

**WOODMAN PUBLIC HOUSE,  
70-72 WATLING STREET,  
BEXLEYHEATH**

**NGR: TQ 4993 7508 (Centred)**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Report No. 929  
January 2014



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**Quality Assurance**

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## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December 2013 by Foundations Archaeology at the former Woodman Public House in Bexleyheath (NGR: TQ 4993 7508, centred). The work was commissioned by The Caldecotte Group.

The evaluation involved the excavation of two 15m by 1.6m trenches and one 10m by 1.6m trench within the proposed development area to enable an assessment of the archaeological potential prior the development of the site. However, on-site constraints resulted in a minor relocation of Trench 3 (See Figure 2).

The archaeological evaluation revealed no archaeological features or deposits demonstrably earlier than the late Post-medieval/Modern period and Trenches 1 and 2 showed significant late Post-medieval/Modern disturbance. A piece of 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century tobacco clay pipe was found in an upper layer of Trench 1 and represented redeposited material.

Intact soil horizons were present in all the trenches and the archaeological evaluation did not produce evidence for any substantial activity within the site before the 19th century.

## 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 *c.* 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.

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey

### *Post-medieval*

The period from *c.* AD 1500 onwards

### *Romano-British*

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *c.* AD 410.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December 2013 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Woodman Public House, Bexleyheath (NGR: TQ 4993 7508 centred) (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2013). The WSI was prepared in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2011) and discussions with Mark Stevenson, Archaeological Advisor for National Planning and Conservation: London. The WSI also complies with the principles of NPPF (2012) and Archaeology and Planning in Greater London, a Charter for Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (English Heritage, 2011).
- 1.3 Foundations Archaeology is certified to BS/EN/ISO 9001: 2008 for quality assurance in the provision of archaeological services. The company is a Registered Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists and subscribes to that organisation's Code of Conduct. All relevant IfA Codes of Practice will be adhered to throughout the course of the project.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 There has been a Planning Application (13/00693/F) to demolish the existing building and erect new houses with associated parking on the land of the former Woodman Public House. The former Woodman's Public House is located to the north of Watling Street (A207), with a school and TA centre to the east and residential housing to the west and north. The site is situated within an area of archaeological potential, as defined by Borough Policy, therefore archaeological field evaluation was required prior to any decision on the Planning Application by the Bexley Council in line with NPPF and English Heritage.
- 2.2 Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Bexleyheath consisted of an area of scrub-land with a few buildings, bordered by Watling Street, a former Roman Road. Although there have been very few archaeological deposits identified close to the study area, two findspots of Neolithic axes have been found in the vicinity.
- 2.3 The site therefore, contained the potential for the preservation of archaeological deposits predominately relating to the Prehistoric and Roman periods. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of finds or features relating to other periods.

## **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological recording 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 will allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.

3.2 These aims were to be 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 characterize the nature and preservation 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 which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and recover coherent artefactual, ecofactual and environmental samples;

iv) to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present;

v) to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigations be required.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Two 15m by 1.6m trenches and one 10m by 1.6m trench were excavated within the proposed development area, as shown in Figure 2 and 3. Due to on-site constraints in the form of a solid concrete garden wall behind the former pub there were some minor adjustments to the location of Trench 3. The adjustments were agreed with the Archaeological Advisor for National Planning and Conservation: London.

4.2 All non-significant overburden was removed to the top of the archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a 360° mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket, whilst under constant archaeological supervision. Thereafter cleaning and excavation of the features were conducted by hand and spoil heaps were visually scanned for artefacts.

4.3 Decisions about the relative value of archaeological deposits and features were made in consultation with the Archaeological Advisor for National Planning and Conservation: London.

- 4.4 All artefactual and ecofactual remains, whether stratified or not, were collected, bagged and labelled. Artefacts were subject to preliminary study on site in order to help date archaeological features and contexts. All artefactual and ecofactual evidence were treated in accordance with *First Aid for Finds*. All finds were treated in a manner to prevent deterioration.
- 4.5 All archaeological deposits and features were subject to appropriate levels of investigation. Where excavation was required for the satisfactory assessment of archaeological deposits, this was only sufficient to characterize and date them. It was anticipated that this would require a minimum of 20% sample of all linear features at appropriate intervals, including all intersections, overlaps and terminals and a minimum of 50% sample of all non-linear features. It was accepted that smaller or larger percentages may be sufficient should the date and character of features be readily apparent.
- 4.6 No archaeological deposits were entirely removed unless this was unavoidable. It was not necessarily expected that all trial trenches were fully excavated to natural subsoil, but the depth of archaeological deposits across the whole site was to be assessed. The stratigraphy of all trial trenches was recorded even where no archaeological deposits have been identified.
- 4.7 Each relevant context was excavated in such a way as to produce at least one representative cross-section of the deposit.
- 4.8 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

## **5 RESULTS**

### **Trench 1**

- 5.1.1 The natural deposits in Trench 1 consisted of firm, orange brown, sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles and was encountered at a depth of up to 0.8m from the Modern ground level (52.64m OD). Located in the centre of the trench was refuse pit [105]. The pit cut through layers (101), (102), (103) and into the top of the natural deposits. The pit was 0.54m wide by 0.80m deep and contained fill (104), which consisted of frequent pebbles and Modern rubble, such as glass, brick, mortar, iron nails and pieces of plastic. The natural deposits were sealed by (103) a possible subsoil, 0.35m thick, which consisted of a firm, dark brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles. This layer was in turn sealed by (102), a 0.35m thick layer which consisted of a loose, light brown, sandy loam with frequent inclusions of pebbles, which contained a piece of 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century tobacco clay pipe. The uppermost deposit in Trench 1 was (101), a 0.2m thick layer of loose, dark brown sandy loam with frequent inclusions of pebbles. The trench contained no archaeological features.



## **Trench 2**

- 5.2.1 The natural deposits in Trench 2 consisted of firm, orange yellow sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles and was encountered at a depth of up to 1.70m from the Modern ground level (50.91m OD). Cut into the natural were five refuse pits ([210], [214], [216], [218] and [220]), as well as late Post-medieval/Modern brick-built well [212]. As the pits were of late Post-medieval/Modern date only [210] and [214] were fully excavated, these were found to contain frequent fragments of chinaware and glass and pit [214] was stratigraphically earlier than [210].
- 5.2.2 Well cut [212] continued into the natural deposits, beyond the limits of excavation. The brick well (221), was constructed of mortar and brick and was only partly contained within the evaluation trench for a width of 1m and then extended beyond the western section of Trench 2. Between the brick and the cut was fill (211), a loose, dark brown sandy silt with occasional brick, charcoal and pebble inclusions. The internal fill of the well (222) consisted of Modern rubble, glass, chinaware, brick, mortar and plastic.
- 5.2.3 The refuse pits and natural deposits were sealed by (208), a 0.13m thick possible buried soil, which consisted of a loose, dark brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles. This was then sealed by a series of Modern make-up/demolition layers ((207) to (202)). No archaeologically significant finds or deposits demonstrably earlier than late Post-medieval/Modern were present in Trench 2.

## **Trench 3**

- 5.3.1 The natural deposits in Trench 3 consisted of firm, orange yellow sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles and was encountered at a depth of up to 0.80m from the Modern ground level (50.74m OD). The natural deposits were sealed by (304), a 0.32m thick layer which consisted of a plastic, light brown sandy silt, with frequent inclusions of pebbles and occasional pieces of brick. Layer (304) was possibly a buried soil, which was sealed by (303), a 0.31m thick layer, which consisted of a plastic, dark brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles, charcoal and small stones and was most likely a former topsoil. Layer (303) was then sealed by bedding layer (302) and concrete slabs (301). The trench contained no archaeological finds or features.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 No archaeological features or deposits demonstrably earlier than the late Post-medieval/Modern period were uncovered during the archaeological evaluation and Trenches 1 and 2 showed significant late Post-medieval/Modern disturbance. A piece of a tobacco clay pipe from the 17<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> century was found in an upper layer of Trench 1 and represented redeposited material.

- 6.2 Intact soil horizons were present in all the trenches and the archaeological evaluation did not produce evidence for any substantial activity within the site before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the appropriate museum under an accession number to be confirmed. A short note will also be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Foundations Archaeology, 2013. *Woodman Public House, 70-72 Watling Street, Bexleyheath: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Evaluation and Recording*. Unpublished.

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English Heritage (London Region). Archaeological Guidance paper 4: *Archaeological Evaluation: (guidelines)*.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank James Sturgess at the Caldecotte Group and the Archaeological Advisor for National Planning and Conservation in London, Mark Stevenson, for their kind assistance during the course of this project.

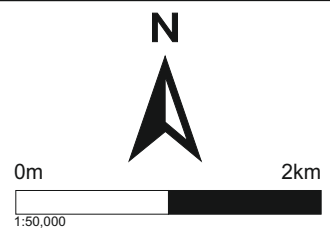
**APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data**

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/ OVERLIES	CUT BY/ OVERLAID BY
				<b>Trench 1: 15m long, 1.6m wide. Excavated onto natural substrate up to</b>		
				<b>0.80m (52.64m OD) from the Modern ground surface</b>		
(101)	15+	1.6+	0.2	Dark brown, loose, sandy loam with frequent inclusions of pebbles.	(102)	[105]
(102)	15+	1.6+	0.35	Probable buried soil. Light brown, loose, sandy loam with frequent pebbles.	(103)	(101), [105]
(103)	15+	1.6+	0.35	Probable buried soil. Dark brown, firm, sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles.	Nat	(102), [105]
(104)	0.8	2.7	0.8	Fill of rubbish pit [105], frequent of pebbles and modern rubbish, such as plastic, mortar, bricks and iron nails.	[105]	-
[105]	0.8	2.7	0.8	Cut of rubbish pit.	(101), (102), (103), Nat	(104)
Nat	15+	1.6+	-	Orange brown, firm sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles.	-	(103), [105]
				<b>Trench 2: 15m long, 1.6m wide. Excavated onto natural substrate up to</b>		
				<b>1.70m (50.91m OD) from the Modern ground surface.</b>		
(202)	15+	1.6+	0.12	Black, solid tarmac.	(203)	-
(203)	15+	1.6+	0.8	Bedding layer of yellow grey, loose gravel.	(204)	(202)
(204)	15+	1.6+	0.22	Demolition layer with frequent inclusions of brick and mortar.	(205)	(203)
(205)	15+	1.6+	0.35	Dark brown, loose sandy silt with frequent inclusions of charcoal and pebbles.	(206), [212]	(204)
(206)	15+	1.6+	0.25	Light brown, loose silty sand with occasional inclusions of charcoal, brick and mortar.	(207)	(205)
(207)	15+	1.6+	0.27	Light yellow, loose sand.	(208)	(206)
(208)	15+	1.6+	0.13	Possible buried soil of dark brown, loose sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles.	(209), (215), (217), (219)	(207)
(209)	4.7	1.6	0.2	Fill of rubbish pit [210] consisting of loose, dark brown, sandy silt with occasional inclusions of charcoal pebbles and brick.	[210]	(208)
[210]	4.7	1.6	0.2	Cut of rubbish pit.	(213), Nat	(209)
(211)	2	0.25	?	Fill of [210] consisting of dark brown, loose sandy silt with occasional inclusions of pebbles, charcoal and brick.	[212]	(221)
[212]	2	0.25	?	Cut of brick well.	(206), (207), (208), Nat	(211)
(213)	1.2	0.5	0.05	Fill of rubbish pit [214] consisting of dark brown, loose sandy silt with occasional inclusions of brick, charcoal and pebbles.	[214]	[210]
[214]	1.2	0.5	0.05	Cut of rubbish pit.	Nat	(213)
(215)	0.9	0.8	?	Fill of rubbish pit [216]. Not excavated.	[216]	(208)
[216]	0.9	0.8	?	Cut of rubbish pit. Not excavated.	Nat	(215)
(217)	1.75	0.6	?	Fill of rubbish pit [218]. Not excavated.	[218]	(208)

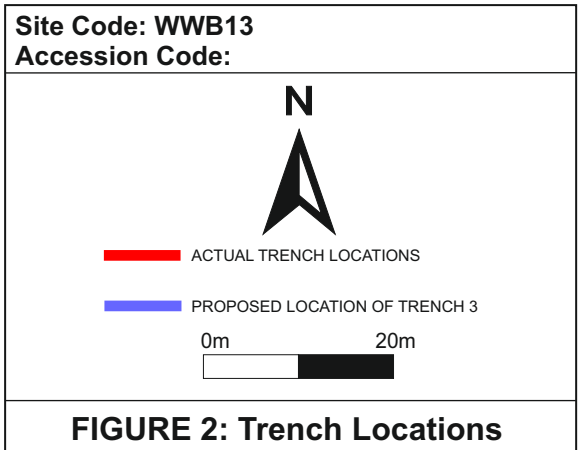
[218]	1.75	0.6	?	Cut of rubbish pit. Not excavated.	Nat	(217)
(219)	3	1.1	?	Fill of rubbish pit [220]. Not excavated.	[220]	(208)
[220]	3	1.1	?	Cut of rubbish pit. Not excavated.	Nat	(219)
(221)	1+	0.20+	?	Late Post-medieval/Modern well of brick and mortar.	[212]	(211)
(222)	1	?	?	Fill of well cavity containing Modern rubble, glass, chinaware, brick, mortar and plastic		
Nat.	15+	1.6+	-	Yellow orange, loose sandy silt with frequent inclusions of small stones.	-	[210], [212], [214], [216], [218], [220]
				<b>Trench 3: 10m long, 1.6m wide. Excavated onto natural substrate up to</b>		
				<b>0.80m (50.74m OD) from the Modern ground surface</b>		
(301)	10+	1.6+	0.1	Grey, solid concrete slabs.	(302)	-
(302)	10+	1.6+	0.12	Bedding layer of yellow grey, loose sand.	(303)	(301)
(303)	10+	1.6+	0.31	Probable buried topsoil. Dark brown, plastic, sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles, small stones and charcoal.	(304)	(302)
(304)	10+	1.6+	0.32	Probable buried subsoil. Light brown, plastic sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles and occasional inclusions of brick and charcoal.	Nat	(303)
Nat.	10+	1.6+	-	Orange yellow, firm sandy silt with frequent inclusions of pebbles.	-	(304)

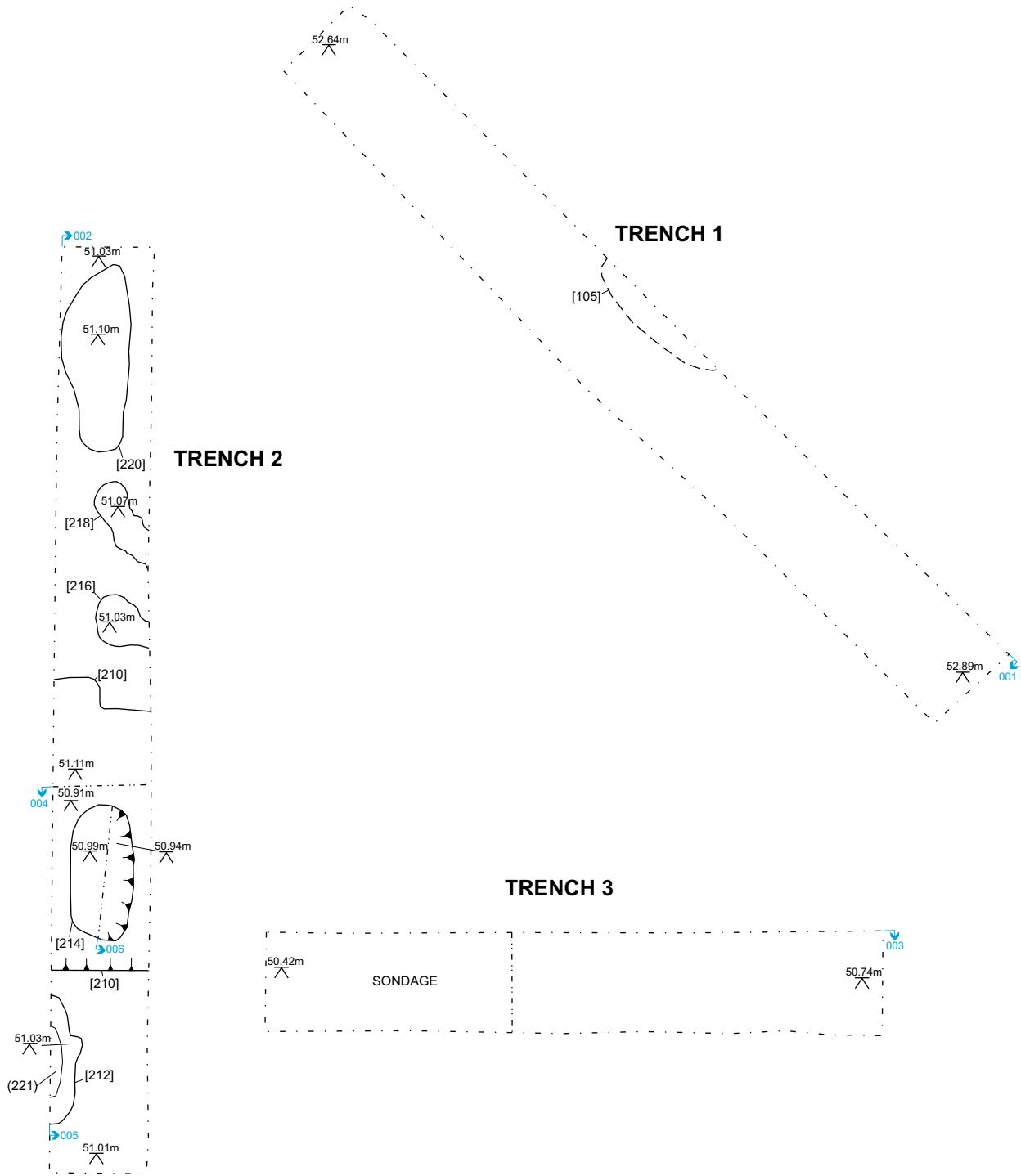


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**Site Code: WWB13**  
**Accession Code:**



**FIGURE 1: Site Location**

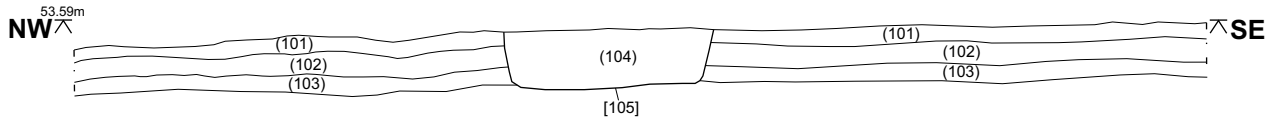




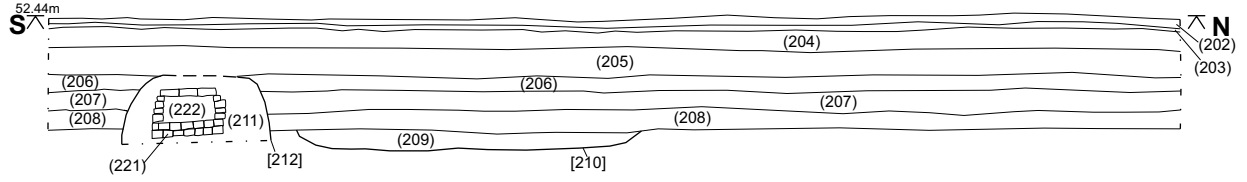
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**FIGURE 3: Trench Plans**

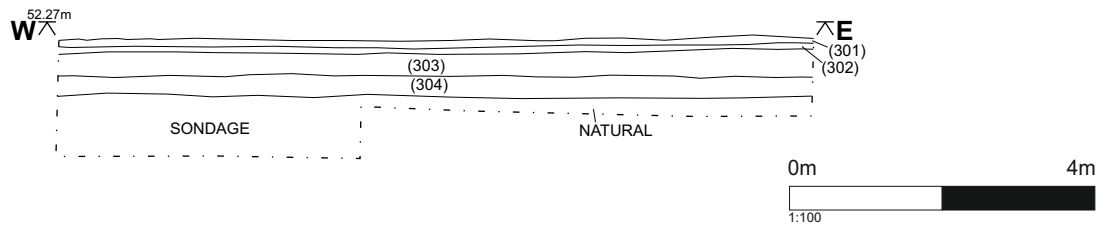
**001: SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [105]**



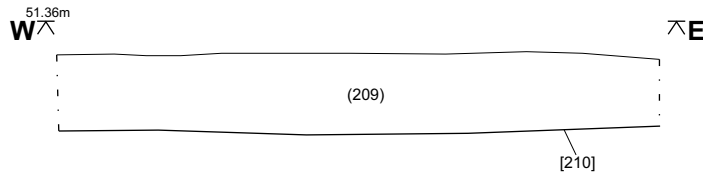
**002: EAST FACING SECTION [210] and [212]**



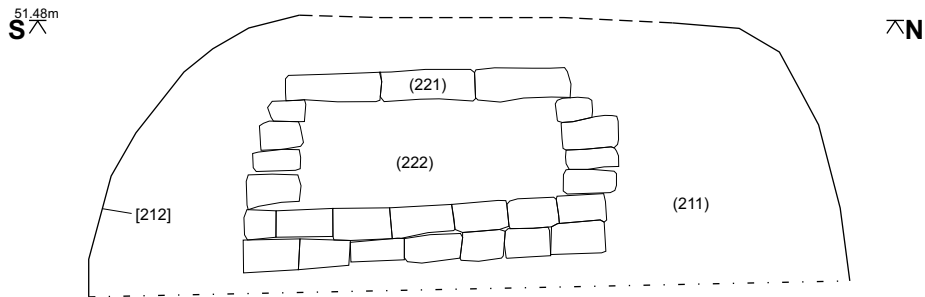
**003: SOUTH FACING SECTION TRENCH 3**



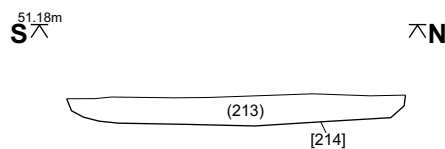
**004: SOUTH FACING SECTION [210]**



**005: EAST FACING SECTION [212]**



**006: EAST FACING SECTION [214]**



<p><b>Site Code: WWB13</b>  <b>Accession Code:</b></p>
<p>0m <span style="float: right;">1m</span></p> <p>1:20</p>
<p><b>FIGURE 4: Sections</b></p>