

**LAND AT EBNAL LODGE,
GOBOWEN,
SHROPSHIRE.**

NGR: 331832.334078 (centred)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

August 2016
Report No. 1145



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Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

Between the 18th and 20th July 2016 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Ebnal Lodge, Gobowen, Shropshire (NGR: 331832.334078 - centred). The project was commissioned by Elgin Energy.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of four trenches within a proposed solar photovoltaic park.

The evaluation trenching has indicated that the site contained the remains of former Post-medieval field boundaries, as well as localised evidence for Post-medieval clay and/or gravel quarrying. These remains are considered to be of generally low significance. There is a low potential for the presence of features dating to before the Post-medieval period.

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.

Early Medieval

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

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.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology between 18th and 20th July 2016 on land at Ebnal Lodge, Gobowen, Shropshire (NGR: 331832.334078 - centred). The project was commissioned by Elgin Energy.
- 1.2 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2016), CIfA *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2014) and the general principles of *National Planning Policy Framework* (2012).
- 1.3 The code of conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists was adhered to throughout.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located on agricultural land approximately 1.4km northeast of Gobowen and occupies an area of approximately 14ha. The underlying geology is recorded as *Halesowen Formation* - mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, with superficial deposits recorded as *Till, Devensian* – diamicton (BGS online viewer).
- 2.2 The proposal, under Application Number **15/03975/FUL**, is for a photovoltaic array of ground mounted solar panels, each approximately 2.8m in height. Inverter stations, each no more than 3.0m high, are associated with the array. The development also comprises a 3.0m high substation and a control building with a compound area of 12m x 17.5m consisting of four small buildings. The development will be surrounded by a 2.4m high security fence with closed circuit security cameras (CCTV) mounted on 3-4m poles. Consequently, the below ground disturbance is likely to be limited to posts for the PV panels, the fencing, the CCTV cameras and the associated cable trenches.
- 2.3 A desk based assessment of the site was undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in 2015. The assessment concluded that that *'The main potential of the site is to yield archaeological material from the later periods with generally low significance. However, there is moderate potential for Prehistoric material to be present within the site, although this is more likely to consist of stray finds rather than features. The value of the archaeological resource is consequently assessed as low, as material from the site is only likely to contribute to local research objectives, although the presence of material with either regional or national research significance cannot be discounted entirely.'*
- 2.4 The Shropshire Historic Environment Record currently contains no records of any known heritage assets with archaeological interest within the proposed development site itself. There are records for a possible cropmark enclosure and ring ditch (HER PRN 02158) and two further possible ring ditches (HER

PRN 02288), approximately 400m south and approximately 650m southeast of the site respectively. In addition, an area of probable WWI practice trenches (HER PRN 02858) is also recorded approximately 300m southwest of the site. The Tithe Award Map for Ebnal Township in Whittington Parish of 1839 records a Brickkiln Field (plot 1405) in the northwestern part of the site. The Shropshire Historic Landscape Character (HLC) assessment assigns the site to the 'planned enclosure' HLC Type, suggesting the field pattern was originally created through the enclosure of a former common.

- 2.5 In light of the perceived archaeological potential, the Natural and Historic Environment Manager for Shropshire Council required a programme of archaeological works, comprising a geophysical survey followed by further mitigation as appropriate. In line with this, a geophysical survey was carried out by AB Heritage in June 2016, which identified a number of possible archaeological features (Figure 2; geophysical features A to D).
- 2.6 In light of the conclusions of the desk based assessment and the results of the geophysical survey, the Natural and Historic Environment Manager for Shropshire Council recommended that a programme of archaeological trial trenching should be undertaken, prior to the determination of the development application.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the archaeological evaluation was 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 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;

vi) to test the potential archaeological anomalies identified in the geophysical survey.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 A total of four 50m long trenches were excavated within the site, at the location of the possible archaeological anomalies identified in the geophysical survey (Figure 2).
- 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 evaluation is presented in Appendix 1. A summary of the results is given below.
- 5.2 Variable natural substrates were present between 0.25m and 0.30m (99.68m and 100.99m AOD) below Modern ground. These comprised a mixture of clay, sand and silt with outcrops of mudstone and siltstone. The natural deposits were situated directly beneath ploughsoil. A total of four features were present within the evaluation trenches, cut into the top of the natural substrates.
- 5.3 **Trench 1:**
 - 5.3.1 Feature [103] (geophysical anomaly D) comprised a substantial cut feature, which contained Post-medieval/early Modern pottery and brick fragments and probably represented the remains of a former quarry.
- 5.4 **Trench 2:**
 - 5.4.1 No archaeological features relating to geophysical anomaly C were present within the trench.

5.5 Trench 3:

- 5.5.1 Feature [303] (geophysical anomaly A) consisted of a north – south aligned ditch, which contained a single fragment of Post-medieval ceramic smoking pipe.
- 5.5.2 No archaeological features relating to geophysical anomaly B were present within the trench.

5.6 Trench 4:

- 5.6.1 Ditches [402] and [404] were present on east-southeast – west-northwest / north – south alignments respectively and were both related to geophysical anomaly A. Ditch [404] was almost certainly a continuation of ditch [303].
- 5.7 No other archaeological features, finds or deposits were present within the trenches.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 In general, visibility conditions were good. The presence of natural substrates directly beneath ploughsoil, within all of the trenches, indicated that there was likely to have been a degree of plough truncation across the site.
- 6.2 Artefacts recovered from the fills of quarry [103] (geophysical anomaly D) suggested that it was datable to the Post-medieval/early Modern period. It was situated at the northwest of the site and, as such, was most likely to be related to gravel and clay extraction, as detailed in the 1839 Tithe Award for this locale.
- 6.3 Ditches [303], [402] and [404] all appeared to be related to a former field system (geophysical anomaly A), which, on the basis of a fragment of ceramic smoking pipe recovered from ditch fill (302), dated to the Post-medieval period. This correlated well with the cartographic evidence, as the north-south part of the ditch system is shown on the 1839 Tithe Map, but is not present on the 18th century Enclosure Map.
- 6.4 There was no evidence for geophysical anomaly C within Trench 2; however, the 1839 Tithe Map shows a north-south boundary at the location of this anomaly, which suggests that the two are related. Its absence within the trench, as well as the evidence for plough truncation within the site, indicated that the boundary probably only survives as a shallow, intermittent feature. The boundary is not shown on the 18th century Enclosure Map and, as such, can be confidently dated to the Post-medieval period.
- 6.5 There was no archaeological evidence related to geophysical anomaly B, which suggested that it most likely represented natural variation.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The evaluation trenching has indicated that the site contained the remains of former Post-medieval field boundaries, as well as localised evidence for Post-medieval clay and/or gravel quarrying. These remains are considered to be of generally low significance. There is a low potential for the presence of features dating to before the Post-medieval period.
- 7.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited in due course with the Shropshire 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.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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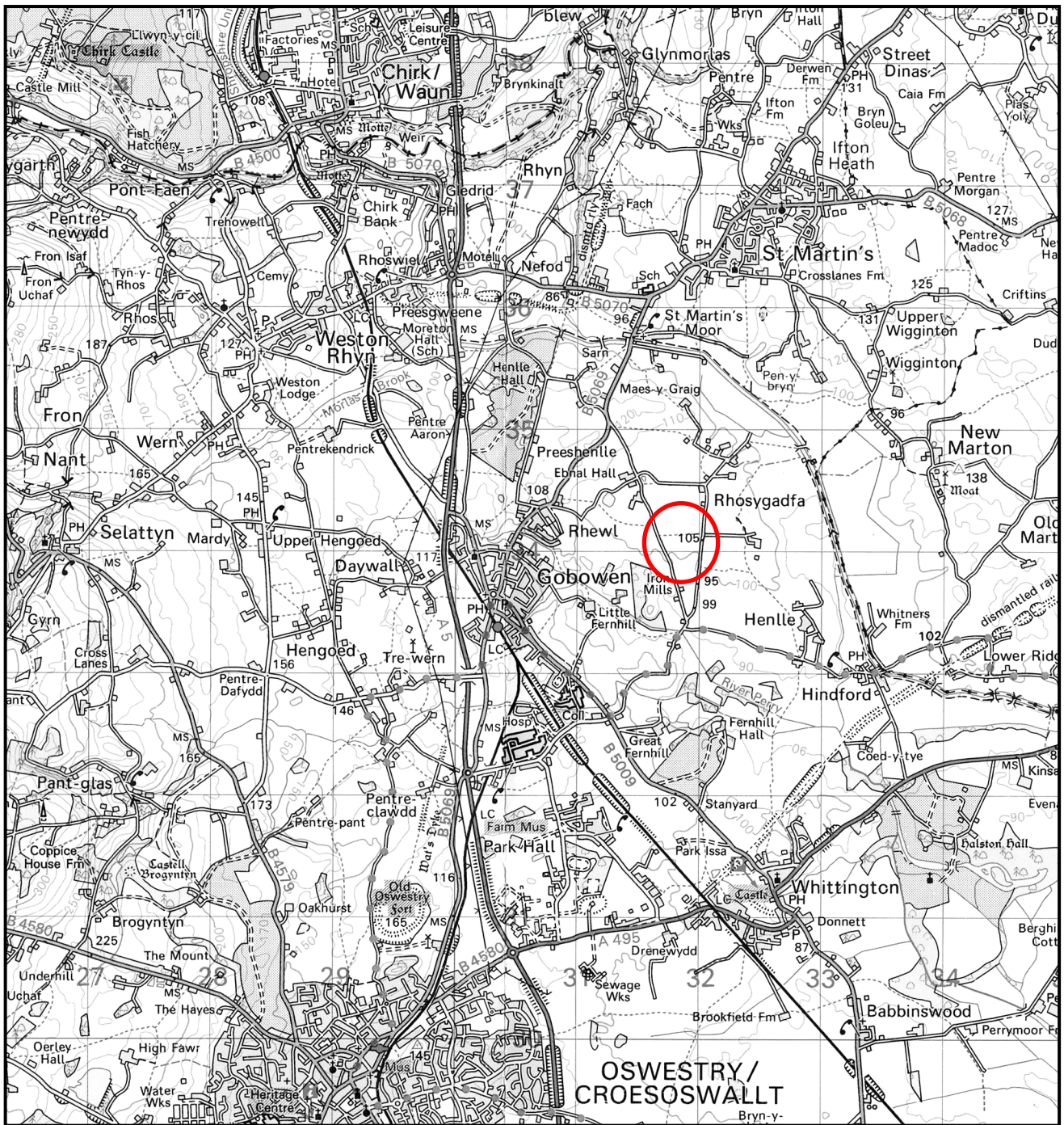
Land at Ebnal Lodge, Gobowen, Shropshire: Archaeological Evaluation

APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	LATER THAN	EARLIER THAN
				Trench 1: 49m by 1.5m. Natural = orange brown clay sand silt with occasional outcrops of grey beige mudstone and siltstone, present at 100.99m (AOD) - 0.25m below Modern ground.		
100	na	na	0.25	Ploughsoil; grey brown plastic silt clay with rare small stones.	101, natural	na
101	2.1	1.5	0.15	Fill of quarry [103]; orange brown clay with occasional patches of grey clay.	102	100
102	2.4	1.5	0.54	Fill of quarry [103]; dark grey plastic silt clay, which contained rare small stones, occasional charcoal flecks, occasional CBM and occasional patches of orange brown clay and clinker. Contained two china-ware pottery sherds and two fragments of brick.	[103]	101
[103]	34.6	1.5	0.54	Substantial quarry. Only partially excavated. Contained fills 101 and 102. No significant archaeological features, finds or deposits were present within the trench.	natural	102
				Trench 2: 48m by 1.8m. Natural = orange brown clay sand silt with occasional outcrops of grey beige mudstone and siltstone and occasional patches of pale grey sand silt, present at 100.33m (AOD) - 0.30m below Modern ground.		
200	na	na	0.3	Ploughsoil; grey brown plastic silt clay with rare small stones. No archaeological features, finds or deposits were present within the trench.	natural	na
				Trench 3: 49m by 1.8m. Natural = orange brown clay with patches of orange sand, present at 100.24m (AOD) - 0.28m below Modern ground.		
300	na	na	0.28	Ploughsoil; brown sand clay with occasional small stones.	302, natural	na
301				Void - natural deposit.		
302	1.8	0.6	0.25	Fill of ditch [303]; orange brown soft silt clay. Contained a fragment of ceramic smoking pipe.	[303]	300
[303]	1.8	0.6	0.25	North - south aligned ditch with a sloping, rounded profile. Contained fill 302. Probably equivalent to ditch [404].	natural	302

Land at Ebnal Lodge, Gobowen, Shropshire: Archaeological Evaluation

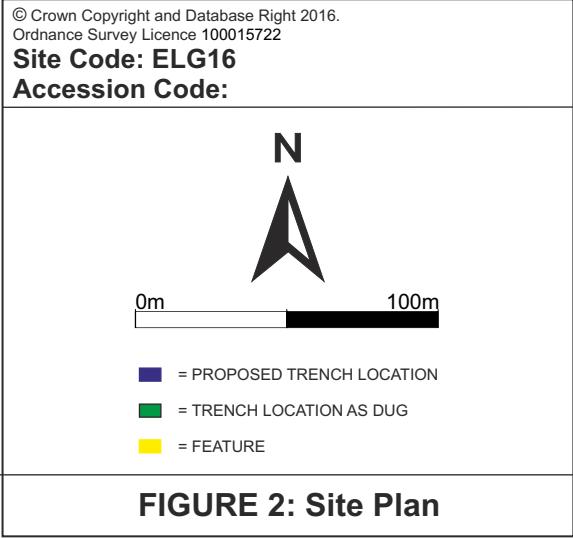
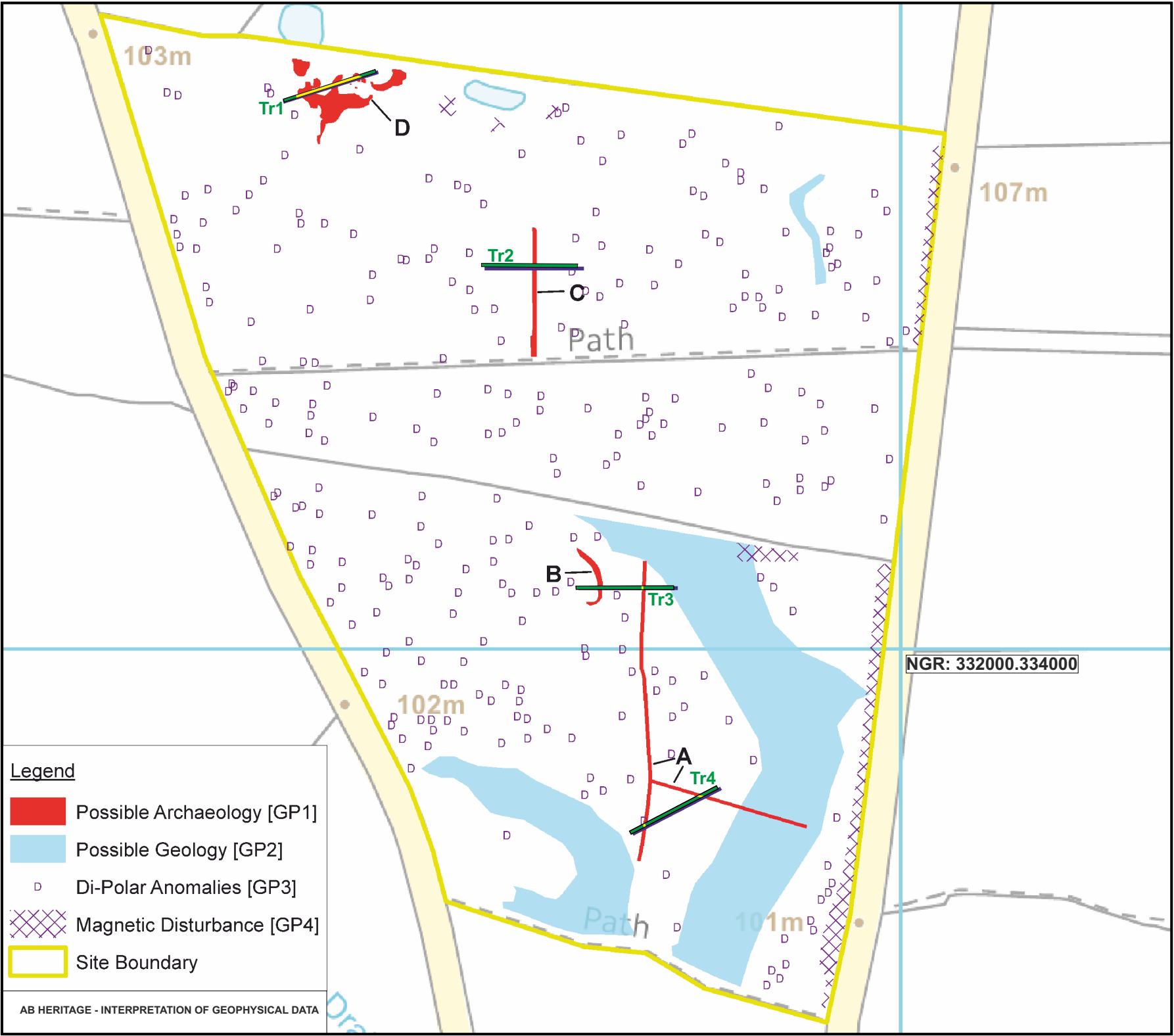
CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	LATER THAN	EARLIER THAN
				Trench 4: 49m by 1.8m. Natural = light orange brown sand clay silt with patches		
				of grey beige mudstone and siltstone, present at 99.68m (AOD) - 0.30m below		
				Modern ground.		
400	na	na	0.3	Ploughsoil; grey brown friable silt clay with rare small stones.	401, 405,	na
					natural	
401	3.5	0.64	0.15	Fill of ditch [402]; brown grey silt clay, which contained occasional small stones.	[402]	400
[402]	3.5	0.64	0.15	East-southeast - west-northwest aligned ditch with a shallow, rounded profile.	natural	401
				Contained fill 401. Probably related to ditches [303] and [404].		
403				Void - natural deposit.		
[404]	2	0.7	0.12	North - south aligned ditch with a shallow profile. Contained fill 405.	natural	405
				Probably equivalent to ditch [303].		
405	2	0.7	0.12	Fill of ditch [404]; brown silt clay sand.	[404]	400

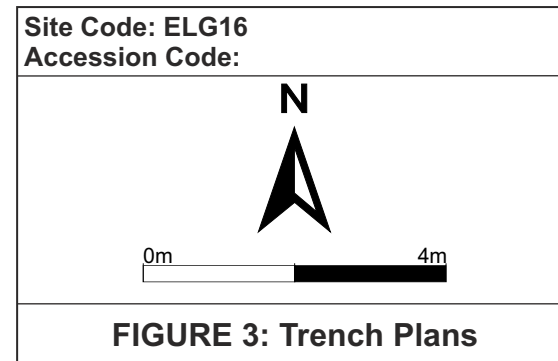
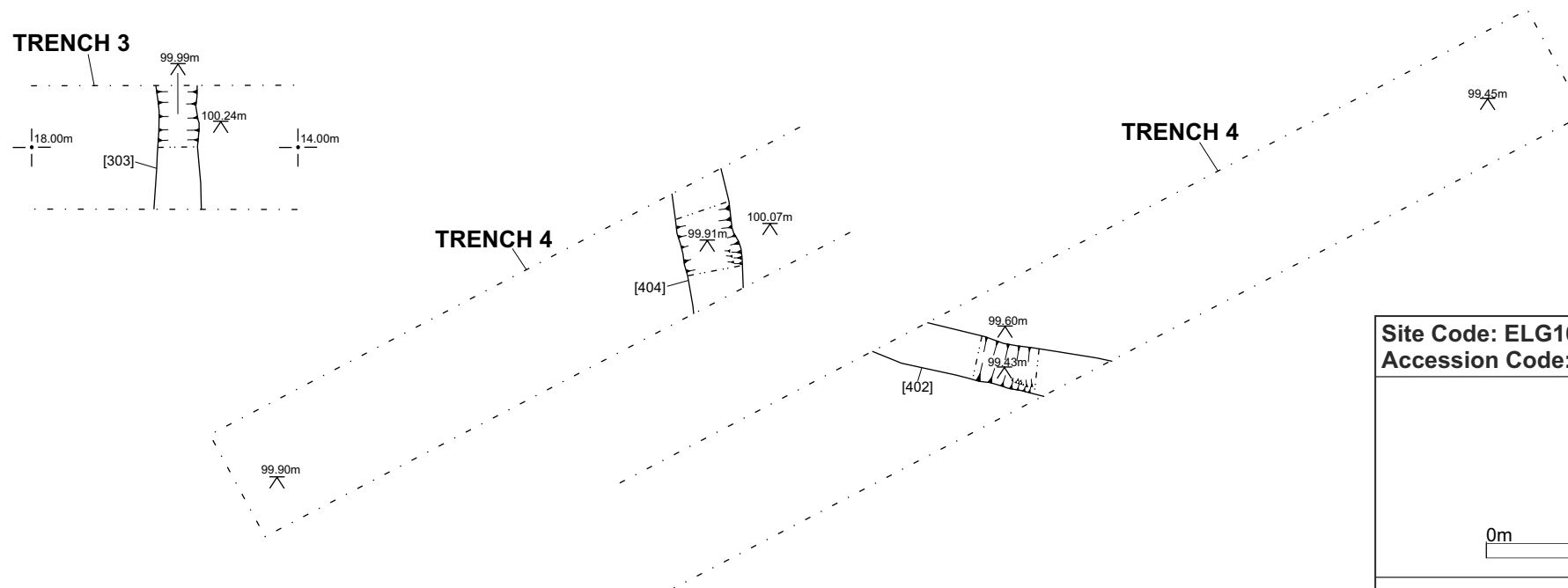
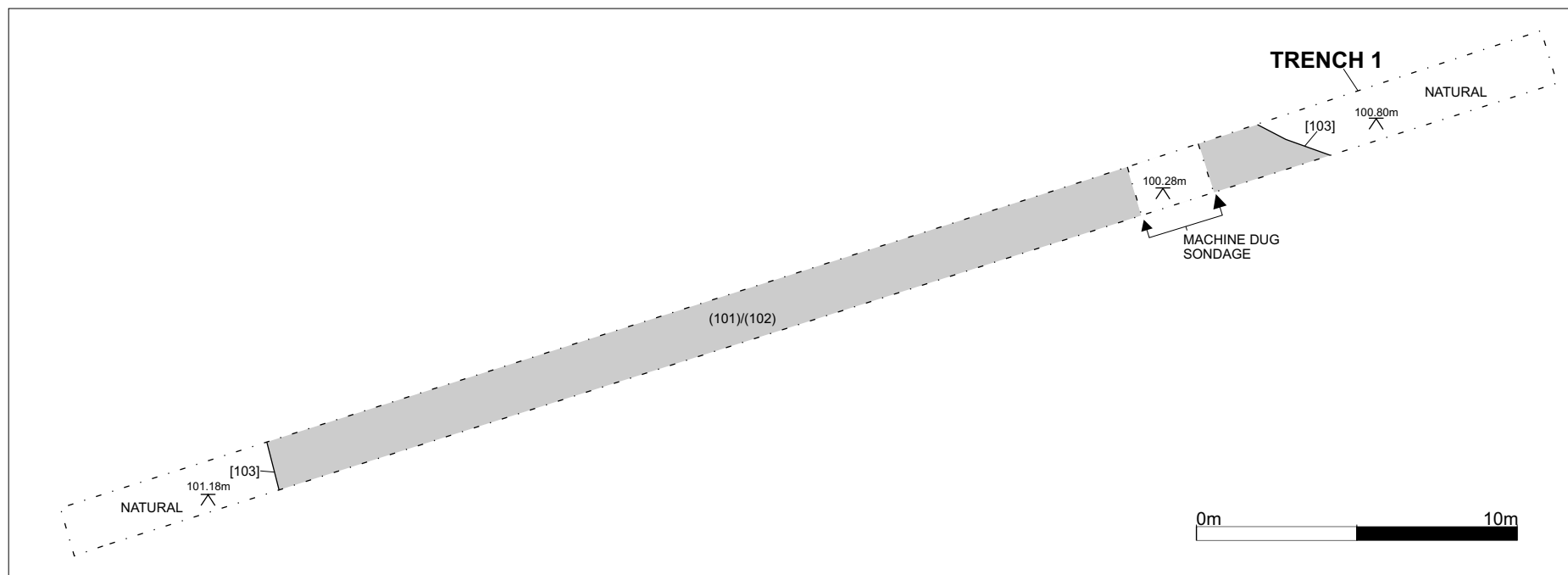


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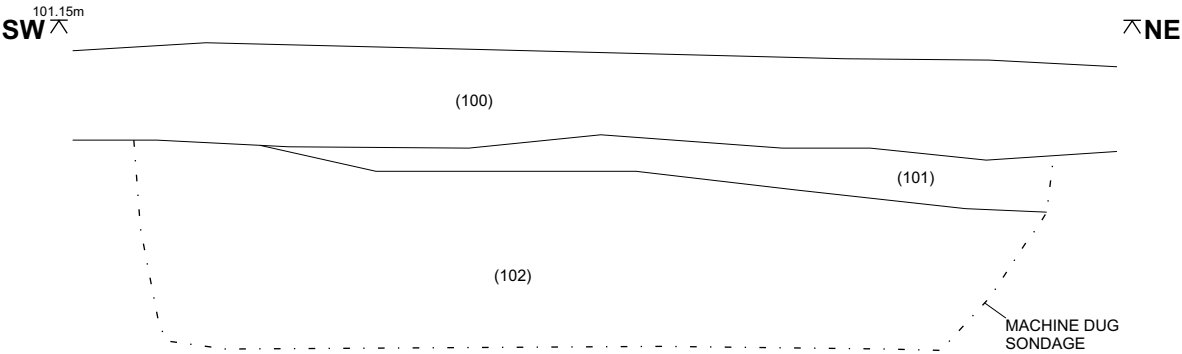
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FIGURE 1: Site Location

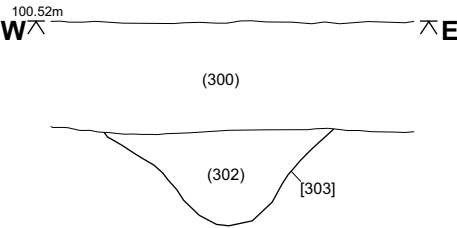




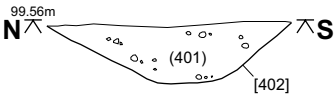
SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION (101) and (102)



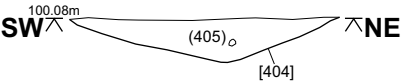
SOUTH FACING SECTION [303]



WEST FACING SECTION [402]



SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION [404]



Site Code: ELG16
Accession Code:



FIGURE 4: Sections