Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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Archaeological Watching Brief

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Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Severn Trent Water Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief on groundworks associated with the construction of a replacement Combined Sewer Overflow and control kiosk, including a footpath diversion and temporary haul road and associated infrastructure on land off Glastonbury Road, King's Heath, Birmingham (hereafter 'the Site'). The Site is approximately centred on NGR 409264 280104.

The scope of the watching brief comprised the monitoring of all groundworks that potentially impacted on archaeological deposits and features in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that was produced in agreement with Birmingham City Council and in line with planning policy guidance set out in PPG16. Three trenches were excavated totalling an area of approximately 480m². The aim of the watching brief was to preserve by record the presence/absence, date, nature, and extent of any buried archaeological remains and features. This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed, the results, and the archaeological interpretation of the monitoring.

Archaeological monitoring during the construction of the CSO and associated infrastructure did not locate any evidence of human activity prior to the post-medieval period. All archaeological features were securely dated and had little significance in relation to the cultural heritage of the surrounding area.



Archaeological Watching Brief

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Severn Trent Water and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Graham Robinson in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Keith Haycock of Tomlinson and the on-site contractors from DAB civil engineering for facilitating access to the site and for their co-operation during this project.

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Michael Hartwell. The report was researched and compiled by Michael Hartwell. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Richard O'Neill.



Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project Background**

- Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Severn Trent Water (the Client) 1.1.1 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Chinn Brook Recreation Ground, Glastonbury Road, King's Heath, Birmingham (hereafter 'the Site'). The works will commence at National Grid Reference (NGR) 409460, 280282 (NE), running to NGR 40927, 28036 (SW) and terminating at NGR 409076, 280001 (SE) (Figures 1-2).
- 1.1.2 Birmingham City Council (BCC) requested that an archaeological watching brief was undertaken to monitor groundworks associated with the installation of a replacement Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) and control kiosk, including groundworks required to provide adequate access to the site.
- A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared (Wessex 1.1.3 Archaeology 2010) approved by Mike Hodder of Birmingham City Council (BCC). This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed, the results of the monitoring, and an archaeological interpretation of the findings.

1.2 The Site, Location and Geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located at Chinn Brook Recreation Ground, to the north of Glastonbury Road, and forms part of the Shire Country Park. Ground cover throughout the majority of the Site is grass, with numerous mature trees in the immediate vicinity of the CSO site. The terrain slopes upwards across the Site from north-east to south-west.
- 1.2.2 The Site is located approximately 127m above Ordnance Datum. The geology of the area is Keuper Marl, overlain by alluvial deposits associated with the Chinn Brook.

2 **METHODOLOGY**

2.1 Aims and scope

- 2.1.1 The principal aim of the watching brief was to provide information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature, and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record archaeological features revealed during the excavations and groundworks.
- 2.1.2 The scope of the watching brief was the observation of all groundworks that may affect archaeological deposits.
- 2.1.3 During the course of the programme, work was being undertaken by BCC to dredge and remodel Chinn Brook at the south-west of the Site. These groundworks were observed by Benchmark Archaeology and do not appear within the scope of this report.



2.2 **Watching Brief**

- 2.2.1 In accordance with the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2010), an archaeological watching brief was maintained on all groundworks by a suitably qualified member of Wessex Archaeology staff.
- Groundworks were carried out by a tracked 360° excavator fitted with a 2.2.2 grading bucket. Intervention areas were located using a base plan of the area provided by the Client.
- 2.2.3 All recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system, supported by a photographic record. The photographic record comprised 35 digital images.
- Archaeological deposits were planned at an appropriate scale, with cross-2.2.4 sections through features also drawn at an appropriate scale. Drawings were drawn on inert materials and adhered to accepted drawing conventions.

2.3 **Best practice**

2.3.1 All works were conducted in compliance with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (Revised 2008).

2.4 Copyright

2.4.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Historical background

- 3.1.1 A Cultural Heritage desk-based assessment prepared by Birmingham Archaeology (Halsted 2006) identified that a burnt mound (MBM 771) is situated to the west of the Site, while the former course of the leet or head race of Trittiford Mill (MBM 916), a former water, corn and rolling mill, is located to the south-east.
- 3.1.2 The burnt mound dates from the mid- to Late Bronze Age and has been interpreted as a sweat lodge or a cooking site (Halsted 2006). Trittiford Mill was recorded as a corn mill in 1778, but appears to have operated previously as a water mill which utilised a leet to channel water from the Chinn Brook (Halsted 2006). Trittiford Mill had been converted into a rolling mill by 1914.



3.2 **Previous Archaeological Fieldwork**

3.2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology (Halsted 2006) during geotechnical investigations on the route of a proposed pipeline scheme. Two test pits were excavated in the area between the site of the temporary bailey bridge and that of the CSO and control kiosk at the south of the Site. No archaeological remains were identified.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 In total three trenches were excavated totalling an area of approximately 480m². Trench 1 was located at the north-east corner of Chinn Brook recreation ground adjacent to Chinn Brook Road. Trenches 2 and 3 were located in the south-west corner of the Chinn Brook recreation ground, between houses on Glastonbury Road and the Chinn Brook (Figure 2).
- 4.1.2 The area of the temporary haul road and bailey bridge were not excavated and instead temporary aluminium roadways were laid on the surface. These installations had no archaeological impact.
- 4.1.3 The following sections provide a summary of the information held in the Site archive. Observed features and contexts for each trench are tabulated as Appendix 1.

4.2 Trench 1

- 4.2.1 Trench 1 measured 53m x 2.1m and was excavated for the installation of a temporary footpath diversion. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m at the south end and 0.2m at the north end (Figure 3, Plate 1).
- 4.2.2 Covering the Site was a dark brown, silty clay topsoil with frequent clinker and rubble inclusions (101). At the north end of the trench, this was underlain by a dark grey, made ground deposit of building rubble and industrial debris (107). A clear glass bottle was recovered from this deposit. The natural was a greyish brown clay with orange mottling and moderate gravel inclusions (102).
- 4.2.3 Two modern rubbish pits were found, both of which contained a dark greyish brown silt with over 90% clinker and rubble (104 and 106 respectively). A clear glass bottle and four fragments of ceramic were recovered from these deposits. The pits measured 1.8m x 2.1m (as excavated) [103] (Plate 2) and 1.1m (as excavated) x 1.9m [105]. As the pits were clearly modern features, no further investigation was deemed necessary.

4.3 Trench 2

- 4.3.1 This trench was excavated in the location of the replacement CSO control kiosk, measured 20.2m x 13.7m and was archaeologically stripped to a maximum depth of 0.5m before further excavation (Figure 4, Plate 3).
- 4.3.2 The trench was covered by a mid-greyish brown clayey silt topsoil (201), 0.15m in depth. At the northern end of the trench, there was a deposit of



mid-red clay (202) this has a maximum depth of 0.1m towards the brook. This overlaid a mid-brownish grey clayey silt buried topsoil which contained 19th-century ceramic **(203).** The natural was revealed as light yellowish brown sandy clay with orange mottling, which contained frequent gravels and pebbles (204) (Figure 5b).

- A 2.2m wide ditch (Figure 5c) ran the length of the trench [205] and cut 4.3.3 through the red clay (202), the fill was primarily composed of 50mm-150mm pebbles with a smaller proportion (5%) of modern CBM and rubble (206). This fill contained some modern ceramic.
- 4.3.4 The western part of the trench contained no archaeological deposits and was heavily truncated by the insertion of modern services.

4.4 Trench 3

- 4.4.1 This trench was excavated to the north of the CSO, in the location of a new sewer pipe and several new manholes. The excavation measured 13m x 7.2m and was archaeologically stripped to a maximum depth of 0.8m (Figure 3, Plate 4). This trench was adjacent to Chinn Brook and was covered by mature trees. These were grubbed out and disturbed the upper deposits at several points.
- The trench was covered by a mid-greyish brown clayey silt topsoil (301). 4.4.2 This was underlain by a deposit of clay which varied in thickness from 0.1m to 0.35m, and varied in colour from mid-red to a mid-greenish grey (302). Underlying this was a mid-brownish grey clayey silt buried topsoil which contained a complete glass bottle (303). At the north-west end of the trench, mid-reddish brown clayey silt deposit (304) was identified, possibly buried subsoil or an alluvial deposit associated with the Chinn Brook. Two layers of natural were identified, the upper horizon of which was a light orange-brown sandy clay with moderate gravel inclusions (305). This deposit was above a second layer of natural geology comprising greenish grey clay with frequent pebbles (306) (Figure 5a).
- 4.4.3 The only archaeological feature that was identified in Trench 3 was a 3.1mwide drainage ditch [307] which cut through the red and green clay deposit to a depth of 0.65m. The ditch was filled by a deposit that was approximately 90% pebbles (50mm-150mm), with smaller proportions of modern CBM and mid-brown clayey sands (308). This ditch was a continuation of the ditch [205] uncovered in Trench 2 and no further excavation was deemed necessary.

5 **FINDS**

5.1 Summary

A very small quantity of finds was recovered during the watching brief, which 5.1.1 represented a restricted range of material types. Table 1 presents the quantities of finds by context. All finds appear to represent domestic refuse of relatively recent date, 19th century or later (animal bone, bottle glass, ceramic 'tea wares').



5.2 Recommendations

- 5.2.1 No further analysis is warranted for any of the components of this assemblage.
- 5.2.2 Given the date range of the finds recovered, and the quantities represented, retention for long-term curation is not recommended.

Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

Context	Animal Bone	Glass	Pottery
104		1/68	3/11
106	1/7		1/54
107		1/56	
203			5/21
206			2/34
303		1/211	
TOTALS	1/7	3/335	11/120

6 **CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 **Discussion**

- 6.1.1 Historical and archaeological analysis of the area suggested the possibility of Bronze Age activity in the vicinity of the Site; however, no archaeological evidence relating to these periods was encountered within the monitored area.
- The large drainage ditch [205, 307] in Trench 2 may be associated with 6.1.2 previous agricultural land use prior to the development of housing in the immediate area during the second quarter of the 20th century. The two rubbish pits that were found in Trench 1 [103, 105] may have been associated with the construction of this housing.
- 6.1.3 Trenches 2 and 3 each contained a topsoil (203, 303) formed on the natural, which was then sealed by a layer of clay (202, 302). This material was present only in those parts of the trenches that were closest to the Brook. The clay was reasonably homogenous, with very few heavy inclusions and was most likely redeposited.

6.2 Conclusion

6.2.1 Archaeological monitoring during the construction of the CSO and associated infrastructure did not locate any evidence of human activity prior to the post-medieval period. All archaeological features were securely dated and had little significance in relation to the cultural heritage of the surrounding area.

7 **ARCHIVE**

7.1 **Preparation**

7.1.1 The project archive, consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs, and electronic data, will be prepared by Wessex Archaeology staff in accordance with United Kingdom Institute for



Conservation (1990), Museums and Galleries Commission (1992), English Heritage (1991) guidelines and the requirements of the repository museum.

7.2 **Deposition**

- 7.2.1 It is anticipated that the physical Site archive will be deposited with the appropriate museum, the accession number for which has still to be confirmed.
- 7.2.2 A digital copy of the report will be prepared for the Client and additional copies will be submitted to English Heritage, and to BCC for inclusion within the Sites and Monuments Record. An OASIS form will be completed at http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/ for inclusion in the ADS database. This will include an electronic copy of the report in PDF format.

Table 2: Archive index

Paper archive				
Folder no.	Folder type	Item(s)	No.	
1	A4 ring binder	Written Scheme of Investigation	1	
		Risk Assessment	1	
		Test Pit/Trial Trench Record	3	
		Context Record	0	
		Graphic Register	1	
		Drawings	5	
		Photographic Record	1	



8 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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9 **APPENDIX**

Table 3: Context Descriptions: Trench 1

Trench 1			
Depth bgl	Context	Sediment description	Interpretation
0.00-0.10m	101	Mid-to dark-brown silty clay with frequent clinker and rubble inclusions <50mm	Topsoil
0.10-0.40m	102	Mid-greyish brown silty clay orange patches and moderate gravel inclusions	Natural
0.20m as excavated	103	Cut for modern rubbish pit 1.8m x 2.1m (as uncovered), not excavated	Rubbish pit
0.20m as excavated	104	Dark greyish brown silt with over 90% clinker and rubble	Fill of [103]
0.20m as excavated	105	Cut for modern rubbish pit 1.1m (as uncovered) x 1.9m, not excavated	Rubbish pit
0.20m as excavated	106	Dark greyish brown silt with over 90% clinker and rubble	Fill of [105]
0.10-0.20m	107	Deposit of rubble and building debris at north end of trench	Made-ground Layer

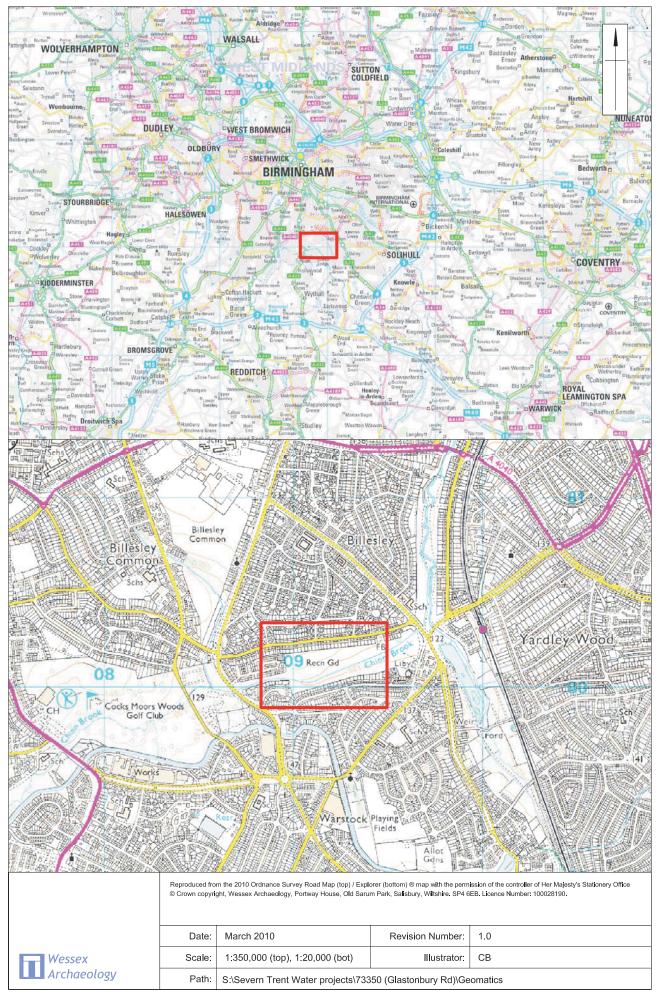
Table 4: Context Descriptions: Trench 2

Trench 2			
Depth bgl	Context	Sediment description	Interpretation
0.00-0.35m	201	Mid-brown clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions, max. depth at south end of trench.	Topsoil
0.20-0.30m	202	Mid-red clay at north end of trench, lenses to maximum thickness of 0.10m.	Layer
0.30-0.45m	203	Mid-brownish grey clayey silt with occasional small stones.	Buried Topsoil
0.35-0.50m	204	Light yellowish brown sandy clay with orange mottling and frequent gravel/pebble inclusions.	Natural
0.20-0.50m	205	Cut for ditch, concave sides and convex base, max. width 2.2m	Ditch (drainage)
0.20-0.50m	206	Deposit consisting of 90% pebbles (50mm-150mm), 5% mid-brown clayey sand and 5% modern CBM	Fill of [205]

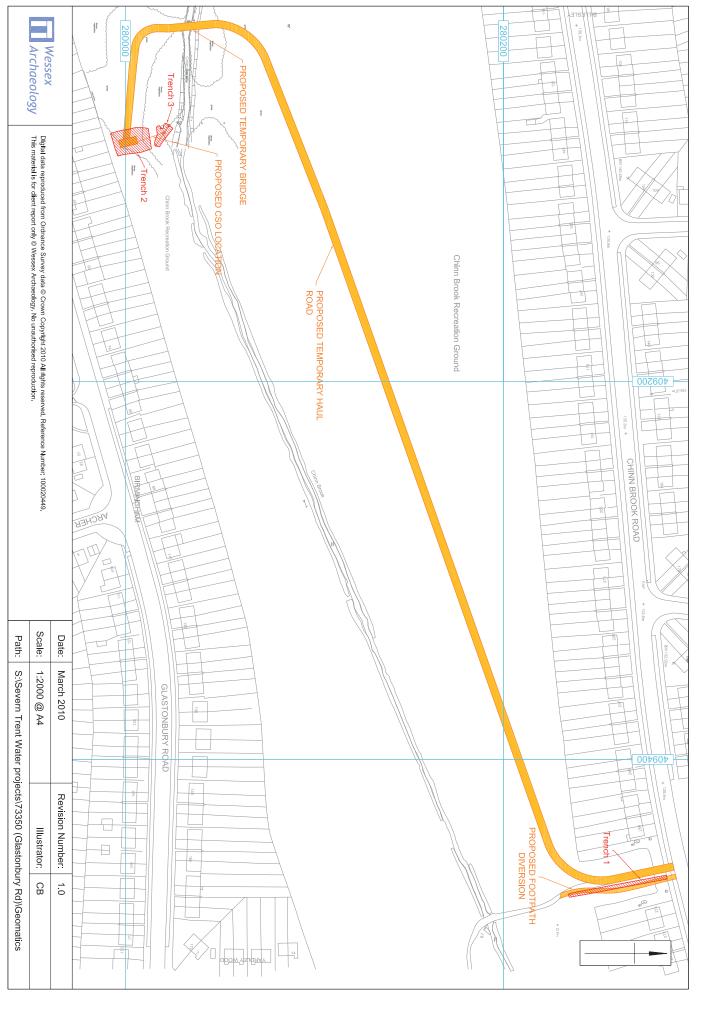


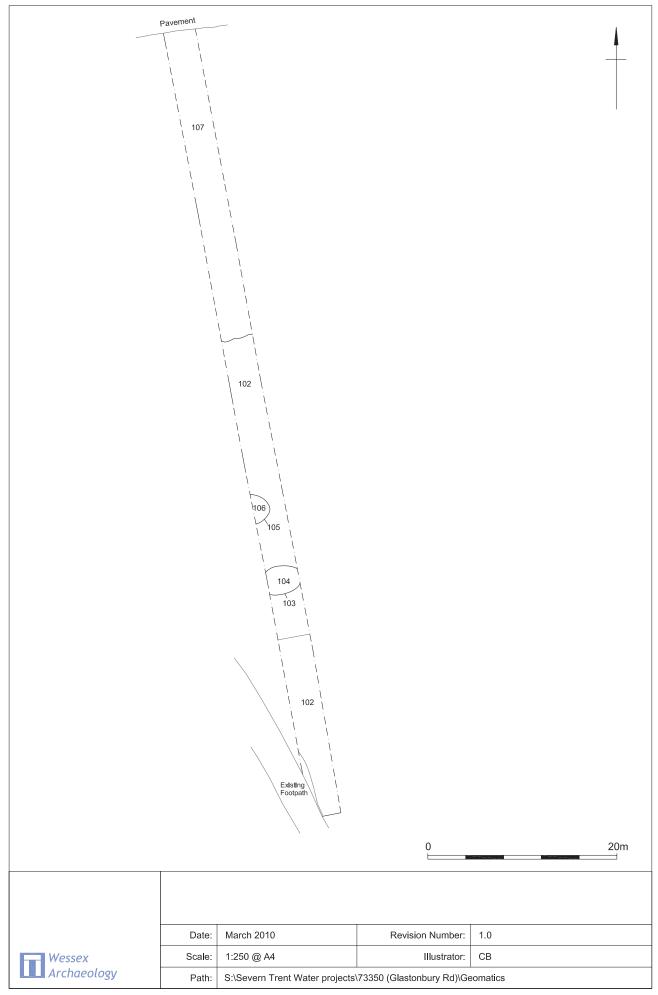
Table 5: Context Descriptions: Trench 3

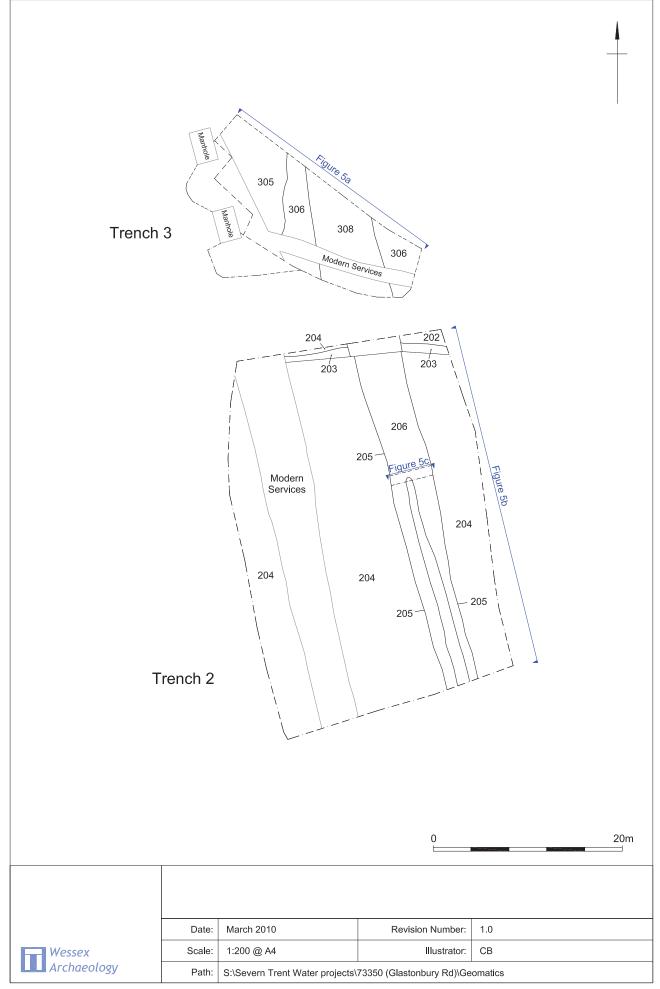
Trench 3			
Depth bgl	Context	Sediment description	Interpretation
0.00-0.15m	301	Mid-brown clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions, max. depth at south end of trench.	Topsoil
0.15-0.50m	302	Mid-red clay with greenish grey patches, lenses to maximum thickness of 0.35m at south-east end of trench.	Layer
0.25-0.60m	303	Mid-brownish grey clayey silt with occasional small stones. Consistently 0.10-0.15m thick.	Buried Topsoil
0.40-0.55m	304	Mid-reddish brown clayey silt at north- west end of trench	Alluvium
0.55-0.65m	305	Light orangey brown sandy clay with moderate gravel/pebble inclusions.	Natural
0.65-0.80m	306	Light to mid-greenish grey clay with frequent pebbles	Natural
0.15-0.80m	307	Cut for ditch, concave sides and convex base, max. width. 3.1m	Ditch (drainage)
0.15-0.80m	308	Deposit consisting of 90% pebbles (50mm-150mm), 5% mid-brown clayey sand and 5% modern CBM	Fill of [307]



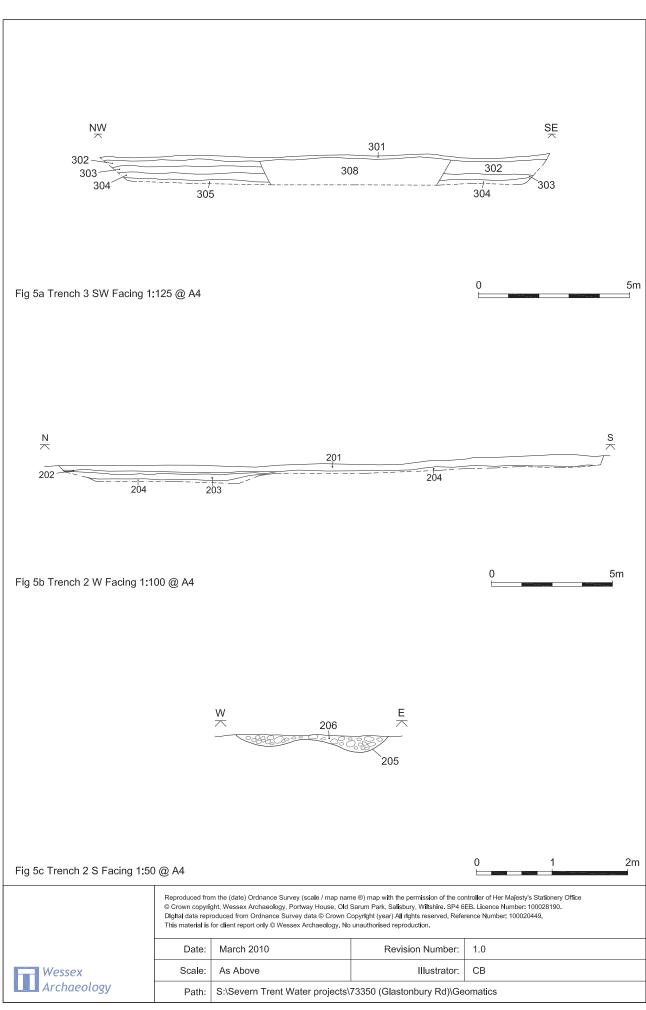
Site Location Figure 1







Trenches 2 & 3 Plan Figure 4



Sections Figure 5





