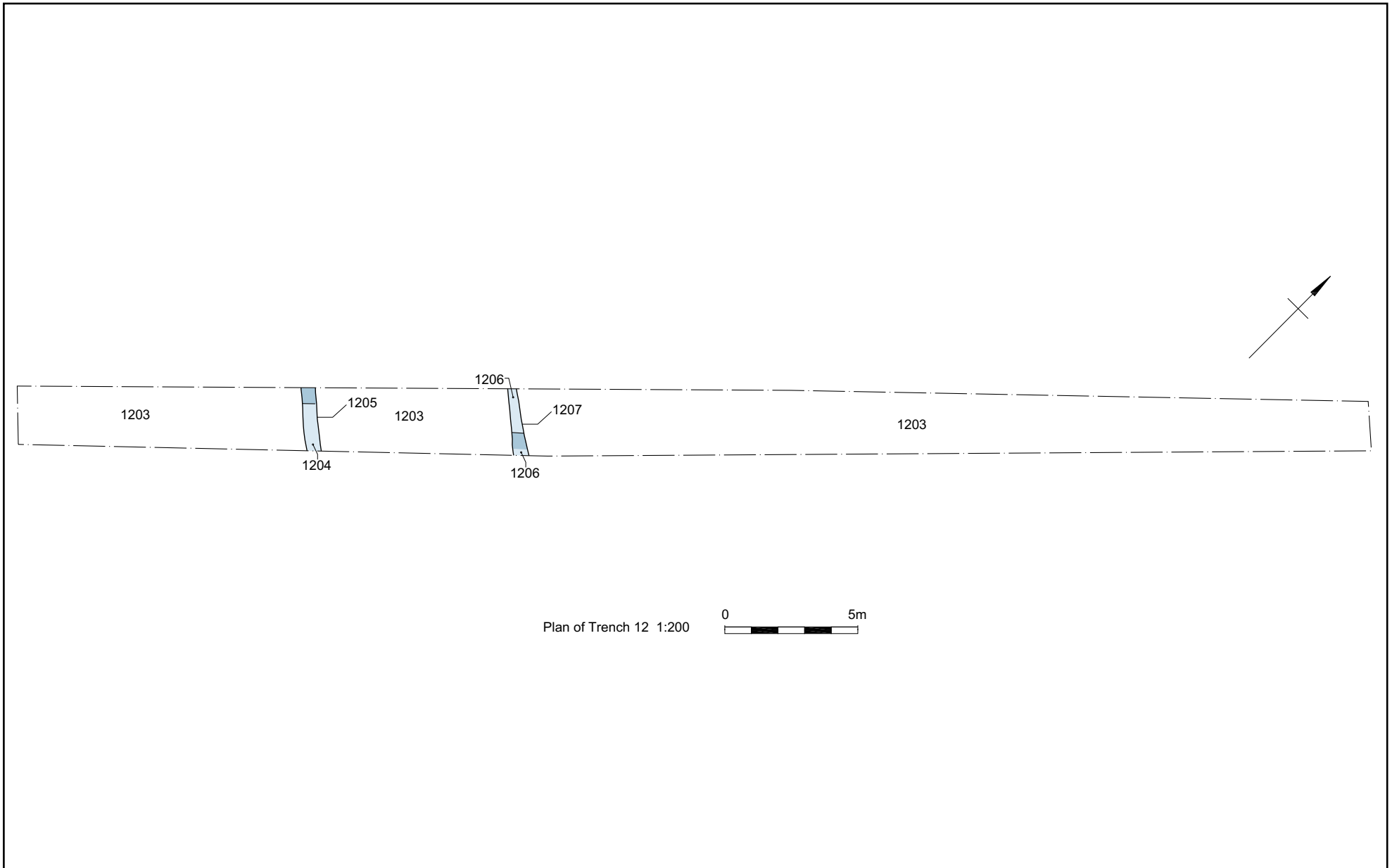
■ Archaeology ■ Excavation

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Date:	02/04/2015	Revision Number:	1.0
Scale:	As described @ A4	Illustrator:	APS
Path:	Y:\Projects\108000\Graphics Office\Rep figs\Eval\2015_03_24\108000.02		

Plan of Trench 8 and section of ditch 804

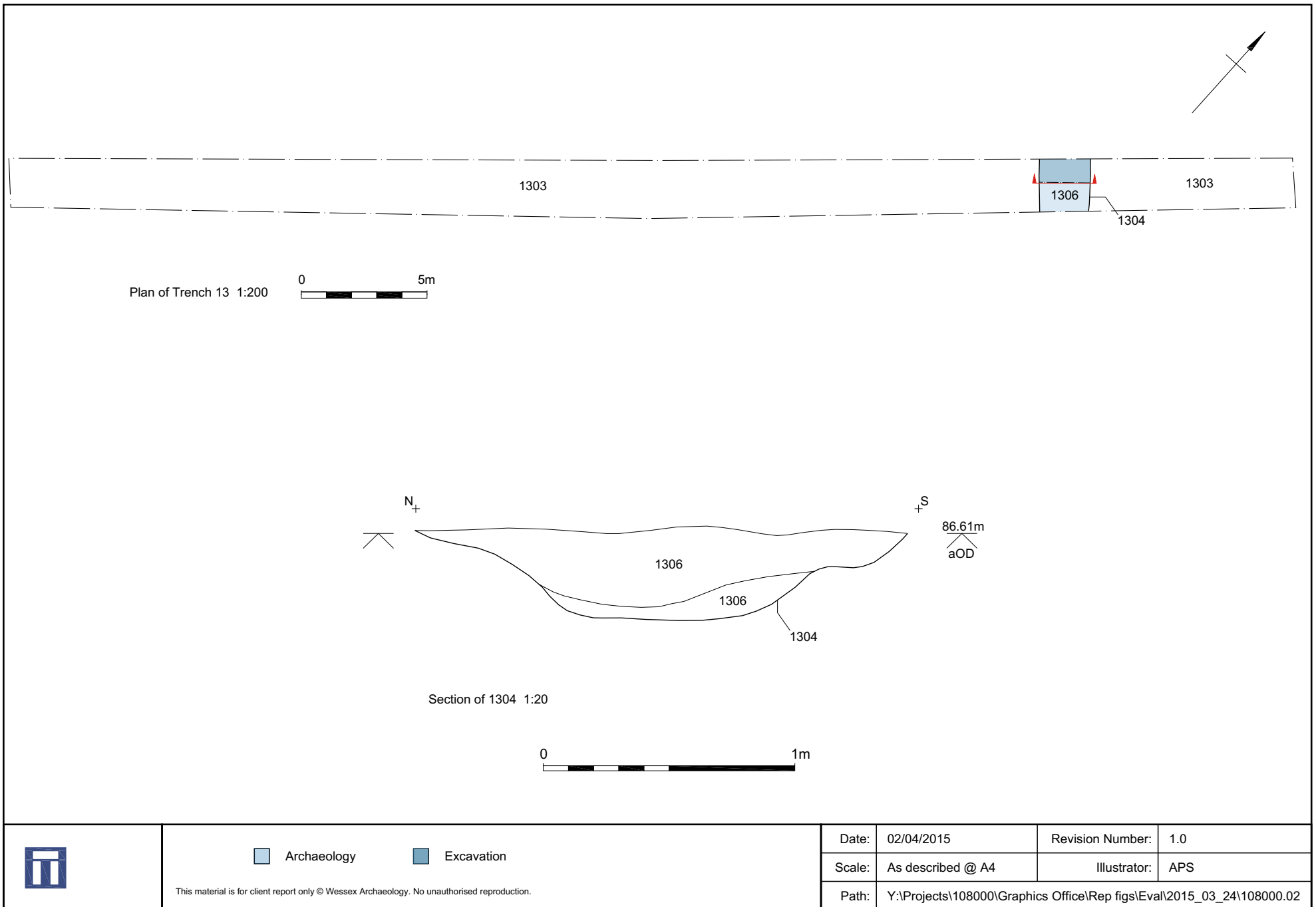
Figure 3



	<p> Archaeology Excavation </p> <p>This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>	Date:	02/04/2015	Revision Number:	1.0
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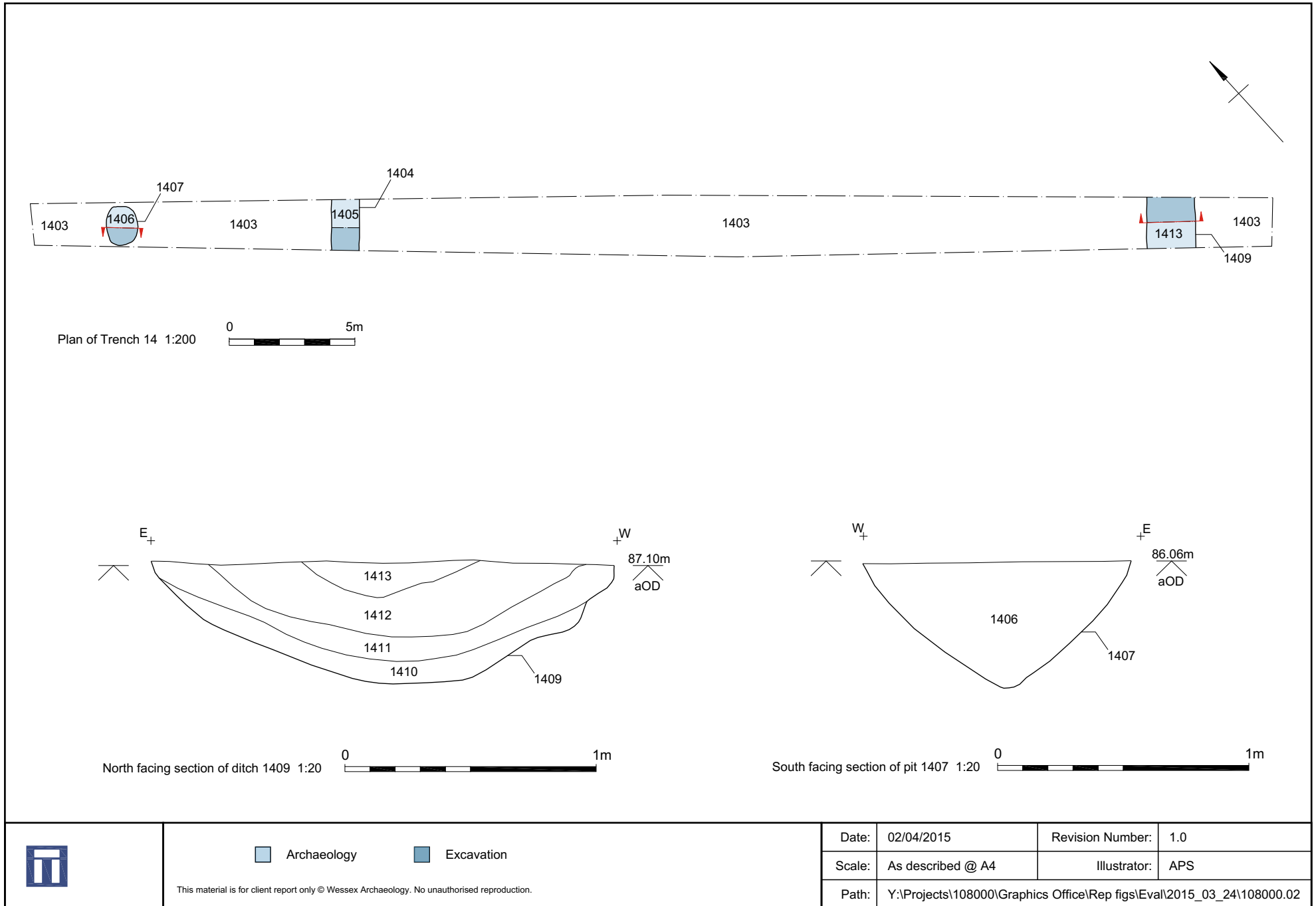
Plan of Trench 12

Figure 4



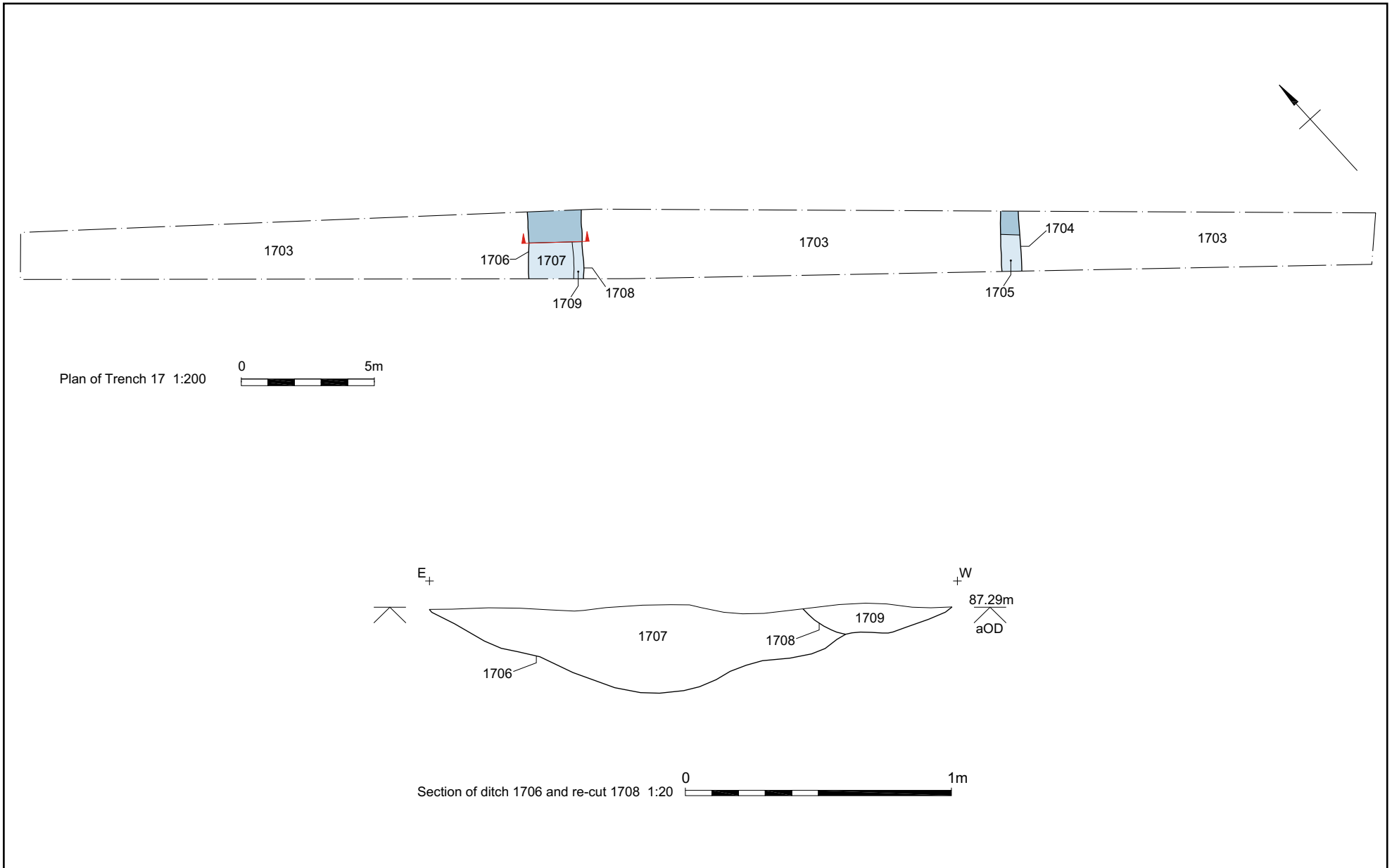
Plan of Trench 13 and section of 1304

Figure 5



Plan of Trench 14 with sections of pit 1407 and ditch 1409

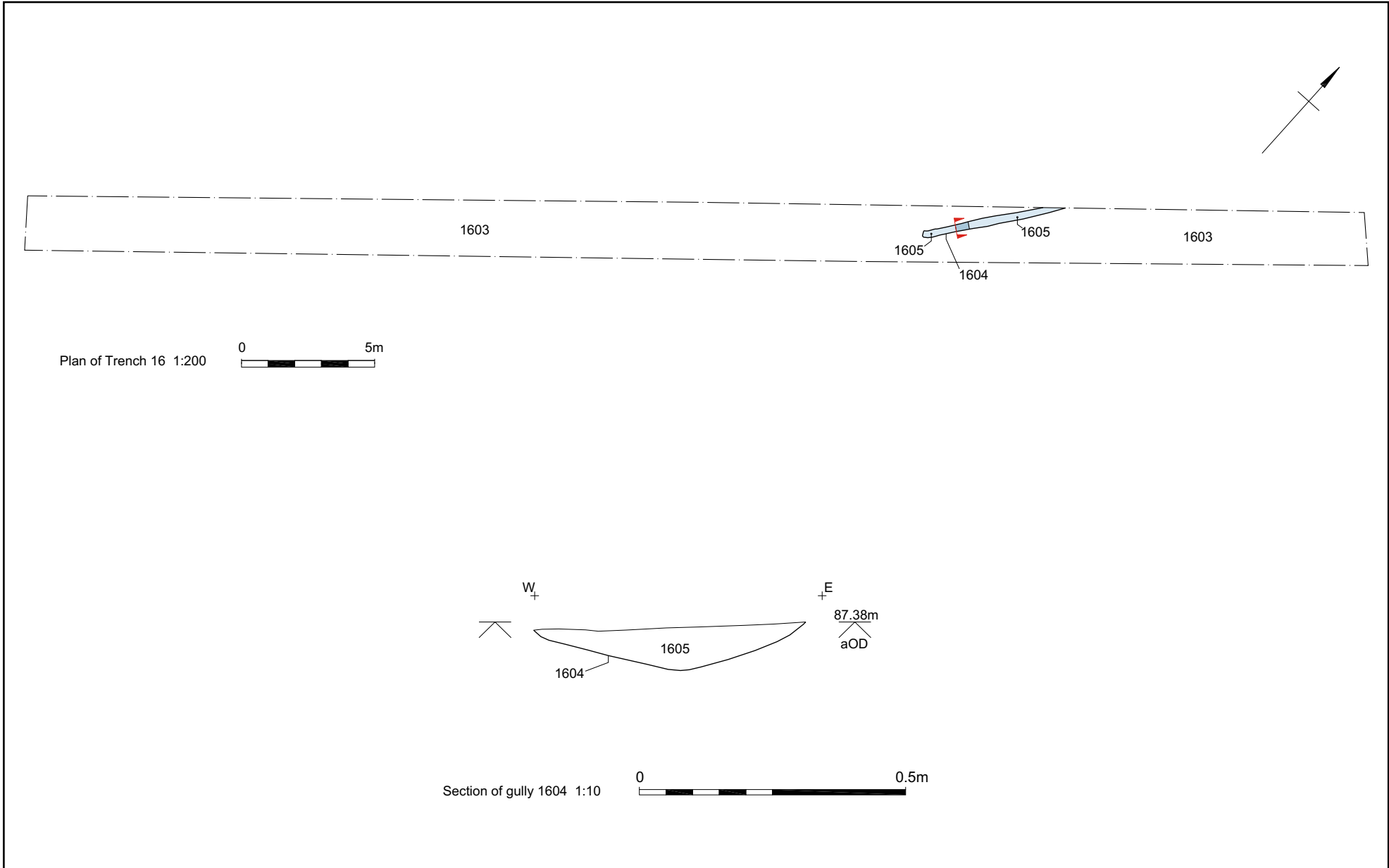
Figure 6




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		Scale:	As described @ A4	Illustrator:	APS
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Plan of Trench 17 with section of 1706 and gully 1708

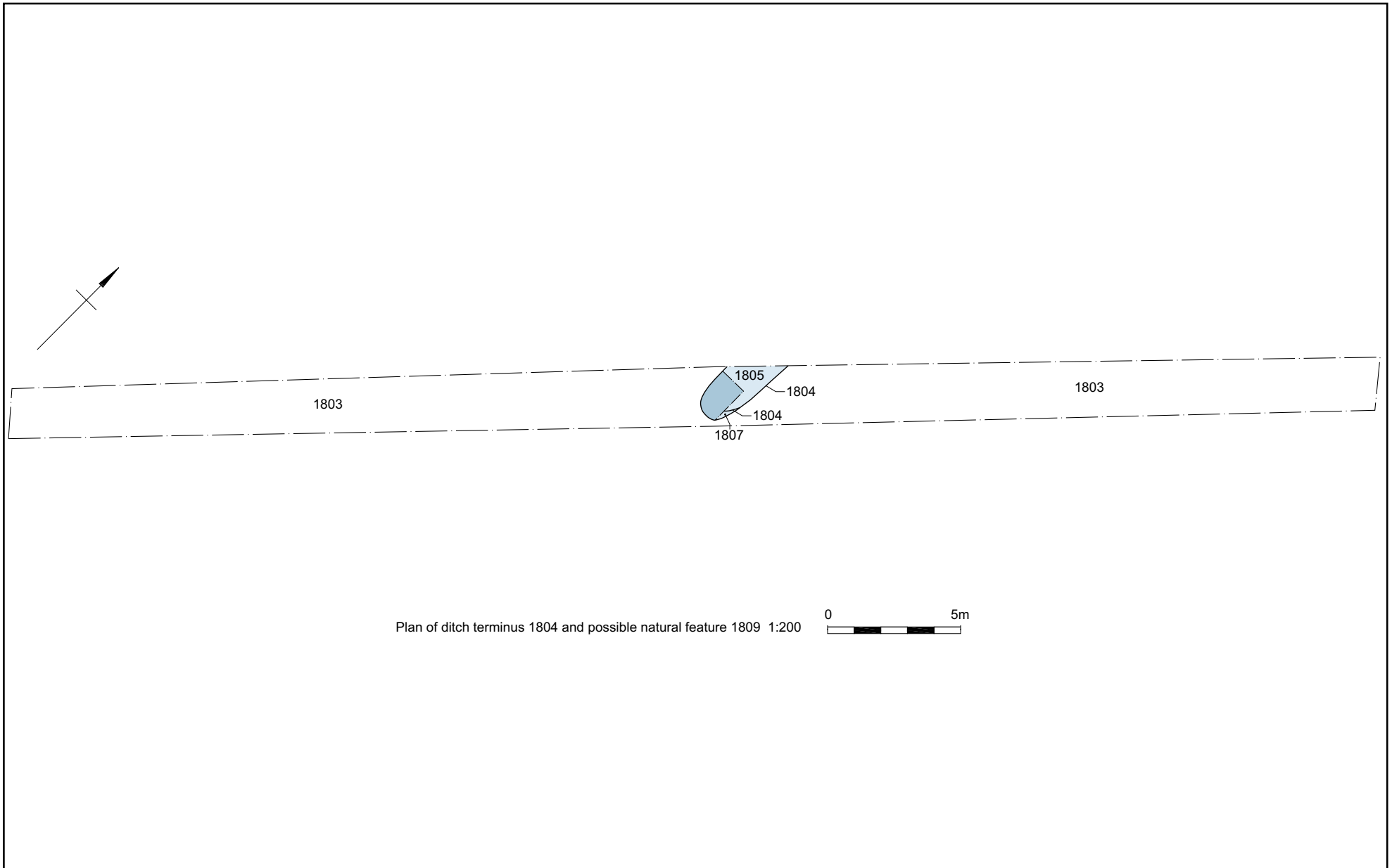
Figure 7



	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology <input type="checkbox"/> Excavation </p> <p>This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>	Date:	02/04/2015	Revision Number:	1.0
		Scale:	As described @ A4	Illustrator:	APS
		Path:	Y:\Projects\108000\Graphics Office\Rep figs\Eval\2015_03_24\108000.02		

Plan of Trench 16 and section of gully 1604

Figure 8



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Plan of modern ditch 1904 1:200

A scale bar is located below the caption, consisting of a horizontal line with alternating black and white segments, labeled '0' at the start and '5m' at the end.

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Plate 1: Pit **204** cut by pit **207** from east



Plate 2: Ditch **704** from west


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Plate 3: Ditch **804** from east



Plate 4: Gully **1205** from west


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Plate 5: Gully **1207** from east



Plate 6: Ditch **1304** from west


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Plate 7: Pit **1406** from south



Plate 8: Ditch **1404** from south


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Plate 9: Ditch **1409** from south



Plate 10: Ditch **1706** from north


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Plate 11: Gully **1704** from north



Plate 12: Gully **1604** from north



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Plate 13: Ditch terminus **1804** and possible natural feature **1809**



Plate 14: Modern ditch **1904** from north

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