

**LAND AT COFFIN CLOSE,
WESTROP,
HIGHWORTH,
WILTSHIRE.**

NGR: 420010.192710 (centred)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2015

April 2015
Report No. 1053

Quality Assurance

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Author: A. Hood BSc MCIfA

Date: 1st May 2015

Approved: R. King BA MCIfA

QA Checked: D. King BA MCIfA

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SUMMARY

In April 2015 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Coffin Close, Westrop, Highworth, Wiltshire (NGR: 420010.192710 - centred). The project was commissioned by Sepehr Izadpanah.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of two trenches within the site.

The evaluation identified the presence of six ditches on multiple alignments, which appeared to represent at least two phases of activity. Pottery recovered from the evaluation indicated that the majority of the ditches [102]/[108]/[202]/[204] most likely represented early Medieval features, which was entirely consistent with the results of the excavations north of the current site.

Two ditches, [105] and [207/9], represented later activity; although they remained poorly dated. Ditch [105] contained a charcoal-rich fill (106), which also contained patches of possible heated clay. This was similar to a charcoal-rich ditch fill present approximately 20m to the northeast, which was identified in the previous excavations. The occurrence of two similar, charcoal-rich features, at least 20m apart, suggested that there is a potential for the presence of evidence related to possible later Medieval/Post-medieval industrial activity in this general locale.

There was no evidence for a continuation of the Post-medieval/early Modern regular quarry pits, which were present within Area 2 of the previous excavations.

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 April 2015 on land at Coffin Close, Westrop, Highworth, Wiltshire (NGR: 420010.192710 - centred). The project was commissioned by Sepehr Izadpanah.
- 1.2 The project was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2015) and CIfA *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (2011).
- 1.3 The code of conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a single three bedroom house and associated works (Ref: **S/14/1504**). An archaeological excavation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology to the immediate north of the site revealed evidence for early Medieval settlement, as well as Post-medieval quarrying (Foundations Archaeology, forthcoming). In particular, the northern part of the present site lies adjacent to Area 2 of the excavations, which revealed a number of probable Medieval linear features and numerous regular pits, of Post-medieval/early Modern date, which probably related to small-scale quarrying works.
- 2.2 The site therefore contained the potential for archaeological features and deposits, predominately relating to the Medieval and Post-medieval 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. 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 and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent 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 to 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 Two evaluation trenches were excavated within the site, as shown in Figure 2. The trenches were located in order to provide a representative sample of the site area. Due to on-site constraints it was necessary to reduce the width of the trenches from 1.6m, as detailed in the WSI, to 1.2m. The trenches as excavated represented an approximate 8% sample of the site area.

4.2 Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological supervision, to the top of archaeological remains or the underlying natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a 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 list of miscellaneous finds in Appendix 2. A summary and discussion of the results is given below:

5.2 Relatively level natural clay and limestone substrates were present at the south of the site, in the area of Trench 1, at an average depth of 0.65m (122.09m OD) below Modern ground. The natural deposits at the north of the site sloped downwards from north to south and were present in Trench 2 at 0.60m (121.85m OD) below Modern ground at the southern end of the trench and 1.2m (120.86m OD) at the northern end of the trench.

5.3 The natural deposits were overlaid by variable soil deposits (101), (107) and (201), which appeared to represent a mixture of disturbance and dumped/make-up deposits. A buried soil horizon (210), which was located immediately north of ditches [204]/[207/9], contained fragments of Modern flower-pot and almost certainly represented a former garden soil.

5.4 A total of six features were present, cut into the top of the natural substrates.

5.5 Trench 1

- 5.5.1 Feature [102] and ditch [108] shared parallel north-northeast – south-southwest alignments, had similar fills (103)/(109) and possibly represented a double-ditch boundary. Feature [102] was stratigraphically earlier than ditch [105] and contained four sherds of early Medieval pottery and, as such, the boundary could, with some confidence be dated to the early Medieval period.
- 5.5.2 Ditch [105] remained undated; however, it was stratigraphically later than feature [102]/(103), as well as soil layer (101) and it is therefore likely that it related to later Medieval or Post-medieval activity. The fill (106) of the ditch contained frequent charcoal flecks and lumps, along with patches of red-orange discoloured, possibly heated clay. This was similar to a charcoal-rich fill of a ditch present in Area 2 of the previous excavation (Ditch [1382]/(1383), report forthcoming), which was also stratigraphically later than a probable early Medieval feature. The occurrence of two similar, charcoal-rich features, at least 20m apart, suggested that there is a potential for the presence of evidence related to possible later Medieval/Post-medieval industrial activity in this general locale.

5.6 Trench 2

- 5.6.1 Ditch terminus [202] contained a single small sherd of early Medieval pottery and could therefore be tentatively dated to the early Medieval period; although, the pottery sherd could be residual and a later date for the feature is possible.
- 5.6.2 Ditch [204] contained two fills (205)/(206), which yielded a total of five sherds of early Medieval pottery. It was stratigraphically earlier than ditch [207/9] and, as such, possibly dated to the early Medieval period. A single piece of struck flint, present within fill (206), represented a residual Prehistoric artefact.
- 5.6.3 Feature [207/9] was only partially investigated but appeared to represent the base of a re-cut of boundary ditch [204]. The feature remained undated; although, garden soil (210) only occurred to the north of, and appeared to respect, boundary [204]/[207/9], which suggested that the boundary had existed until relatively recently.
- 5.7 Artefacts recovered from the evaluation included a small assemblage of ten sherds of early Medieval pottery, comprising *Newbury A/B* ware and *Minety* ware, along with a small amount of animal bone and a piece of Prehistoric struck flint.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The evaluation has identified the presence of six ditches on multiple alignments, which appeared to represent at least two phases of activity. Pottery

recovered from the evaluation indicated that the majority of the ditches [102]/[108]/[202]/[204] most likely represented early Medieval features. This was entirely consistent with the results of the excavations north of the current site (Foundations Archaeology, forthcoming).

- 6.2 Two ditches, [105] and [207/9], demonstrably represented later activity; although they remained poorly dated. Ditch [105] contained a charcoal-rich fill (106), which also contained patches of possible heated clay. This was similar to a charcoal-rich ditch fill present approximately 20m to the northeast, which was identified in the previous excavations. The occurrence of two similar, charcoal-rich features, at least 20m apart, suggested that there is a potential for the presence of evidence related to possible later Medieval/Post-medieval industrial activity in this general locale.
- 6.3 There was no evidence for a continuation of the Post-medieval/early Modern regular quarry pits, which were present within Area 2 of the previous excavations.
- 6.4 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited in due course 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

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2011. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*. Reading.

Foundations Archaeology. 2015. *Land at Coffin Close, Westrop, Highworth, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger and Clare King of Wiltshire County Council and Sepehr Izadpanah for their help during the course of the project.

APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

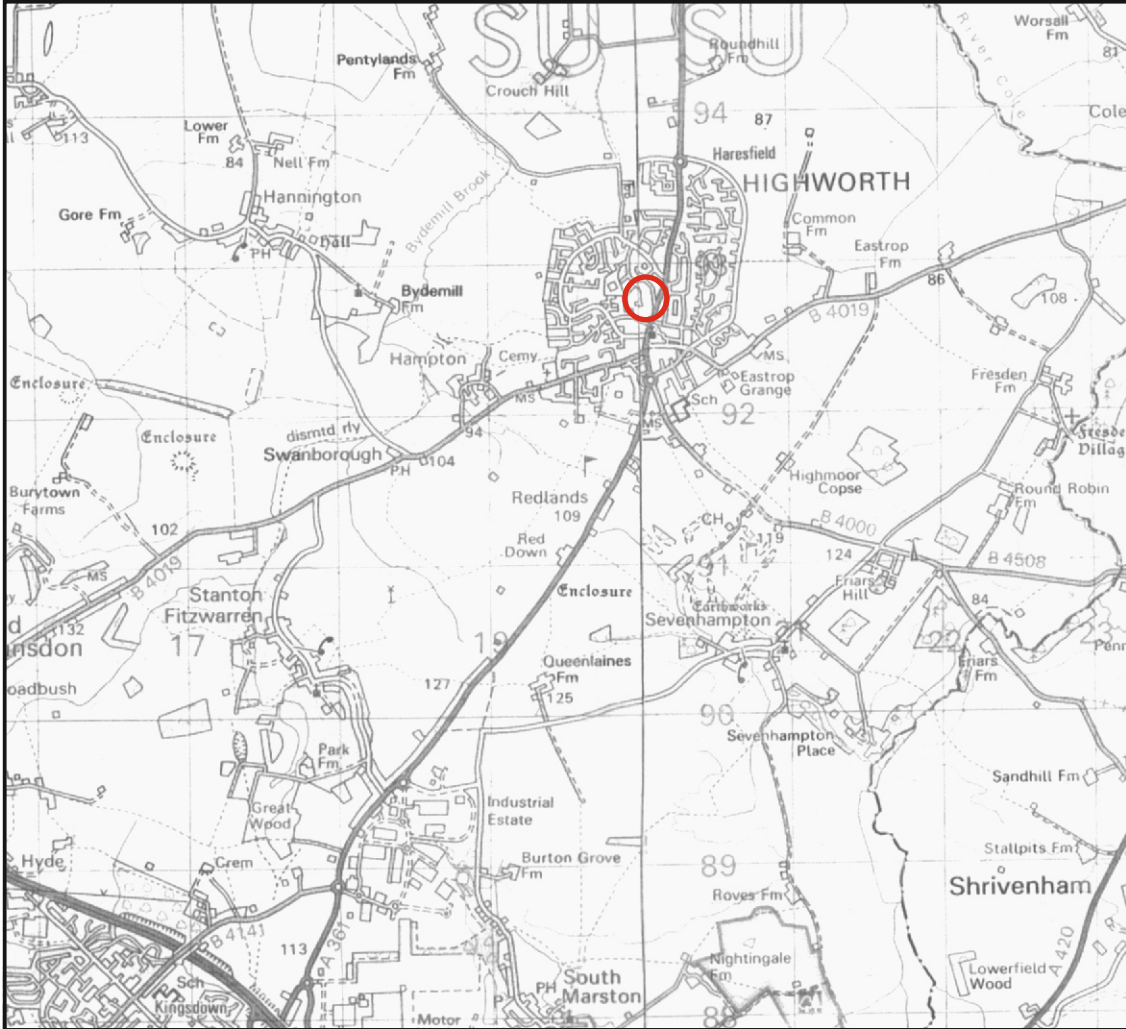
CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				TRENCH 1 ; 9m by 1.2m. Natural = yellow plastic clay at average 122.09m OD.		
101	na	na	0.37	Layer of variable brown orange grey clay silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks. Occurred intermittently across the trench.	103	[105]
[102]	1.5	1.7	0.35	Cut feature with a shallow, uneven profile. Contained fill 103. The feature had a north-northeast - south-southwest aligned edge, but had been cut/obscured by ditch [105].	natural	103
103	1.5	1.7	0.35	Fill of feature [102]; light tan grey clay silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	[102]	101
104				Void.		
[105]	1.2	1.7	0.58	Northeast - southwest aligned ditch with uneven sloping sides and a flat base. Contained fill 106.	101	106
106	1.2	1.7	0.58	Fill of ditch [105]; dark brown black clay silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks and lumps as well as patches of red-orange discoloured, possibly heated clay.	[105]	107
107	na	na	0.65	Mixed overburden; variable dark grey brown clay silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks. Highly variable thickness.	106, 109	na
[108]	1.6	0.8	0.23	North-northeast - south-southwest aligned ditch with a rounded profile. Contained fill 109.	natural	109
109	1.6	0.8	0.23	Fill of ditch [108]; light tan grey clay silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks. Similar to fill 103.	[108]	107

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CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				TRENCH 2; 10m by 1.2m. Natural = yellow plastic clay with occasional outcrops of		
				limestone brash at average 121.36m OD.		
201	na	na	sw = 0.60 ne = 0.90	Mixed overburden; variable dark grey brown clay silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks and Modern detritus.	210, 208, 203	na
[202]	1.05	0.5	0.44	East - west aligned ditch with a steep, rounded profile. Terminated at the east. Contained fill 203.	natural	203
203	1.05	0.5	0.44	Fill of ditch [202]; mixed dark brown beige clay silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	[202]	201
[204]	1.7	0.7	0.5	East-northeast - west-southwest aligned ditch with steep sides and a flat base. Contained fills 205 and 206.	natural	205
205	?	0.35	0.2	Primary fill of ditch [204]; mottled beige brown clay sand, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	[204]	206
206	?	0.7	0.22	Secondary fill of ditch [204]; mottled light grey brown clay sand, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	205	[207]
[207]	1.7	2?	0.17	East-northeast - west-southwest aligned ditch base with a shallow, flat profile. Probably equivalent to feature [209]. Re-cut of ditch [204]. Contained fill 208.	206	208
208	1.7	2	0.17	Fill of ditch [207]/[209]; dark brown clay sand, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	[207]/[209]	201
[209]	1.6	2?	?	Not excavated - probably equivalent to feature [207]. Represented north edge of a ditched boundary. Contained fill 208.	natural	208
210	?	2	0.3	Deposit of dark brown black clay silt, which contained two fragments of Modern flower-pot, as well as occasional pieces of CBM. The deposit was up to 0.30m thick at the north and gradually dissipated to the south. It was only present to the north of boundary [204]/[207/9].	natural	201

APPENDIX 2: Miscellaneous Finds

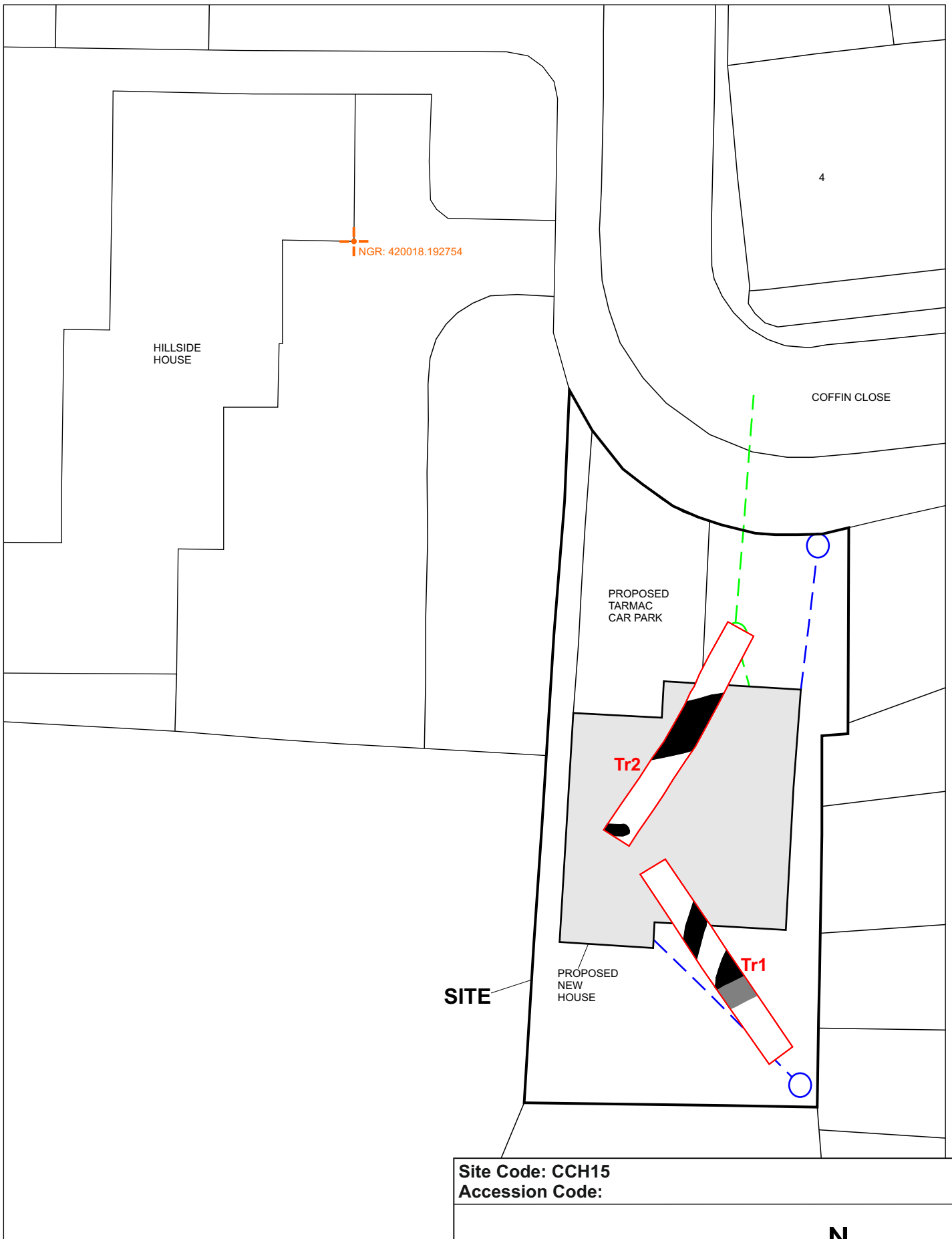
Context	Description
103	1 x bone fragment
109	3 x bone fragment
203	2 x bone fragment
206	3 x bone fragment
206	1 x struck flint



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Site Code: CCH15
Accession Code:

FIGURE 1: Site Location



Site Code: CCH15
 Accession Code:

- EVALUATION TRENCH
- FEATURE
- PROPOSED STORM DRAINAGE
- PROPOSED FOUL DRAINAGE

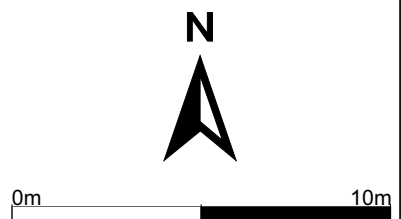
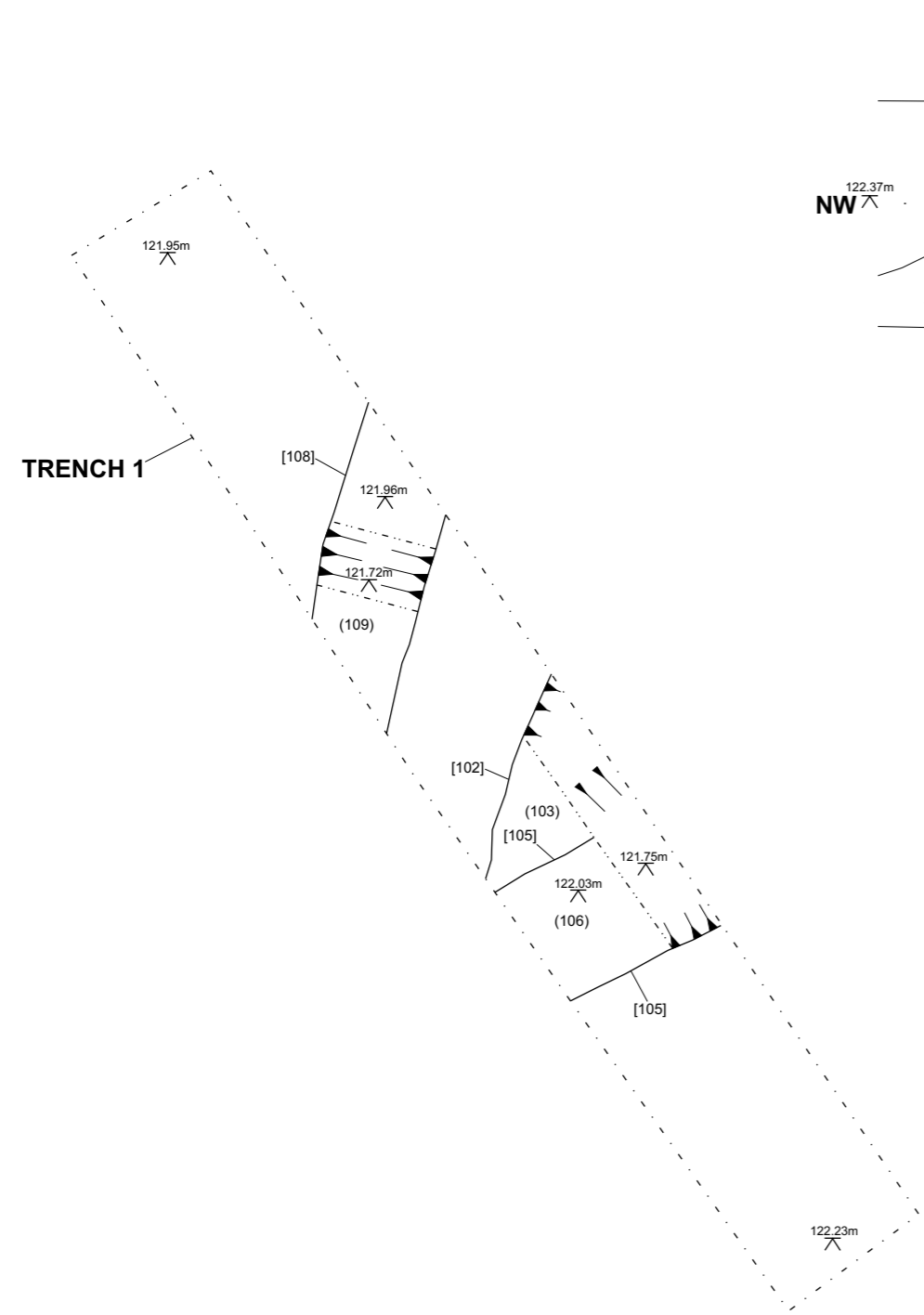
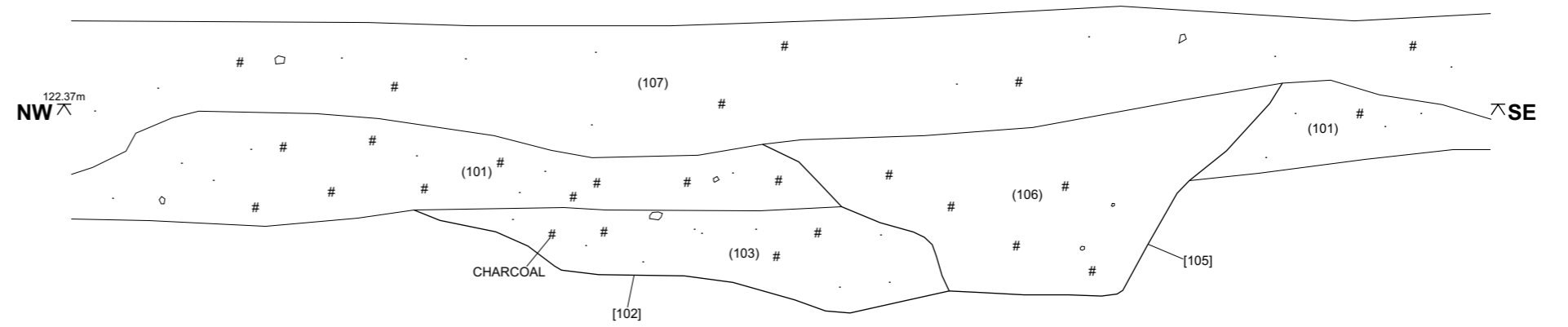


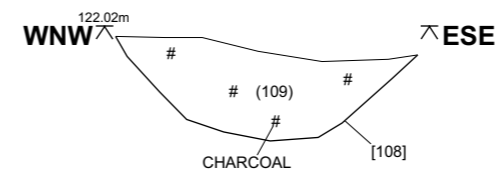
FIGURE 2: Trench Locations



SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [102] and [105]



SOUTH-SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [108]



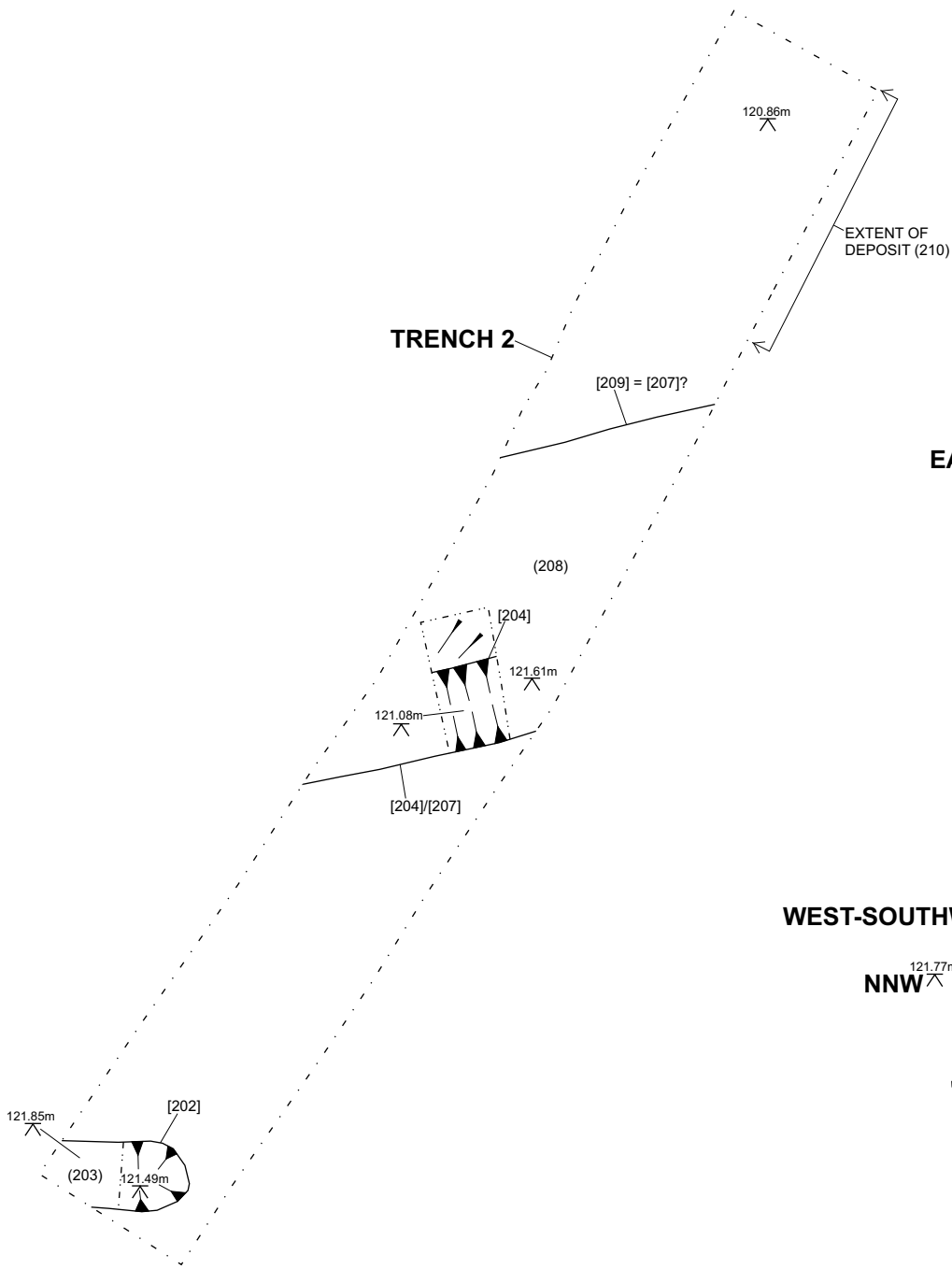
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Accession Code:

N

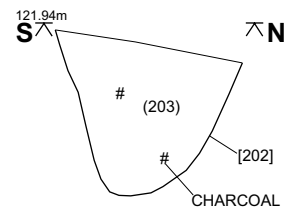
0m 2m
PLANS

0m 1m
SECTIONS

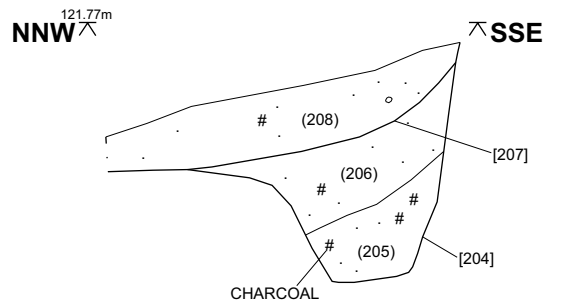
FIGURE 3: Trench 1 Plan and Sections



EAST FACING SECTION [202]



WEST-SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [204] and [207]



Site Code: CCH15
Accession Code:



FIGURE 4: Trench 2 Plan and Sections