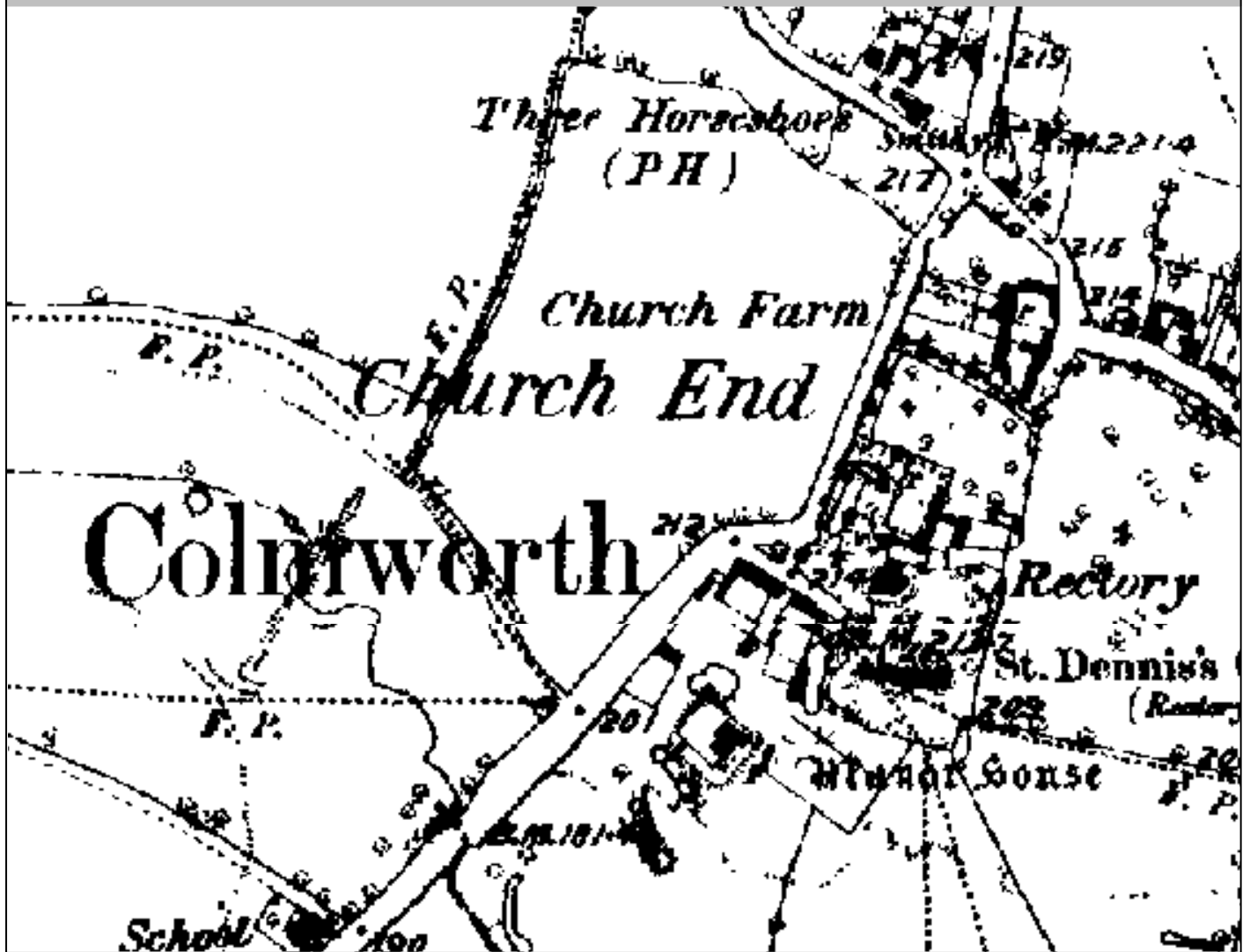


HERITAGE NETWORK



BURNIX CLOSE **Church Road, Colmworth, Beds.**

HN489

Archaeological Evaluation Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

BURNIX CLOSE Church Road, Colmworth, Beds.

HN489

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Prepared on behalf of Bewick Homes Ltd

by

Geoff Saunders, BA

Report no.257

October 2004

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The cover illustration is an extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 6" series, 1889

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Chris Turner, David Kaye, and Geoff Saunders. Illustrations were prepared by Geoff Saunders, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Ray Kane, Bewick Homes Ltd; Steve Bull, H Bull & Sons Plant Hire; Steven Coleman, Bedfordshire HER; Anna Slowikowski, Albion Archaeology; and Martin Oake and Lesley-Ann Mather, Heritage and Environment Section, BCC, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Burnix Close, Church Road, Colmworth, Bedfordshire		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Bedford Borough
Village/town:	Colmworth	Parish:	Colmworth
Planning reference:	04/01049/FUL	NGR:	TL 1089 5871
Client name and address:	Bewick Homes Ltd, 40 Mill Street, Bedford, Bedfordshire		
Nature of work:	New Housing	Present land use:	Garden
Size of affected area:	c.2085m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.114m ²
Site Code:	HN489	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Evaluation	Archive location:	Bedford Museum
Start of work	22/09/2004	Finish of work	24/09/2004
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Medieval, Modern
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis: In response to an archaeological condition on the planning permission for a new housing development at Burnix Close, Church Road, Colmworth, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the developer to carry out an archaeological evaluation of the site.

Three trial trenches measuring c.1.5 x 25m each were opened across the proposed development area. A series of boundary ditches and drainage gullies of 10th to 13th century date were revealed suggesting that the site was located within a field system on the edge of an occupation site at this time. Two modern postholes were also revealed and probably relate to a former structure shown on the site on recent Ordnance Survey maps.

1. Introduction

- This report has been prepared on behalf of Bewick Homes Ltd, as part of the archaeological evaluation of a development site at Burnix Close, Church Road, Colmworth, Beds. The planning permission for the development (ref. 04/01049/FUL) controlled by the Bedford Borough Council (BBC), has been granted subject to a standard condition requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with the provisions set out in the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance Note no.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning. The scope of the required investigation has been set out in a *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Investigation* and a *Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation* both dated 28 July 2004 prepared by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) of Bedfordshire County Council, acting as adviser to the planning authority.

- The site lies on the east side of Church Road, just to the north of the parish church and the manor house, centred on NGR TL 1089 5871. It was previously occupied by a single house with garage set in garden grounds. The development proposes the construction of four detached dwellings with garages, together with associated access, landscaping and services.

- The site lies in the core of the Saxon and medieval manorial settlement, which itself lies in a documented archaeological landscape which includes earthworks (including ridge and furrow) cropmarks and other occupation evidence. A moated site lies immediately to the south of the site at Moat House, and Manor Farm is also built on a moated island of medieval date, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

- On the basis of its location, there was considered to be a good probability that remains of medieval or earlier date could be preserved on the site. The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains that are liable to be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), if they were discovered.

- The present report is intended to provide the planning authority with sufficient data to allow it to consider the archaeological implications of the proposed development, and to determine what further, if any, mitigation measures may be required to allow the development to proceed.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- The site is located on level ground in the centre of the village of Colmworth at approximately c.66.00m AOD. The surrounding landscape rises gently from east to west, falling away to the south into the valley of the Colmworth Brook which flows from west to east.
- The underlying natural geology was formed during the Anglian glaciation and consists of Boulder Clay.

SITE BACKGROUND

- The Bedfordshire HER demonstrates that, although the site lies within a documented archaeological landscape, little intrusive archaeological work has taken place in the vicinity of the manorial complex at Colmworth.
- The pre-enclosure map of 1838 shows that, to the south of the site, Church Road deviates from its present course to follow a less direct route through the parish along the line of former field boundaries. The study area lies within an open plot of land called 'Football Close'. The parish of Colmworth is shown to have several foci of settlement.
- The post-enclosure map of 1838 shows Church Road following its present alignment. The present study area lies within an open and unnamed plot of land.
- Both maps show the site as lying outside of the boundary of Colmworth manor.

METHODOLOGY

- The alignment of Trench 1 was rotated so that it ran approximately north – south, this was to avoid any disturbance caused by the demolition the house which previously occupied the site. All other work was carried out in accordance with the approved *Project Design*, current health and safety legislation, and IFA standards.
- The trenches were triangulated from known points using fibreglass tape measures.
- Three trenches were opened using a JCB excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket, under direct archaeological supervision (see Figure 2). Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts. Trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon.
- The trenches were cleaned by hand, and all potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.
- All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:50 and 1:10.

RESULTS

Stratigraphy

- The stratigraphy was broadly similar across all three trenches. It consisted of:
 - topsoil of firm, very dark greyish brown (2.5Y 3/2), silty clay measuring between 0.25m and 0.30m in depth;
 - a subsoil of firm, dark greyish brown (2.5Y 4/2), slightly silty clay measuring between 0.30m and 0.35m in depth;
 - undisturbed natural of firm, pale olive (5Y 6/4), clay with flint, chalk and mudstone inclusions, encountered at approximately 0.6m below the existing surface.

Trench 1

- Trench 1 ran across the western half of the site and was aligned north – south (see Figure 2). The trench measured 1.5 x 25.4m and was a maximum of 0.75m in depth.
- The stratigraphy in this trench varied slightly from the rest of the site, in the area of the structure which previously occupied the site demolition rubble replaced the topsoil.
- The trench contained a linear cut feature [101], a modern water pipe, and a concrete block associated with the house which formerly occupied the site. Evidence of root disturbance was also observed.
- Ditch [101] was observed cut into the natural geology on an east- west alignment across the north end of the trench. This feature was 0.80m wide and approximately 0.20m deep, with moderately shallow slightly concave sides and a flat base. The solitary friable, olive brown, slightly silty clay fill yielded no archaeological artefacts. The clean nature of the fill within the feature indicates that it likely represents a boundary ditch located away from occupation areas.

Trench data:

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)
101	Cut	Linear cut feature with moderately shallow slightly concave sides and a flat base aligned east – west. Boundary ditch.	Length: 1.50m+ Width: 0.80m Depth: 0.20m
102	Fill	Friable, olive brown (2.5Y 4/4), slightly silty clay with frequent chalk inclusions, moderate small flints, and occasional charcoal flecks. Fill of [101].	Length: 1.50m+ Width: 0.80m Depth: 0.20m

Trench 2

- Trench 2 ran across the southern half of the site on an east – west alignment (see Figure 2). The trench measured 1.5 x 25.7m and was a maximum of 0.73m in depth.
- The trench contained a linear cut feature [201], a shallow scoop [203], a possible posthole [205], and a modern soakaway and associated pipe. The trench showed evidence of glacial striations in the form of a gravel lens crossing its centre.
- Gully [201] was observed cut into the natural geology on a north – south alignment across the east end of the trench. This feature was 0.45m wide and approximately 0.14m deep, with moderately steep concave sides and a rounded ‘U’ shaped base. The solitary firm, olive brown, slightly silty clay fill yielded two pottery fragments of 13th century date. The limited finds assemblage and the profile of the cut suggest that it represents a drainage gully or field boundary.
- Sub-ovoid shallow scoop [203] was observed cut into the natural geology running beneath the northern baulk in the centre of the trench. The feature measured 0.95m in width and approximately 0.11m deep, and had shallow concave sides and a flat base. The solitary friable, dark olive brown, silty clay fill yielded a single sherd of pottery of 13th century date. The shallow nature of the feature and the limited finds assemblage suggest that only its base survives. The function of the feature is unclear.
- Sub-circular possible posthole [205] was observed cut into the natural geology running beneath the southern baulk in the centre of the trench. The full dimensions of the feature were not revealed, but it had an approximate depth of 0.1m, with slightly concave sides and a rounded base. The solitary firm, olive brown, clay fill yielded no archaeological artefacts.

Trench data:

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)
201	Cut	Linear cut feature with moderately steep concave sides and a ‘U’ shaped base aligned north – south. Drainage gully.	Length: 1.50m+ Width: 0.45m Depth: 0.14m
202	Fill	Firm, olive brown (2.5Y 4/4), slightly silty clay with frequent chalk flecks, moderate medium sub-rounded stones, and occasional charcoal flecks. Fill of [201].	Length: 1.50m+ Width: 0.45m Depth: 0.14m
203	Cut	Sub-ovoid cut feature running beneath northern baulk with shallow concave sides and a flat base. Shallow scoop, possibly base of a pit.	Length: 0.70m+ Width: 0.95m Depth: 0.11m
204	Fill	Friable, dark olive brown (2.5Y 3/3) silty clay with frequent chalk flecks and occasional charcoal flecks. Fill of [203].	Length: 0.70m+ Width: 0.95m Depth: 0.11m
205	Cut	Sub-circular cut feature running beneath southern baulk with slightly concave sides and a rounded base. Possible posthole.	Length: 0.60m+ Width: 0.15m+ Depth: 0.10m
206	Fill	Firm, olive brown (2.5Y 4/3), clay with frequent small charcoal fragments and occasional small sub-angular flints. Fill of [205].	Length: 0.60m+ Width: 0.15m+ Depth: 0.10m

Trench 3

- Trench 3 ran across the northern half of the site on an east – west alignment (see Figure 2). The trench measured 1.5 x 25.0m and was a maximum of 0.60m in depth.
- The trench contained a linear cut feature [301], two postholes [303] and [305], and a land drain. The land drain consisted of a circular segmented ceramic pipe, commonly used during the 19th century. This suggests an agricultural use for the land at this time. Evidence of root disturbance was also observed.
- Ditch [301] was observed cut into the natural geology on a northwest – southeast alignment across the centre of the trench. This feature was 0.84m wide and approximately 0.35m deep, with steep sides and a rounded ‘U’ shaped base. The solitary firm, olive brown, silty clay fill yielded seven sherds of pottery ranging in date from the 10th to 13th centuries. The limited finds assemblage along with the profile of the feature suggest that it represents a boundary ditch.
- Sub-square posthole [303] was observed cut into the natural geology in the eastern end of the trench. The posthole measured 0.45m across by 0.17m deep, with a steep and straight southwest side, a shallower straight northeast side, and an irregular base. The solitary firm, light olive brown, slightly silty clay fill yielded a sherd of glazed modern pottery.
- Sub-square posthole [305] was observed cut into the natural geology in the eastern end of the trench. The posthole measured 0.45m across by 0.18m deep, with a steep concave north side, a shallower straight south side, and a narrow pointed base. The solitary firm, light olive brown, slightly silty clay fill yielded a single small undiagnostic fragment of late post-medieval to modern CBM and two fragments of mortar.
- The two postholes are of similar shape and size, and both yielded artefacts of modern date. They are likely to be contemporary with each other and part of the same structure.

Trench data:

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)
301	Cut	Linear cut feature with steep sides and a rounded ‘U’ shaped base aligned northwest – southeast. Boundary ditch.	Length: 3.00m+ Width: 0.84m Depth: 0.35m
302	Fill	Firm, olive brown (2.5Y 4/4), silty clay with frequent chalk inclusions, and occasional charcoal flecks. Fill of [301].	Length: 3.00m+ Width: 0.84m Depth: 0.35m
303	Cut	Sub-square cut feature with straight sides and an irregular base. Posthole.	Length: 0.45m Width: 0.45m Depth: 0.17m
304	Fill	Firm, light olive brown (2.5Y 5/3) slightly silty clay. Fill of [303].	Length: 0.45m Width: 0.45m Depth: 0.17m

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)
305	Cut	Sub-square cut feature with one concave side, one straight side and a pointed base. Posthole.	Length: 0.45m Width: 0.45m Depth: 0.18m
306	Fill	Firm, light olive brown (2.5Y 5/3), slightly silty clay. Fill of [305].	Length: 0.45m Width: 0.45m Depth: 0.18m

FINDS ASSESSMENT

Concordance of Finds

Ctxt	Pottery		CBM		Daub		An.bone		Fe.objs		Fe.nails		Slag		Mortar		Coal	
	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.
202	5	2			5	1	4	2	5	1	4	1	5	1				
204	15	1																
302	20	7			25	14							15	3			4	3
304	5	1											10	5			3	1
306			10	1											45	2		
Total	45	11	10	1	30	15	4	2	5	1	4	1	30	9	45	2	7	4

Pottery

- A total of 11 sherds of pottery, weighing 45g, was recovered from four stratified contexts during the present investigation. The pottery ranged in date from the early medieval period to the late post-medieval period. The assemblage consisted mostly of small, abraded, undiagnostic, bodysherds of medieval date, ranging from the 10th to the 13th centuries.
- Sherds recovered from fill (302) within ditch [301] make up 44% of the assemblage by weight and 64% by number. This context yielded a variety of local and regional shell-tempered wares, two sherds of St Neots-type ware dated to the 10th – 11th centuries (Bedford pottery fabric type series B01), a single rim sherd of later St Neots-type ware dated to the 11th – 12th centuries (B01A), a single base sherd of 13th century Harrold ware (B07), and three undiagnostic shell-tempered wares probably of medieval date (general type B).
- A further three sherds of 13th century Harrold ware (B07) were recovered during the evaluation, two from the fill of gully [201], and a single base sherd from shallow scoop [203]. A small white glazed sherd of modern pottery was recovered from the fill of posthole [303].
- The pottery from the present site represents a domestic assemblage. The small and abraded nature of the sherds indicates that this material was not in its primary place of deposition. This, combined with the small size of the assemblage, indicates that it is not the result of the dumping of domestic refuse in the features. It does, however, suggest domestic occupation in the vicinity of the site at this time

Recommendations

- Given the small size of the assemblage, the abraded nature of the sherds, and that the sherds are unlikely to be in their primary place of deposition, no further work is proposed on this assemblage.

CBM

- A single fragment of undiagnostic CBM, weighing 10g, was recovered during the evaluation. The fragment is late post-medieval in date and was recovered from the fill of posthole [305].

Recommendations

- No further work is proposed on this object.

Daub

- A total of 15 fragments of daub, weighing 30g, were recovered from two stratified contexts during the evaluation. Fourteen fragments were recovered from ditch fill (302) and therefore are probably medieval in date. The remaining fragment was recovered from gully fill (202) and is therefore also probably medieval in date.

- The daub assemblage is small, abraded, and fragmentary in nature, its presence does however indicate the presence of at least one structure in the vicinity of the site at this time.

Recommendations

- No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

Animal bone

- A total of 2 fragments of animal bone, weighing 4g, were recovered during the evaluation. The fragments are small, worn, and undiagnostic.

Recommendations

- No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

Iron objects

- A single iron object, weighing 5g, was recovered during the evaluation. The object, recovered from the fill of gully [201], was heavily corroded and triangular in shape, measuring approximately 28mm in length, by 23mm in width, and 10mm thick.

Recommendations

- No further work is proposed on this object.

Iron nails

- A single, corroded, iron nail, weighing 4g, was collected from the fill of gully [201]. It measured 23mm in length, with a shank width of approximately 6mm, tapering to 3mm. The sub-rectangular head measured 13mm long by 6mm wide.

Recommendations

- No further work is proposed on this object.

Slag

- A total of nine fragments of slag, weighing 30g, were recovered from three stratified contexts during the evaluation. Three fragments recovered from ditch [301], and a further fragment from gully [201], may be medieval in date. The remaining five fragments were recovered from posthole [303] and may be modern.

- Although the fragments are small, abraded, and undiagnostic in nature, they are an indication of metal working in the vicinity of the site during this period.

Recommendations

- No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

Mortar

- A total of two fragments of modern cement mortar, weighing 45g, were recovered from posthole [305].

Recommendations

- No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

Coal

- A total of four fragments of coal, weighing 7g, were recovered from two stratified contexts during the evaluation. Three small, abraded and sub-round fragments were recovered from ditch [301] and may be medieval in date, although the possibility that the fragments are later intrusions in the fill, as a result of worm and root action, cannot be ruled out. The remaining fragment was recovered from posthole [303] and is probably late post-medieval in date.

Recommendations

- No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

3. Discussion

- The site is located in a well documented archaeological landscape, at the core of the Saxon and medieval manorial settlement. The archaeological evaluation has demonstrated low density activity on the site from the early medieval period onwards.
- The evaluation revealed a series of boundary ditches and drainage gullies, [101], [201], and [301], which yielded artefacts of 10th to 13th century date. The alignment of the features does not suggest any relation to the modern boundaries, and suggests that they form part of an earlier field system which has subsequently become disused.
- The abraded nature of the pottery and other finds from the site indicate that there was occupation in the vicinity of the site. Ditch [301] on the south of the site yielded the greatest number of pottery sherds and daub fragments indicating the likelihood that occupation was focussed to the south of the site, closer to the church and moated manor. This would support the records consulted in the Bedfordshire HER, which show the location of the deserted medieval village (HER712) immediately to the south and east of the church.
- The land drain observed in Trench 3 indicates that the site lay within agricultural land during the 19th century.
- The fieldwork revealed two modern postholes, [303], and [305]. The postholes possibly represent the remains of a structure shown to the south-east of the centre of the site on the present Ordnance Survey map of the area.

Conclusions

- The archaeological evaluation has demonstrated the presence of boundary features of medieval date within the current study area. In addition the finds recovered indicate the presence of occupation within the vicinity of the site, possibly to the south associated with the manorial complex. No direct evidence of occupation on the site during this period was recovered.
- The site has remained relatively undisturbed until the construction of the recently demolished bungalow and its associated garden structures and services.
- On the basis of these findings, it is considered that medieval boundaries, and further similar or related features are likely to be disturbed by the proposed development. The risk that significant occupation features of similar date will be disturbed can be considered to be low.

CONFIDENCE RATING

- In the course of the fieldwork conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. On this basis, there are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which is less than high.

4. Sources Consulted

Bedfordshire County Historic Environment Record

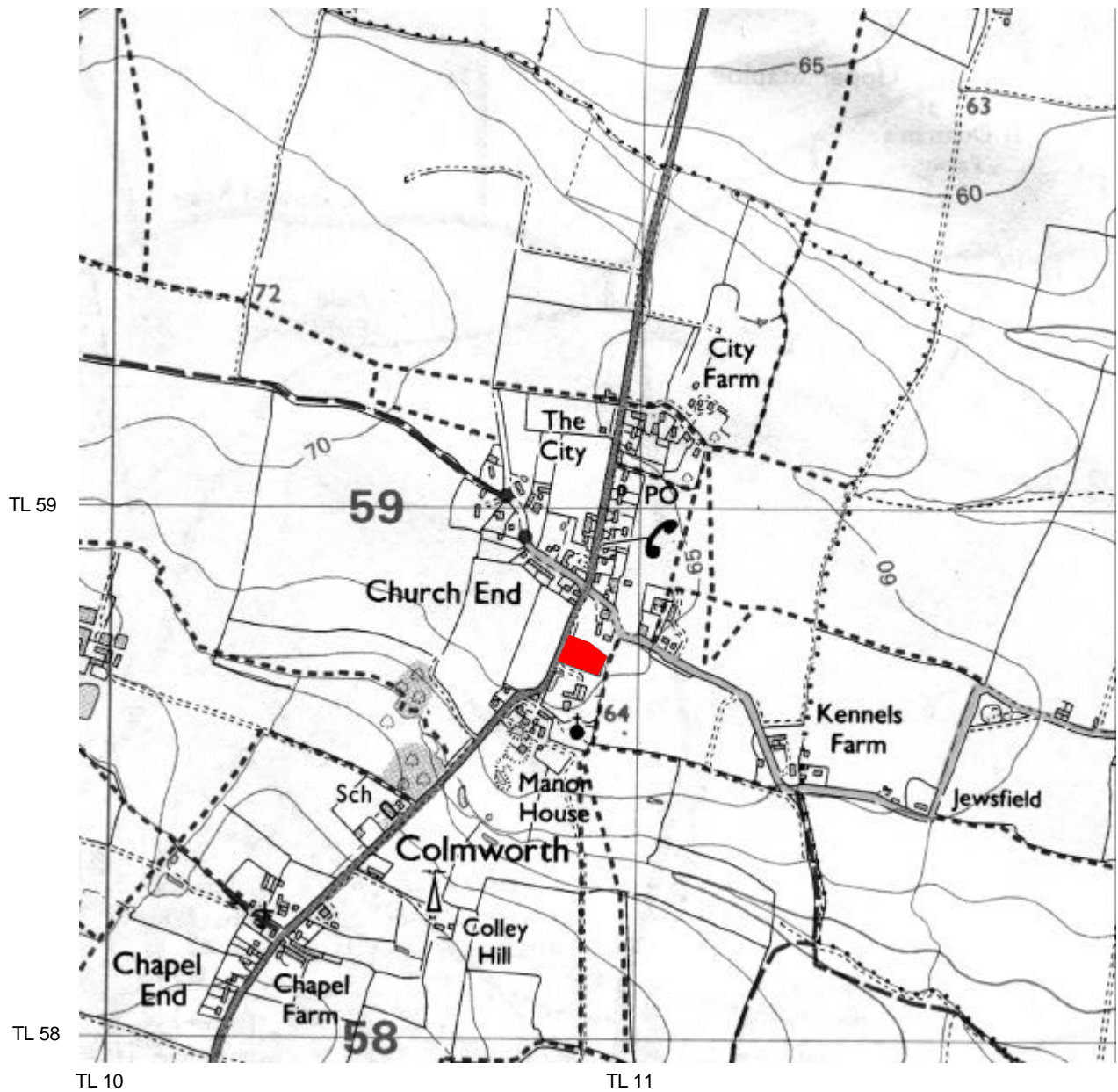
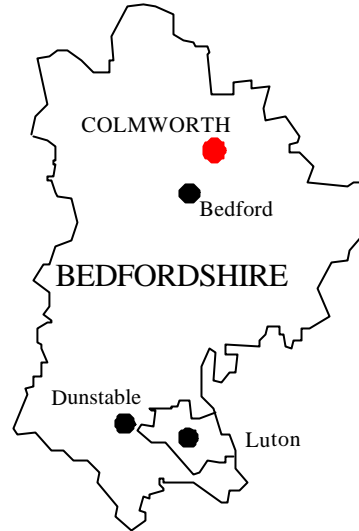
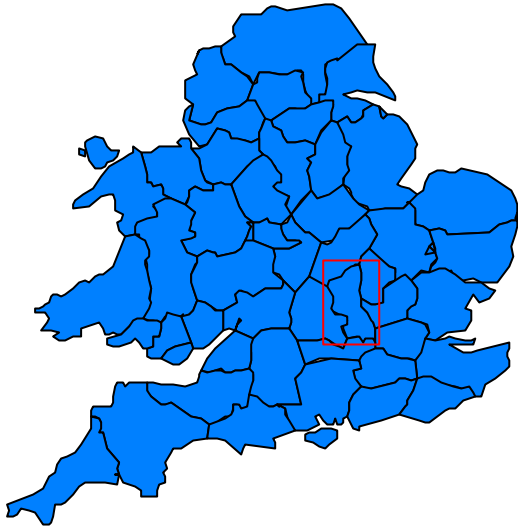
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Mather, L. 2004b. *Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation of Land at Burnix Close, Church Road, Colmworth, Bedfordshire.* Bedfordshire County Council

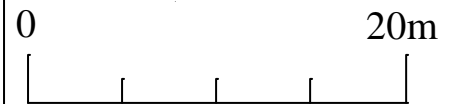
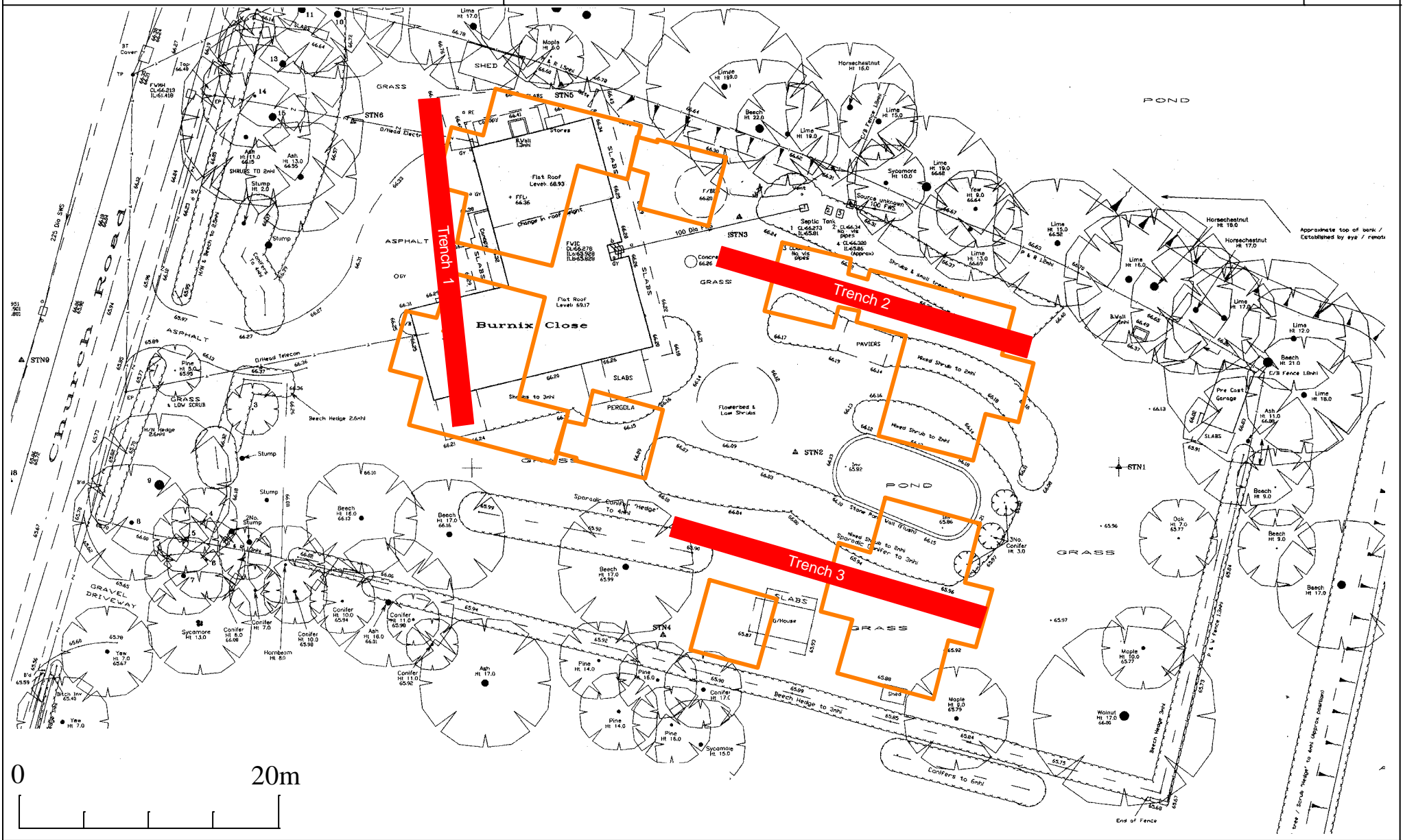
5. Illustrations

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Trench layout
Figure 3	Trenches 1 and 2 plans and sections
Figure 4	Trench 3 plan and section
Figure 5	Feature sections



Site Location

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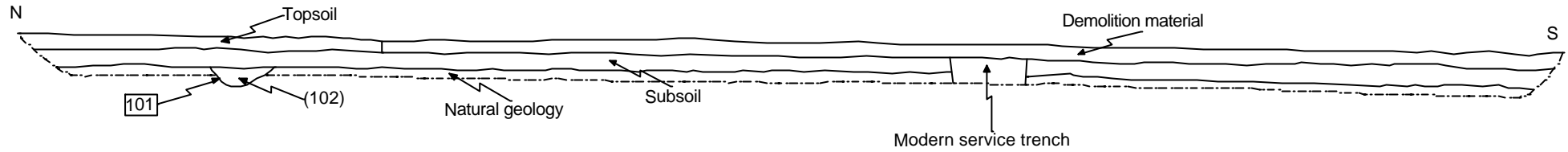


Trench Layout

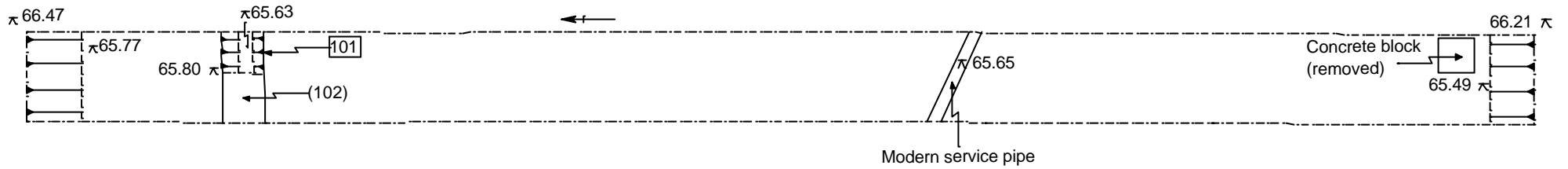
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Figure 2

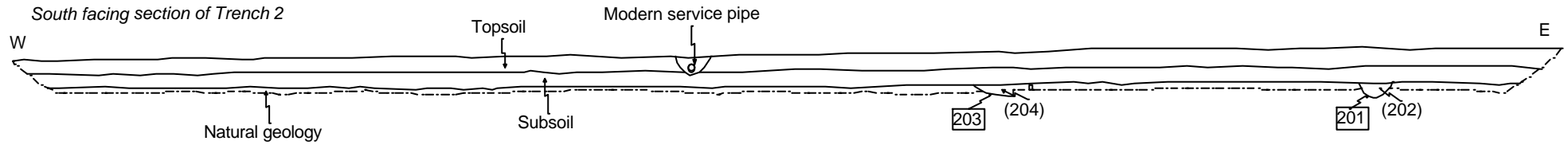
West facing section of Trench 1



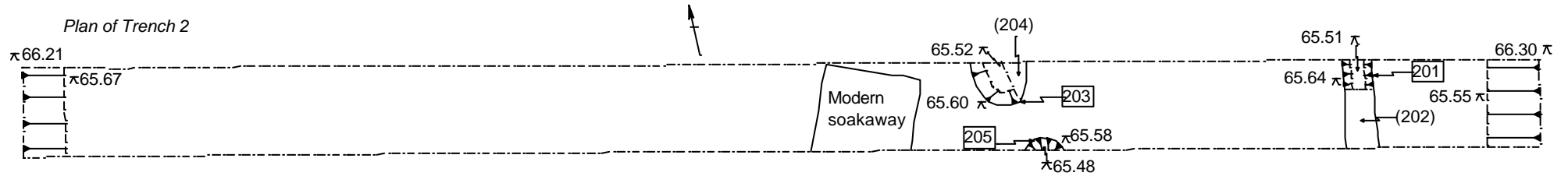
Plan of Trench 1



South facing section of Trench 2



Plan of Trench 2

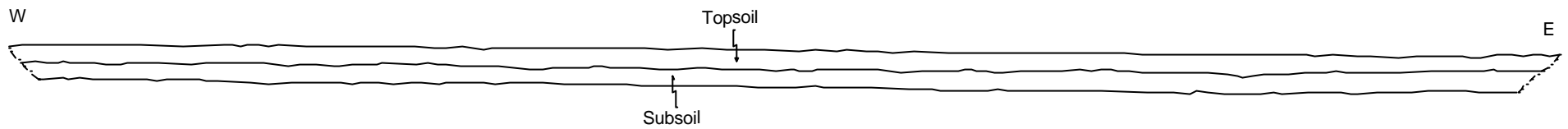


Trench 1 & 2 plan and section

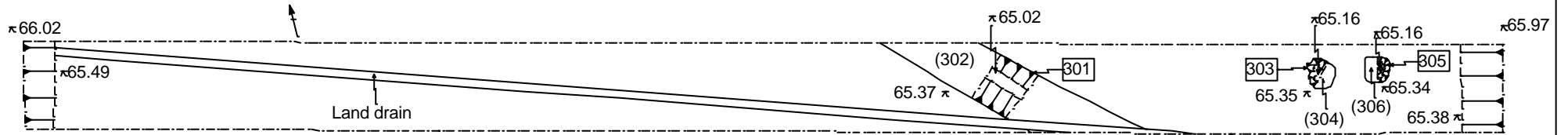
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Figure 3

South facing section of Trench 3



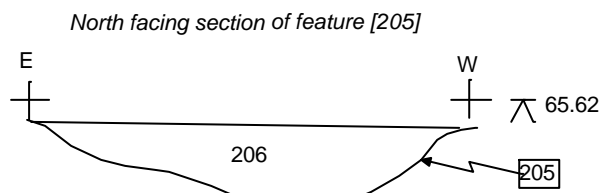
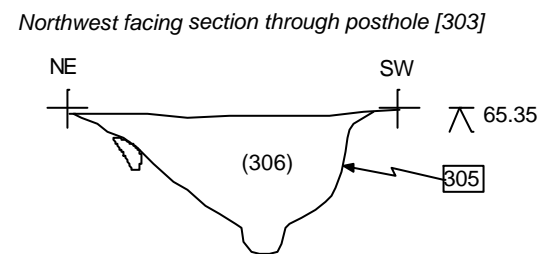
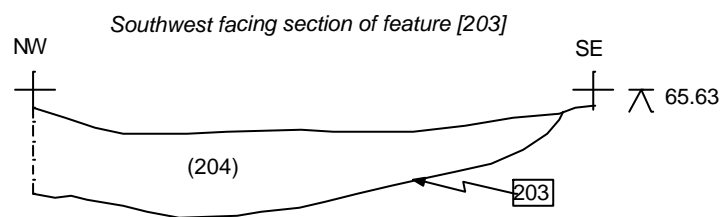
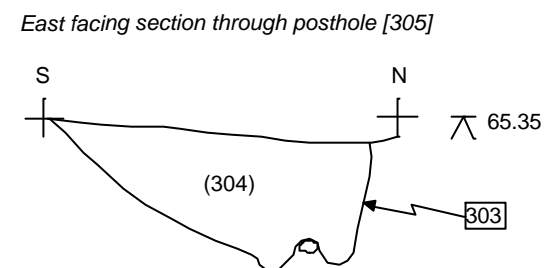
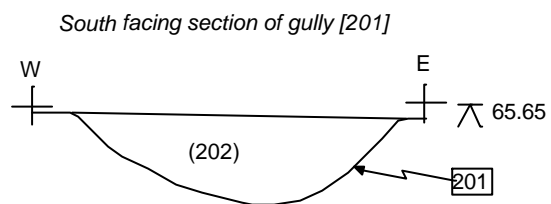
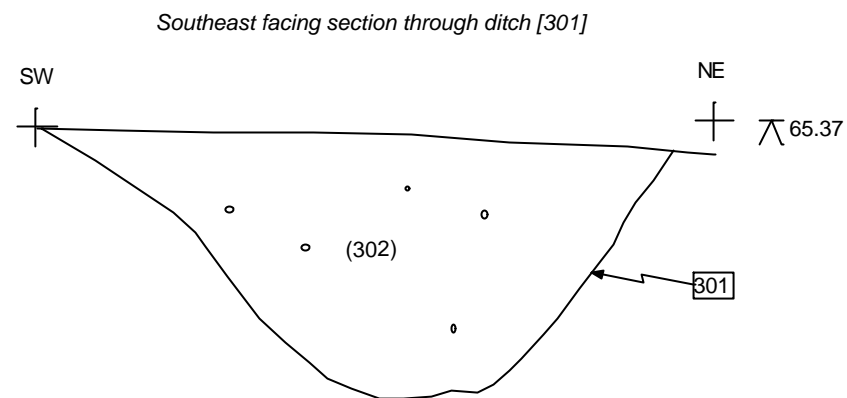
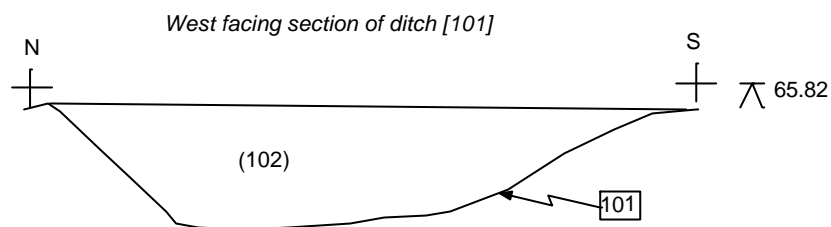
Plan of Trench 3



Trench 3 plan and section

Scale 1:100

Figure 4



Feature sections

Scale 1:10

Figure 5