

**LAND AT 6 FROME ROAD,
RODE,
SOMERSET.**

NGR: 380938.153550 (centred)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

May 2015
Report No. 1057



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

In March 2015 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at 6 Frome Road, Rode, Somerset (NGR: 380938.153550 - centred). The project was commissioned by Les Boyce.

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

Trenches 1 and 2 contained a series of ditches and a pit, which probably represented Medieval settlement activity. A further feature, present at the west end of Trench 1, remained difficult to interpret; although, it also probably represented Medieval activity.

Trench 3 contained a substantial probable quarry, which had been cut into the sloping limestone deposits present at the east of the site. Pottery recovered from the associated in-fill deposits suggested a Medieval date for the feature; although, this material could be residual and, as such, a later date remains possible.

The evaluation has identified the presence of features associated with Medieval settlement, as well as a Medieval or later limestone quarry. It is likely that the on-site evidence represents part of the Medieval village centred on St. Lawrence Church.

Limited evidence for earlier activity was present in the form of a single sherd of Iron Age pottery and two struck flints.

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 in March 2015 on land at 6 Frome Road, Rode, Somerset (NGR: 380938.153550 - centred). The project was commissioned by Les Boyce.
- 1.2 The project was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2014) and CIfA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (2014).
- 1.3 The code of conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission is being sought to erect residential units within the site.
- 2.2 The site is located on the eastern side of Frome Road and comprises a roughly triangular plot of land, covering approximately 0.3ha. At the time of the fieldwork the site contained a single residential dwelling situated within an associated garden. The underlying geology is recorded as *Cornbrash Formation* – limestone (BGS – online viewer). The site is situated on relatively flat land, which slopes upwards towards the east.
- 2.3 There are no Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within 500m of the Site. A single Scheduled Monument, The Devil's Bed and Bolster Long Barrow (Ref 1017897) lies 540m to the east-southeast of the site (HER 23199). There are 21 listed buildings within 500m of the site, of which 11 fall within the churchyard of the Grade I listed St. Lawrence Church (HER 24245).
- 2.4 Evidence for Prehistoric activity is essentially limited to the Scheduled Neolithic long barrow and an adjacent flint scatter (HER 23128) identified in 1977 and further collected in 1997, approximately 400 east-southeast of the site. An Iron Age coin has also been found 400m to the northwest of the site (HER 25317).
- 2.5 Evidence for Roman activity is represented by a settlement (HER 24246) located approximately 530m to the southwest of the site. Evidence for the settlement has come from field collection of surface artefacts, a geophysical survey (HER 32172) and evaluation (HER 31596), both in 2011, as well as an excavation (HER 32655) in 2014.
- 2.6 Evidence for Early Medieval (Saxon) activity is restricted to the name of the settlement - Anglo-Saxon 'rud', a clearing; suggesting an early settlement may have existed. The first reference to Rode comes from the Domesday Book, at which time the estate was held by the Bishop of Coutances in Normandy;

though a hide was also held by Richard, who held the land of Regenblad the priest who had held the land Tempus Rex Edwardus.

- 2.7 The Medieval village appears to have been located along Frome Road, centred on St. Lawrence Church. Earthworks relating to this historic core survive as a shrunken Medieval village (HER 24252) approximately 200m to the southwest of the site. The church itself is located approximately 140m to the southwest of the site. A watching brief at the church in 2010 (HER 28344) revealed a number of shallow burials.
- 2.8 The study area therefore contained potential for archaeological features and deposits, predominantly associated with the Saxon, Medieval and Post-medieval periods. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of finds or features associated with other periods.
- 2.9 In accordance with NPPF (2012), the 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 informed 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 establish the relationship of any remains to the surrounding contemporary landscape.

- 3.3 The above objectives were designed to complement and add to research themes set out in the Solent-Thames Research Framework; in particular with regard to characterisation of settlement forms and function, population studies and economy.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 Three evaluation trenches were excavated within the proposed development area, as shown in Figure 2. The trenches were located within available areas in order to provide a representative sample of the site.
- 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 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 variable plastic pink clay and beige limestone, were present at an average depth of 0.42m (64.63m OD) below the Modern ground surface. In Trenches 1 and 2 the natural deposits were sealed beneath a clay sand subsoil (102)/(202), which was, in turn, overlaid by a clay sand topsoil (101)/(201). The natural limestone was directly overlaid by topsoil (301) at the southeast, upslope, end of Trench 3. Due to the presence of a substantial feature [303], which contained multiple variable fills, it was not possible to confidently demonstrate the presence of a subsoil layer within Trench 3.
- 5.3 A total of nine features were present within the trenches.
- 5.4 **Trench 1** contained a ditch [103], which was situated beneath the subsoil and was associated with 12th century Medieval pottery. Feature [105] was also sealed by the subsoil. The feature contained four variable fills (106-9), which yielded 11th to 14th century Medieval pottery, as well as animal bone fragments. The feature was only partially revealed at the west end of the trench and was therefore difficult to interpret.
- 5.5 **Trench 2** contained two ditches [203]/[205], a probable ditch (210) and one small pit [207], all of which were sealed by the subsoil. Ditches [205] and

(210), along with pit [207], were all associated with 12th century Medieval pottery. A single struck flint present within ditch [203] almost certainly represented residual material.

- 5.6 **Trench 3** contained a substantial feature [303], which was cut into the top of natural solid limestone and extended across Trench 3 for 15 metres. The feature had a near vertical southeastern edge and limited excavation indicated that it had an essentially flat base. It contained a series of mixed, dumped in-fill deposits, which yielded 12th century Medieval pottery, iron and copper objects and animal bone, as well as a piece of possible slag.
- 5.6.1 Features [311] and [319] were stratigraphically later than the in-fill deposits associated with feature [303] and contained 17th century pottery and most likely represented Post-medieval/Modern activity.
- 5.7 The recovered artefact assemblage included a single sherd of Iron Age pottery, present within subsoil (102), as well as Medieval and Post-medieval pottery, struck flints, animal bone, metal objects, CBM and a piece of possible slag.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Trenches 1 and 2 contained a series of ditches and a pit, which probably represented Medieval settlement activity. The ditches appeared to form part of a fairly regular co-axial ditch system. Feature [105], present at the west end of Trench 1, remained difficult to interpret; although, it also probably represented Medieval activity.
- 6.2 Trench 3 contained a substantial probable quarry, which had been cut into the sloping limestone deposits present at the east of the site. Limited investigation indicated that the feature had a relatively regular and flat base, and, as such, it was not possible to entirely rule out the possibility that it represented a terrace. Pottery recovered from the associated in-fill deposits suggested a Medieval date for the feature; although, this material could be residual and, as such, a later date remains possible.
- 6.3 The evaluation has identified the presence of features associated with Medieval settlement, as well as a Medieval or later limestone quarry. It is likely that the on-site evidence represents part of the Medieval village centred on St. Lawrence Church. Limited evidence for earlier activity was present in the form of a single sherd of Iron Age pottery and two struck flints.
- 6.4 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with an appropriate museum. 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 Steven Membery of the South West Heritage Trust, Howard Waters of Mathewson Waters Architects and Les Boyce for their help during the course of the project.

Land at 6 Frome Road, Rode: Archaeological Evaluation

APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				TRENCH 1; 19.3m by 1.5m. Natural = plastic pink clay and beige limestone		
				brash at		
				average 64.76m OD.		
101	na	na	0.18	Topsoil; dark brown clay sand.	102	na
102	na	na	0.23	Subsoil; grey brown clay sand.	natural	101
[103]	3.6	0.6	0.2	Northeast - southwest aligned ditch with a rounded profile. Contained fill 104.	natural	104
104	3.6	0.6	0.2	Fill of ditch [103]; grey brown soft clay sand, which contained occasional	[103]	102
				small stones and frequent charcoal flecks.		
[105]	1.6	3	0.55	Cut feature with a sloping eastern edge and a flat base. Only partially	natural	106
				present within the evaluation trench. Contained fills 106 - 109.		
106	?	1.7	0.29	Primary fill of feature [105]; mottled blue grey plastic clay, which contained	[105]	107
				occasional stones and occasional to frequent charcoal flecks.		
107	?	0.9	0.1	Fill of feature [105]; beige brown clay sand, which contained frequent	106	108
				beige limestone fragments and frequent charcoal flecks.		
108	?	2.14	0.24	Fill of feature [105]; mid brown plastic clay sand, which contained occasional	107	109
				small stones and occasional charcoal flecks.		
109	1.6	3	0.22	Fill of feature [105]; mid brown plastic clay sand, which contained frequent	108	102
				beige limestone fragments and occasional charcoal flecks.		
				TRENCH 2; 19.3m by 1.45m. Natural = plastic pink clay at average 64.12m OD.		
201	na	na	0.14	Topsoil; dark brown clay sand.	202	na
202	na	na	0.32	Subsoil; grey brown clay sand.	natural	201
[203]	1.45	0.66	0.24	Northwest - southeast aligned ditch with a steep, rounded profile. Contained fill	natural	204
				204. Similar to/associated with ditch [205].		

Land at 6 Frome Road, Rode: Archaeological Evaluation

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
204	1.45	0.66	0.24	Fill of ditch [203]; light brown clay sand, which contained occasional small stones	[203]	202
				and rare charcoal flecks.		
[205]	3.2	0.75	0.23	Northeast - southwest aligned ditch with a rounded profile. Contained fill 206.	natural	206
206	3.2	0.75	0.23	Fill of ditch [205]; light brown clay sand, which contained occasional small stones	[205]	202
				and rare charcoal flecks. Similar to fill 204.		
[207]	0.62	0.55	0.21	Sub-oval pit with steep sides and a flat base. Contained fill 208.	natural	208
208	0.62	0.55	0.21	Fill of pit [207]; light brown clay sand, which contained occasional small stones and occasional charcoal flecks.	[207]	202
209				Void.		
210	2.2	0.6	?	North - south aligned probable ditch, similar to ditches [203] and [205]. Trowel cleaned, but not excavated.	natural	202
				TRENCH 3; 19.1m by 1.40m. Natural = solid limestone at average 65.00m OD.		
301	na	na	se = 0.20 nw = 0.33	Topsoil; dark brown clay sand.	302	na
302	na	11	se = 0.00 nw = 0.27	Layer of grey brown clay sand, which contained occasional small stones. Only occurred in the northwestern half of the trench; dissipated towards the southeast.	309, 322	[311], 301
[303]	15	1.7	0.67	Substantial cut feature, which extended across the majority of Trench 3. Limited hand excavation indicated that the feature had a near vertical southeastern edge and, where exposed, a relatively uniform flat base. It contained fills 304-310, 313-318, 321-322 and possibly 302.	natural	306, 313, 316, 321, 322
304	?	0.72	0.5	Fill of feature [303]; mid brown clay sand, which contained occasional small stones and occasional charcoal flecks.	315	305

Land at 6 Frome Road, Rode: Archaeological Evaluation

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
305	?	0.9	0.25	Fill of feature [303]; orange brown gritty clay sand, which contained occasional to frequent small stones.	304	307
306	?	0.7	0.35	Fill of feature [303]; compact deposit of beige limestone fragments.	[303]	307
307	?	1.1	0.08	Fill of feature [303]; grey brown clay sand, which contained occasional small stones and occasional charcoal flecks.	306, 305	308
308	?	1.5	0.21	Fill of feature [303]; mid to light brown clay silt sand, which contained occasional stones.	307	309
309	?	1.1	0.45	Fill of feature [303]; mid brown clay sand, which contained occasional small stones.	308	310
310	1.4	0.8	0.4	Fill of feature [303]; mid orange brown clay sand, which contained frequent beige limestone fragments.	309	[311]
[311]	?	2	0.21	Cut feature visible in section. The feature had a shallow, uneven profile. Extended beyond the northwest limit of excavation. Contained fill 312.	302	312
312	?	2	0.21	Fill of feature [311]; mixed grey beige green grit and plastic clay, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	[311]	301
313	3	1.4	?	Fill of feature [303]; light grey brown loose grit and limestone.	[303]	314
314	2	1	0.37	Fill of feature [303]; mid brown clay silt, which contained occasional small stones.	313	315
315	1.5	1.5	0.37	Fill of feature [303]; yellow pink friable grit and limestone.	314	304
316	?	0.65	0.34	Fill of feature [303]; mid brown clay sand, which contained occasional small stones.	[303]	317
317	?	0.5	0.35	Fill of feature [303]; beige brown clay sand grit, which contained frequent beige limestone.	316	318
318	3	1.4	0.3	Fill of feature [303]; light brown clay silt, which contained occasional stones.	317	[319]

Land at 6 Frome Road, Rode: Archaeological Evaluation

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
[319]	?	0.37	0.33	Cut feature visible in section. The feature had a steep, uneven profile and was located at the edge of feature [303].	318	320
320	?	0.37	0.33	Fill of feature [319]; dark brown orange silt grit, which contained frequent beige limestone.	[319]	301
321	0.6	0.6	?	Fill of feature [303]; patch of loose beige limestone fragments.	?	302
322	5.2	1.4	?	Fill of feature [303]; brown clay sand, which contained frequent beige limestone.	?	302

APPENDIX 2: The Pottery

Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 58 sherds with a total weight of 560g. It was mostly of Medieval and later date, although a single sherd of Iron Age pottery was also present. The following fabric types were noted:

- BA:** Bath 'A' Ware, 12th – 14th century (Vince 1979). 11 sherds, 178g.
- BB:** Bath 'B' Ware, late 11th – 13th century (*ibid.*). 2 sherds, 15g.
- BS:** Bristol Slipware, mid 17th – 18th century (Crossley 1994, 243). 1 sherd, 11g.
- DW:** Donyatt-type Ware, 14th century (Coleman-Smith and Pearson 1988)
- GSW:** Glazed Sandy Ware, 12th – 14th century. Very similar to Ilchester Group 19 fabrics (Pearson 1982, 173). 11 sherds, 92g.
- MW:** Minety-type Ware, early/mid 12th - 16th century. (Vince 1984). 1 sherd, 1g.
- NC:** Newbury C Ware, Late 12th – mid 14th century (Mephram 1997, 52-4). 1 sherd, 8g.
- SFL:** Sandy Flint-tempered Ware, 12th – 14th century. Very similar to Ilchester Group 18 fabrics (Pearson 1982, 172). 27 sherds, 235g.
- SSOM:** South Somerset Ware, 16th -17th century (Vince unpub.). 1 sherd, 10g.
- SSW:** Sparse Shelly Ware, Middle Iron Age? 1 sherd, 4g.
- SWSG:** Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware, c AD1720-80 (Mountford 1971). 1 sherd, 4g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is fairly typical of sites in the region, although very little previous work has been carried out in Rode, apart from a small-scale evaluation excavation which produced a few sherds of Bath Wares and a small assemblage of South Somerset Ware (Vince and Steane, 2008).

The bulk of the assemblage is of 12th – 14th century date, and comprises fragments of unglazed jars and glazed jugs and tripod pitchers, which is typical of the earlier Medieval period. The sherds are in reasonably good condition, although many show signs of abrasion. This may be due to burial conditions. Most sherds represent individual vessels, and are clearly the product of secondary deposition.

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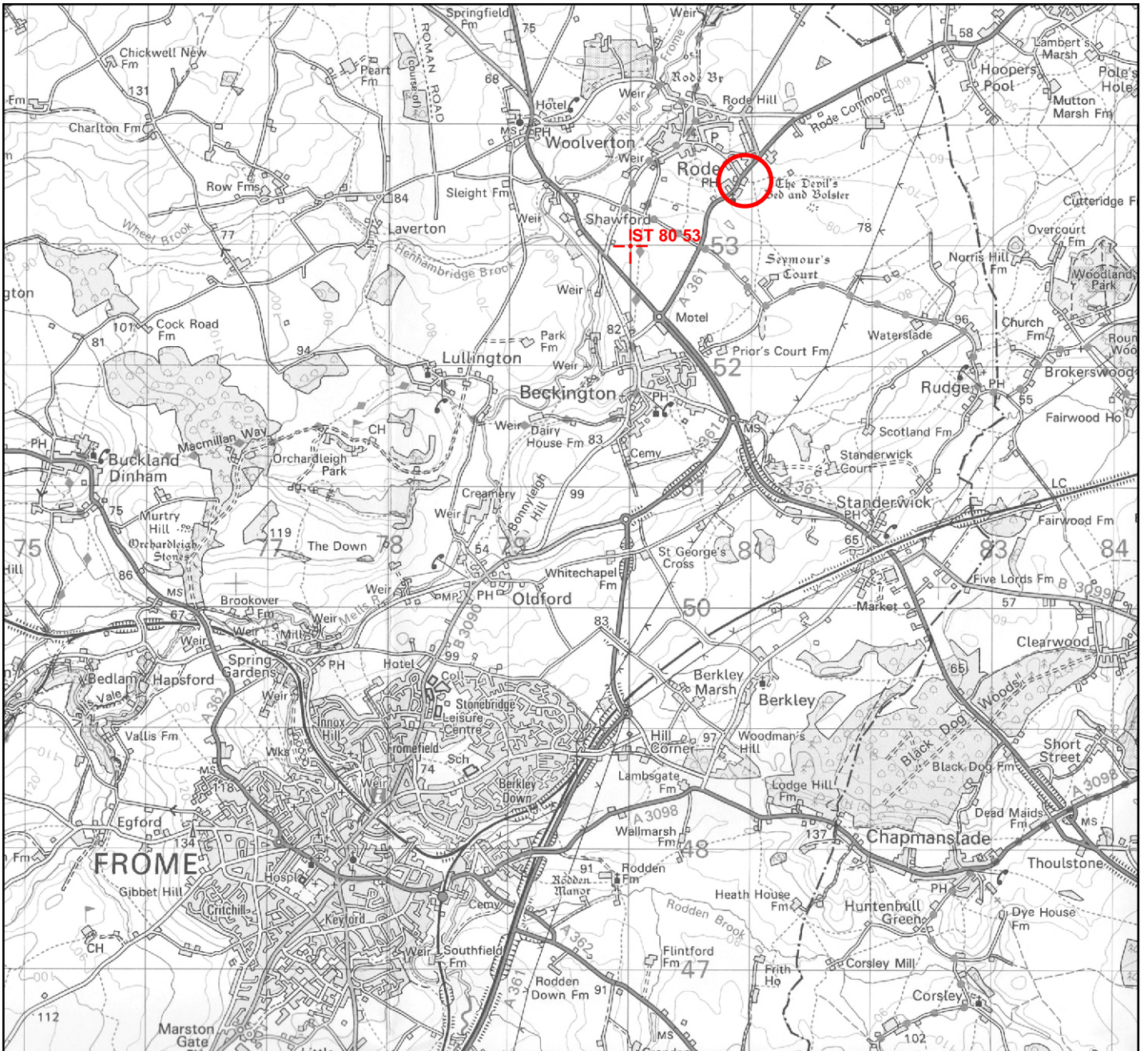
Land at 6 Frome Road, Rode: Archaeological Evaluation

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Cntxt	SSW		BB		SFL		BA		GSW		NC		MW		DW		SSOM		BS		SWSG		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
101																					1	4	U/S
102	1	4																					MIA
106			1	3																			L11thC
104					9	107			1	11													12thC
107					1	21			2	14													12thC
108									5	50					1	2							14thC
109					1	2	3	106															12thC
202					1	4	1	32															U/S
206							1	13															12thC
208					1	10							1	1									12thC
210							1	1															12thC
305					1	4	3	19	1	9													12thC
308					1	25																	12thC
309					2	18	1	4	1	5													12thC
310			1	12	2	3																	12thC
312																	1	10					17thC
314							1	3															12thC
316					8	41			1	3	1	8											L12thC
320																			1	11			M17thC
Total	1	4	2	15	27	235	11	178	11	92	1	8	1	1	1	2	1	10	1	11	1	4	

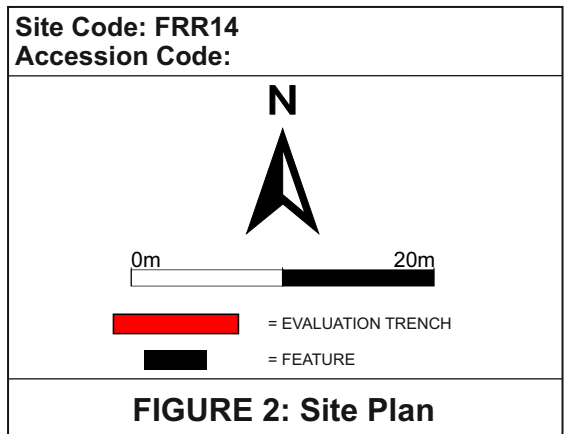
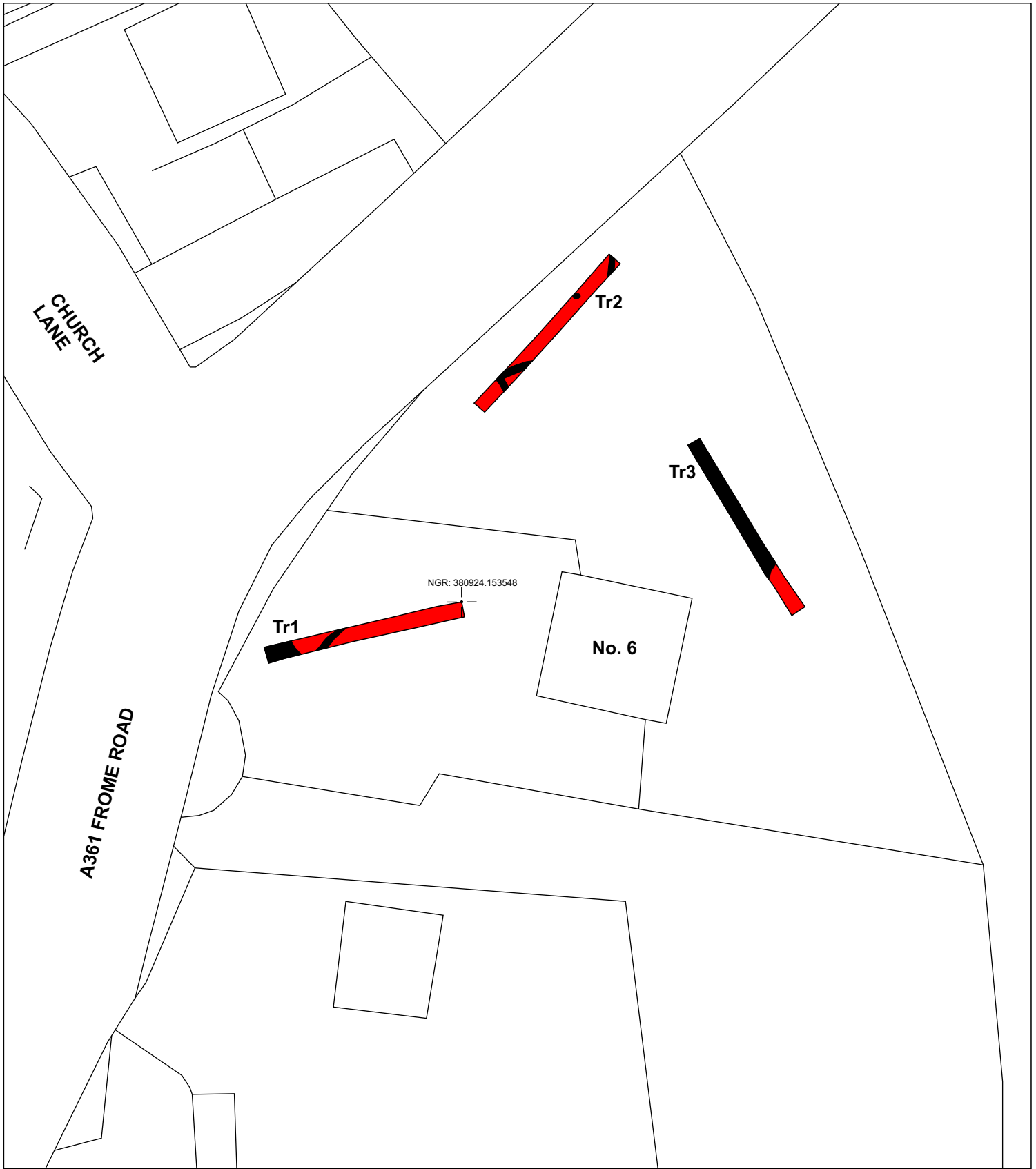
APPENDIX 3: Miscellaneous Finds List

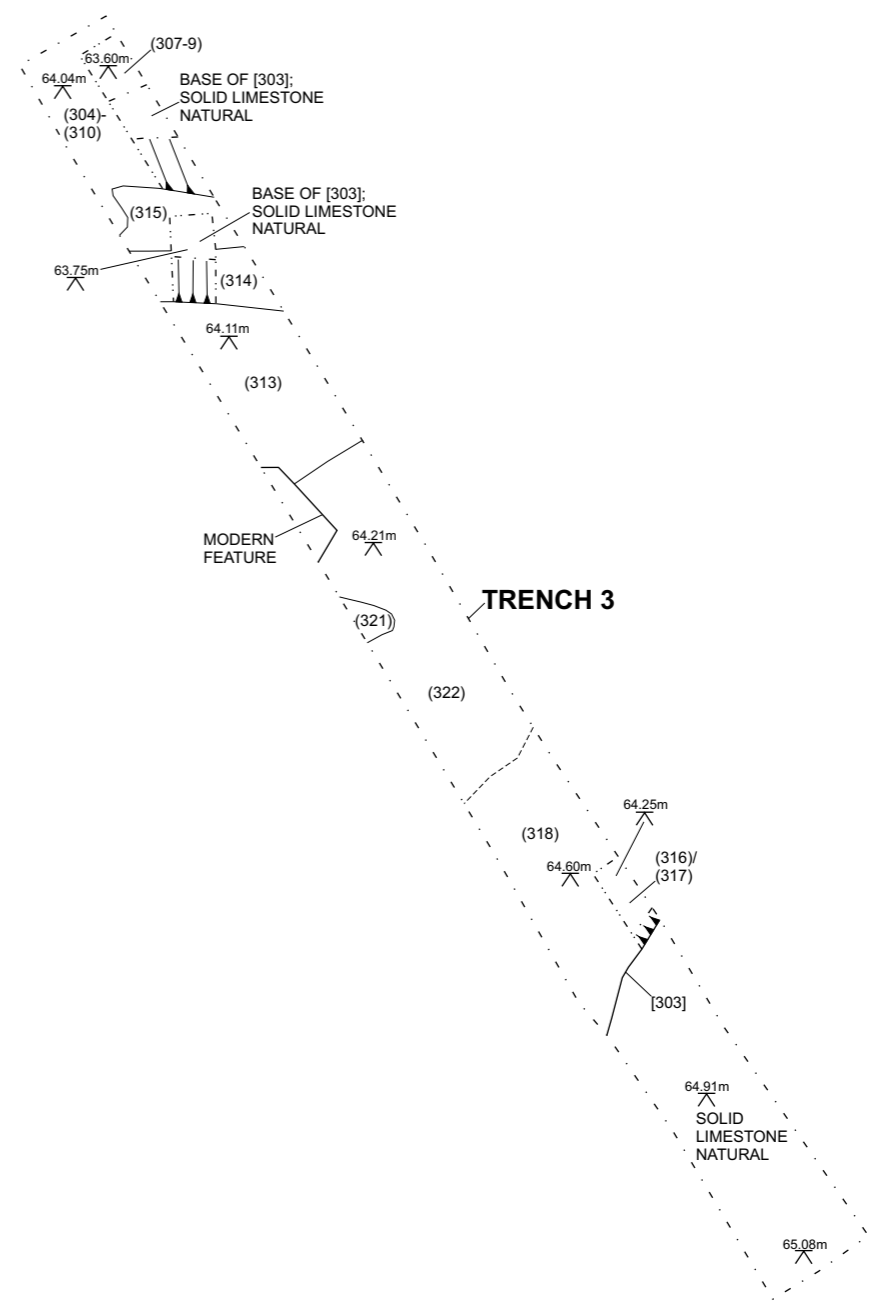
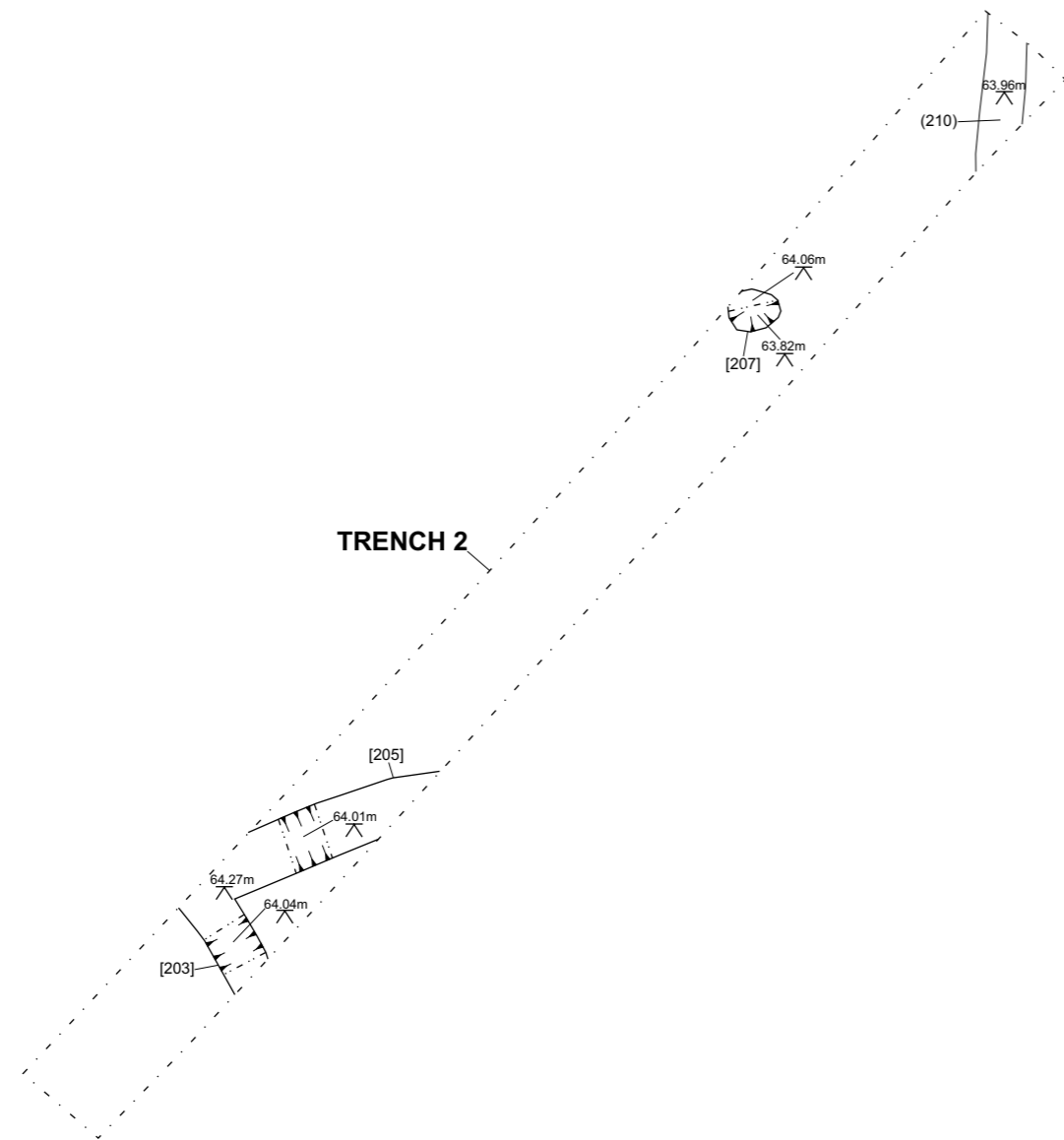
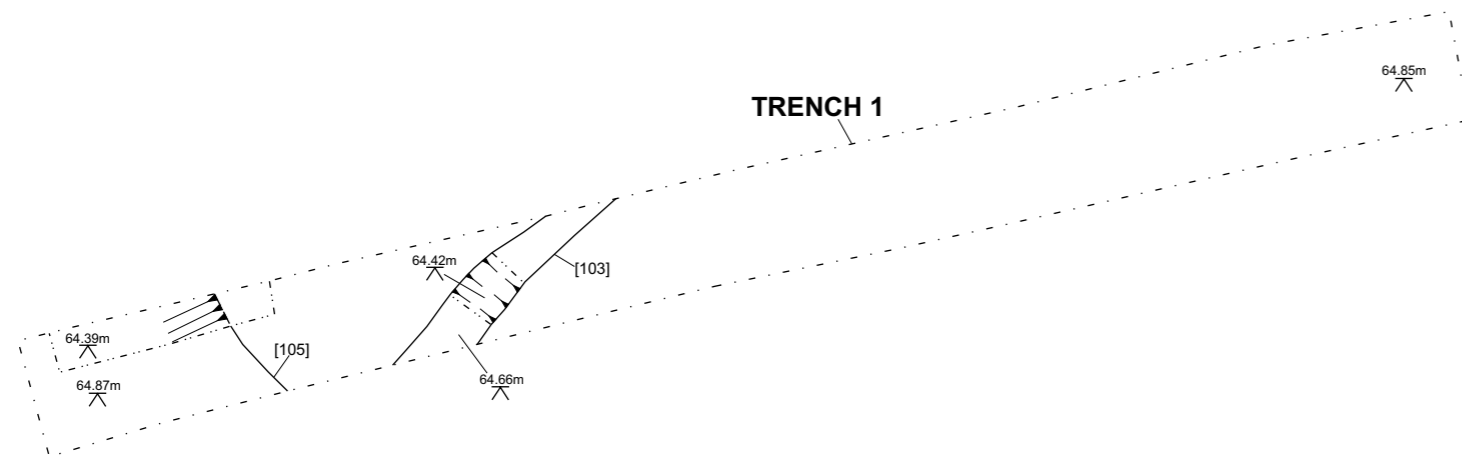
Context	Description
102	1 piece CBM, 2 fragments of animal bone (1 long bone fragment exhibits cut marks)
107	2 fragments of animal bone (1 metapodial with evidence of infection, 1 unidentified)
202	1 struck flint
204	1 struck flint
302	1 ferrous object
305	1 ferrous object (possibly a hinge or bracket fragment)
308	1 abraded long bone fragment
309	1 piece ferrous slag, 1 unidentified metal object, 1 copper object (possibly from the lip of a small copper bowl or cup)
316	1 iron nail



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Site Code: FRR14
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FIGURE 1: Site Location





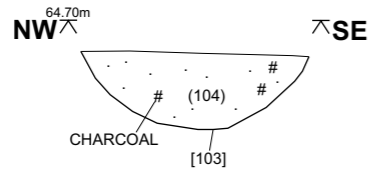
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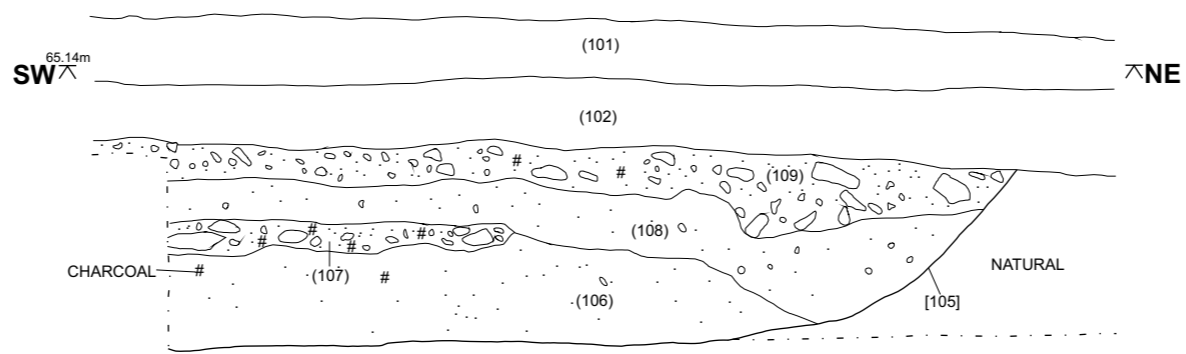
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FIGURE 3: Trench Plans

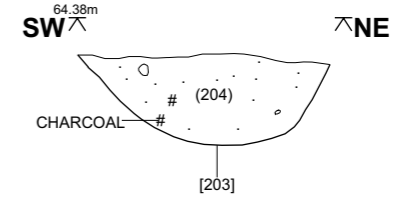
SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [103]



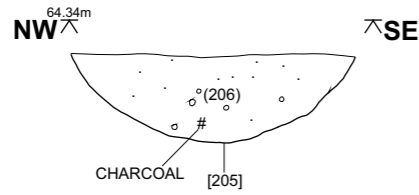
SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION [105]



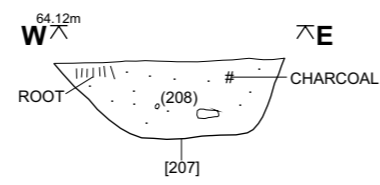
SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION [203]



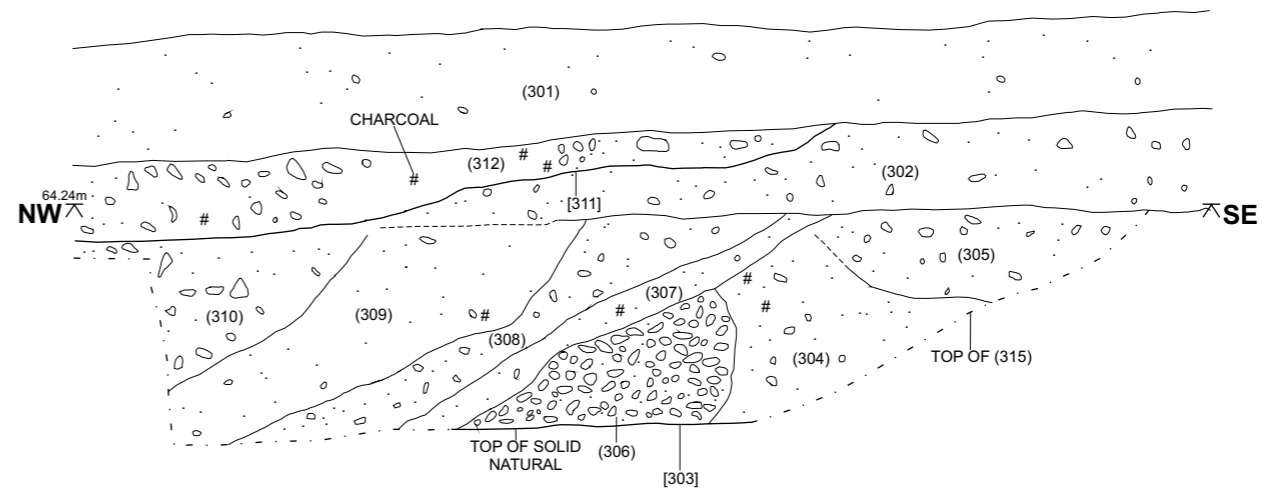
SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [205]



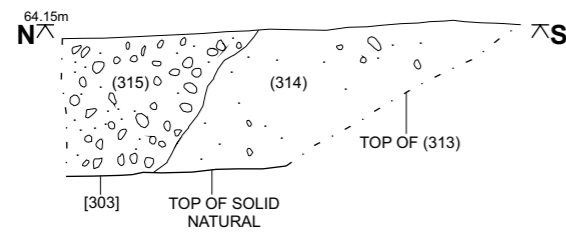
SOUTH FACING SECTION [207]



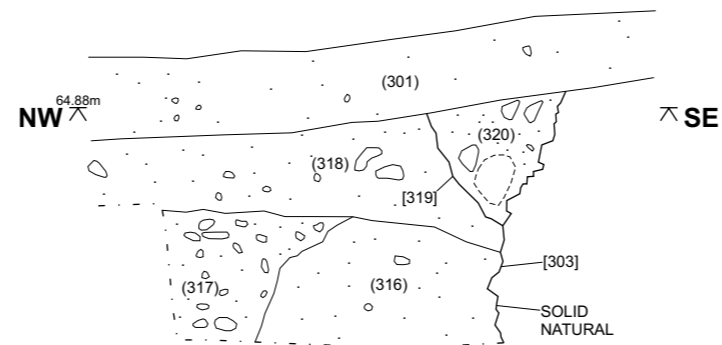
SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [303] and [311]



WEST FACING SECTION (313)-(315)



SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [303] and [319]



Site Code: FRR14
Accession Code:



FIGURE 4: Sections