

# Ambrey Archaeology

Archaeological  
Evaluation at 49  
Winchcombe Road,  
Sedgeberrow,  
Worcestershire

WSM 78345

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## Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at 49 Winchcombe Road, Sedgeberrow, Worcestershire (NGR 402580, 238444). It was carried on behalf of Joe Nott who has been granted planning permission by Wychavon District Council for the erection of a side and rear single-storey extension to the property.

No. 49 stands in the eastern side of the village of Sedgeberrow, one of a row of semi-detached houses to the east of Winchcombe Road. The River Isbourne flows 100m to the north-east. This is within the known extent of the medieval occupation area of the village and close to an extensive Iron Age and Roman occupation area at Trebor known from cropmarks and an archaeological evaluation. Permission for the development was therefore granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

Consultation with Aidan Smyth, archaeology and planning advisor to Wychavon District Council, established that an initial programme of trial trenching to determine the presence or absence, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any remains was an appropriate first stage of mitigation.

The trial trench element of the evaluation was carried out in September 2022. Two trenches were laid out in the footprint of the proposed extension. In a short trench to the east of the house two layers of alluvial material were recorded overlying a brashy limestone gravel with patches of blue-grey clay. These are thought to be deposits derived from the River Isbourne. In the second trench to the north of the house, a thick layer of made ground was present overlying the truncated alluvium. This is thought likely to be derived from the construction of the house.

Two post holes were recorded cutting the alluvium and gravels beneath. Sections were excavated across these they were found to contain a loose silty clay with frequent charcoal and fragments of ceramic building material. A fragment of brick was recovered from one and it is thought that these are relatively modern features likely to represent the line of a former fence. A former field boundary is shown in this location on Ordnance Survey maps surveyed prior to the construction of the houses.

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## 1. Background

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at 49 Winchcombe Road, Sedgeberrow, Worcestershire (NGR 402580, 238444; Figure 1). It was carried on behalf of Joe Nott who has been granted planning permission by Wychavon District Council for the erection of a side and rear single-storey extension to the property (ref. W/22/01163/HP).

The proposed development area (PDA) lies in an area of archaeological potential related to the record of Iron Age, Roman occupation. No. 49 stands in the eastern side of the village of Sedgeberrow, one of a row of semi-detached houses to the east of Winchcombe Road. The River Isbourne flows 100m to the north-east. This is within the known extent of the medieval occupation area of the village and close to an extensive Iron Age and Roman occupation area at Trebor, known from cropmarks and an archaeological evaluation. Permission was therefore granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

Consultation with Aidan Smyth, archaeology and planning advisor to Wychavon District Council (the Curator), established that an initial programme of trial trenching to determine the presence or absence, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any remains was an appropriate first stage of mitigation. If archaeological remains were identified that would be damaged or destroyed by the development and could not be preserved *in-situ*, then the evaluation would have been followed by a defined programme of archaeological excavation and/or a watching brief to record the remains prior to their loss (Heritage consultation response dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022).

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the project was produced and approved in August 2022 (AA 2022) and the fieldwork element of the project was carried out in September 2022.

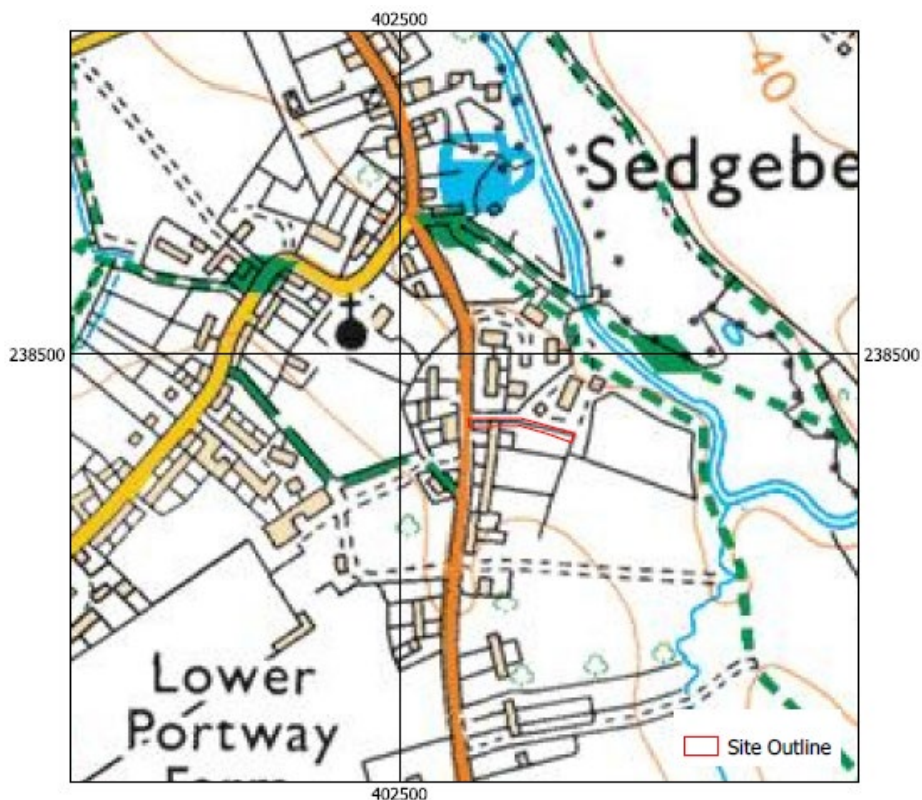


Figure 1 Site location (OS Explorer map)

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## 2. Aims

The purpose of the evaluation (CifA 2014) is: to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:

- a. the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource
- b. the formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource
- c. the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research

## 3. Methods

The evaluation was carried out by Elizabeth Connolly MA ACIfA and Tom Rogers MSc MCIfA following *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire*.

Prior to fieldwork a search of Worcestershire Historic Environment Record of 250km radius from the centre of the site was obtained from Worcestershire County Council (Event No. WSM78345).

The field survey was undertaken on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Two trenches were laid out on the site in positions designed to test the archaeological potential of the footprint of the proposed extension (Figure 3). Due to the constraints of the site and the discovery of a sewer, when the patio slabs were removed prior to fieldwork, it was necessary to change alter the intended locations of the trenches as set out in the WSI.

Initial excavation of the trenches (removal of topsoil and subsoil) was carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent cleaning of the trench was undertaken by hand.

Context recording was undertaken using context sheets and other pro-forma recording sheets and photographs were taken with a Nikon D3200 SLR camera. Plans and sections of trenches and features were drawn on permatrace at 1:10 and 1:50 scales.

On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

Following excavation all context sheets were checked and cross referenced. Artefacts were washed and analysed with reference to the Worcestershire Ceramics database. Provision has been made to upload the digital archive of the project via OASIS (OASIS Id: ambreyar2-509687).

### 3.1 Site location and topography

The site is located in a row of houses just off the Evesham to Winchcombe Road, to the east of the village of Sedgeberrow. The village is about 3km to the south of Evesham, surrounded by a low-lying agricultural landscape at a height of about 40m AOD on the west bank of the River Isbourne.

A trackway runs to the north of the site, from which the site, to the rear of No. 49, is accessed.

Bedrock at the site is of the Lias Group, comprising well-bedded marine calcareous mudstone and silty mudstone formed in the Triassic era (BGS, 2022). Alluvial deposits area recorded following the line of the River Isbourne to the north-east (however see trench descriptions and discussion below).

### 3.2 Historic context

#### *Prehistoric*

In 1827, during the deepening of the channel of the River Isbourne at Sedgeberrow the following were found (WSM05508); 'two oval shaped spearheads of bronze, of most perfect workmanship with portions of their staves attached were found stuck in the bank at a depth of several feet. Pieces of Roman defensive armour were likewise found; together with the sharpened half of a celt, formed of basalt, and a portion of another.... [also recovered were] part of a steel band, apparently from the shoulder, and retaining the bronze rivets that attached it to the cuirass.... Several very large antlers were dug at the same time". The location of the findspot is unknown, but the finds suggest that this part of the river may have been used for the deposition of votive offerings (Buteux 1999).

Ditches of probable prehistoric date were recorded during salvage recording during the construction of a residential development at Trebor, Main St Sedgeberrow (Buteux 1999).

#### *Romano-British*

The site is located within 100m of an area identified on the HER as an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement site (WSM34924). The settlement is characterised by concentrations of cropmarks including enclosures, a ring ditch, linear boundaries and possible structures as well as a trackway. Archaeological evaluation of the field in 2012 recorded enclosure ditches of Romano-British date adjacent to a possible track or road. A human skeleton and Roman roof tile were found in the backfill of the roadside ditch. A probable Romano-British building of unknown function was recorded as well as a well-preserved corn-dryer (Riccoboni 2012, 1).

#### *Medieval*

Finds of Early Medieval pottery behind the Old School in the 1930s (WSM0715) suggest that there may have been a continuation of occupation from the Romano-British period (WSM40026). The first documentary reference to Sedgeberrow is in AD777 and further evidence suggests that there may have been a late Saxon Church in the village, the remnants of which may survive within the Church of St Mary about 120m to the north-west of the site (Buteux 1999, 2).

The site is located within the conjectural Medieval settlement area of Sedgeberrow (WSM29775). Evidence of laid-out plots of medieval date survive along the Main Street and several areas of ridge and furrow have been identified in the vicinity of the village both from LiDAR and from field name evidence.

#### *Post Medieval*

On the 1884 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 2) the site is immediately south of a field boundary which runs along the line of the modern trackway. There is a smaller plot shown on the map in the location of No. 49 Winchcombe Road.

At some point between the 1921 and the 1938 Ordnance Surveys the row of houses of which No 49 was the most northerly was constructed.

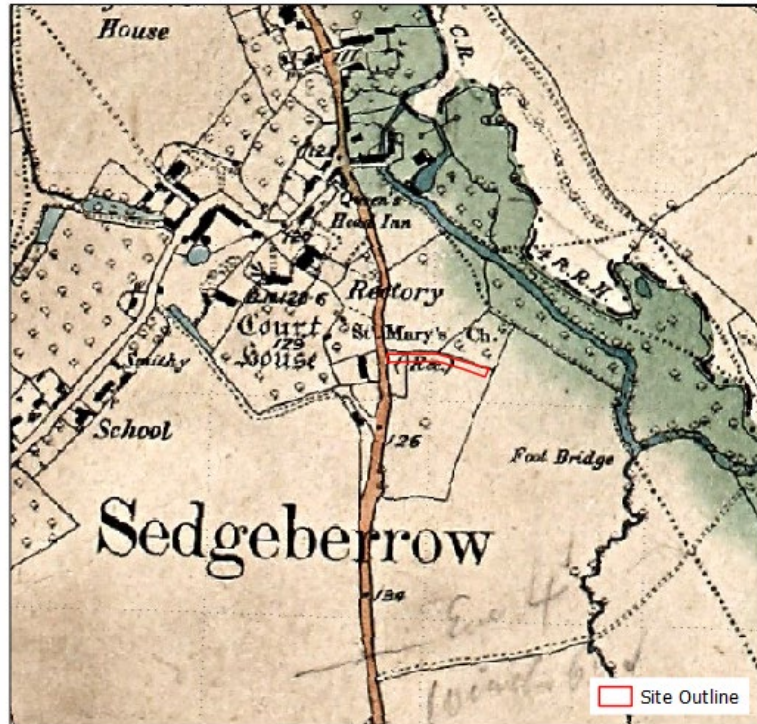


Figure 2: Extract of Ordnance Survey 1884 Gloucestershire, Sheet VI.SE

On the 1884 and 1903 25 inch to the mile Ordnance Survey maps, a building is shown on the western side of the site in a small square parcel. The land to the west is an orchard and is still depicted as such on the Ordnance Survey 1:10560 scale map of 1954, but not on the 1:10,000 survey of 1971.

#### 4. Results

##### *Trench 1 (Plate 1)*

Context (100), the uppermost layer in Trench 1, was a loose light brown sandy clay with frequent angular stones with brick, slate, glass and charcoal. This had formed the base layer for a patio which had been located in this area.

Underlying this were two layers interpreted as subsoil derived from alluvial deposition (Plate 2). The uppermost (101) was a mid-brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones and natural flint. Below this was a firm noticeably more yellow silty clay with occasional manganese flecks and rounded cobbles (102).

The lower natural deposit (103) comprised a compact yellow limestone brashy gravel with patches of blue grey clay and some iron staining. This is interpreted as a river gravel deposit.

##### *Trench 2 (Plate 3 and 4)*

Context (200), the uppermost layer in Trench 2, was a loose, dark brown sandy silt with frequent brick, glass, ash and small rounded pebbles, surviving to a depth of 0.3m. This is thought to be a layer of made ground, possibly imported to raise the level at the side of the house following construction. Below this (201), surviving to a depth of (0.3-0.65m), was the same as (101) and (202) (0.65-0.7m) was the same as 102. A layer at the base of the eastern end of the trench (203) was the

same brashy limestone gravel as (103), though to the west (204) was a blue grey clay similar to the patches in (103) but more widespread. Investigation by hand revealed that these two deposits were intermingled in an irregular fashion and both are interpreted as river derived.

Two sub round postholes were cut into the alluvial layers and the underlying gravel. Posthole [206] (Plate 5) at the western end of the trench was 0.4m in diameter with a maximum depth of 0.14m from the top of the blue clay. It had a sharp break of slope at the top to vertical side to the north and gentle side to the south and an irregular base. It was filled by (205) a firm mid brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks, ceramic building material, fragments of limestone and a broken piece of brick. At its base this feature cut (204) the blue grey clay present at the eastern end of the trench.

Some 2m to the east, posthole [208] (Plate 6) was 0.45m in diameter with a maximum depth of 0.16m from the top of the gravel. The sides were approximately 45° with a bowl-shaped, slightly irregular base. It was filled by (207), a firm, mid-brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and ceramic building material. Although no dating evidence was retrieved from this deposit, it is thought, due to its location and similar size to have formed part of the same structure as [206].

## 5. Evaluation discussion

The natural deposits within the two trenches appear to be alluvial in nature suggesting that material deposited by the River Isbourne extends slightly further west than currently mapped on the British Geological Survey. Although extensive areas of Romano-British settlement similar to that recorded at Trebor to the south-east of the site have commonly been recorded on such deposits derived from the Avon its tributaries in this part of the county, no such deposits were recorded here.

The only archaeological features recorded were two post holes of relatively modern date which are thought likely to derive from a former field boundary shown on the tithe map of the parish and Ordnance Survey maps prior to the construction of the houses in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

## 6. Sources consulted

### 6.1 Cartographic sources

Ordnance Survey 1884 Gloucestershire, Sheet VI.SE, Six inches to the mile

Ordnance Survey 1884 Gloucestershire, Sheet VI.15, 25 inches to the mile

Ordnance Survey 1903 Gloucestershire, Sheet VI.SE, Six inches to the mile

Ordnance Survey 1903 Gloucestershire, Sheet VI.15, 25 inches to the mile

Ordnance Survey 1954 of Worcestershire, Sheet SO56NE, Scale 1:10560

### 6.2 Bibliography

AA 2022, *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation at 49 Winchcombe Road, Sedgeberrow, Worcestershire* unpublished document

BGS 2022, <https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geindex/home.html> [accessed August 2022]

Buteux V 1999 *Salvage Recording at Trebor, Main Street, Sedgeberrow Archaeological Service Worcestershire County Council*, unpubl rpt No. 730, dated 9<sup>th</sup> May 1999

CIfA 2014 (updated 2020) *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*

Riccoboni, Paul. 2012 *An Archaeological Field Evaluation on Land off Main Road, Sedgeberrow, Worcestershire* Unpublished document John Moore Heritage Services.

WAAS, 2019, *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire*, available at [https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Worcs\\_Standards\\_Guidance\\_2019\\_V1.pdf](https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Worcs_Standards_Guidance_2019_V1.pdf)

Worcestershire Ceramics database <https://www.worcestershireceramics.org/fabrics/>



Figure 3: Trench locations

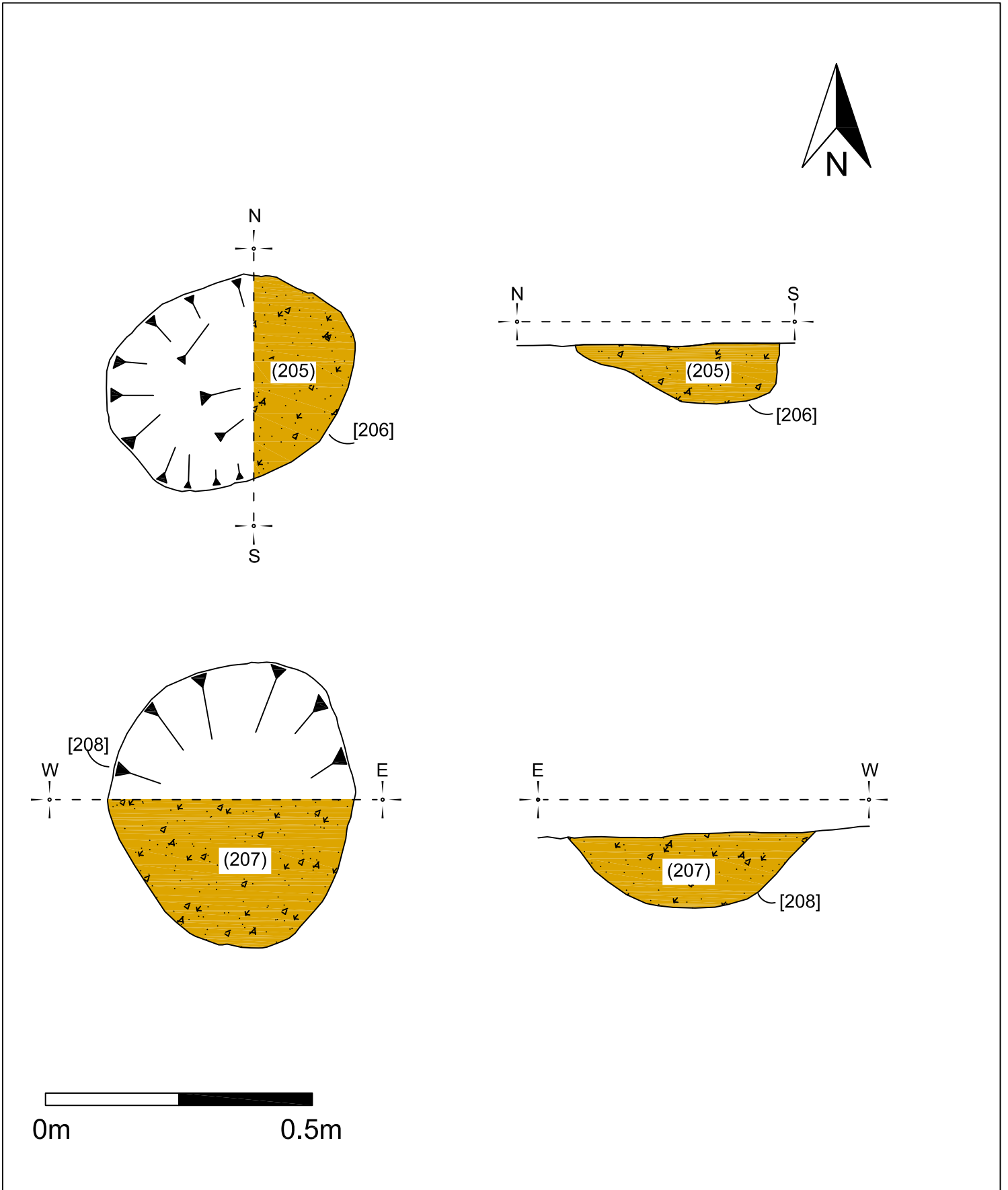


Figure 4. Posthole plans and sections

## Plates



*Plate 1: Trench 1 facing north (1m scales)*



*Plate 2: East facing section of Trench 1 showing two layers of alluvium (1m scale)*



*Plate 3: Trench 2 facing east (2m scales) with natural layer (203) in foreground and (204) further to the east*



*Plate 4: Trench 2 facing west (2m scales)*



*Plate 5: Post hole cut [206] filled by (205) facing east (0.5m scale)*



*Plate 6: Post hole cut [208] filled by (207) facing south-east (0.5m scale)*

## Appendix 1 Context descriptions

**Trench 1:** Length 2.4m Orientation: WSW-ENE, Max. depth: 0.85m

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth
100	Loose, light brown sandy clay with frequent angular stones, brick, slate, glass and charcoal	Base layer of patio	0.00-0.2m
101	Firm mid brown silty clay with occasional rounded cobbles and natural flint	Upper alluvial subsoil	0.2-0.4m
102	Firm yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional manganese flecks and rounded cobbles	Lower alluvial subsoil	0.4-.085m
103	Compact yellow limestone brashy gravel with patches of blue grey clay and some iron staining	Natural substrate	0.85m+

**Trench 2:** Length 7m Orientation: WNW-ESE, Max. depth: 0.86m

Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth
200	Loose dark brown sandy silt with frequent charcoal, ceramic building material, brick, glass, ash and small rounded pebbles	Made ground	0.00-0.3m
201	Compact mid-brown silty clay with small, rounded stones and occasional charcoal flecks	Upper alluvial subsoil	0.3-0.65m
202	Firm yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional manganese flecks and rounded cobbles	Lower alluvial subsoil	0.65m – 0.7m
203	Compact yellow limestone brashy gravel	Natural substrate	0.7m+
204	Very compact blue-grey clay (interbedded with (203))	Natural substrate	0.7m+
205	Firm mid brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks, ceramic building material, fragments of limestone and a broken piece of brick.	Fill of post hole 206	0.7 – 0.84m
206	Cut of post-hole 0.4m in diameter and 0.14m deep.. Sharp break of slope at the top to vertical side to the north and gentle side to the south and an irregular base	Fill of post-hole 207	0.7 – 0.84m
207	Firm mid brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and ceramic building material	Fill of post hole 208	0.7 – 0.86m
208	Cut of post hole 0.45m in diameter with a maximum depth of 0.16m. The sides were approximately 45° with a bowl shaped slightly irregular base.	Cut of post hole	0.7 – 0.86m