

**FAIR MILE HOSPITAL,
CHOLSEY,
OXFORDSHIRE.**

NGR: SU 5977 8596

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

In September 2010 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Fair Mile Hospital, Cholsey, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 5977 8596). The project was commissioned by Linden Homes.

The project comprised the excavation and recording of 20 evaluation trenches within a proposed development area.

The archaeological works revealed the presence of a Prehistoric or Medieval pit in Trench 12, a possible Prehistoric ditch and associated posthole in Trench 15 and a number of Post-medieval/Modern features. A small assemblage of residual Prehistoric struck flints was recovered from the trenches.

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 *circa* 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 *circa* 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 between AD 43 and AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in September 2010 on land at Fair Mile Hospital, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 5977 8596). The project was commissioned by Linden Homes.
- 1.2 The archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (2010), based upon a brief issued by Oxfordshire County Council (2010), and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire Planning Archaeologist advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation was to be undertaken in advance of redevelopment at Fair Mile Hospital, Cholsey.
- 2.2 The site is located to the southeast of Cholsey, close to the River Thames and covers an area of approximately 39ha, of which only limited areas will see new build. At the time of the evaluation works, the site comprised a derelict hospital and grounds, which was bounded to the west by the Reading Road, to the east by fields and the Cholsey Marsh nature reserve beyond, and by open fields to the north and the Papist Way to the south.
- 2.3 Planning permission (P09/W1313) has been granted for the demolition, extensions, alterations, refurbishment and conversion of the main hospital buildings to create 130 homes, along with community facilities, offices, nursery and leisure uses. Conversion works (including alterations and extension) of former farm buildings to form offices, cafe/restaurant/shop and retention and refurbishment of a cricket pavilion will also be undertaken, along with the erection of 224 new homes and allotment buildings, as well as provision of facilities for outdoor sport and play. A condition requiring a staged programme of archaeological investigation has been attached to the planning permission because of the potential for the presence of archaeological remains as indicted in a Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2009). The condition was applied in accordance with PPS5 and Policy CON12 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.
- 2.4 The results of the CgMs Desk Based Assessment are summarised here; the site lies within an area of some archaeological interest, located immediately north are a series of rectilinear enclosures and trackways seen as cropmarks (PRN 8591 (SU 5979 8549) and 8592(SU 5959 8529)). Further cropmarks of a Bronze Age barrow have been recorded 420m north of the site. Prehistoric daub and pottery has been recovered from the area to the west of the former hospital suggesting some form of Prehistoric settlement in the area (PRN 11152 (SU 6025 8572)) and a Palaeolithic ovate hand axe was also found to the east of the site in the 19th century (PRN 8874 (SU 5950 8610)).

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- 2.5 Parts of the extant 19th and 20th century hospital building and the associated Lodge and Chapel are Grade II Listed. In addition the formal hospital gardens are Grade II Listed as a Registered Park and Garden.
- 2.6 The site has been subjected to considerable ground disturbance and levelling operations, as shown by a geotechnical survey carried out on the site. This has most likely removed large areas of any potential archaeology, particularly close to the existing buildings. Some areas of the site proposed for development, however, have seen little modern truncation and contain the potential for surviving archaeological deposits.
- 2.7 The main potential of the site is for the recovery of Prehistoric finds or features; this will not prejudice the evaluation against recovery of data related to other 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; 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 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.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation required the excavation of 24 trenches, measuring 25m by 1.6m. Due to on-site constraints, it was only possible to excavate 20 trenches, and some of the trenches had to be slightly re-located in order to avoid potential services. All amendments to the trenching methodology were agreed, on-site, with the Oxfordshire Planning Archaeologist. The final trench locations are shown in Figure 2.

- 4.2 Topsoil and non-significant overburden was removed to the top of the archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved by the use of a 360° mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket, whilst under constant archaeological direction. Thereafter all additional investigation was conducted manually by archaeologists.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- 5.1 A full stratigraphic description of all the contexts identified in the course of the project is presented in Appendix 1, along with a report on the recovered struck flints in Appendix 2. A summary discussion is given below.
- 5.2 The natural deposits present within the trenches varied across the site, with trenches containing solid clay and chalk brash, sand and gravel and solid clay and gravel deposits. It was uncertain if this general degree of variation indicated different levels of truncation or reflected variation within the underlying terrace deposits.
- 5.3 Trenches 9, 10, 13, 20 and 21 contained natural deposits which were directly overlaid by Modern in-fill and, as such, had probably been previously stripped.
- 5.4 Features [1102], [1104] and [1106] were all associated with Post-medieval/Modern artefacts and did not represent significant archaeological activity.
- 5.5 Pit [1204] contained eight Prehistoric struck/burnt flints, along with a small sherd of Medieval pottery. Given the shallow depth and soft fill of the feature, it was unclear if Pit [1204] represented a Prehistoric feature, which contained invasive (later) Medieval material or, alternatively, a Medieval feature, which contained residual (earlier) Prehistoric artefacts.
- 5.6 Ditch [1508] and Posthole (1507) were both located beneath subsoil (1505) and were, therefore, likely to be of some antiquity. A small amount of Prehistoric pottery and struck/burnt flints within ditch fill (1509) indicated that these features were possibly Prehistoric.
- 5.7 Features [1903] and [1905] shared a similar location and alignment and probably represented the remains of a ditched field boundary. Ditch [1905] contained a layer of clinker and a fragment of Post-medieval brick. There was no evidence to suggest that either of these features pre-dated the Post-medieval period.

- 5.8 Residual struck flints recovered from Trenches 7, 11 and 24 represented limited evidence for Prehistoric activity in the general locales of these trenches.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The evaluation has revealed the presence of a Prehistoric or Medieval pit in Trench 12, possible Prehistoric features in Trench 15 and a number of Post-medieval/Modern features. A small assemblage of residual Prehistoric struck flints was recovered from the trenches.
- 6.2 There was no certain evidence for extensive areas of truncation, however; Trenches 9, 10, 13, 20 and 21 had previously been stripped in the Modern period.
- 6.3 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 Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Council and Nick Ashfield of Linden Homes for their assistance during the course of this project.

APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Trench 1 - not excavated.		
				Trench 2 - not excavated.		
				Trench 3 - 15m long, 1.6m wide and 0.58m deep (natural at 47.91m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised red/beige/brown patchy clay with frequent chalk inclusions.		
301	na	na	0.28	Topsoil - brown sand silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	302	na
302	na	na	0.3	Subsoil - red/brown clay silt, which contained occasional stones and occasional charcoal flecks.	natural	301
				Trench 4 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.45m deep (natural at 49.09m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised red/beige/brown patchy clay with frequent chalk inclusions.		
401	na	na	0.2	Topsoil - brown sand silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	402	na
402	na	na	0.25	Subsoil - red/brown clay silt.	natural	401
				Trench 5 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.53m deep (natural at 48.53m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised yellow/red/beige/brown patchy clay with frequent chalk inclusions.		
501	na	na	0.25	Topsoil - dark brown sand silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	502	na
502	na	na	0.28	Subsoil - red/brown clay silt, which contained occasional stones.	natural	501
				Trench 6 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.30m deep (natural at 50.97m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/brown sand and gravel with occasional patches of beige, chalky clay.		
601	na	na	0.3	Topsoil - dark brown clay sand.	natural	na
				Trench 7 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.42m deep (natural at 52.30m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/brown sand and gravel with occasional patches of beige, chalky clay.		
701	na	na	0.42	Topsoil - dark brown clay sand.	natural	na
				Trench 8 - not excavated.		

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CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Trench 9 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.29m deep (natural at 53.26m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/beige/grey solid clay and gravel.		
901	na	na	0.1	Tarmac.	902	na
902	na	na	0.08	Pink gravel make-up layer.	903	901
903	na	na	0.11	Dark brown stone and clay make-up layer.	natural	902
				Trench 10 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.33m deep (natural at 53.38m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/beige/grey solid clay and gravel.		
1001	na	na	0.13	Tarmac.	1002	na
1002	na	na	0.09	Pink gravel make-up layer.	1003	1001
1003	na	na	0.11	Dark brown stone and clay make-up layer.	natural	1002
				Trench 11 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.26m deep (natural at 54.43m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/brown sand and gravel.		
1101	na	na	0.26	Topsoil - dark brown clay sand, which contained frequent roots, along with one struck flint.	natural	na
[1102]	2.3	1.5	0.35	Shallow cut feature with steep sides and a flat base. Contained fill 1103.	natural	1103
1103	2.3	1.5	0.35	Fill of Feature [1102]; grey/brown sand silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks, along with occasional fragments of CBM and a sherd of chinaware pottery.	[1102]	1101
[1104]	2.55	1.6	0.24	Cut feature with steep sides and a flat base. Contained fill 1105.	natural	1105
1105	2.55	1.6	0.24	Fill of Feature [1104]; light grey/brown clay sand, which contained occasional charcoal flecks, along with occasional fragments of CBM and frequent sherds of Post-medieval/Modern pottery.	[1104]	1101
[1106]	0.58	0.28	?	Probable cut feature. Contained fill 1107. Not excavated.	natural	1107
1107	0.58	0.28	?	Fill of Feature [1106]; grey/brown sand silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks; equivalent to fill 1103. Hand cleaning across the top of fill 1107 yielded two small fragments of Post-medieval CBM.	[1106]	1101

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CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Trench 12 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.32m deep (natural at 54.30m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/brown sand and gravel.		
1201	na	na	0.22	Topsoil - dark brown sand silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	1202	na
1202	na	na	0.1	Subsoil - light orange/brown sand silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks. Occurred	natural	1201
				intermittently across the trench.		
[1203]	0.7	0.7	0.12	Sub-circular pit with a shallow, flat profile. Contained fill 1204.	natural	1204
1204	0.7	0.7	0.12	Fill of Pit [1203]; mid-brown soft sand silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks, occasional	[1203]	uncertain
				stones, four struck flints, four burnt flints and a single sherd (4g) of Oxford Medieval ware		
				pottery (OXY); datable to AD 1075-1350.		
				Trench 13 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.82m deep (natural at 52.93m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised red/brown, compact sand and gravel.		
1301	na	na	0.2	Topsoil - mid-brown sand silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	1302	na
1302	na	na	0.62	Layered make-up deposits, which contained frequent Modern artefacts and CBM, along with	natural	1301
				frequent rotted vegetation.		
				Trench 14 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.37m deep (natural at 54.07m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/brown sand and gravel.		
1401	na	na	0.25	Topsoil - mid-brown sand silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	1402	na
1402	na	na	0.12	Subsoil - light brown sand silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks. Occurred	natural	1401
				intermittently across the trench.		
				Trench 15 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.72m deep (natural at 48.31m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised light orange/brown, solid clay with frequent gravel inclusions.		
1501	na	na	0.07	Sand and grit.	1502	na
1502	na	na	0.2	Layer of black clinker.	1503	1501

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CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
1503	na	na	0.1	Layer of red/brown clay, which contained frequent Modern CBM fragments.	1504	1503
1504	na	na	0.13	Make-up layer of compacted stones.	1505	1503
1505	na	na	0.22	Subsoil - light orange/brown clay silt, which contained occasional stones.	1507	1504
1506				void		
1507	0.15	0.15	?	Sub-circular patch of dark orange/brown/grey clay silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks. Possible posthole. Not excavated.	1509?	1505
[1508]	8	2.25	0.36	East - west aligned linear feature, probably a ditch, with a steep sloping southern edge and a flat base. Contained fills 1510 and 1509. Partially investigated.	natural	1510
1509	8	2.25	0.31	Secondary fill of Ditch [1508]; light red/brown clay silt, which contained frequent small stones, frequent charcoal flecks and eight small fragments (5g) of undiagnostic, flint tempered Prehistoric pottery, along with two struck flints and two pieces of burnt flint.	1510	1507?
1510	?	0.87	0.08	Primary fill of Ditch [1508]; light beige/brown clay silt, which contained occasional small stones and frequent charcoal flecks.	[1508]	1509
				Trench 16 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.90m deep (natural at 48.38m OD). Natural deposits comprised light orange/brown, solid clay with frequent gravel inclusions.		
1601	na	na	0.03	Tarmac.	1602	na
1602	na	na	0.07	Concrete.	1603	1601
1603	na	na	0.35	Make-up layer of gritty clay silt, which contained frequent CBM fragments.	1604	1602
1604	na	na	0.15	Layer of green/grey silt clay, which contained frequent CBM fragments and frequent charcoal flecks.	1605	1603
1605	na	na	0.3	Subsoil - orange/brown silt clay, which contained occasional small stones and occasional charcoal fragments.	natural	1604
				Trench 17 - not excavated.		

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CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Trench 18 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.55m deep (natural at 47.32m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised light orange/brown compact clay/sand and gravel.		
1801	na	na	0.35	Topsoil - dark grey/brown sand silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	1802	na
1802	na	na	0.2	Subsoil - orange/brown sand silt, which contained frequent fragments of CBM.	natural	1801
				Trench 19 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.56m deep (natural at 46.81m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised light beige/orange/brown compact clay/sand and gravel.		
1901	na	na	0.24	Topsoil - grey/brown sand silt, which contained frequent small stones and occasional charcoal	1902	na
				flecks.		
1902	na	na	0.32	Subsoil - light yellow/grey/brown silt, which contained frequent small stones, occasional charcoal flecks and occasional CBM fragments.	natural	1901
[1903]	1.6	0.9	0.12	Northwest - southeast aligned linear feature, probably a ditch, with a shallow, flat profile.	natural	1904
				Contained fill 1904.		
1904	1	0.9	0.12	Fill of Ditch [1903]; grey/brown clay silt, which contained frequent small stones, occasional charcoal flecks, a fragment of iron nail, a fragment of CBM and a piece of burnt flint.	[1903]	1902
[1905]	1.6	2	0.18	Northwest - southeast aligned linear feature, probably a ditch, with a shallow, flat profile.	natural	1906
				Contained fills 1906 and 1907.		
1906	0.66	0.6	0.05	Primary fill of Ditch [1905]; lens of black vitrified clinker material.	[1905]	1907
1907	1.6	2	0.15	Secondary fill of Ditch [1905]; brown sand silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks and an abraded Post-medieval brick fragment.	1906	1902
				Trench 20 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.84m deep (natural at 46.03m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised beige/grey/green solid clay gravel.		
2001	na	na	0.19	Topsoil - dark brown clay sand.	2002	na
2002	na	na	0.16	Layer of beige/brown gravel and soil.	2003	2001
2003	na	na	0.2	Layer of dark brown clay gravel, which contained frequent charcoal flecks and frequent CBM fragments.	2004	2002
2004	na	na	0.29	Layer of grey/brown plastic clay and gravel, which contained occasional charcoal flecks and occasional Modern CBM fragments.	natural	2003

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CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Trench 21 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.95m deep (natural at 45.74m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised solid beige clay and patches of solid grey/green/orange clay gravel.		
2101	na	na	0.28	Topsoil - dark brown/grey clay sand.	2102	na
2102	na	na	0.25	Layer of dark brown clay sand gravel, which contained frequent charcoal flecks and lumps	2103	2101
				of clinker.		
2103	na	na	0.42	Mixed deposit of orange/brown clay and gravel, which contained frequent charcoal flecks	natural	2102
				and frequent Modern CBM.		
				Trench 22 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.30m deep (natural at 45.86m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/brown clay sand gravel.		
2201	na	na	0.3	Topsoil - dark brown clay sand gravel, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	natural	na
				Trench 23 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.29m deep (natural at 46.04m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/brown clay sand gravel.		
2301	na	na	0.29	Topsoil - dark brown clay sand gravel, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	natural	na
				Trench 24 - 25m long, 1.6m wide and 0.25m deep (natural at 46.34m OD).		
				Natural deposits comprised orange/brown clay sand gravel.		
2401	na	na	0.25	Topsoil - dark brown clay sand gravel, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	natural	na

APPENDIX 2: The Struck Flints

By Dr. Hugo Lamdin-Whymark

Ten struck flints, comprising six flakes, two end scrapers and two pieces of irregular waste, and seven pieces of burnt unworked flint were recovered from the evaluation. The flints all exhibit edge-damage, indicating that they are not contemporary with the archaeological deposits and features they were recovered from.

None of the flints are intrinsically datable, but the squat flake forms are most characteristic of the later Neolithic and Bronze Age.

Catalogue

Tr.7. Service backfill. End scraper on a thick flake. Later Neolithic or Bronze Age?

TR.11. 1101. One squat flint flake. Edge-damaged and residual.

Tr.12. 1204. Four pieces of burnt unworked flint, 12g.

Tr.12. 1204. Two flakes. Edge-damaged and residual.

Tr.12. 1204. Two pieces of irregular waste.

Tr.15. 1509. Flake. Moderate white cortication. Thin and regular with slight platform-edge preparation. Neolithic-early Bronze Age?

Tr.15. 1509. Flake. Rolled and residual.

Tr.15. 1509. Two pieces of burnt unworked flint, 8g.

Tr.19. 1904. One piece of burnt unworked flint, 1g.

Tr.24. Spoilheap. One flake and one thick end scraper. Heavy edge-damage. Neolithic or Bronze Age.

Tr.24. Top of natural. Flake with edge damage. Residual.



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Site Code: FMC10
Accession Code:


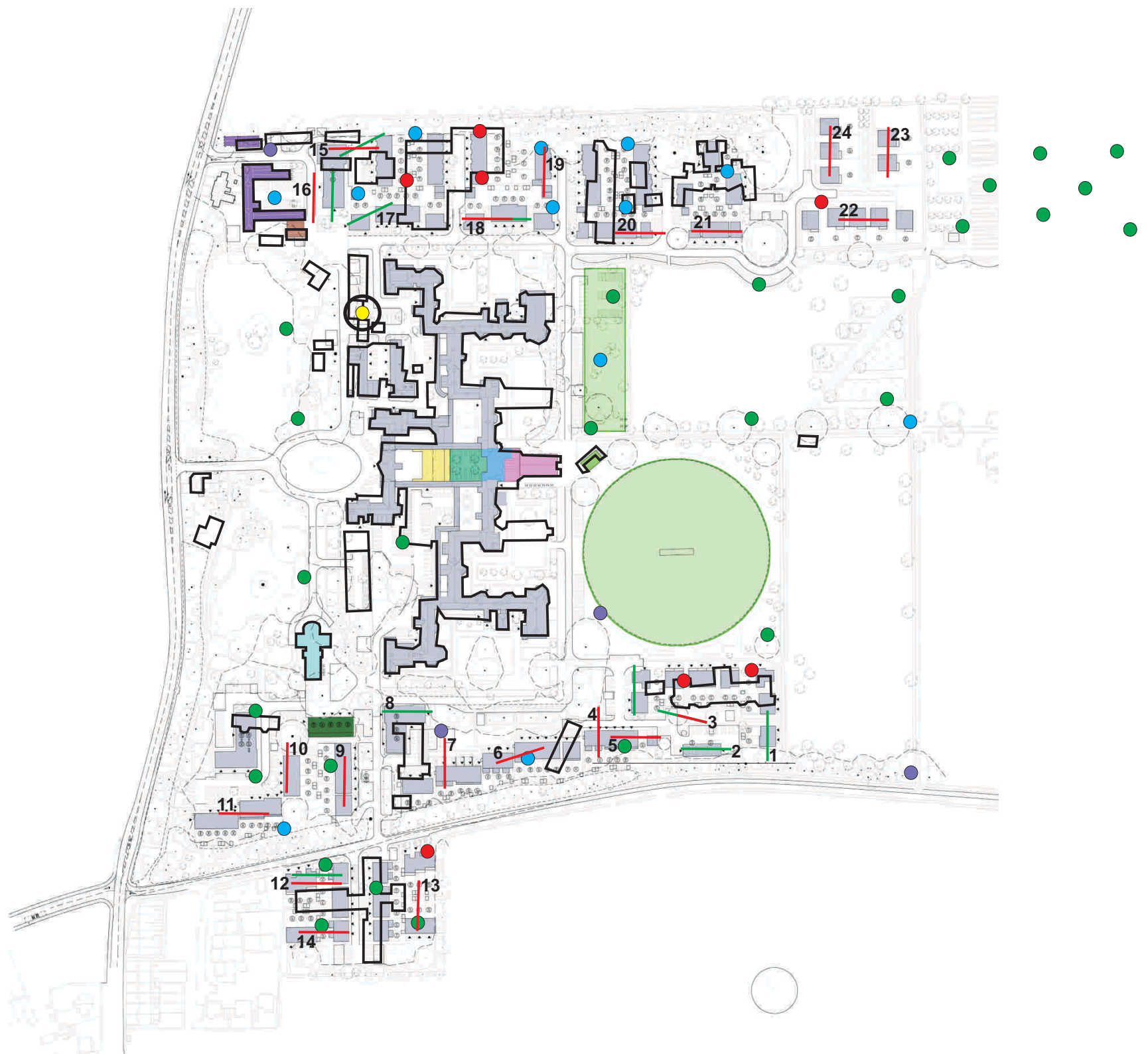

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FIGURE 1: Site Location



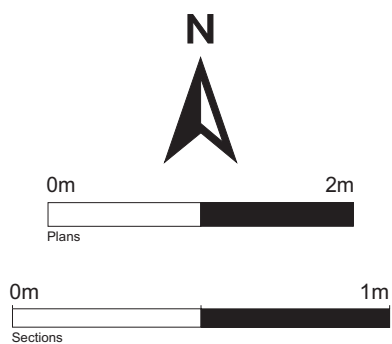
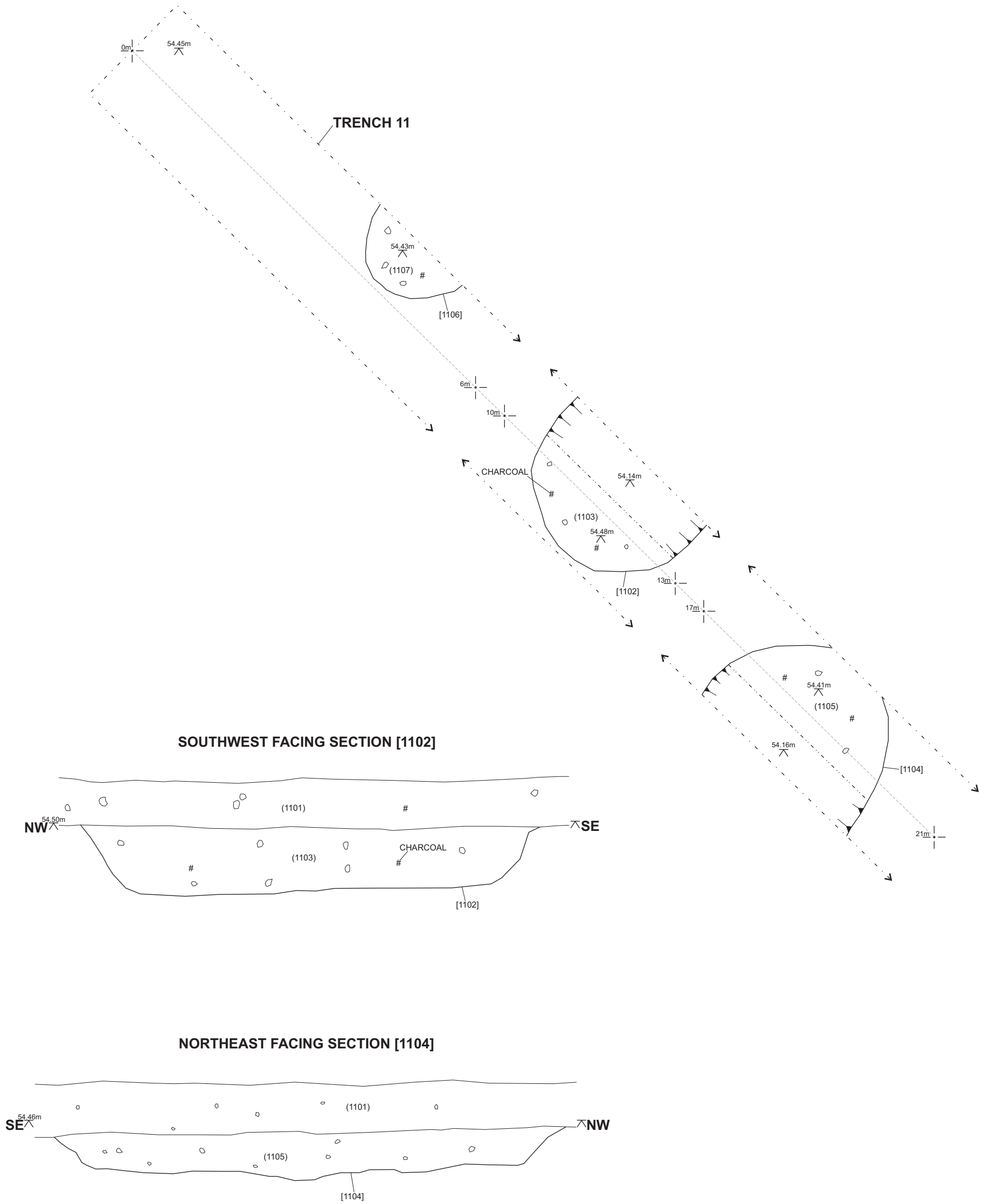
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Accession Code:

- 0.2-0.50m "Made Ground"
- 0.5-1.0m "Made Ground"
- 1.0-1.5m "Made Ground"
- 1.5-2.0m "Made Ground"
- 2.6m "Made Ground"
- Existing Buildings
- Proposed Archaeological Trenching
- Actual Archaeological Trenching

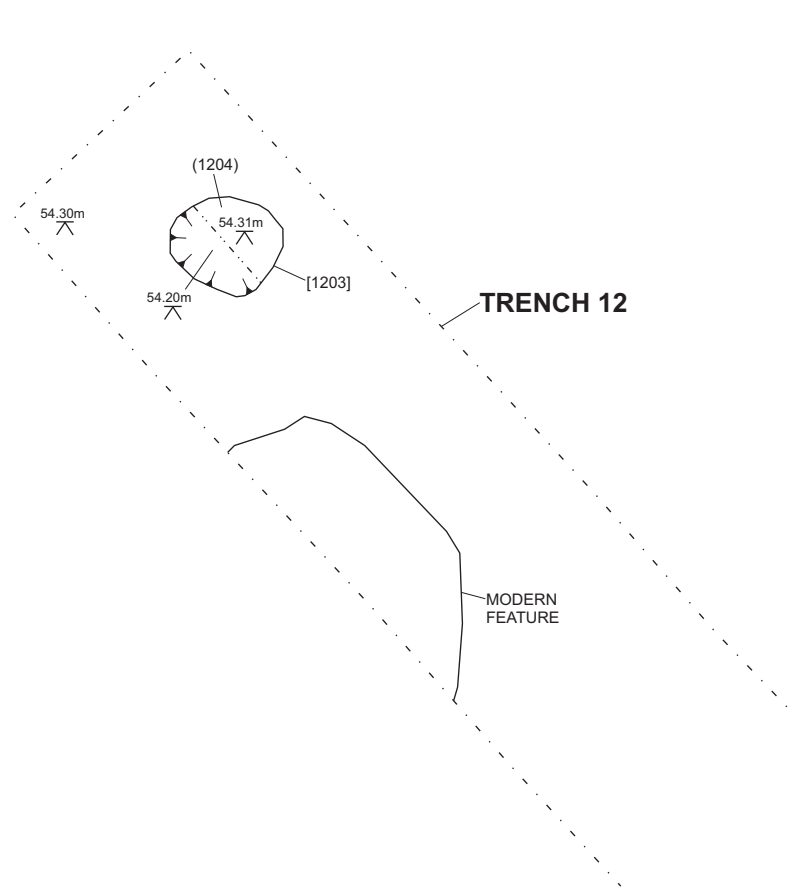


 0m 100m

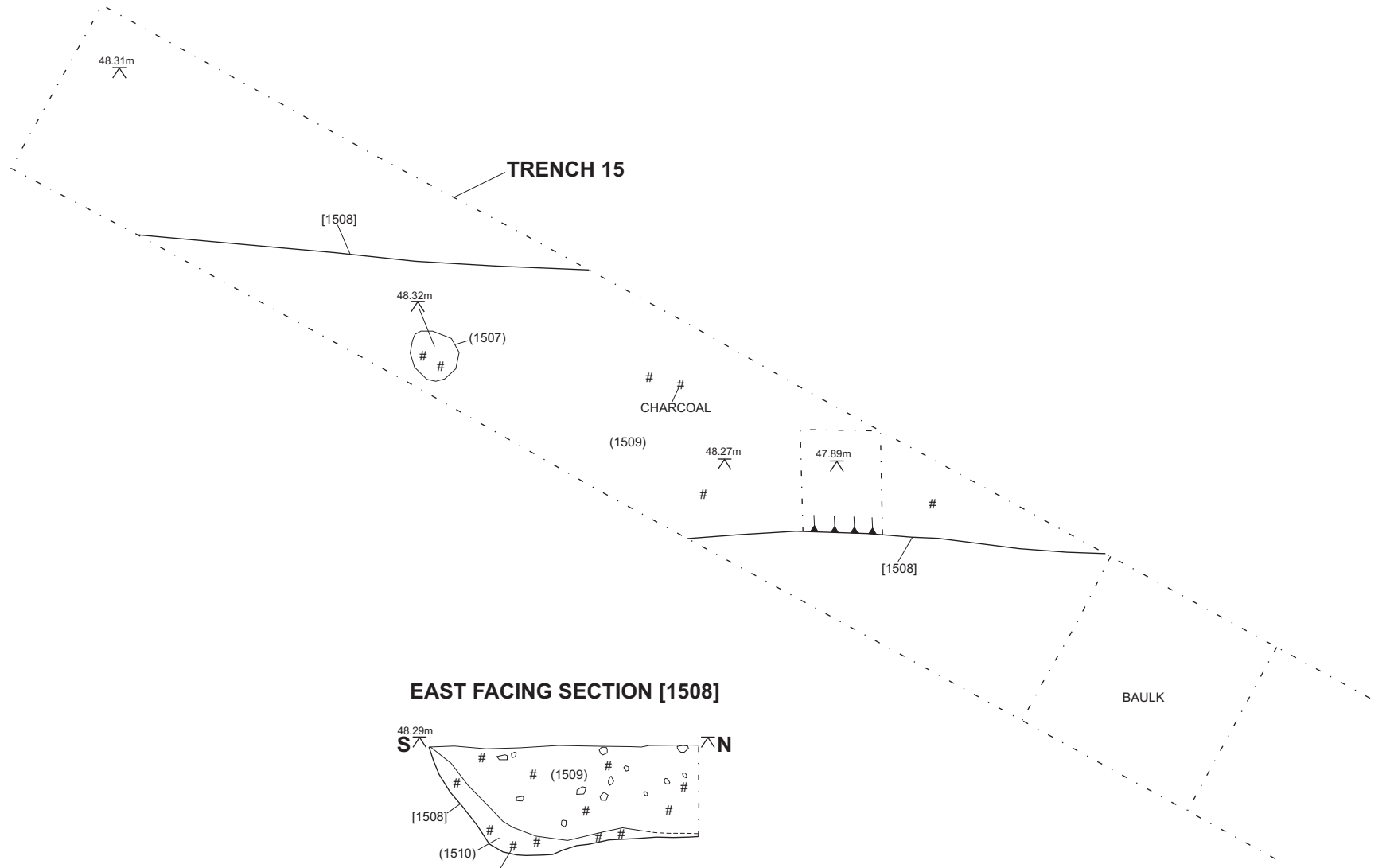
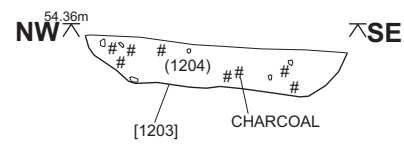
FIGURE 2: Site Plan



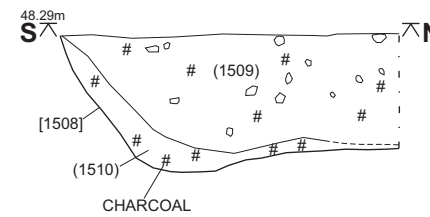
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FIGURE 3: Trench 11 Plan and Sections



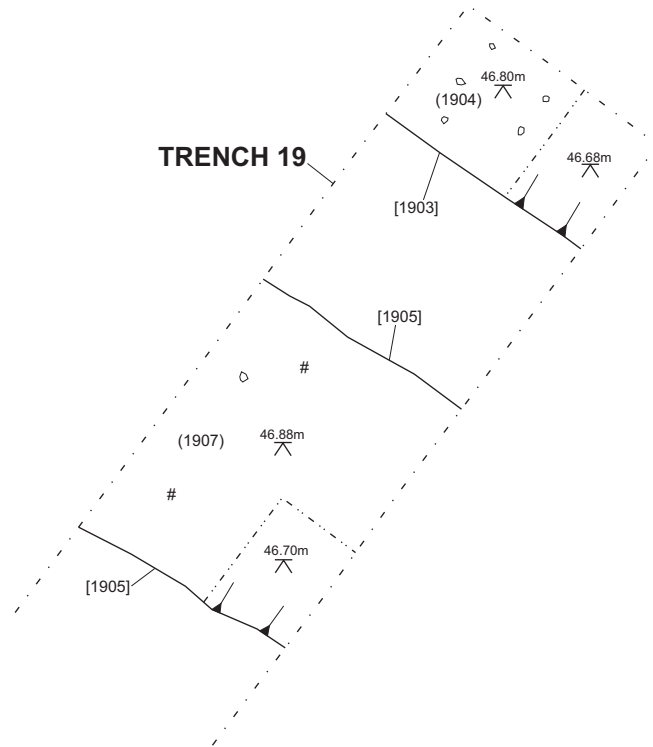
SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION [1203]



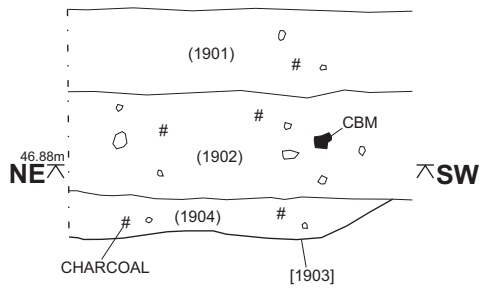
EAST FACING SECTION [1508]



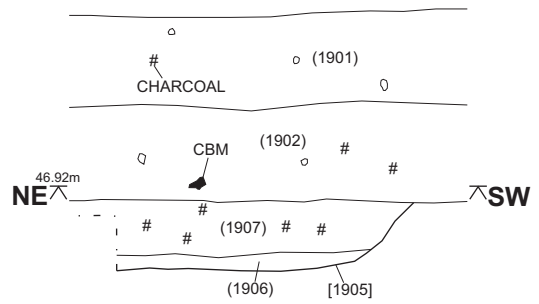
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**FIGURE 4: Trenches 12 and 15
Plans and Sections**



NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [1903]



NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [1905]



Site Code: FMC10

Accession Code:

FIGURE 5: Trench 19 Plan and Sections