

**LAND AT SUTTON ROAD,**

**MILTON,**

**OXFORDSHIRE**

**NGR: 448991.192544(CENTRED)**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Report No. 974  
June 2014



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES**



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**Quality Assurance**

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## **SUMMARY**

Between 27<sup>th</sup> May and 6<sup>th</sup> June 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Sutton Road, Milton, Oxfordshire (NGR: 448991.192544 - centred). The project was commissioned by Linden Homes.

The project comprised the excavation and recording of eleven trenches across a proposed development area.

The evaluation identified the presence of later Neolithic - early Bronze Age pits/postholes and ditches/gullies, which may represent evidence for settlement activity within the site. A total of six undated graves were also present, which may relate to an adjacent Anglo-Saxon cemetery. The graves were covered and left *in-situ*.

A small finds assemblage included Grooved Ware, Beaker and Post-medieval pottery sherds, a single struck flint and a small amount of CBM and brick.

## 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 AD 1066 and 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 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 traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

### Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology between 27<sup>th</sup> May and 6<sup>th</sup> June 2014 on land at Sutton Road, Milton, Oxfordshire (NGR: 448991.192544 - centred). The project was commissioned by Linden Homes.
- 1.2 The project was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2014) and IfA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (2008).
- 1.3 The code of conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.

## 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission is being sought to erect 36 residential units to the east of Milton.
- 2.2 The site is located within an arable field, to the south of Sutton Road and immediately east and north of residential dwellings (Figures 1 and 2). The site area is approximately 1.3ha. The topography is generally flat, at approximately 59m OD and the underlying geology is recorded as *Gault Formation* - mudstone, overlaid by *Summertown-radley* - sand and gravel (BGS online viewer).
- 2.3 The site has been subject to a desk-based assessment (Foundations Archaeology 2014), which highlighted the presence of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery (MOX 11060) immediately to the west, as well as other burials and features of the same period. A Roman cemetery is also known from within 500m south of the site.
- 2.4 In accordance with NPPF (2012), the Oxfordshire Planning Archaeologist advised that a programme of pre-determination archaeological evaluation was to be undertaken in order to allow the archaeological impact of the new development to be fully assessed.

## 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. 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;
- 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 investigation be required.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 Eleven trenches were excavated across the proposed development area, as shown in Figure 2. It was necessary to shorten the length of Trench 1 in order to allow machine access/egress. All amendments to the trenching methodology were agreed, on site, with the Oxfordshire Planning Archaeologist.
- 4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of the archaeological deposits or the underlying natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a 360° mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Spoil tips were visually scanned for finds.
- 4.3 Graves were left *in-situ* and were covered in plastic sheeting subsequent to recording and prior to backfill.
- 4.4 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

#### **5 RESULTS**

- 5.1 A full description of all contexts identified during the course of the project is presented in Appendix 1, along with a report on the recovered pottery in Appendix 2 and a Miscellaneous Finds list in Appendix 3.
- 5.2 The natural substrates, which comprised highly variable sand, gravel, clay and chalk deposits, were present at an average depth of 0.55m (58m OD) below the Modern ground surface. These were sealed beneath a sandy subsoil, which was, in turn, overlaid by a ploughsoil. Fragments of brick and tile, present

within the subsoil in Trenches 7, 10 and 11, indicated that the subsoil had most likely been ploughed in the Post-medieval - Modern period. A relatively small area of Modern disturbance was present within Trench 2 (Figure 2).

5.3 Visibility conditions were generally very poor; frequently there was no discernable difference between the base of the subsoil and the top of the natural substrates and graves were only visible after trowel cleaning (Figure 8).

5.4 A total of fifteen features were cut into the top of the natural substrates within Trenches 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8. These appeared to represent two distinct types of activity; possible settlement and burial.

5.5 **Evidence for settlement activity:**

5.5.1 **Trench 1** contained a pit or posthole [104], which was associated with late Neolithic Grooved Ware pottery, as well as another possible pit or posthole [106] and the terminus of a gully [108].

5.5.2 **Trench 2** contained part of a ditch [203], which yielded a sherd of early Bronze Age Beaker pottery and may have been a continuation of gully [108].

5.5.3 **Trench 4** contained a posthole [403]/[404], which yielded a sherd of Beaker pottery along with a struck flint. A further possible posthole (406) was recorded immediately to the east.

5.5.4 **Trench 6** contained a gully [603], which was associated with evidence for a fence line, in the form of two possible postholes [605] and [607]. These features remained undated; although, the alignment of gully [603], approximately perpendicular to ditch/gully [108]/[203], suggested that they may have formed part of a contemporaneous group of boundaries.

5.6 **Evidence for burial:**

5.6.1 **Trench 4** contained five graves [407], [410], [413], [416] and [420], all of which were approximately east – west aligned.

5.6.2 **Trench 8** contained another east – west aligned grave [803].

## 6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Trenches 1, 2, 4 and possibly 6 contained evidence of later Neolithic - early Bronze Age settlement activity. The lack of evidence for similar types of features within the other trenches indicated that the distribution of features relating to this phase of activity may not be extensive and that they are possibly focused towards the north of the site.

6.2 The inhumations within the graves in Trenches 4 and 8 were partially revealed and it was possible to determine that the heads of the burials were situated at



the west of the graves. The burials remained undated, however, the east – west alignment of the graves indicated that they may have been Christian; although, this hypothesis remains untested.

- 6.2.1 There was no positive evidence for a boundary, such as a ditch or fence line, which may have demarcated the edge of the burial ground. As such, it is difficult to predict the distribution of burials within the site. The lack of burials within other trenches suggested that, beyond the area around Trench 4, extensive areas of densely distributed burials are unlikely to occur within the site. This does not preclude the possibility of isolated burials or clusters of burials to be present.
- 6.3 The evaluation has identified the presence of later Neolithic - early Bronze Age pits/postholes and ditches/gullies, which may represent evidence for settlement activity within the site. A total of six undated graves were also present, which may relate to an adjacent Anglo-Saxon cemetery.
- 6.4 Any further site investigation should seek to:
- i/ establish the extent, date and nature of the possible Prehistoric settlement activity;
  - ii/ excavate graves and any other funerary/associated features, with a view to establishing the extent and date of the burial ground, as well as addressing questions relating to the burial population demographic.
- 6.5 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 Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Council and Tom Smailes of Linden Homes for their help during the course of the project.

Land at Sutton Road, Milton, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation

APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				<b>Trench 1: 21.4m by 1.7m; natural = orange brown variable clay sand and gravel at 58m OD.</b>		
101	na	na	0.28	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	102	na
102	na	na	0.27	Subsoil; mid brown soft clay sand, which contained rare charcoal flecks.	natural	101
103				Void.		
[104]	0.5	0.46	0.14	Sub-circular pit or posthole with a rounded profile. Contained fill 105.	natural	105
105	0.5	0.46	0.14	Fill of posthole [104]; mid brown soft clay sand, which contained occasional gravel and occasional flecks and lumps of charcoal.	[104]	102
[106]	0.48	0.46	0.19	Sub-oval feature with a rounded profile. Uncertain if the feature represented a pit/posthole or a natural hollow. Contained fill 107.	natural	107
107	0.48	0.46	0.19	Fill of feature [106]; mid orange brown soft clay sand, which contained occasional gravel and rare small charcoal flecks.	[106]	102
[108]	1.4	0.38	0.15	East-west aligned gully with a rounded profile. Terminated at the west. Contained fill 109.	natural	109
109	1.4	0.38	0.15	Fill of gully [108]; mid brown soft clay sand, which contained occasional gravel and rare charcoal flecks.	[108]	102
				<b>Trench 2: 29m by 1.75m; natural = orange beige gravel and sand at 57.95m OD.</b>		
201	na	na	0.4	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	202	na
202	na	na	0.19	Subsoil; mid brown soft clay sand.	natural	201
[203]	2	0.83	0.33	Northeast - southwest aligned ditch with a rounded profile. Contained fill 204.	natural	204
204	2	0.83	0.33	Fill of ditch [203]; mid orange brown clay sand, which contained occasional gravel and rare charcoal flecks.	[203]	202
				<b>Trench 3: 30.5m by 1.70m; natural = orange beige brown clay gravel and sand at 57.99m OD.</b>		
301	na	na	0.32	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	302	na
302	na	na	0.17	Subsoil; mid brown soft clay sand.	natural	301
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		

**Land at Sutton Road, Milton, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation**

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				<b>Trench 4:</b> 29.5m by 1.70m; natural = orange beige brown sand gravel and clay at 58.10m OD.		
401	na	na	0.23	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	402	na
402	na	na	0.25	Subsoil; mid brown soft clay sand.	natural	401
[403]	0.68	0.4	0.27	Cut feature, possibly a pit, with a rounded profile. Contained a probable posthole [404] at the base.	natural	405
				Contained fill 405.		
[404]	0.37	0.21	0.19	Sub-oval posthole with near vertical sides and a rounded base. Situated at the base of feature [403]. Contained fill 405.	natural	405
405	0.68	0.4	0.42	Fill of features [403] and [404]; mid-dark brown soft clay sand, which contained occasional small stones and frequent charcoal flecks and lumps.	[403]/[404]	402
406	0.2	0.2	?	Possible sub-circular posthole; deposit of dark brown soft clay sand, which contained frequent charcoal flecks. Not excavated.	natural	402
[407]	1.2	0.7	?	East-west aligned grave, which contained skeleton 408 and grave backfill 409. Not fully excavated.	natural	408
408	0.15	0.13	?	Partially exposed human skeleton. Skeletal element exposed = part of skull.	[407]	409
409	1.2	0.7	?	Fill of grave [407]; mid brown clay sand gravel.	408	402
[410]	1.1	0.58	?	East-west aligned grave, which contained skeleton 411 and grave backfill 412. Not fully excavated.	natural	411
411	0.1	0.1	?	Partially exposed human skeleton. Skeletal elements exposed = part of skull and part of undiagnostic bone.	[410]	412
412	1.1	0.58	?	Fill of grave [410]; mid brown clay sand gravel.	411	402
[413]	1.05	0.5	?	East-west aligned grave, which contained skeleton 414 and grave backfill 415. Not fully excavated.	natural	414
414	0.09	0.09	?	Partially exposed human skeleton. Skeletal element exposed = part of skull.	[413]	415
415	1.05	0.5	?	Fill of grave [413]; mid brown clay sand gravel.	414	402
[416]	1.3	0.5	?	East-west aligned grave, which contained skeleton 417 and grave backfill 418. Not fully excavated.	natural	417
				Grave and skeleton partially truncated during machining phase.		
417	0.95	0.35	?	Partially exposed human skeleton. Skeletal elements exposed = part of skull, part of arm bone, area around pelvis.	[416]	418
418	1.3	0.5	?	Fill of grave [416]; mid brown clay sand gravel.	417	402
419	0.6	0.11	?	Curvilinear lens of black clay silt. Uncertain if this deposit represented a natural feature, such as root disturbance, or, was related to burial activity.	natural	402?

**Land at Sutton Road, Milton, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation**

<b>CXT</b>	<b>L(m)</b>	<b>W(m)</b>	<b>D(m)</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>CUTS/LATER THAN</b>	<b>CUT BY/EARLIER THAN</b>
[420]	1.23	0.9	>0.15	East-west aligned grave with a sloping profile, which contained skeleton 421 and grave backfill 422.	natural	421
				Not fully excavated.		
421	0.3	0.15	?	Partially exposed human skeleton. Skeletal elements exposed = leg bones.	[420]	422
422	1.23	0.9	>0.15	Fill of grave [420]; mid brown clay sand gravel.	421	402
				<b>Trench 5:</b> 31m by 1.75m; natural = orange brown white sand gravel and chalk at 58.01m OD.		
501	na	na	0.26	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	502	na
502	na	na	0.25	Subsoil; mid dark brown soft clay sand.	natural	501
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		
				<b>Trench 6:</b> 29m by 1.8m; natural = orange brown clay sand gravel at 57.83m OD.		
601	na	na	0.26	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	602	na
602	na	na	0.37	Subsoil; light orange brown clay sand gravel.	natural	601
[603]	5.6	0.46	0.16	Northwest - southeast aligned gully with a rounded profile. Contained fill 604. Associated with	natural	604
				postholes [605] and [607].		
604	5.6	0.46	0.16	Fill of gully [603]; orange brown plastic clay silt, which contained occasional gravel.	[603]	602
[605]	0.22	0.22	0.11	Possible sub-circular posthole with a rounded profile. Contained fill 606. Similar to posthole [607].	natural	606
				Associated with gully [603].		
606	0.22	0.22	0.11	Fill of posthole [605]; grey brown plastic silt clay, which contained occasional gravel.	[605]	602
[607]	0.2	0.18	0.1	Possible sub-circular posthole with a rounded profile. Contained fill 608. Similar to posthole [605].	natural	608
				Associated with gully [603].		
608	0.2	0.18	0.1	Fill of posthole [607]; light brown grey plastic silt clay, which contained occasional gravel.	[607]	602
				<b>Trench 7:</b> 30m by 1.75m; natural = beige brown sand gravel and clay at 57.93m OD.		
701	na	na	0.4	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	702	na
702	na	na	0.15	Subsoil; light orange brown clay sand gravel.	natural	701
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		

**Land at Sutton Road, Milton, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation**

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				<b>Trench 8:</b> 30m by 1.75m; natural = orange brown sand gravel clay at 58.10m OD.		
801	na	na	0.3	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	802	na
802	na	na	0.21	Subsoil; mid brown soft clay sand.	natural	801
<b>[803]</b>	2	0.5	?	East-west aligned grave, which contained skeleton 804 and grave backfill 805. Not fully excavated.	natural	804
804	1.55	0.25	?	Partially exposed human skeleton. Skeletal elements exposed = part of skull, part of pelvis and some foot bones.	[803]	805
805	2	0.5	?	Fill of grave [803]; mid brown sand clay, which contained occasional gravel and occasional chalk pieces.	804	802
				<b>Trench 9:</b> 30m by 1.75m; natural = orange beige clay sand gravel at 58.13m OD.		
901	na	na	0.3	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	902	na
902	na	na	0.26	Subsoil; orange brown soft clay silt sand.	natural	901
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		
				<b>Trench 10:</b> 29.5m by 1.70m; natural = orange brown gravel clay sand at 58m OD.		
1001	na	na	0.35	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	1002	na
1002	na	na	0.2	Subsoil; orange brown gravel clay sand.	natural	1001
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		
				<b>Trench 11:</b> 30m by 1.70m; natural = beige orange brown pea-grit gravel and clay silt at 58.01m OD.		
1101	na	na	0.35	Ploughsoil; dark brown clay sand.	1102	na
1102	na	na	0.31	Subsoil; mid brown clay sand silt.	natural	1101
				No archaeological features were present within the trench.		

## APPENDIX 2: The Pottery

By Jane Timby

### Summary

The evaluation resulted in the recovery of seven sherds of pottery weighing 64.5 g dating to the later Neolithic - early Bronze Age, Beaker and Post-medieval periods. Pottery was recovered from just four contexts ranging from single pieces to a maximum of four fragments from context (105). For the purposes of the assessment the assemblage was sorted macroscopically into fabrics in order to ascertain date and quantified by sherd count and weight. The finds are catalogued individually below.

The earliest material is four sherds of Grooved Ware from context (105) probably from two separate vessels. One vessel is represented by a rim tapering slightly to a rounded point and decorated with two horizontal grooves. It has a grog temper. The second vessel has a grog and sparse decayed limestone temper and is represented by three bodysherds decorated with incised diagonal chevrons.

One very small rimsherd from (204) and a decorated bodysherd from (405) are both from Beaker. Both sherds have a grog temper with sparse rounded grains of quartz sand. The sherd from (405) is decorated with four horizontal comb-impressed lines.

Several sites with Grooved Ware and Beaker pottery are known in the region, for example, Kingshill North, Cirencester (Mullin 2011), Bourton-on-the-Water (Raymond forthcoming) and several sites in the Cotswold Water Park especially in the Lechlade area (Darvill *et al.* 1986, fig. 3; Darvill 1998; Lamdin-Whymark *et al.* 2009; Brown and Mullin 2010). Close parallels can also be cited from Durrington Walls (Longworth 1971, fig. 26-7).

A sherd of Post-medieval glazed red earthenware came from (1001).

### Potential and further work

The presence of the earlier Prehistoric pottery is an important addition to the growing catalogue of material from the region and is of considerable significance at both a local and regional level. Should further work be undertaken this material should be analysed further and placed into its regional context by an appropriate specialist.

### Catalogue

1. Rim sherd, slightly tapered with two horizontal grooved just below on the exterior surface. Black in colour. Fabric: grog-tempered. Wt. 5 g. Context (105). Grooved Ware. Date: late Neolithic.
2. Three bodysherds with a reddish brown exterior and dark grey core. Decorated with incised discontinuous diagonal line chevrons. Fabric: grog and sparse limestone. Wt. 38 g. Context (105). Grooved Ware. Date: late Neolithic.

3. Small rimsherd from a Beaker. Fabric: grog with sparse rounded quartz grains. Wt. > 1 g. Context (204).
4. Bodysherd from a Beaker decorated with four horizontal lines of comb impressions. Fabric: grog with sparse rounded quartz grains. Wt. 9 g. Context (405).
5. Bodysherd of glazed red earthenware. Wt. 12 g. Context (1001). Date: post-medieval/modern.

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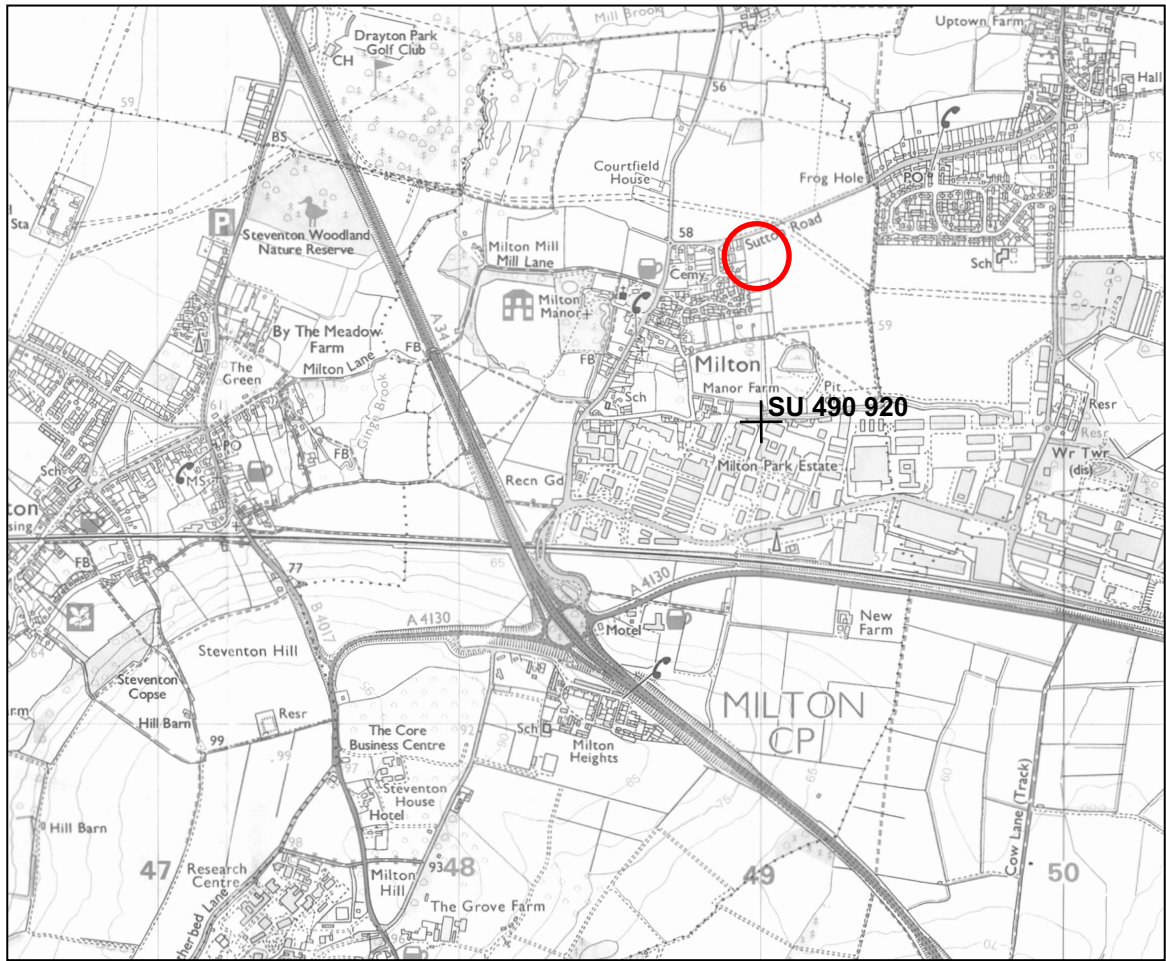
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**APPENDIX 3: Miscellaneous Finds List**

<b>CONTEXT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
405	1 X struck flint
702	1 X brick fragment
1002	1 X tile fragment
1102	2 X tile fragments
1102	1 X brick fragment



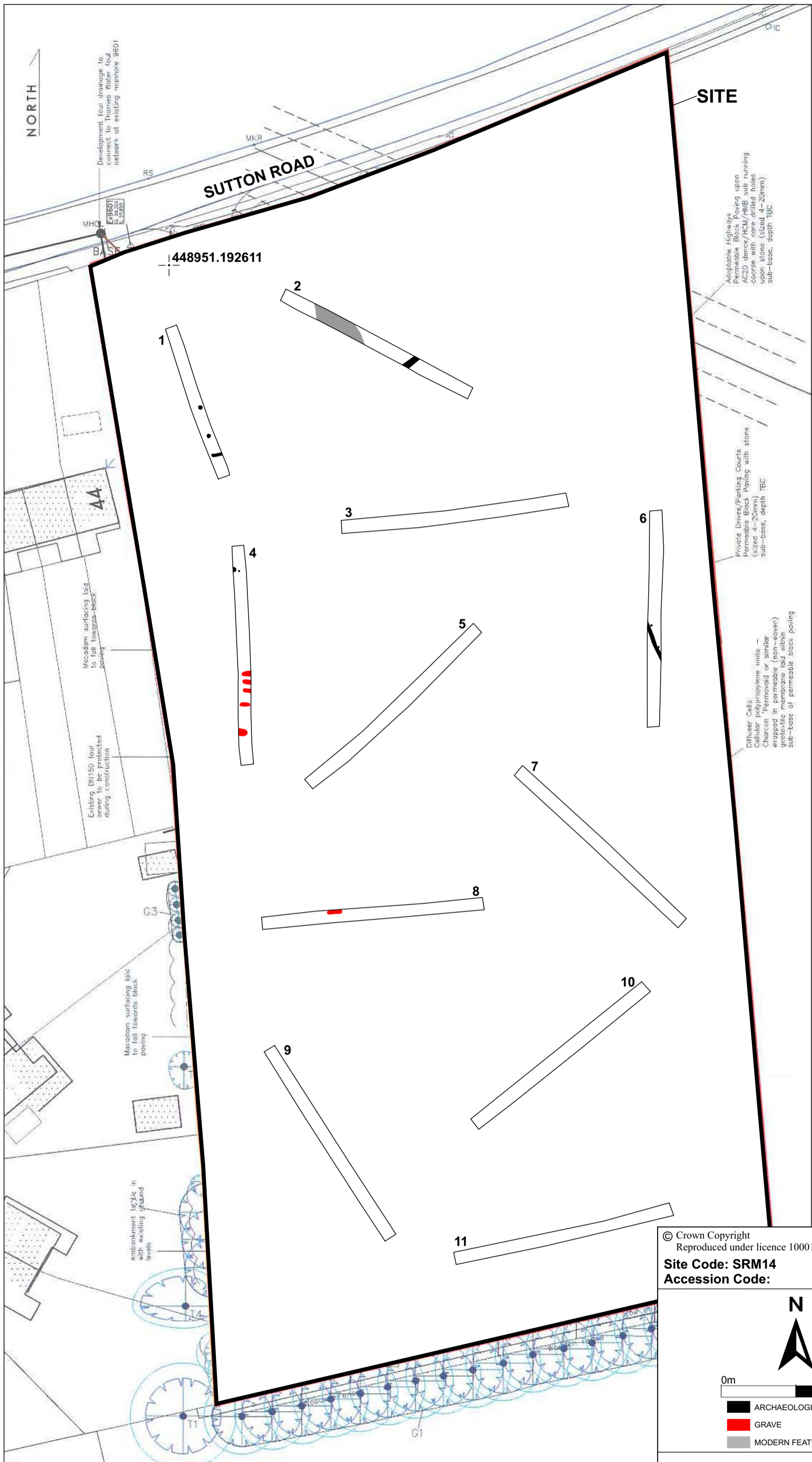


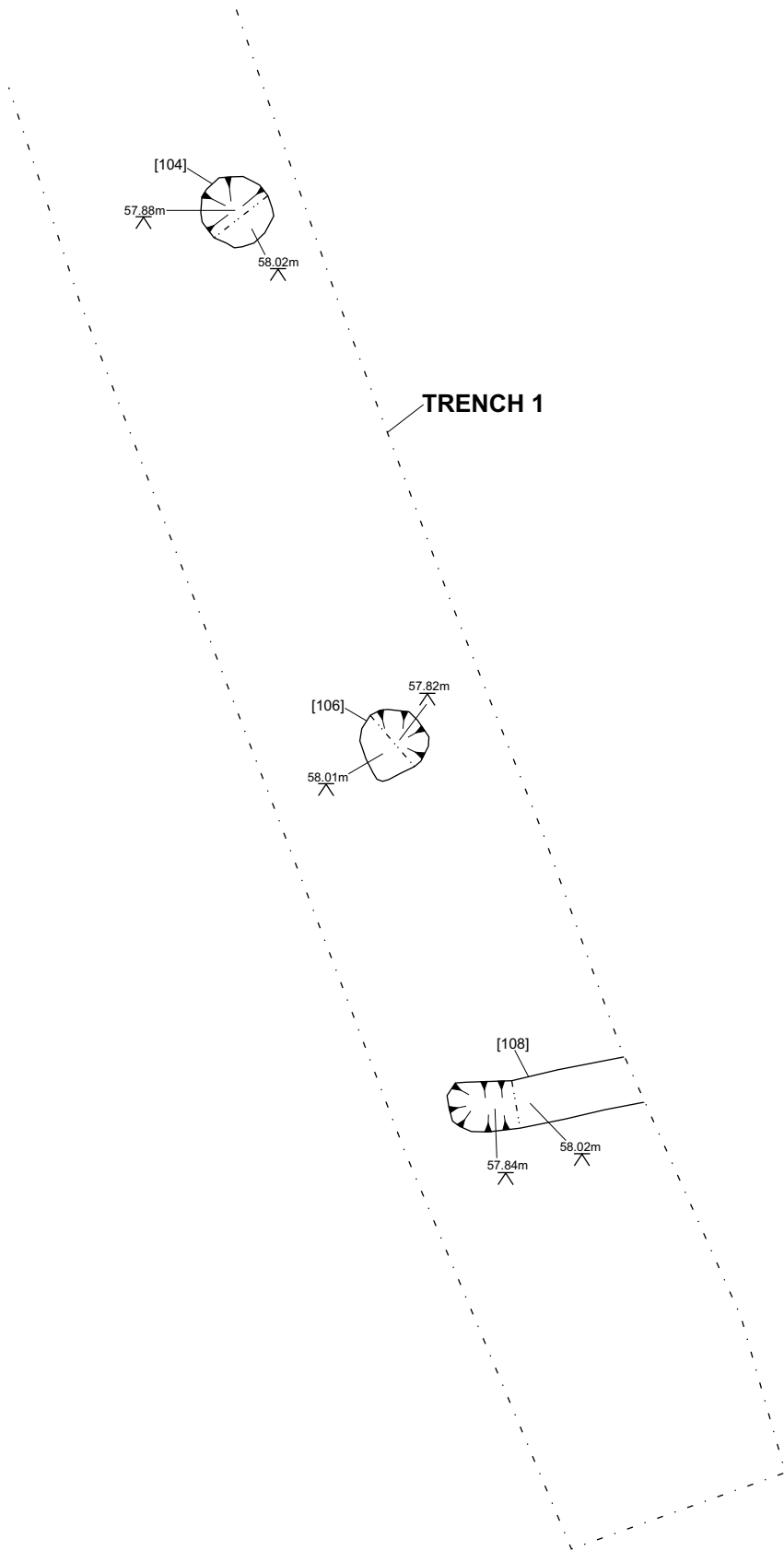
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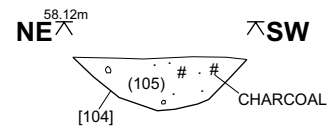
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**FIGURE 1: Site Location**

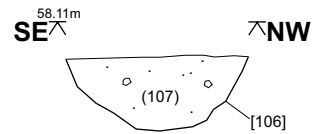




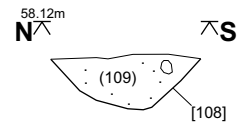
**NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [104]**



**NORTHEAST FACING SECTION [106]**



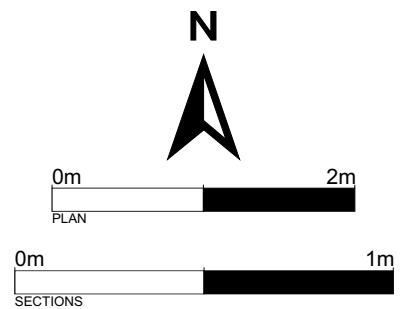
**WEST FACING SECTION [108]**



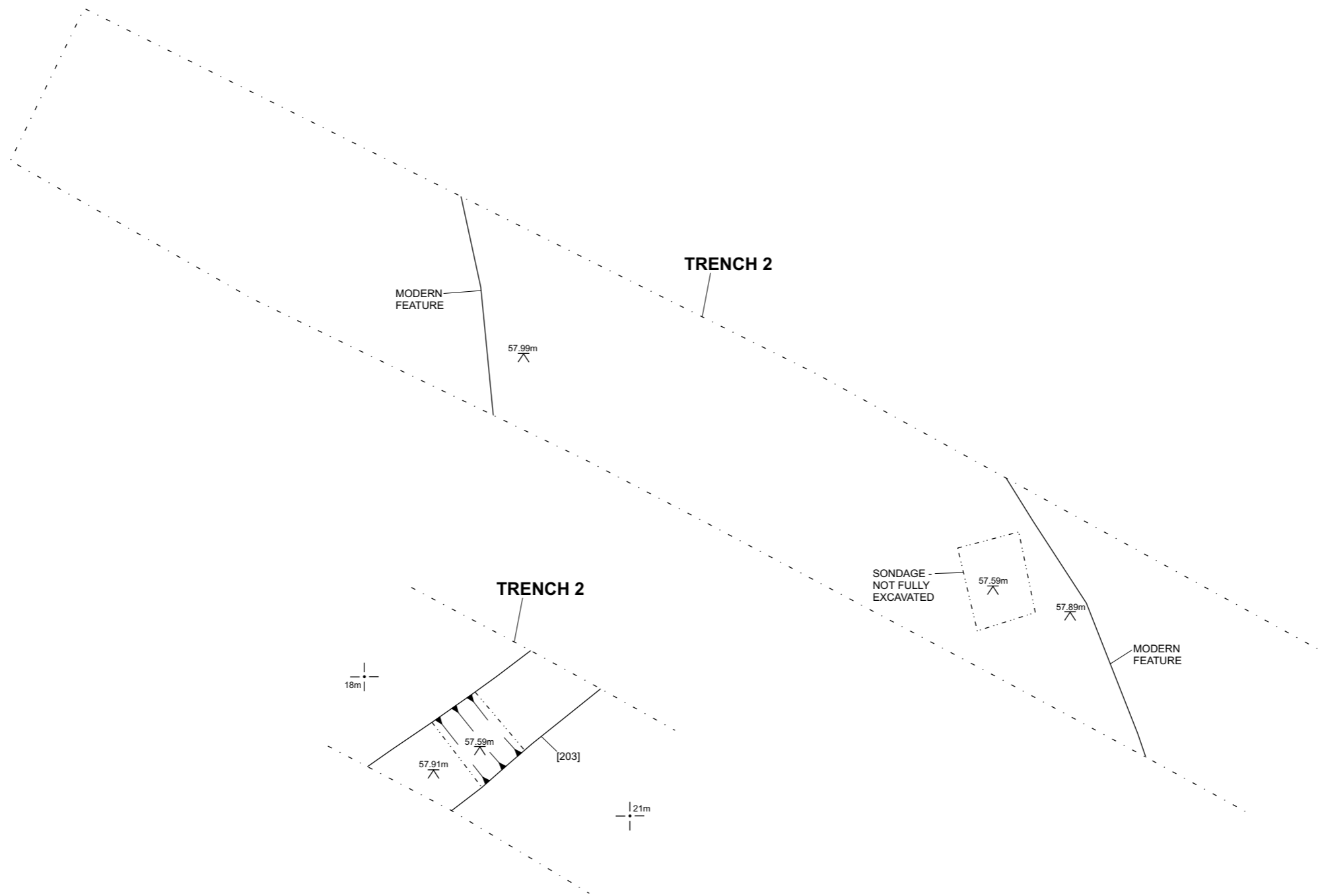
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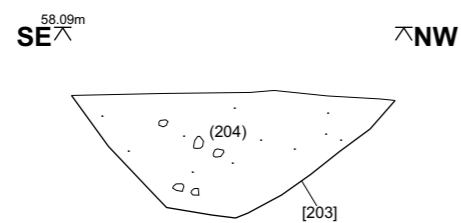
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**FIGURE 3: Trench 1 Plan and Sections**

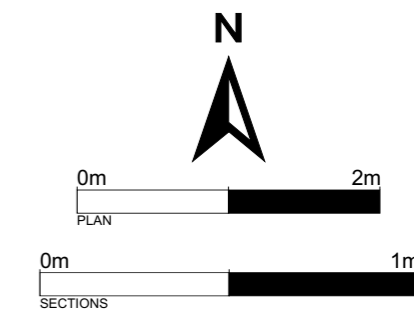


**NORTHEAST FACING SECTION [203]**

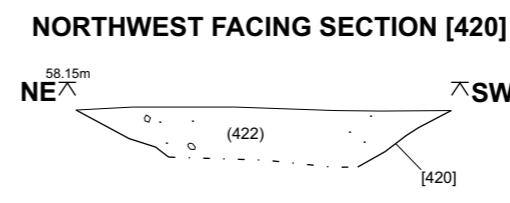
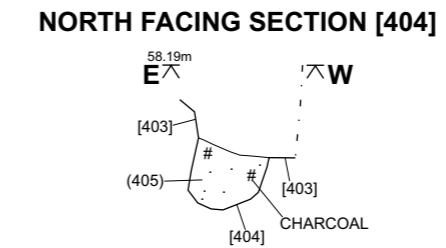
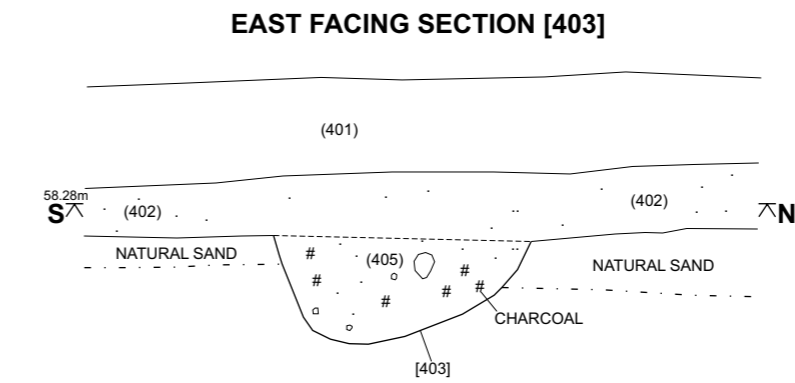
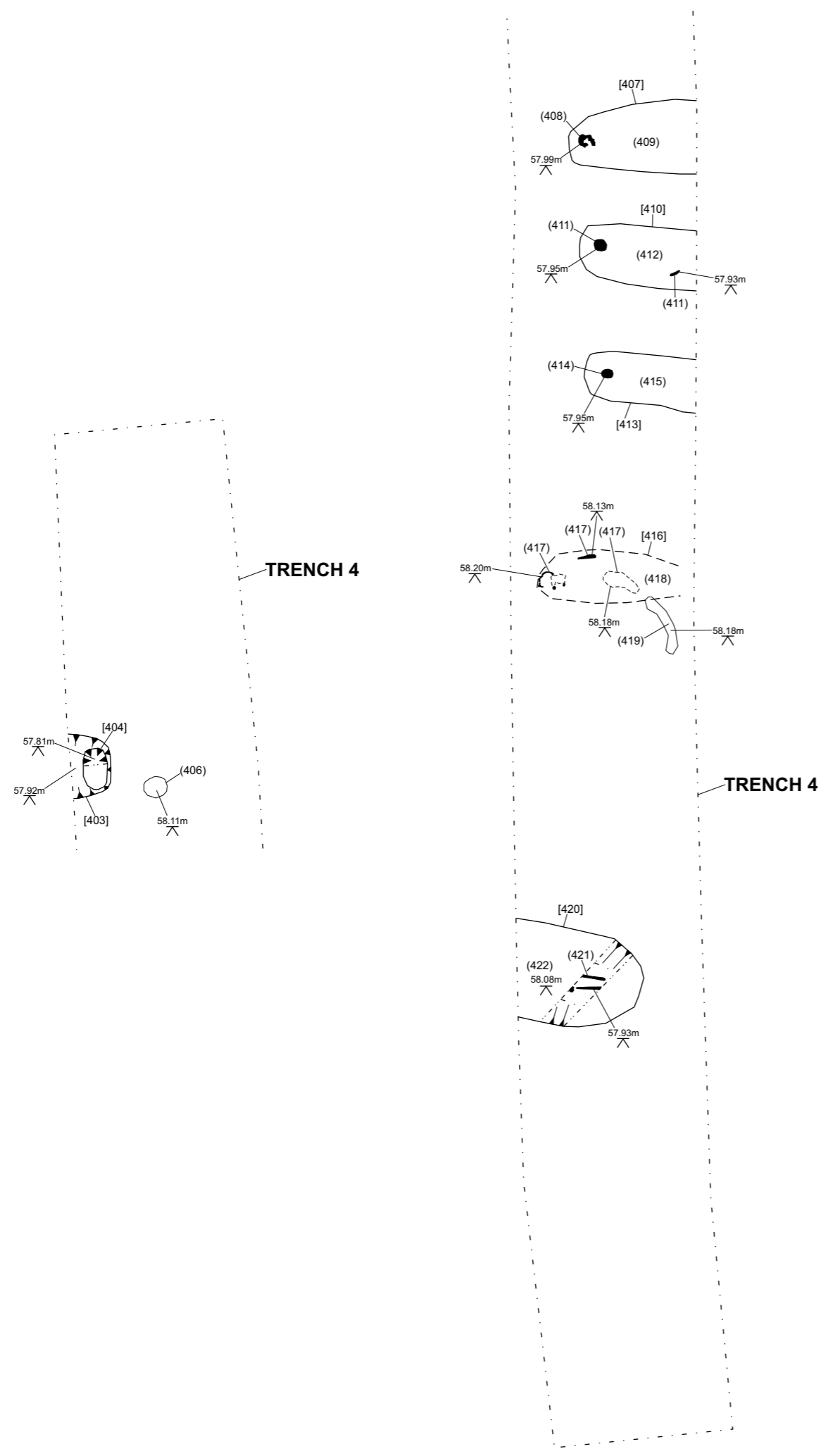


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**FIGURE 4: Trench 2 Plans and Section**



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**N**

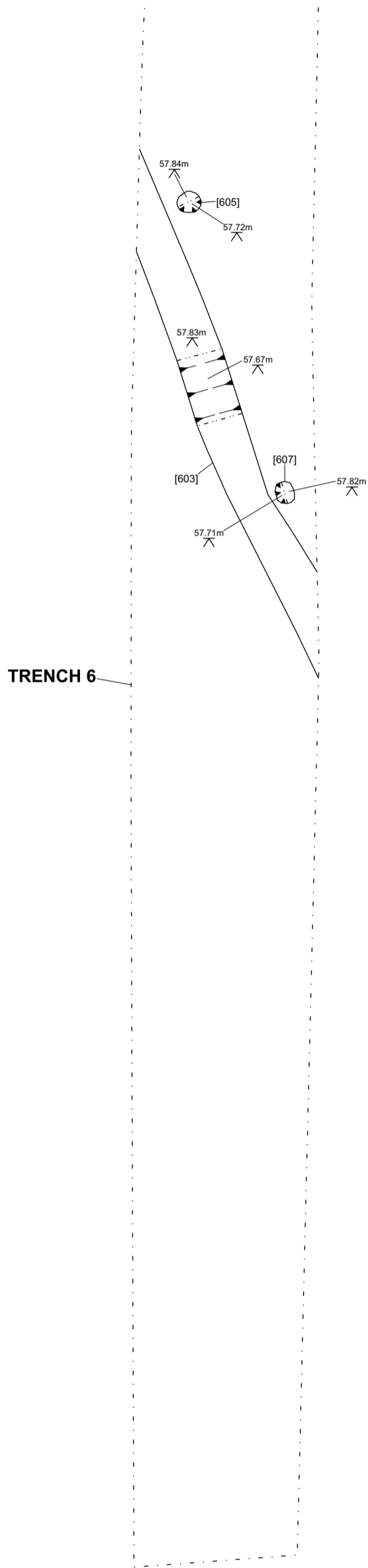
0m 2m

PLAN

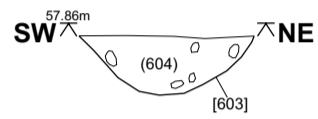
0m 1m

SECTIONS

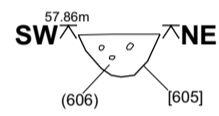
**FIGURE 5: Trench 4 Plans and Sections**



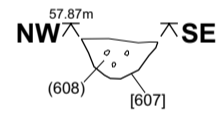
**SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION [603]**



**SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION [605]**



**SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [607]**

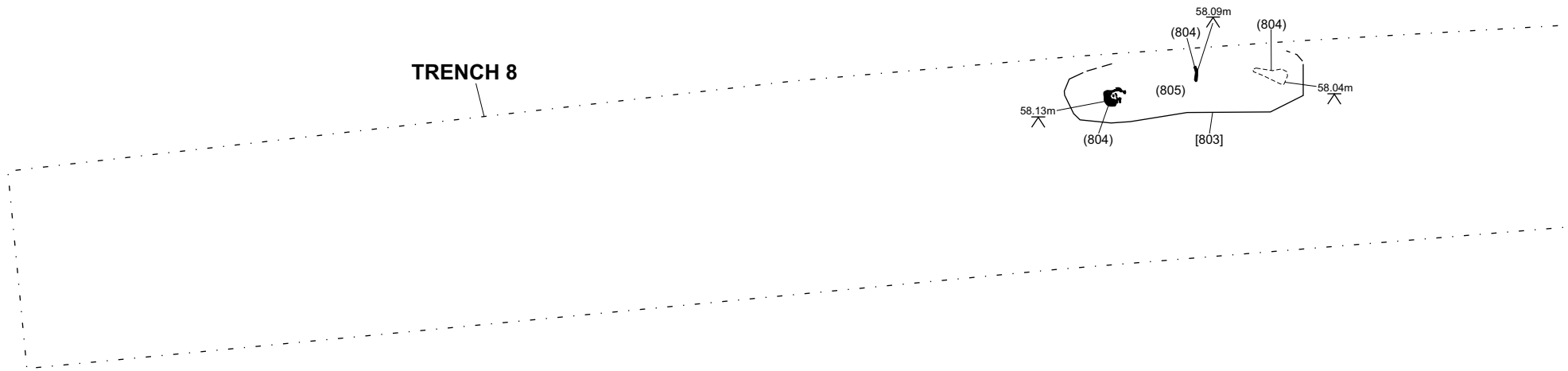


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**FIGURE 6: Trench 6 Plan and Sections**



**TRENCH 8**

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0m 2m

**FIGURE 7: Trench 8 Plan**



PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVES [407] AND [410] AFTER TROWEL CLEAN

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**FIGURE 8: Photograph of Graves  
[407] and [410]**