

HERITAGE NETWORK



7a & 8 WENDOVER LODGE Welwyn, Herts.

HN553

Archaeological Evaluation Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

7a & 8 WENDOVER LODGE
Church Street, Welwyn, Herts.

HN553

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of Chris and Isobel Morison

by

Geoff Saunders, BA AIFA

Report no.311

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Contents

	Summary.....	Page i
Section 1	Introduction.....	Page 1
Section 2	Fieldwork	Page 2
Section 3	Discussion & Conclusion	Page 5
Section 4	Bibliography	Page 6
Section 5	Illustrations.....	following Page 6

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Geoff Saunders and Alison Hudson. The report text was written by Geoff Saunders and the illustrations were prepared by Alison Hudson and Geoff Saunders. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

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Summary

Site name and address:	7a and 8 Wendover Lodge, Church Street, Welwyn, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Welwyn Hatfield
Village/town:	Welwyn	Parish:	Welwyn
Planning reference:	6/05/0835	NGR:	TL 23285 16357
Client name and address:	Chris and Isobel Morison, 8 Wendover Lodge, Church Street, Welwyn, Hertfordshire		
Nature of work:	New Housing	Present land use:	Housing and gardens
Size of affected area:	c.550m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.60m ²
Site Code:	HN553	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Evaluation	Curating Museum:	Welwyn Hatfield Museums
Start of work	11/10/2005	Finish of work	13/10/2005
Related HER Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Late post-medieval – modern
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In order to determine the archaeological risk posed by a proposal to construct new housing on land at 7a and 8 Wendover Lodge, Church Street, Welwyn, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the landowners to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation.

Two trenches were excavated across the proposed development site. Trench 1, to the rear of 8 Wendover Lodge, contained two large tree boles, but no archaeological features or deposits. Trench 2, to the rear of 7a Wendover Lodge, contained evidence of probable bedding trenches and a shallow undated boundary ditch. The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or deposits predating the site's use as part of the gardens associated with Wendover Lodge.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *Chris and Isobel Morison*, as part of the archaeological evaluation of a development site located at 7a and 8 Wendover Lodge, Church Street, Welwyn, Herts. The determination of the planning application for the development (ref. 6/05/0835) by the North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), has been referred back to the applicants for further information on the archaeological potential of the site. This is in accordance with the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning. The scope of the required investigation has been defined in a *Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation* produced by the County Archaeological Office (CAO) of Hertfordshire County Council, acting as adviser to the planning authority (ref. JS 09/08/2005). A full specification for the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design* dated September 2005.

1.2 The site is located on the south-eastern side of Church Street, opposite the entrance to Welwyn Hall Gardens, centred on NGR TL 23285 16357. The study area comprises two plots, currently occupied by two dwellings and their associated gardens. The development proposes the construction of seven dwellings in two blocks with associated services and landscaping.

1.3 The site lies within an 'Area of Archaeological Significance' (AS7) designated by the Welwyn Hatfield District Local Plan, which defines the Iron Age, Roman and Medieval settlements at Welwyn. The study area formerly formed part of the grounds of Wendover Lodge, the present no.8 dating to the 1930s and the present no. 7a dating to the 1960s. Excavations at Welwyn Hall, on the opposite side of Church Street, have revealed the presence of a Roman mausoleum, as well as an enclosed 4th century inhumation cemetery. The presence of features of Saxo-Norman date has also been suggested. No remains or chance finds have been recorded on the present site.

1.4 The aim of the present 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).

1.5 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

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The ground slopes from 74.36mOD on the northern boundary of the garden of 8 Wendover Lodge to 72.08mOD in the southern half of the garden of no.7a.

2.2 The site forms part of two garden plots surrounded by trees and bushes and the underlying geology of the area is a yellowish brown slightly clayey sand with flinty gravel.

METHODOLOGY

2.3 All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the approved *Project Design*, current health and safety legislation, and the appropriate IFA and ALGAO guidance documents.

2.4 The trenches were located by triangulation from known points using fibreglass tape measures.

2.5 Two trenches were opened using a tracked 360⁰ mini-digger fitted with a 0.80m wide toothless ditching bucket (see Figure 2). Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts. Trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon.

2.6 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.

2.7 All identified contexts were recorded using the appropriate pro-forma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at a scale of 1:50.

RESULTS

Trench 1

2.8 Trench 1 measured 2 x 20m, was 0.75m in depth, and was aligned north – south. A sondage was excavated through the north end of the trench to a maximum depth of 0.95m.

2.9 The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of a layer of firm, very dark grey (10YR 3/1), clayey silt topsoil beneath which lay a firm, brown (10YR 4/3), slightly silty sand with very frequent medium flints, over the natural geology of strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) sand with very frequent flinty gravel.

2.10 Feature [101] was observed cut through the subsoil in the north end of Trench 1. The feature, which ran across the trench on an east to west alignment, had a maximum width of 2.35m. The sides of the feature were steep and straight but contained frequent medium to large root holes. The base of the feature was not reached, but augering demonstrated that the feature extended beyond a depth of 1.45m below the existing ground surface with no change in fill. The single very hard, brown (10YR 4/3), silty clayey sand fill (102) yielded no archaeological artefacts, or inclusions other than very frequent flinty gravel. The feature has been interpreted as a natural tree bole.

2.11 Sub-rectangular feature [103] was observed cut through the subsoil in the centre of Trench 1. The full dimensions of the feature are unclear as it ran beneath the western trench baulk. The sides and base of the feature were irregular with frequent root holes. The single very hard, brown (10YR 4/3), silty clayey sand fill (104) yielded no archaeological artefacts, or inclusions other than very frequent flinty gravel. The feature has been interpreted as a natural tree bole.

Trench data

Length (m):	20.00	Width (m):	2.00	Maximum Depth (m):	0.95	Orientation	N – S
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)		Top	74.36	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	73.60
		Base	73.41			Base	72.85
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
101	Cut	Tree bole.	2.00 +	2.35	1.14+		
102	Fill	Very hard, brown (10YR 4/3), silty clayey sand with very frequent flinty gravel. Fill of [101].	2.00 +	2.35	1.14+		
103	Cut	Tree bole.	2.90 +	1.65 +	0.80 +		
104	Fill	Very hard, brown (10YR 4/3), silty clayey sand with very frequent flinty gravel. Fill of [103].	2.90 +	1.65 +	0.80 +		

Trench 2

2.12 Trench 2 measured 2m x 10m, was 0.65m in depth, and was aligned approximately north – south.

2.13 The stratigraphy in the trench consisted of a layer of firm, very dark grey (10YR 3/1), clayey silt topsoil beneath which lay a firm, dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4), slightly silty sand with very occasional small flints, over the natural geology of strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) slightly clayey sand with flinty gravel.

2.14 Three parallel linear cuts were observed running approximately north – south along the trench. The cuts measure approximately 0.45m in width and are separated by a gap of approximately 0.40m. They survive to a maximum depth of only 0.04m and contained a subsoil fill which yielded no archaeological artefacts. The cuts abut linear feature [201] but do not cut through it nor continue on its southern side. The cuts may represent bedding trenches possibly forming part of a vegetable plot, or kitchen garden associated with Wendover Lodge.

2.15 Linear feature [201] was observed cut through the natural geology on an east – west alignment in the southern end of the trench. The feature measured 0.69m wide and survived to a maximum depth of approximately 0.19m. The sides of the features were shallow and slightly concave, the base very slightly rounded. The single firm, dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4), slightly sandy silty clay fill (202) yielded two very small sherds of white glazed pottery of 19th/20th century date and several small, abraded, and undiagnostic animal bone fragments. The possible bedding trenches observed in the trench do not

appear on the southern side of the feature. The feature appears to represent the remains of a field or plot boundary.

Trench data

Length (m):	10	Width (m):	2.00	Maximum Depth (m):	0.65	Orientation	N – S
Level at N End of Trench (mOD)		Top	72.60	Level at S End of Trench (mOD)		Top	72.08
		Base	71.95			Base	71.43
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
201	Cut	Linear cut feature on an east – west alignment with shallow concave sides and a slightly rounded base. Boundary ditch.	2.00 +	0.69	0.19		
202	Fill	Firm, dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4), slightly sandy silty clay with occasional small flints and charcoal flecks. Primary fill of [201].	2.00 +	0.69	0.19		

Concordance of finds

2.16 Two sherds of pottery, weighing 3g, were recovered from the fill of gully/ditch [201]. The two small sherds, which are white glazed, are of 19th/20th century date.

2.17 A single piece of brick, weighing 485g, was recovered unstratified from the subsoil in Trench 1. The brick, which has been over fired and likely represents a waster, is late medieval/early post medieval in date. Although the brick is heavily abraded and unlikely to have been recovered from its primary place of deposition it does indicate activity of this date in the vicinity.

2.18 Four fragments of animal bone, weighing 5g, were recovered from the fill of gully/ditch [201]. The animal bone, which has been sawn on one side, is part of a rib, possibly bovine.

2.19 Further Victorian and modern artefacts including pottery, ceramic building material (CBM), and animal bone, were observed within the overburden but not collected.

3. Discussion & Conclusion

3.1 Two trenches were excavated in order to investigate the archaeological potential of the present site. Despite the site's location within an 'Area of Archaeological Significance' (AS7) defining the Iron Age, Roman, and Medieval settlements at Welwyn, the only feature observed during the groundworks was a shallow boundary.

3.2 A large fragment of unstratified late medieval/early post medieval hand made brick represents the only of activity in the vicinity of the site predating the 19th century.

3.3 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows that prior to the construction of the present properties the site formed part of the gardens associated with Wendover Lodge. The map shows that part of the gardens associated with the Lodge appear to form part of an orchard, whilst closer to the lodge are more formal gardens.

3.4 The tree boles observed in Trench 1 indicate the possibility that prior to the construction of 8 Wendover Lodge in the 1930s, this area was located within the orchards shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey.

3.5 The probable bedding trenches and boundary feature [201] observed in Trench 2 suggest that this part of the site was located within the gardens associated with Wendover Lodge.

Conclusion

3.6 The archaeological evaluation of the site did not reveal any archaeological remains of significance.

3.7 The evaluation has revealed no archaeological features or deposits which demonstrably predate the site's use as gardens for Wendover Lodge.

3.8 On this basis, there is considered to be a low probability that development of the site will disturb archaeological remains of any significance.

Confidence Rating

3.9 Despite periodic rain during the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

3.10 There are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

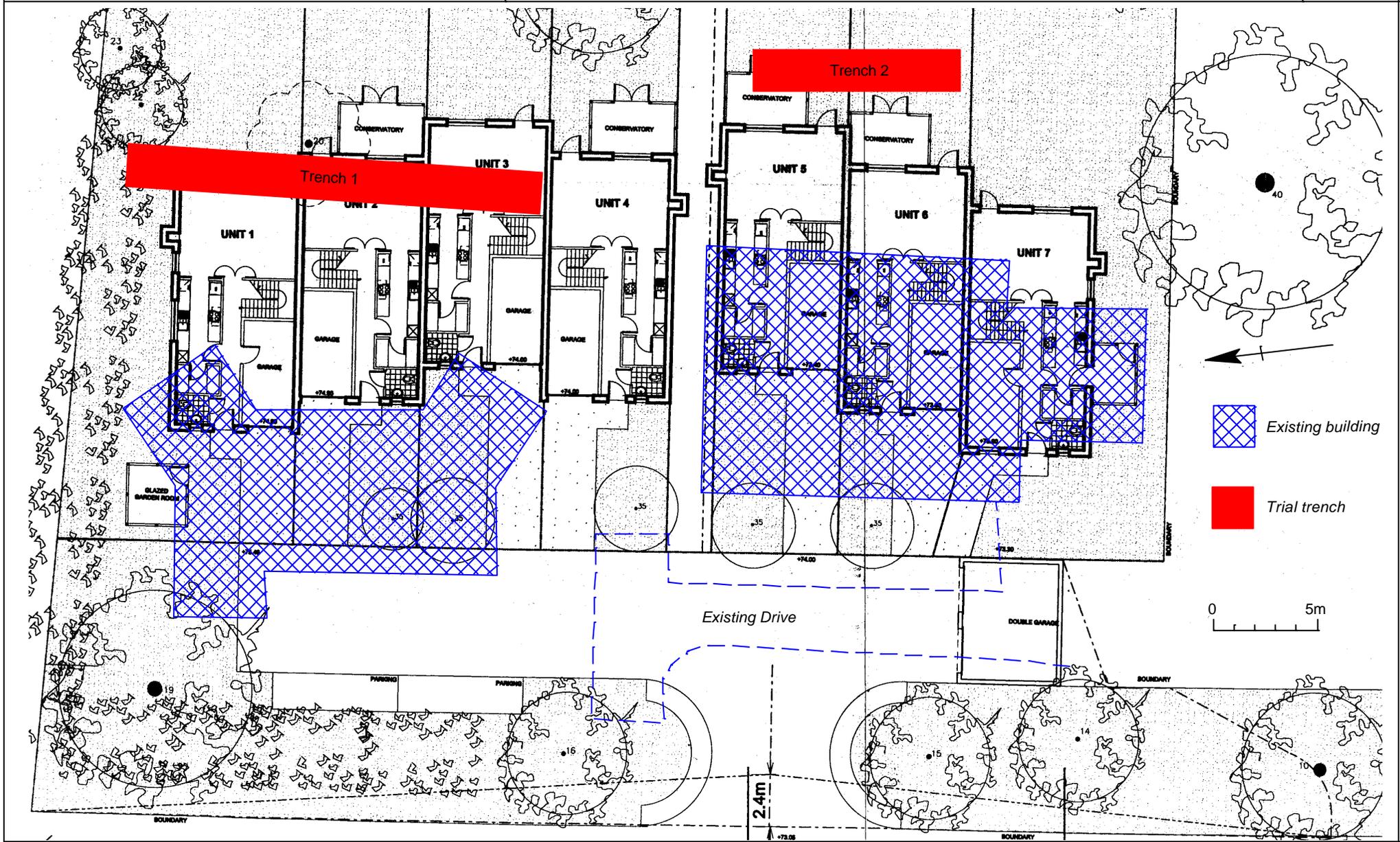
4. Bibliography

Hillelson, D, 2005 *7a & 8 Wendover Lodge, Church Street, Welwyn, Herts. Project Design: Archaeological Evaluation*. Heritage Network September 2005.

Smith, J, 2005 *Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation, 7a and 8, Church Street, Welwyn*. Hertfordshire County Council

5. Illustrations

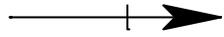
Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Trench location
Figure 3	Trench 1: section and plan
Figure 4	Trench 2: section and plan



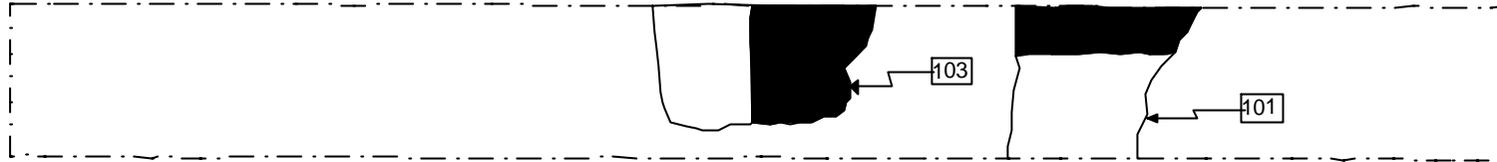
Trench Locations

Scale 1:250

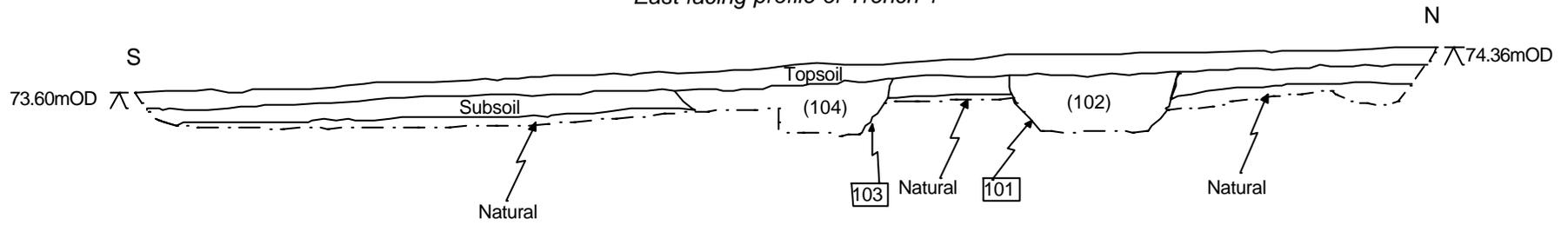
Figure 2



Plan of Trench 1



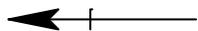
East facing profile of Trench 1



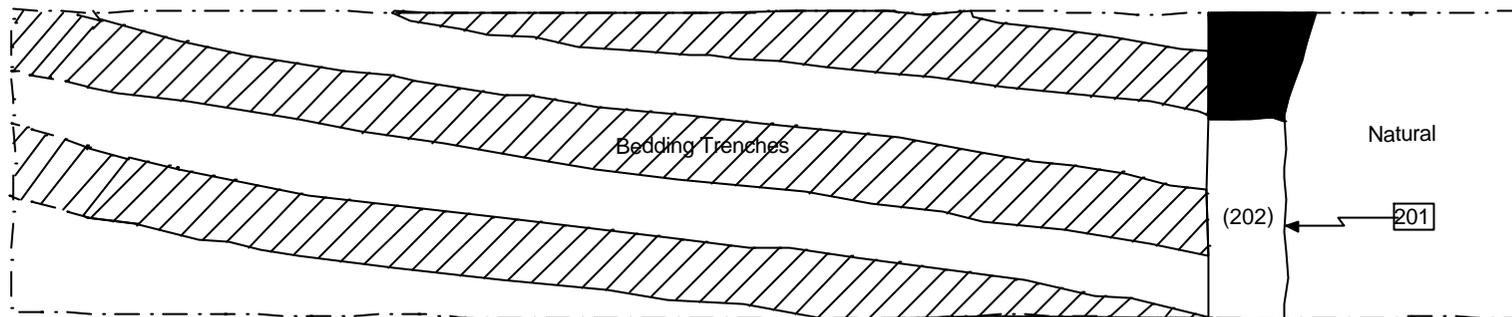
Trench 1 plan and section

Scale 1:100

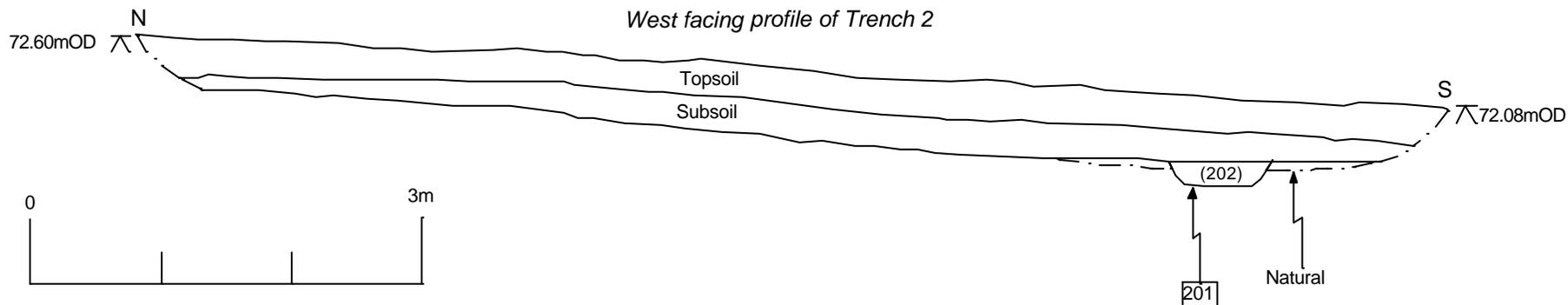
Figure 3



Plan of Trench 2



West facing profile of Trench 2



Trench 2 plan and section

Scale 1:50

Figure 4