

**LAND AT THE CROSS KEYS PUBLIC HOUSE,
WALLINGFORD,
OXFORDSHIRE.**

NGR: SU 6042 8956

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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Date: 7th January 2011

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January 2011

Report No. 720

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SUMMARY

In November 2010 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at The Cross Keys public house, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 6042 8956). The project was commissioned by Caldecotte Consultants on behalf of Brakspear Pub Company.

The project comprised the excavation and recording of two evaluation trenches within a proposed development area.

The archaeological works revealed significant archaeological deposits, in the form of a probable large ditch, which may represent part of a Saxon or Medieval defensive circuit, along with another possible ditch, a pit and a small number of other cut features.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum)

OS

Ordnance Survey

Post-medieval

The period between *circa* AD 1500 and AD 1900.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43. Traditionally sub divided into; *Palaeolithic* – *c.* 500,000 BC to *c.* 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – *c.* 12,000 BC to *c.* 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – *c.* 4,500 BC to *c.* 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – *c.* 2,000 BC to *c.* 800 BC; *Iron Age* – *c.* 800 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period between AD 43 and AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in November 2010 on land at The Cross Keys public house, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 6042 8956). The project was commissioned by Caldecotte Consultants on behalf of Brakspear Pub Company.
- 1.2 The archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Foundations Archaeology 2010), based upon a brief issued by Oxfordshire County Council (2010), and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire Planning Archaeologist required a programme of archaeological evaluation in advance of the determination of a planning application to develop land to the rear of The Cross Keys public house in Wallingford (Planning Reference: P10/W0735).
- 2.2 The proposed development is located immediately outside of the historic core of Wallingford and covers an area of approximately 0.044 ha. The centre of the site is located at National Grid Reference SU 6042 8956. It is currently utilized as a surfaced car park.
- 2.3 The site has been the subject of a desk-based archaeological assessment (Foundations Archaeology 2010), which has highlighted its high archaeological potential and fully supported the requirement for field evaluation.
- 2.4 The study area lies outside of the historic Saxon and Medieval cores of the town but is located in close proximity to the Scheduled defences (OX 234). Archaeological works in similar locations close to the defences elsewhere in Wallingford (PRNs 16714 and 16792) have suggested that there may have been an outer ditch to the Saxon or Medieval defences, of which no traces remain above ground. Cartographic evidence showing the site supports this suggestion; the narrow strip of land within which the proposed development is located appears to curve northeast following the circuit of the defences and may well, therefore, have contained a ditch and/or bank. Hachuring on the 1912 Ordnance Survey also suggests that such a feature might have survived into the early 20th century as a visible monument. In the event that such a ditch does exist, it is likely to have removed any earlier archaeological deposits. A possible smithy building shown on the 1899 and 1912 Ordnance Survey plans may partly fall within the site and foundations to this structure may also survive.

- 2.5 The site therefore contained high potential for Saxon or Medieval features associated with the town defences. The potential also existed for Prehistoric, Roman and Post-medieval activity.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits, in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.

- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

- i) To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
- ii) To attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
- iii) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation required the excavation of two trenches, measuring 10m by 1.6m, as shown in Figure 2.
- 4.2 Topsoil and non-significant overburden was removed to the top of the archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved by the use of a 360° mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket, whilst under constant archaeological direction. Thereafter all additional investigation was conducted manually by archaeologists.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- 5.1 A full stratigraphic description of all the contexts identified in the course of the project is presented in Appendices 1, 2 and 3, along with a report on the recovered pottery in Appendix 4. A summary discussion is given below.

- 5.2 Features [104] and [204] shared similar alignments and may be interpreted as parts of a larger feature, such as a ditch. Both features were associated with multiple, interleaved fill sequences, which possibly represented dumped in-fills and/or re-cuts. The pottery contained within fills (105), (107), (108), (205) and (208) indicated that this activity dated to the Medieval period or later.
- 5.3 Given the location of the site immediately to the west of the Saxon/Medieval defensive circuit, it is likely that feature [104]/[204] represented the remains of the in-filled external defensive ditch, which has been previously sighted during two other archaeological interventions in Wallingford (PRN's 16714 and 16792) and is suggested on early Ordnance Survey plans of the site. However, due to the limited nature of the investigation, this interpretation remains somewhat tentative.
- 5.4 Feature [2004] was only partially present within Trench 2, however, the existence of a possible re-cut [215] indicated that this feature potentially represented part of a ditch.
- 5.5 Features [102], [213] and [218] were cut into earlier fills and indicated the potential for the presence of at least two broad phases of on-site activity spanning the Medieval and Post-medieval periods.
- 5.6 A number of Modern features were present in both trenches, although their impact upon earlier archaeological deposits appeared to have been relatively limited.
- 5.7 A small assemblage of pottery was recovered during the course of the evaluation. The Medieval pottery comprised the products of a limited number of industries, consisting of *Late Saxon/Early Medieval West Oxfordshire Ware and Early Medieval Oxford Ware (OXAC)*, dating to the late 9th-13th century, *Late Saxon-Late Medieval South East Oxfordshire Ware (OX162)* dating from the late 11th to early 13th century and *Brill Boarstall Ware (OXAM)* dating to the 13th-14th century. A small assemblage of Post-medieval pottery in the form of Red Glazed Earthenwares (OXDR) dating from 1550 onwards, was also recovered.
- 5.8 A small assemblage of animal bone was also recovered. This comprised fragments of pig, cattle and sheep/goat bone but is too small to be of any statistical value. It is recommended that this material not be subject to any detailed assessment at this stage.
- 5.9 Palaeoenvironmental samples were taken from a number of fills. Timescales for analysis of this material mean that the results will not be available for several months. It is recommended, therefore, that the samples are only analysed at this stage if no further archaeological work will be undertaken at the site.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The evaluation has identified significant archaeological deposits, in the form of a probable large ditch, which may represent part of a Saxon or Medieval defensive circuit, along with another possible ditch, a pit and a small number of other cut features. The defensive ditch in itself is of high significance and of considerable relevance to on-going archaeological research into the development of Wallingford.
- 6.2 The archaeological features identified during the course of the project will require mitigation in the form either of preservation *in situ* or through preservation by record. A design solution should be sought, which can float the proposed structures above the archaeological features. If no such solution is possible within the constraints of the development, full excavation of the study area will be required to provide suitable mitigation in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Council, Chris Welch of English Heritage and Aaron Smith of Caldecotte Consultants for their assistance during the course of this project.

Land at The Cross Keys public house, Wallingford, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation

APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Trench 1; 10m by 1.6m		
100	na	na	0.25	Modern ground surface; tarmac above loosecore.	101	na
101	?	2.85	0.45	Layer; mixed dark to light brown clay silt, which contained occasional stones.	1005	100
[102]	0.95	0.85	0.42	Sub-oval pit with a steep, irregular profile. Contained fill 103.	105	103
103	0.95	0.85	0.42	Fill of pit [102]; light brown sand silt, which contained occasional flint pieces, a corroded iron object,	[102]	?
				and frequent bone fragments.		
[104]	2	7.5?	0.65+	North – south aligned, large cut feature, which extended across the majority of the trench.	1001	105
				Only partially investigated; contained fill 105 and possibly fills 106, 107, 108, 109, 110 and 1002.		
105	2	4.85	0.63	Fill of cut [104]; orange red loose gravel.	[104], 1002	[102], 1005
106	1.7	1.2	0.12	Possible fill of cut [104]; dark brown silt, which contained occasional small stones and gravel.	107	1002
107	1.7	0.9	0.5	Possible fill of cut [104]; orange red loose gravel. Similar to fill 105.	?	106, 108
108	1.7	1.5	0.4	Possible fill of cut [104]; light brown chalk silt, which contained occasional small stones.	107, 109	110
109	1.9	1.3	0.18	Possible fill of cut [104]; dark brown silt.	1006	108
110	?	1.65	0.47	Possible fill of cut [104]; brown silt.	108, 1002	1005, 1003
1001	2.2	1	0.1	Deposit; light grey clay sand, which contained occasional chalk fragments. It was uncertain if this	?	[104]
				represented natural substrates.		
1002	?	1.75	0.5	Possible fill of cut [104]; soft, dark brown silt.	106	105, 110
1003	?	1.4	0.23	Layer; mixed soil and chalk, which contained frequent Modern artefacts.	110	1004
1004	?	1.4	0.3	Layer; mixed dark to light brown clay silt, which contained occasional stones. Similar to layer 101.	1003	100
1005	?	3.7	0.4	Layer; dark brown clay silt.	105, 110	101
1006	0.5	0.3	?	Deposit; similar to context 1001. Only visible in plan.	?	109

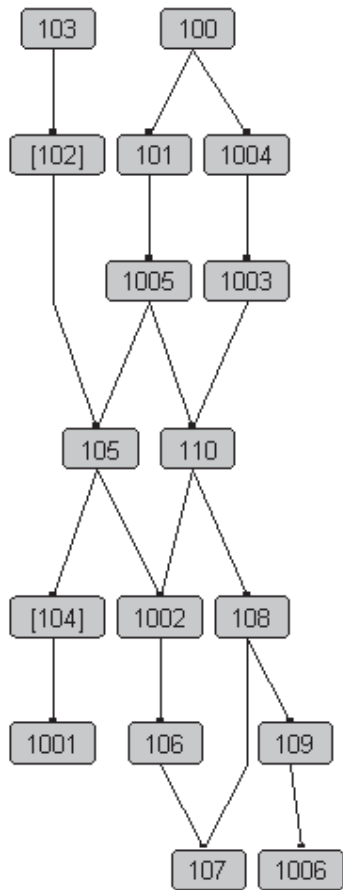
Land at The Cross Keys public house, Wallingford, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Trench 2; 9.6m by 1.6m		
200	na	na	0.33	Modern ground surface; tarmac above loosecore.	212, 2001, 2003	na
201	?	3.2	0.32	Layer; mixed black brown silt.	210	[211]
202				Void.		
203	2.5	1.5	0.6	Deposit; similar to context 1001. Probably represented natural substrates.	?	[204], [213], [218], [2004]
[204]	2.1	3.5	0.67	North - south aligned, large cut feature, which occurred at the southwest end of the trench. Only partially investigated; contained fill 205 and possibly fills 206, 207, 208, 209 and 210.	203	205
205	2.5	1.4	0.25	Fill of cut [204]; mixed pink black brown sand grit silt, which contained frequent small stones, a single oyster shell and frequent bone fragments.	[204]	206, [211]
206	2	2.5	0.33	Possible fill of cut [204]; red brown gravel, which contained rare bone fragments and a corroded iron object.	205	207, [218]
207	2	1	0.2	Possible fill of cut [204]; light grey green sand clay, which contained rare small stones.	206	208
208	1.75	1.4	0.2	Possible fill of cut [204]; grey brown sand silt, which contained occasional flint and rare charcoal flecks.	207	209
209	1.6	1.65	0.33	Possible fill of cut [204]; light green grey sand clay.	208	210, [211]
210	?	1.05	0.6	Possible fill of cut [204]; mottled grey brown green orange sand silt.	209	201
[211]	7.2	1.5	0.57	Shallow cut with steep sides and a flat base. Contained fill 212.	205, 201, 214, 217, 219	212
212	7.2	1.5	0.57	Fill of cut [211]; dark red brown sand silt, which contained rare charcoal flecks.	[211]	2001
[213]	1.35	0.84	0.32	Northwest - southeast aligned linear cut, possibly a ditch terminus or a pit, with an irregular profile. Contained fill 214.	217	214
214	1.35	0.84	0.32	Fill of feature [213]; grey green clay gravel.	[213]	[211]
[215]	1.9	2.9	1	Cut feature with a sloping edge and a flat base; probably a re-cut of feature [204]. Contained fill 217.	216	217
216	?	0.8	0.28	Fill of feature [204]; dark brown grey sand clay, which contained frequent small stones.	[2004]	[215]

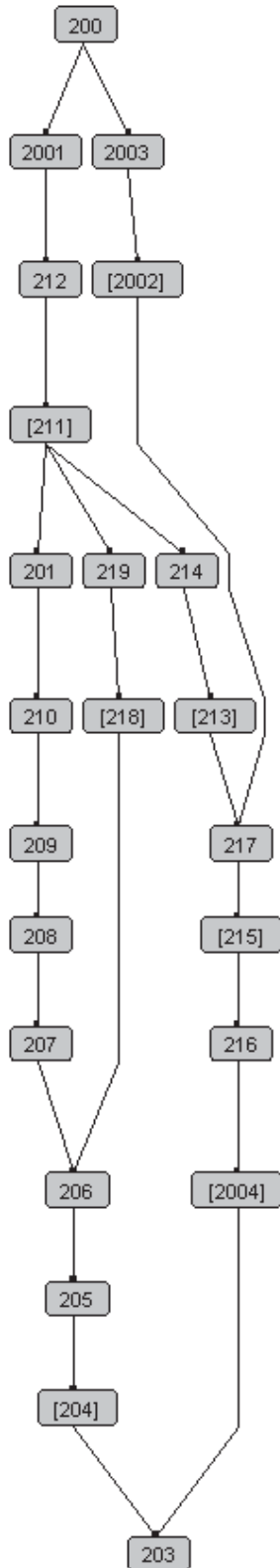
Land at The Cross Keys public house, Wallingford, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
217	1.9	2.9	1	Fill of feature [215]; dark brown clay sand, which contained frequent small stones, along with two tile fragments, a snail shell, a single struck flint and occasional bone fragments.	[215]	[213], [2002]
[218]	2.6	0.32	0.35	Cut feature with a sloping profile. Contained fill 219.	206	219
219	2.6	0.32	0.35	Fill of feature [218]; dark brown black sand silt, which contained occasional small stones.	[218]	[211]
2001	?	10	0.2	Former tarmac surface.	212	200
[2002]	?	1.65	0.6	Cut feature with a rounded profile. Only visible in section. Contained fill 2003.	217	2003
2003	?	1.65	0.6	Fill of feature [2002]; black brown silt.	[2002]	200
[2004]	0.43	0.8	0.28	Cut feature, possibly a ditch, with a sloping profile. The feature occurred at, and extended beyond, the northeast end of the trench. Contained fill 216.	203	216

APPENDIX 2: Trench 1 Harris Matrix



APPENDIX 3: Trench 2 Harris Matrix



Land at The Cross Keys public house, Wallingford, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation

APPENDIX 4: The Pottery

By Roy King

Context	No.	Code	Description	Weight(g)
103	1 sherd	OXDR	Red Glazed Earthenware; AD 1550+	22
105	2 sherds	OX162	late Saxon - late Medieval South East Oxfordshire Ware; late 11th - early 13th century	21
107	3 sherds	OX162	late Saxon - late Medieval South East Oxfordshire Ware; late 11th - early 13th century	38
108	2 sherds	OX162	late Saxon - late Medieval South East Oxfordshire Ware; late 11th - early 13th century	14
205	5 sherds	OXAC	late Saxon/early Medieval West Oxfordshire and early Medieval Oxford Ware; late 9th - 13th century	86
205	20 sherds	OX162	late Saxon - late Medieval South East Oxfordshire Ware; late 11th - early 13th century	175
205	2 sherds	OXAM	Brill Boarstall Ware; 13th - 14th century	33
208	1 sherd	OX162	late Saxon - late Medieval South East Oxfordshire Ware; late 11th - early 13th century	6
217	1 sherd	OXAM	Brill Boarstall Ware; 13th - 14th century	3
217	1 sherd	OXDR	Red Glazed Earthenware; AD 1550+	8
219	2 sherds	OXDR	Red Glazed Earthenware; AD 1550+	7

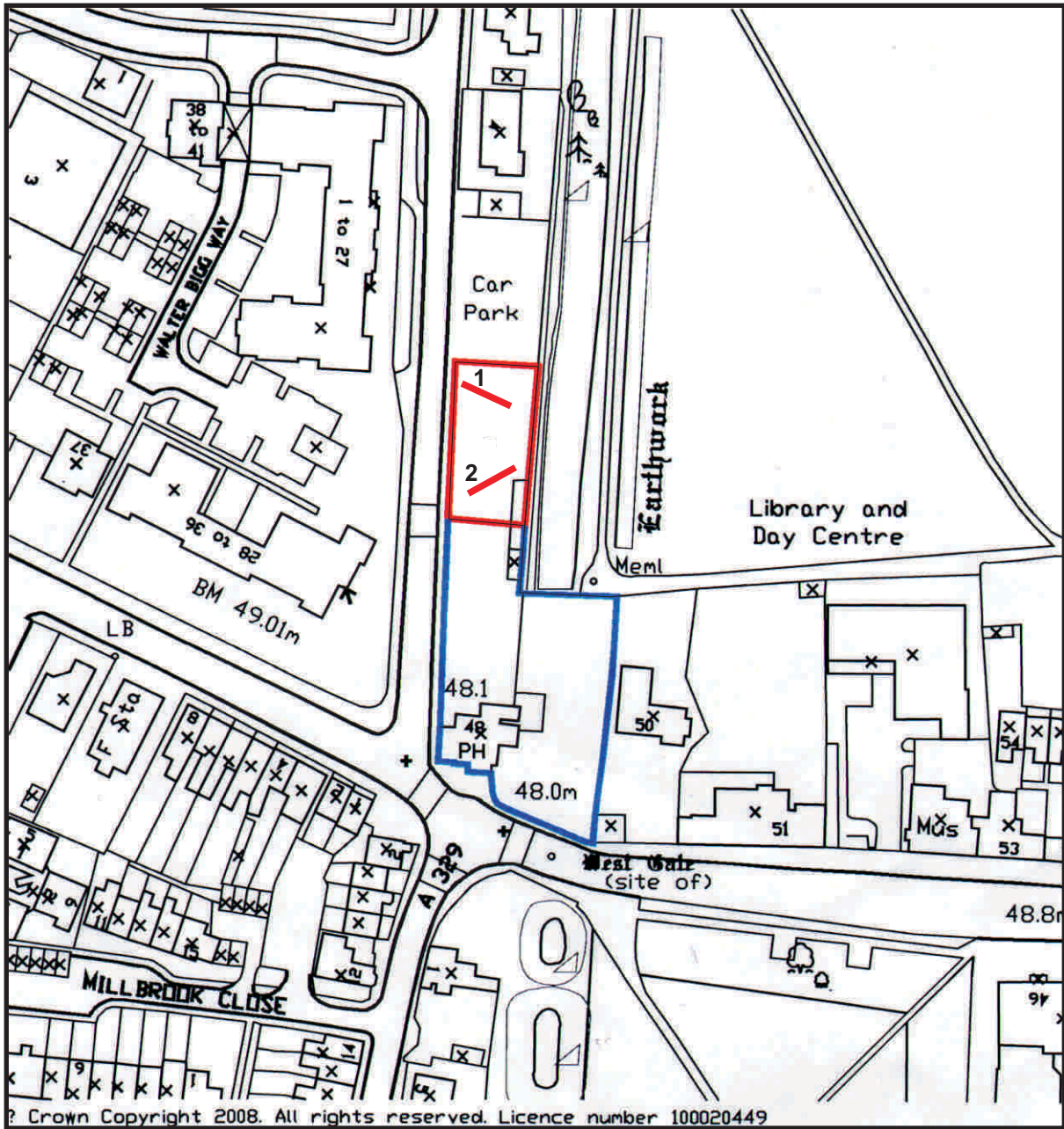


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Site Code: CKW10ev
Accession Code:



FIGURE 1: Site Location



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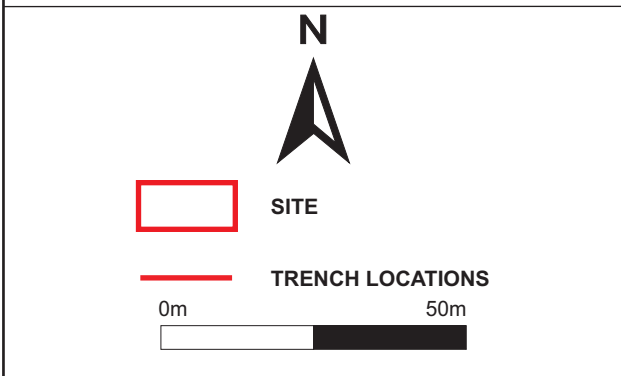
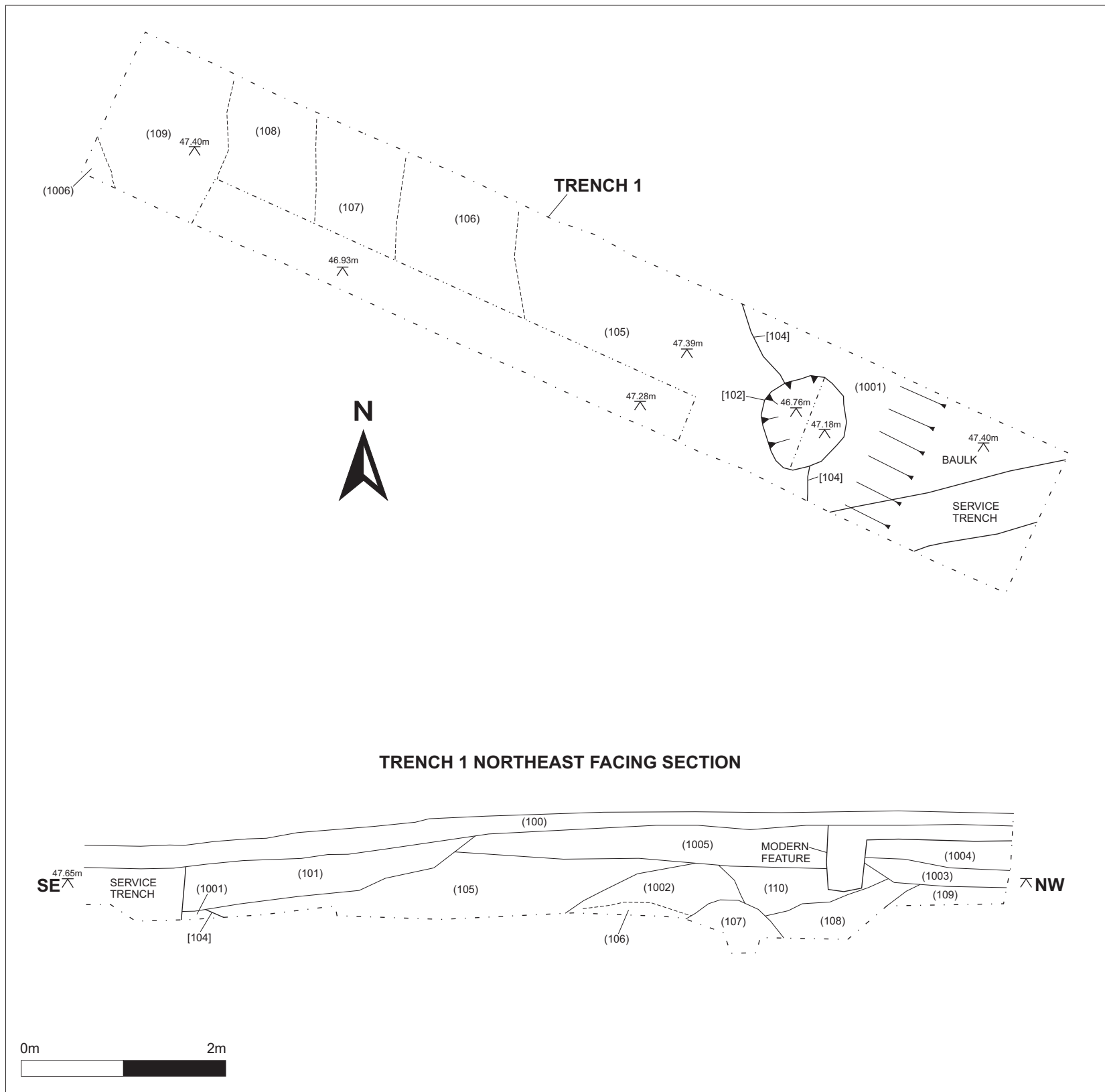
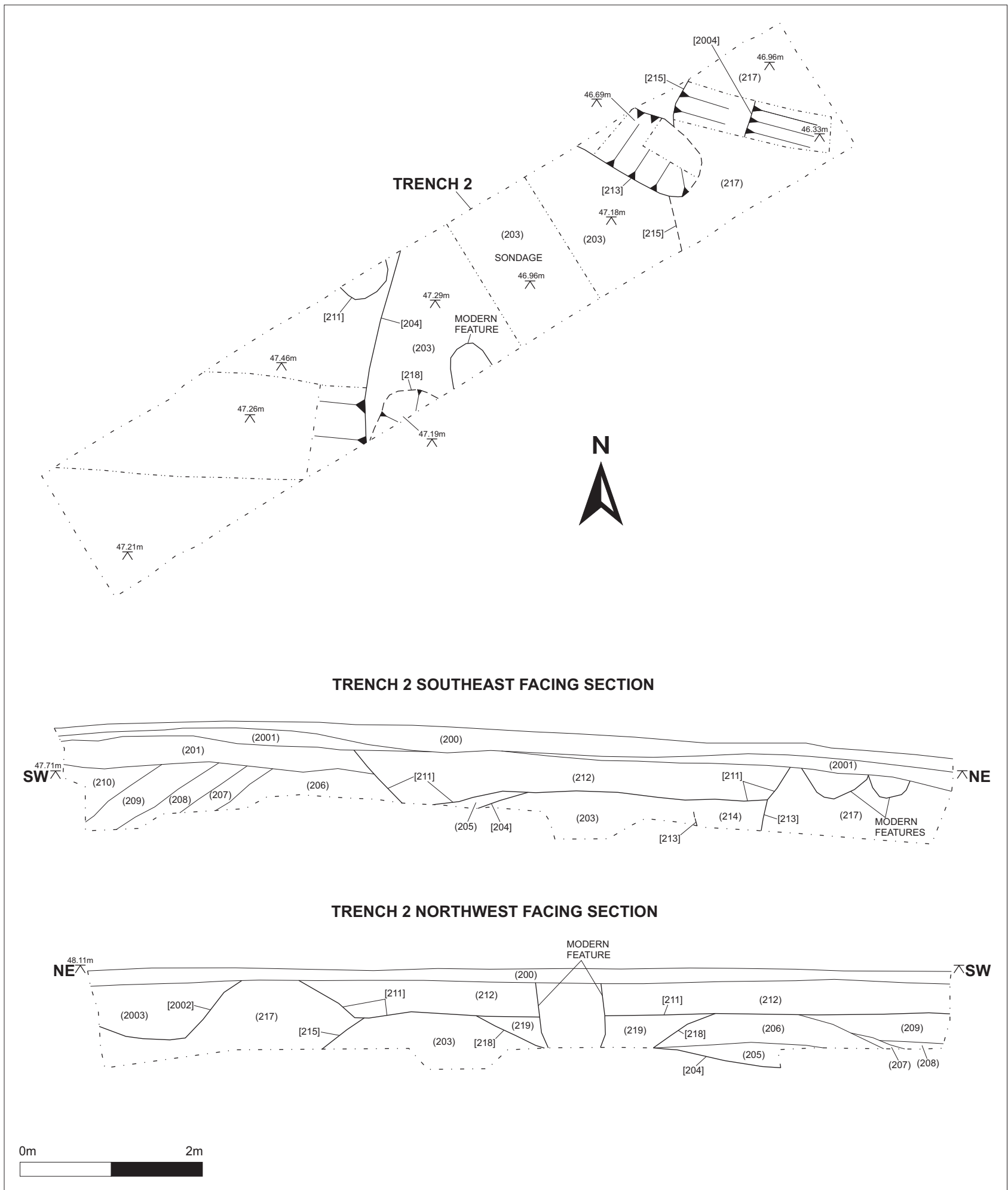


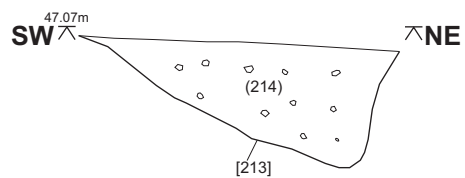
FIGURE 2: Trench Locations



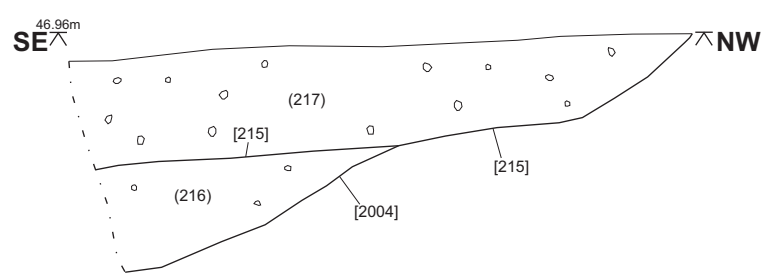
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FIGURE 3: Trench 1 Plan and Sections



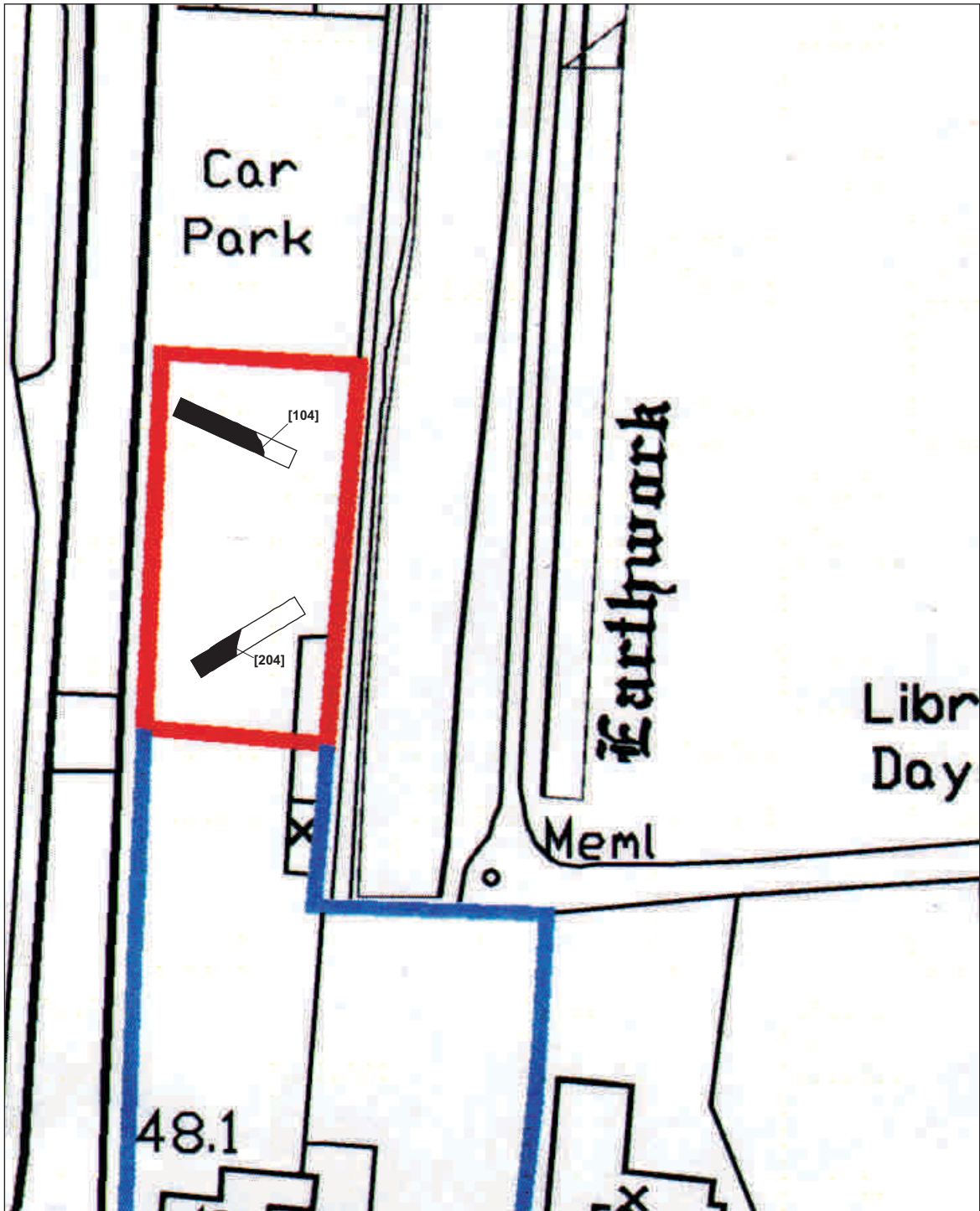
SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION [213]



NORTHEAST FACING SECTION [215]



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FIGURE 4: Trench 2 Plan and Sections



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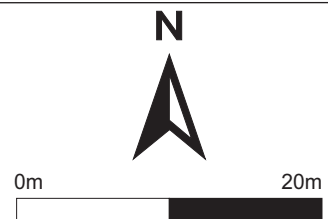


FIGURE 5: Site Plan Showing Location of Features [104] and [204]