



# Land to the rear of Jenny's Lane and Ibstock Road Ravenstone, Leicestershire

Archaeological Trial Trenching Report



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April 2017



**Land to the rear of Jenny's Lane and Ibstock Road  
Ravenstone, Leicestershire**

**Archaeological Trial Trenching Report**

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## Quality Assurance

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# Land to the rear of Jenny's Lane and Ibstock Road Ravenstone, Leicestershire

## Archaeological Trial Trenching Report

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# **Land to the rear of Jenny's Lane and Ibstock Road Ravenstone, Leicestershire**

## **Archaeological Trial Trenching Report**

### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to carry out a programme of archaeological trial trenching on land to the rear of Jenny's Lane and Ibstock Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 440645, 313390. The work was undertaken ahead of a residential development on the site (Planning Ref:P16-0764).

Three previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken, which are associated with earlier phases of the residential development to the west of the site (ULAS 2012, Wessex Archaeology 2015 and MoLA 2016). The archaeological work consisted of geophysical surveys, field walking and trial trenching, which revealed a low density of archaeological remains. A mixture of undated features and Iron Age/Romano-British ditches were uncovered. Two of these ditches (MoLA 2016) had the potential to extend into the site.

Following discussions between CgMs and the Planning Archaeologist (PA) for Leicestershire County Council (LCC) a program of trial trenching was agreed. CgMs produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining how the requirements of the work would be met. The WSI was approved by the PA prior to work commencing.

The archaeological works comprised the excavation of six evaluation trenches within the footprint of the development. The trenches measured 20 m by 1.8 m and were distributed across the development area to achieve a representative sample of the site.

No archaeological remains were identified apart from a small, shallow undated pit in the east of trench 5. No dating material was recovered from this pit. Iron Age to Romano-British ditches found in previous excavations to the west were not identified within the current phase of trial trenching.

The sparsity of archaeological features would support findings from previous phases of archaeological work. This suggests a low density of archaeological activity in the area with the site likely to have been open agricultural land throughout its history, prior to its recent residential development.

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums Service. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under the accession code X.A38.2017. Until deposition the archive will be stored within the Sheffield office of Wessex Archaeology under project code 116380.



# **Land to the rear of Jenny's Lane and Ibstock Road Ravenstone, Leicestershire**

## **Archaeological Trial Trenching Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by CgMs Consulting. The assistance of Alexandra Gillard is gratefully acknowledged in this regard.

Thanks are extended to Sophie Clarke, Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, who provided curatorial support and guidance.

The fieldwork was carried out by Stuart Pierson and Owen Jenkins between March 20th and 21st 2017. Stuart Pierson supervised the excavations and produced this report. Illustrations were prepared by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Chris Swales.



# Land to the rear of Jenny's Lane and Ibstock Road Ravenstone, Leicestershire

## Archaeological Trial Trenching Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting (hereafter 'the Client') to carry out a programme of archaeological trial trenching on land to the rear of Jenny's Lane and Ibstock Road, Ravenstone, Leicestershire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 440645, 313390, (hereafter 'the Site'). The work was undertaken ahead of a residential development on the Site (Planning Ref:P16-0764).
- 1.1.2 Following discussions between CgMs and the Planning Archaeologist (PA) for Leicestershire County Council (LCC) a program of trial trenching was agreed. CgMs produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining how the requirements of the work would be met (CgMs 2017a). The WSI was approved by LCC prior to work commencing.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological works comprised the excavation of six evaluation trenches within the footprint of the development. Each trench measured 20 m x 1.8 m and were distributed across the development area to achieve a representative sample of the Site (Figure 1).

#### 1.2 Site location and topography

- 1.2.1 The Site is located on the southeast outskirts of the village of Ravenstone, Leicestershire. A modern housing development lies to the west, residential housing and gardens lay to the east and south, with allotments making up the northern boundary. The Site boundary itself is boarded by wooden fencing and hedges with turf underfoot.
- 1.2.2 The Site falls slightly from the eastern boundary at just above 145 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to just below 145 m aOD at the western boundary. Tree stumps, various playground structures and waste heaps were located in the southern third of the Site.
- 1.2.3 The underlying solid geology consists of sedimentary bedrock of the Tarporley Siltstone Formation - Siltstone, Mudstone and Sandstone. Superficial deposits consist of Glaciofluvial Deposits, Mid Pleistocene - Sand and Gravel (BGS 2017). The local soils are described as freely draining slightly acid loamy soils (LandIS 2017).

### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological potential of the development Site was categorised through Desk-based Assessment (DBA, CgMs 2017b). The following information is a summary of the information found within the DBA.





## **2.2 Prehistoric and Romano British**

2.2.1 Within the local landscape, field walking has identified a number of prehistoric flint scatters close to the site; most notably two Mesolithic scatters were identified c.600 m and c.870 m to the south of the site. A pit alignment, dating to the early Iron Age, had been recorded on aerial photographs to the north of the village, c.770 m northwest of the Site, providing evidence that the landscape could have been divided up during this period. Little evidence of Iron Age settlement activity has been recorded in the area, although a few sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered during field walking, c.490 m northeast of the Site. These were recorded within a larger Roman pottery concentration. A tight scatter of Roman pottery was also recovered during field walking c.260 m south of the Site.

## **2.3 Medieval and post-medieval**

2.3.1 The Site lies c.0.6 km southeast of the medieval historic core of Ravenstone and throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods the Site was likely used as open agricultural land. A number of possible scatters containing medieval and post-medieval pottery have been recorded by field walking within the wider area.

## **2.4 Recent investigations in the area**

2.4.1 Three previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken, which are associated with previous phases of residential development to the west of the Site (ULAS 2012, Wessex Archaeology 2015 and MoLA 2016). The archaeological work consisted of geophysical surveys, field walking and trial trenching, which revealed a low density of archaeological remains. A mixture of undated features and Iron Age/Romano-British ditches were uncovered. Two of these ditches (MoLA 2016) had the potential to extend into the Site.

## **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **3.1 Summary**

3.1.1 The aims of the project as set out in the WSI were:

- *to establish the depth of burial and complexity of archaeological stratigraphy; the date range of activity; the degree of preservation of remains and conditions of survival;*
- *to assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered;*
- *to assess the impact of previous land use on the Site;*
- *to inform appropriate assessment of the effects of the proposed development on the significance of surviving archaeological heritage assets;*
- *to inform formulation of further measures as necessary to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains; and*
- *to produce a Site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Leicestershire HER.*



## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 The methodology for excavation, recording and artefact analysis is detailed in the WSI (CgMS 2017). All work was carried out in line with this document as well as national guidelines (ClfA 2014a-c; HE 2015).

4.1.2 The archaeological works comprised the excavation of six evaluation trenches, each measuring 20 m x 1.8 m, within the footprint of the development. The trenches were distributed across the development area to achieve a representative sample of the Site (Figure 1). The location of trenches 1, 2, 5 and 6 were marginally altered from the WSI specification to allow for a precautionary ecological corridor to be maintained in the north of the Site as well as to avoid various obstructions on the ground.

### **4.2 Machine excavation**

4.2.1 Excavation of the trenches was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket working under the direct supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist. Machining ceased at the first archaeological horizon or the level of natural geology, whichever was reached first.

### **4.3 Hand excavation**

4.3.1 Archaeological features and deposits were cleaned to define their extent, and then hand excavated.

### **4.4 Recording**

4.4.1 All deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. As per standard practice, excavated stratigraphic units were individually numbered and recorded, with the trench number forming the prefix for the context number. Hence, contexts 100–109 were reserved for use within trench 1, contexts 200–209 were allocated to trench 2 etc.

4.4.2 Trial trenches and excavated deposits were located by means of an RTK GPS system and tied in to the OS grid with a tolerance of better than + or – 100 mm. All deposits had spot heights recorded in relation to Ordnance Datum, correct to two decimal places.

4.4.3 A photographic record was maintained using high specification digital photographic equipment supplemented with 35 mm monochrome film, where required.

### **4.5 Monitoring**

4.5.1 A monitoring meeting was held on Tuesday 21st of March, attended by Alexandra Gillard (CgMs), Sophie Clarke (PA for LCC) and Chris Swales (Wessex Archaeology), with permission to backfill the trenches granted by the PA.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

### **5.1 Overburden**

5.1.1 The Site was overlain by a 0.1 to 0.4 m thick layer of topsoil comprising a mid grey brown silty sand. Beneath this layer was a subsoil comprised of a mid reddish brown silty sand with an average depth of 0.3m.



5.1.2 Natural geology comprised of reddish brown sands and gravels. This natural geology was reached at between 0.5 and 0.7 m below ground level.

### 5.1.3 **Trench 5**

5.1.4 No archaeological remains were identified apart from a small undated pit (504) in the east of trench 5. The pit had a diameter of 0.9 m and a depth of 0.11 m. It was oval in shape with straight sides and a flat base. The pit contained silty sand deposit 505 from which no finds were recovered.

## **6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE**

### **6.1 Introduction**

6.1.1 No artefacts were recovered.

## **7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

### **7.1 Introduction**

7.1.1 No environmental samples were taken.

## **8 DISCUSSION**

### **8.1 Summary and conclusions**

8.1.1 No archaeological remains were identified apart from a small undated pit in the east of trench 5. This pit did not contain any dating evidence and cannot be securely ascribed to any period.

8.1.2 The Iron Age to Romano-British ditches found in previous excavations to the west were not identified within the current phase of trial trenching.

8.1.3 The sparsity of archaeological features would support findings from previous phases of archaeological work. This suggests a low density of archaeological activity in the area with the Site likely to have been open agricultural land throughout its history, prior to its recent residential development.

## **9 STORAGE AND CURATION**

### **9.1 Museum**

9.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums Service. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, under the accession code X.A38.2017.

### **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 Leicestershire County Council Museums Service, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

9.2.2 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 document cases of paper records & A3/A4 graphics

### **9.3 Security copy**

- 9.3.1 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.



## 10 REFERENCES

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Accessed 24/03/2017



## 11 APPENDICES

### 11.1 Appendix 1: Context descriptions by trench

<b>Trench 1</b>			
<b>Trench dimensions:</b> L: 20 m, W: 1.8 m, D: 0.56 m			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
101	Topsoil	Topsoil. Mid grey brown silty sand, rare gravel	0–0.30
102	Subsoil	Subsoil. Light orangy brown silty sand, rare gravel	0.30–0.50
103	Natural	Natural. Mid orange brown silty sand, common gravel	0.50+

<b>Trench 2</b>			
<b>Trench dimensions:</b> L: 20 m, W: 1.8 m, D: 0.7 m			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
201	Topsoil	Topsoil. Mid grey brown silty sand	0–0.40
202	Subsoil	Subsoil. Mid redish brown sily sand, rare gravel	0.40–0.70
203	Natural	Natural. Mid orange yellow silty sand, uncommon gravel	0.70+

<b>Trench 3</b>			
<b>Trench dimensions:</b> L: 20 m, W: 1.8 m, D: 0.54 m			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
301	Topsoil	Topsoil. Mid grey brown silty sand	0–0.20
302	Subsoil	Subsoil. Light orangy brown silty sand, rare gravel	0.20–0.50
303	Natural	Natural. Mid redish orange silty sand, common gravel	0.50+

<b>Trench 4</b>			
<b>Trench dimensions:</b> L: 20 m, W: 1.8 m, D: 0.52 m			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
401	Topsoil	Topsoil. Mid grey brown silty sand	0–0.20
402	Subsoil	Subsoil. Mid redish brown silty sand	0.20–0.50
403	Natural	Natural. Mid redish brown silty sand, common gravel	0.50+

<b>Trench 5</b>			
<b>Trench dimensions:</b> L: 20 m, W: 1.8 m, D: 0.56 m			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
501	Topsoil	Topsoil. Mid grey brown silty sand	0–0.20
502	Subsoil	Subsoil. Light orangy brown silty sand	0.20–0.50
503	Natural	Natural. Mid redish brown silty sand, common gravel	0.52+
504	Cut	Pit. Oval with shallow, straight sides and a flat base	0.52–0.63
505	Fill	Secondary. Mid grey brown silty sand, rare gravel	0.52–0.63

<b>Trench 6</b>			
<b>Trench dimensions:</b> L: 20 m, W: 1.8 m, D: 52. m			
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
601	Topsoil	Topsoil. Mid grey brown silty sand	0–0.12

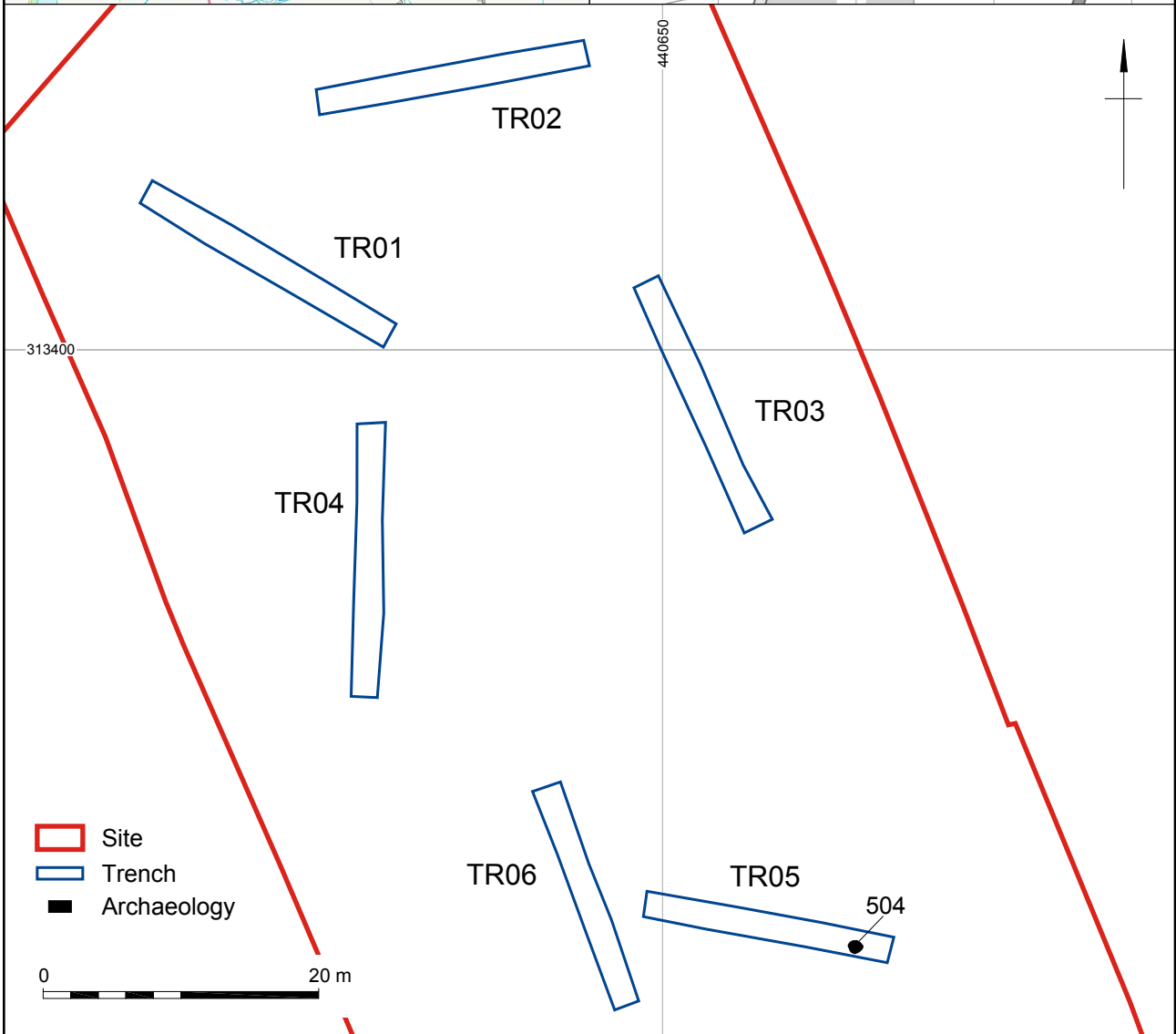
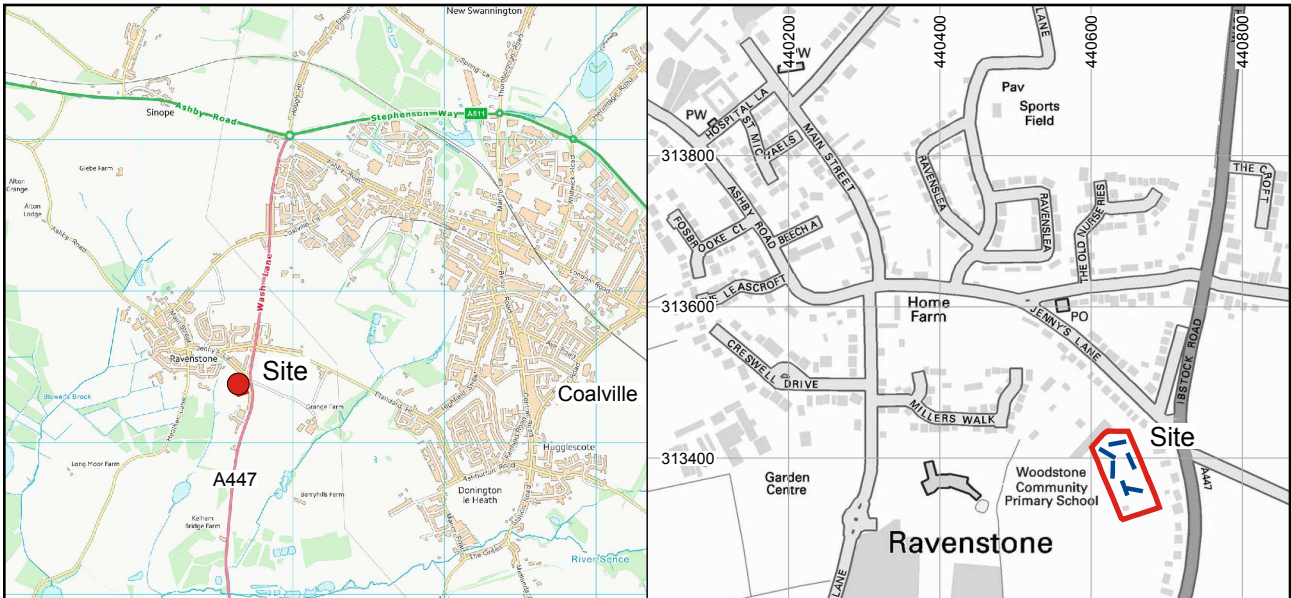



<b>Trench 6</b>	<b>Trench dimensions: L: 20 m, W: 1.8 m, D: 52. m</b>		
<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>
602	Subsoil	Subsoil. Mid redish brown silty sand, rare gravel	0.12–0.50
603	Natural	Natural. Mid redish brown silty sand, common gravel	0.50+



## **11.2 Appendix 2: OASIS form**



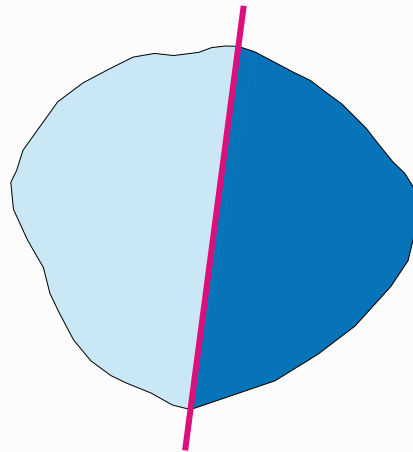


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Site and trench locations

Figure 1

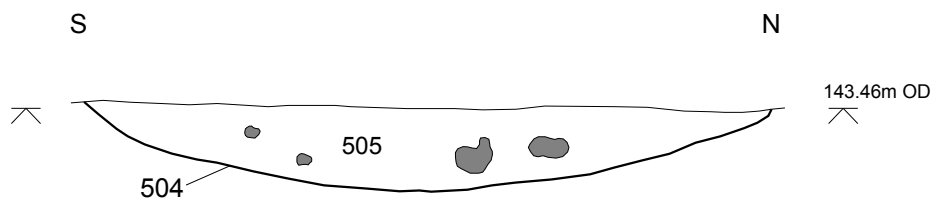
- Archaeology
- Slot
- Section line



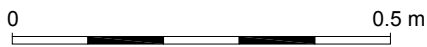
Plan of pit 504



East facing section of pit 504



= Gravel



Coordinate system:  
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Plan and section through pit 504

Figure 2



Plate 1: General shot of the Site, facing north



Plate 2: General shot of the Site, facing south


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Plate 3: General shot of the Site, facing northwest



Plate 4: General shot of trench 1, showing geology and overburden


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Plate 5: General shot of trench 2, showing geology and overburden



Plate 6: General shot of trench 3, showing geology and overburden


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Plate 7: General shot of trench 4, showing geology and overburden



Plate 8: General shot of trench 5, showing geology and overburden



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Plate 9: General shot of trench 6, showing geology and overburden



Plate 10: Detail shot of pit 504, within trench 5. East facing

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