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SUMMARY

During August 2005 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at the former 'Applied Research Station' (ARS Site), Shinfield, Reading (NGR: SU 733 692). The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of four trenches, across the proposed development area.

Two post medieval brick built features, comprising a land drain and a boundary wall, were identified.

No archaeological artefacts, deposits or features pre-dating the post medieval period were present within the investigated area.

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 traditionally dated from AD1066 until *circa* AD1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case London Clay with a capping of plateau gravel in the western part of the site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

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

OS

Ordnance Survey.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology during August 2005, on land at the former 'Applied Research Station' (ARS Site), Shinfield Road, Shinfield, Reading (NGR: SU 733 692). The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd.
- 1.2 It had been proposed to develop the land formerly occupied by the Applied Research Station at Shinfield. A programme of archaeological works was required by Berkshire Archaeology on behalf of Wokingham District Council in advance of this development, in accordance with the principals of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990) and the archaeological policies of Wokingham District Council.
- 1.3 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works. The work was undertaken in accordance with a Specification prepared by CgMs Consulting Ltd. (2005). The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, revised 2001). The code of conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development area is located on the east side of Shinfield Road, Shinfield, at NGR SU 733 692. It is bounded by Shinfield Road to the west, Wilsford Close to the north, scrubland to the east and Lower Early Way to the south. Land use at the time of the archaeological works comprised derelict woodland/scrub. A number of derelict brick and concrete structures were located within the woodland cover (Fig. 2).
- 2.2 The site has been the subject of a number of archaeological investigations which have been summarised in an Oxford Archaeological Unit desk-based assessment (2001).
- 2.3 The south west part of the development area includes the remains of the medieval moated manor of Shinfield. A small hamlet was associated with the manor, the earthwork remains of which survive to the south of the site. The moated site appears to have survived until 1702, with only a small section surviving as an oval pond (Fig. 2). An estate map of 1752 depicts a number of buildings lying to the west of the moat.
- 2.4 Various previous investigations have established that there are no significant remains present to the north and north west of the moat and that there were medieval and post medieval dump deposits present to the west of the moat.
- 2.5 The proposed development will retain the moated site within public open space. However, further work was required to clarify the nature of the deposits to the west of the moat. The study area was therefore located to the west of the moated site.

- 2.6 The study area contained the potential for the preservation of archaeological features and deposits, predominantly associated with the medieval and post medieval periods. This in no way prejudiced the evaluation works against the recovery of finds or features relating to other periods.

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. 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 archaeological specification required the excavation of two trenches measuring 30m long by 2m wide. Due to extensive tree cover and a number of derelict building platforms, it was necessary to relocate the evaluation trenches on a 'best fit' basis. The trench relocations were agreed with CgMS Consulting Ltd. and the archaeological representative of Berkshire Archaeology on behalf of Wokingham District Council. Final trench locations are shown on Figure 2.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of the archaeological deposits or the underlying natural deposits, whichever were encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a JCB-type mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter cleaning and excavation was conducted by hand. Spoil tips were scanned for finds.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Specification supplied by CgMs Consulting and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 **Trench 1** (32m by 1.6m) was aligned north-south and was excavated onto the natural orange brown clay and gravel at an average depth of 0.48m (73.36m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural clay and gravel was overlaid by a light brown sand silt subsoil (101), up to 0.13m thick, which contained occasional gravel. This context only occurred intermittently across the trench. Subsoil (101) was overlaid by layer (102), up to 0.19m thick, which consisted of a loose mix of brick, concrete and rubble. Layer (102) occurred at the south end of Trench 1 for a minimum length of 5.5m and extended beyond the south limit of excavation. Contexts (101) and (102) were both sealed by topsoil (103), up to 0.38m thick, which comprised a dark brown sand silt. Topsoil (103) contained frequent lenses of gravel and clinker, along with frequent modern artefacts.
- 5.2 Feature [104] was 1.5m long, 2.07m in wide and 0.32m in depth and consisted of a linear, east-west aligned ditch. The ditch cut the natural clays and had regular, sloping sides and a flat base. Structure (105)/(117), at least 0.38 m long, 0.50m wide and 0.32m in depth, occurred at the base of ditch [104] and consisted of a linear brick setting, which shared a similar alignment to the ditch. The bricks were set in a *stretcher* pattern in order to create a flat base (105), three bricks wide and one course deep. The base was overlaid, at its northern and southern limits, by two vertical brick columns, four courses deep, which formed two vertical opposing walls (117). The vertical walls were intentionally set with half a brick width over-extending the basal bricks. The individual bricks, 0.24m long, 0.115m wide and 0.05m thick, were not *frogged* and varied in colour from cherry red to yellow. Each brick exhibited a uniform firing and frequent flint and pebble inclusions were visible throughout the clay matrix. Contexts (105)/(117) formed a linear, brick built 'U' shaped channel. No mortar or cement was associated with this structure. Structure (105)/(117) was abutted by fill (106) at the south and (107) at the north. Fill (106), up to 0.32m thick, comprised a compact, yellow brown silt clay, which contained occasional CBM fragments. Fill (107), up to 0.32m, consisted of a compact, grey yellow clay, which contained occasional CBM fragments. Fills (106) and (107) were compact and stable packing fills, which were likely to have been deposited immediately after the construction of brick feature (105)/(117). Fill (108), up to 0.22m thick, comprised a grey brown silty clay, which contained occasional CBM fragments. This context only occurred within the channel formed by brick structure (105)/(117). Structure (105)/(117) and fills (106), (107) and (108) were directly sealed by topsoil (103).
- 5.3 Feature [109] was 1.85m long, 0.90m wide and 0.10m in depth and consisted of a north west–south east aligned ditch with sloping sides and a flat, uneven base. The ditch was cut into the natural clay, with the north west terminal present within the trench. Fill (110) comprised cherry red, un-glazed ceramic tiles with average dimensions of 0.12m long, 0.08m wide and 0.015m thick.

Each tile exhibited a uniform firing with no visible inclusions. The tiles were laid flat, up to two courses deep and occurred intermittently across the base of feature [109]. The majority of the tiles were broken or chipped and at least one had a nail hole. Context (110) is likely to have acted as a levelling layer for fill (111). Context (111), 1.85m long, 0.90m wide and 0.05m in depth, consisted of a single course of bricks, which directly overlaid tile layer (110) and the natural and extended across the full extent of ditch [109]. The bricks were laid flat in a relatively random pattern with frequent 'half bricks' filling voids. The orange brown bricks measured 0.245m long, 0.115m wide and 0.055m thick and were not *frogged*. Each brick exhibited a uniform firing and frequent pebble and stone inclusions. Context (112), up to 0.10m thick, occurred in the voids between individual bricks and tiles and consisted of a light brown sandy clay, which contained frequent CBM fragments. Contexts (111) and (112) were directly sealed by topsoil (103). No mortar or cement was associated with this structure.

- 5.4 Feature [113] was at least 1.5m long, 8.9m wide and 0.60m in depth and consisted of a substantial linear cut with gently sloping sides and a rounded base. The feature extended beyond the west and east limits of excavation. Primary fill (114), up to 0.16m thick, comprised a grey brown clay, which contained frequent modern brick, tile and rubble. Fill (115), up to 0.13m thick, consisted of a light grey silt sand which contained frequent modern china pottery sherds and glass fragments. Layer (116), up to 0.37m thick, comprised a light brown sand silt, which contained occasional metal artefacts. Context (116) was sealed by topsoil (103).
- 5.5 **Trench 2** (12m by 1.6m) was aligned north-south and was excavated onto the natural orange brown clay and gravel at an average depth of 0.39m (75.10m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural clay and gravel was overlaid by a light brown sand silt subsoil (201), up to 0.08m thick, which contained occasional gravel. Subsoil (201) was overlaid by layer (202), up to 0.38m thick, which comprised a dark brown sand silt topsoil. Context (202) contained frequent lenses of gravel and clinker and frequent modern artefacts. Frequent modern disturbance occurred intermittently across the extent of Trench 2. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.
- 5.6 **Trench 3** (11m by 1.6m) was aligned north-south and was excavated onto the natural orange brown clay and gravel at an average depth of 0.39m (75.28m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural clay and gravel was overlaid by a light brown sand silt subsoil (301), up to 0.05m thick, which contained occasional gravel. Subsoil (301) was overlaid by layer (302), up to 0.37m thick, which comprised a dark brown sand silt topsoil. Context (302) contained frequent lenses of gravel and clinker and frequent modern artefacts. Frequent modern disturbance occurred intermittently across the extent of Trench 3. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.
- 5.7 **Trench 4** (10m by 1.6m) was aligned north-south and was excavated onto the natural orange brown clay and gravel at an average depth of 0.60m (74.87m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural clay and gravel was overlaid by a light brown sand silt subsoil (401), up to 0.09m thick, which

contained occasional gravel. This context only occurred intermittently across the trench. Subsoil (401) was overlaid by layer (402), up to 0.24m thick and 4.0m wide, which consisted of a loose mix of brick, concrete and rubble. Layer (402) occurred at and extended beyond the south end of Trench 4 and was equivalent to layer (102). Layers (102) and (402) are likely to be levelling layers associated with construction of the tarmac road/track immediately south of Trenches 1 and 4. Contexts (401) and (402) were both sealed by topsoil (403), up to 0.54m thick, which comprised a dark brown sand silt. Topsoil (403) contained frequent lenses of gravel and clinker and frequent modern artefacts. Frequent modern disturbance occurred across the extent of Trench 4. No archaeological features or artefacts were present.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 In general, a significant amount of modern disturbance had occurred across the site. Discrete areas of undisturbed natural and intermittent remnant subsoils were, however, present in all trenches. Visibility conditions were good.
- 6.2 Features [104] and [109] were directly sealed by the modern topsoil and are probably highly truncated. Although no datable artefactual material was directly associated with these brick-built features, they are unlikely to pre-date the post medieval period.
- 6.3 Feature [104] and a ceramic pipe, present at the north end of Trench 1, represent repeated attempts at land drainage in the post medieval and modern periods.
- 6.4 Feature [109] and associated contexts are the truncated remains of a wall in a shallow footing trench. The lack of artefacts and charcoal, along with the absence of floor layers associated with this feature indicates that it was probably not part of a domestic dwelling structure. Feature [109] is likely to represent a land/garden boundary wall. The presence of a terminus is suggestive of an entrance at this location.
- 6.5 Feature [113] was associated with modern material throughout and is representative of relatively recent disturbance. It was not possible to define the spatial extent of feature [113] as it extended beyond the east and west limits of excavation.
- 6.6 No artefacts, deposits or features pre-dating the post medieval period were present in the investigated area.
- 6.7 The evaluation has indicated that the potential for medieval or earlier archaeological activity, within the study area, is low. Post medieval brick built structures, predominately associated with land management are, however, present.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

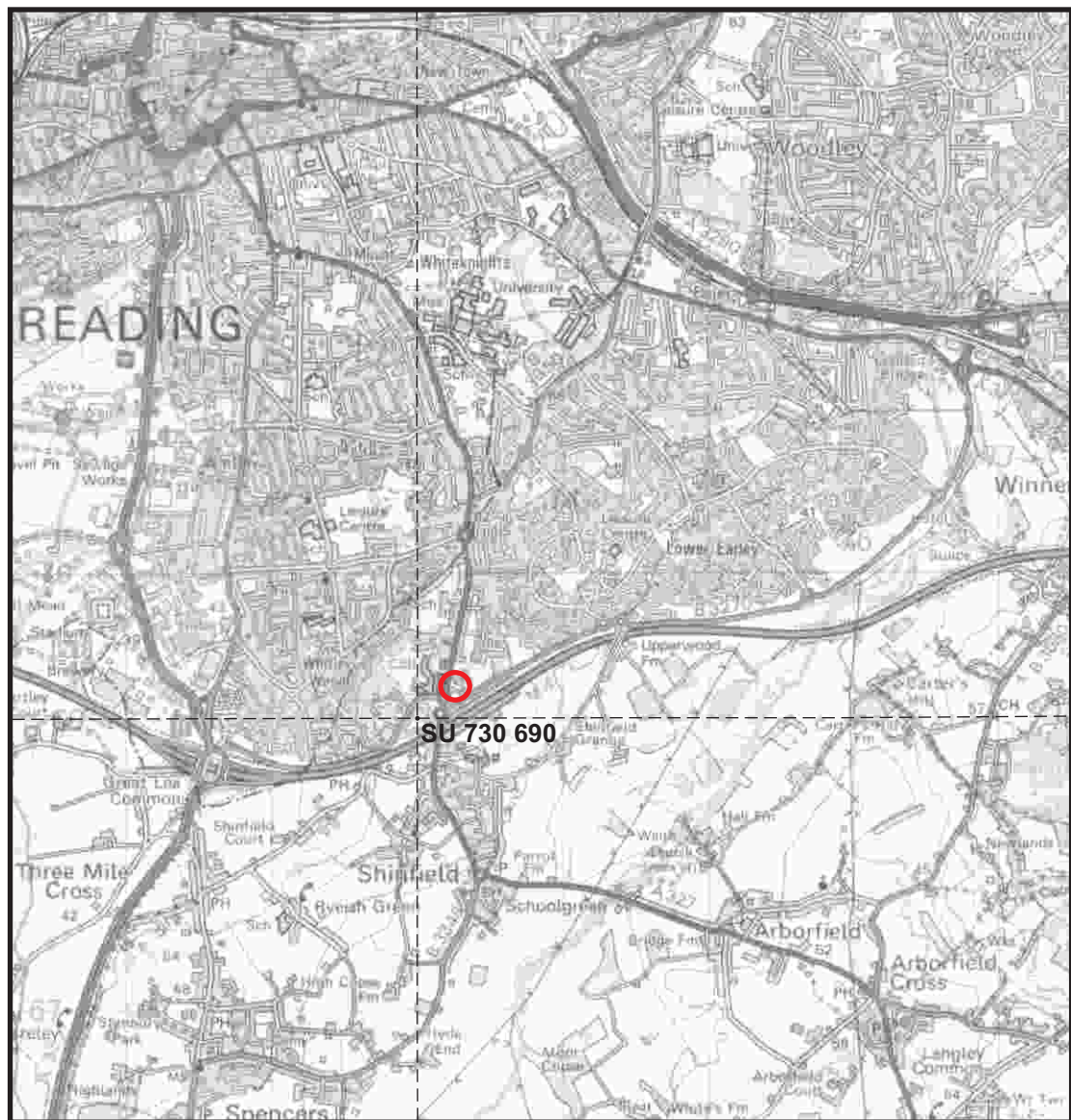
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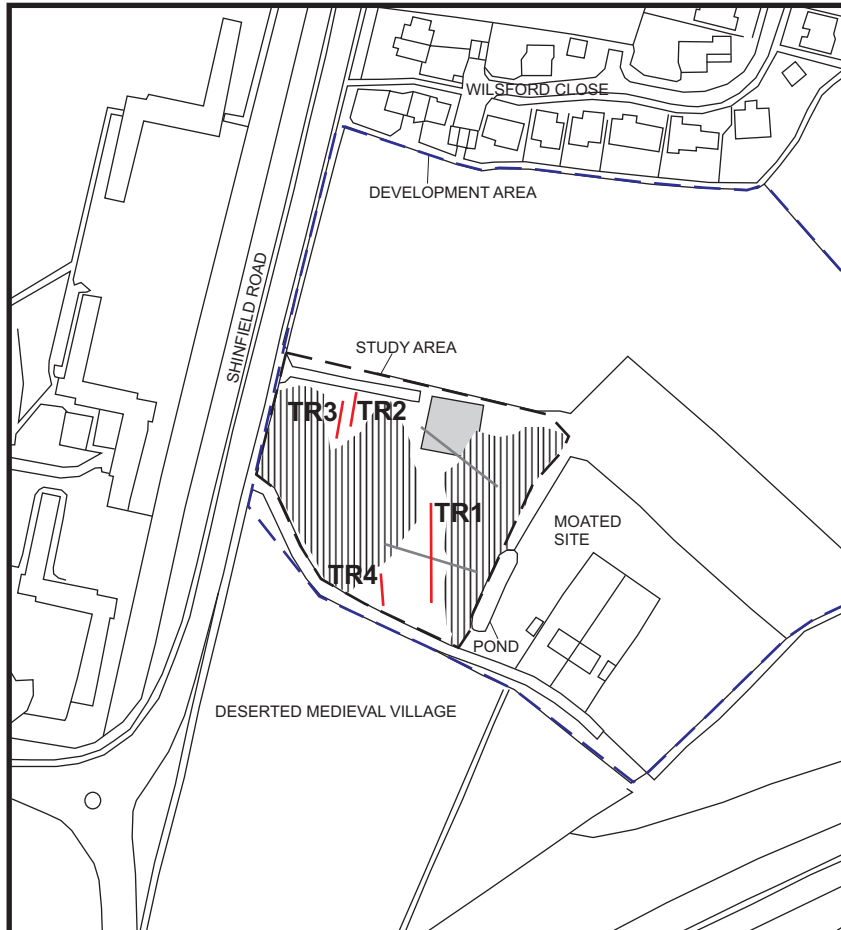
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 1: Site Location



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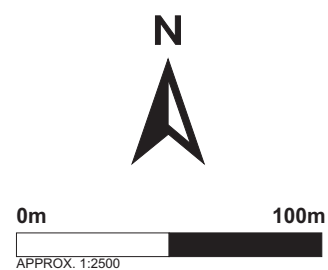
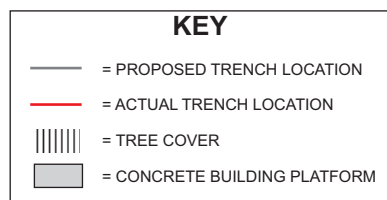


FIGURE 2: Site Plan

TRENCH 1 PLAN

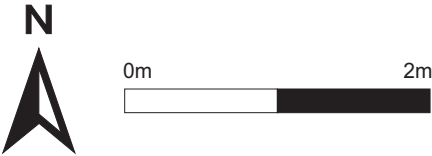
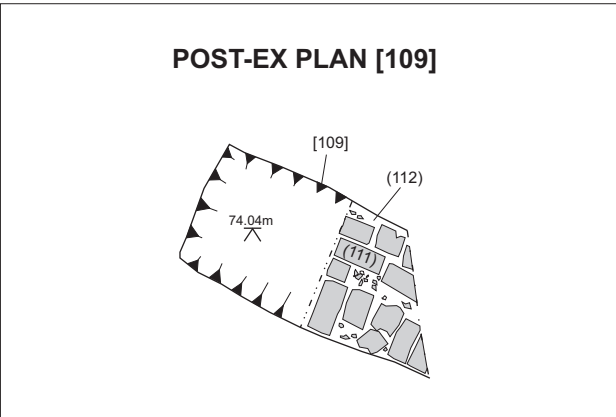
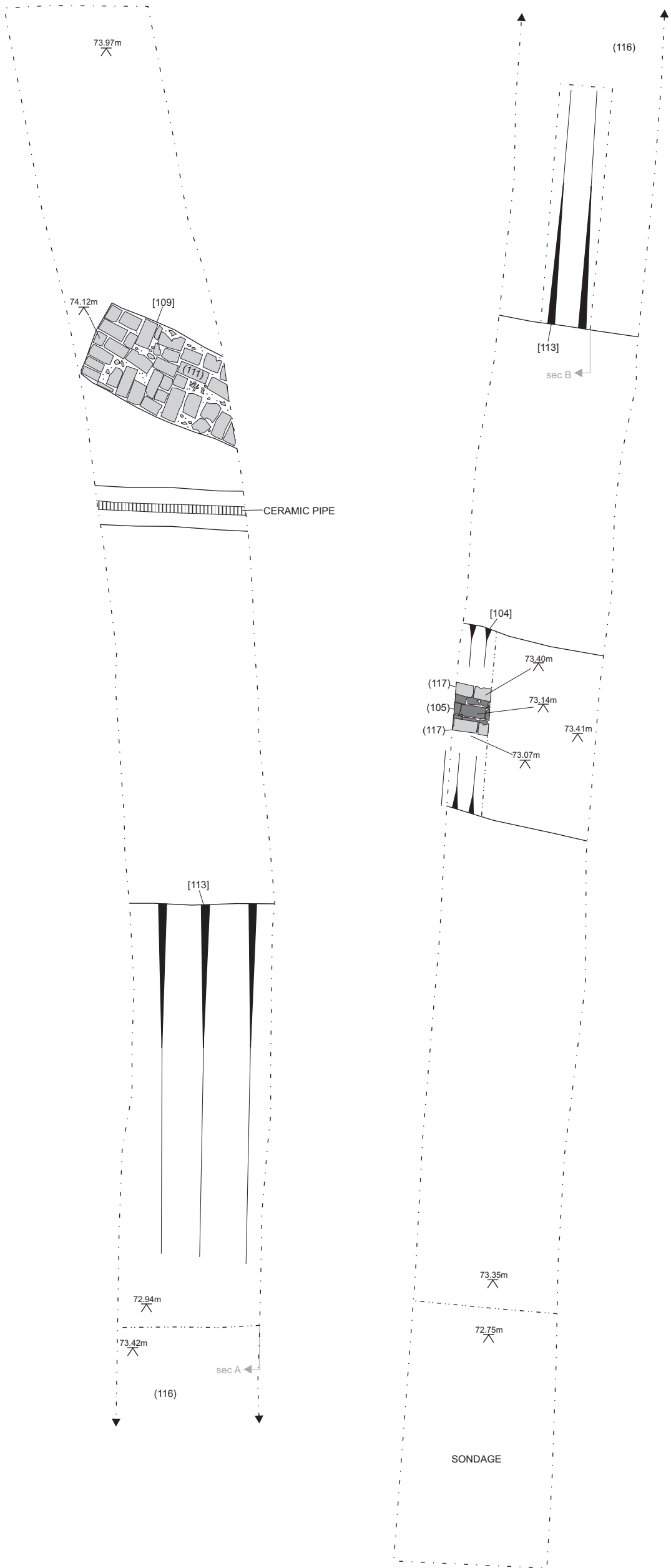
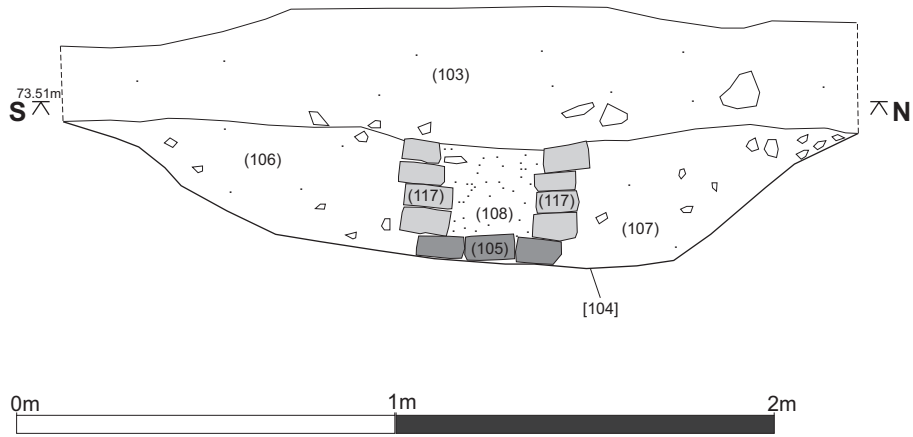
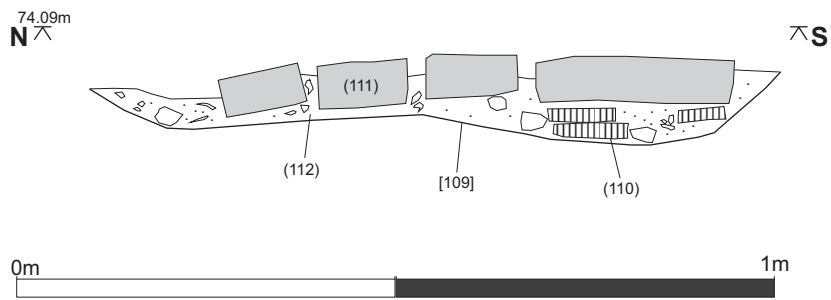


FIGURE 3: Trench 1 Plans

EAST FACING SECTION [104]



WEST FACING SECTION [109]



WEST FACING SECTION [113] (secs. A and B)

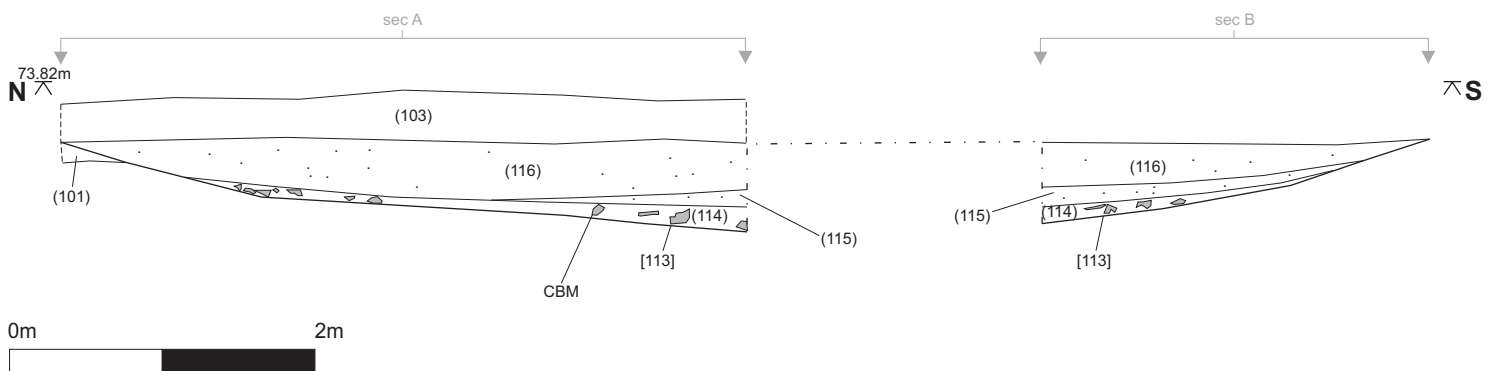


FIGURE 4: Trench 1 Sections