

WP029(B) Historic Environment Works – Weeford to Whittington – Enabling Works North Contract

Addendum to Interim Report: Trial Trenching

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1.1 This interim report addendum details the results of the second phase of archaeological trial trenching on WP29B Weeford to Whittington. This second phase of work was carried out by Connect Archaeology between the 6th of September and the 2nd of October 2019. The trial trench investigation site ('the Site') is 2.9km long and is located just to the north of Watling Street in the south (HS2 Chainage 178500) and Whittington Heath in the north (HS2 Chainage 181430), in Staffordshire. The Site covers approximately 62ha and is required as part of the construction land requirements for the enabling works and subsequent main works for HS2 Phase One. The works were undertaken to assess the potential for the survival of sub-surface archaeological remains within the site that may be affected by the proposed scheme. The Site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 414746, 306134 and mostly comprises agricultural fields subdivided by hedgerows. The trial trenching scope, as detailed in the Project Plan for Trial Trenching from Weeford to Whittington (Doc No: 1EW04-LMJ-EV-PLN-NS06_NL16-029003), comprised 158 trenches. A further seven contingency trenches were added to the scope during the first phase of trial trenching. A further eleven contingency trenches were added to the scope during the second phase of trenching, increasing the total to 176 trenches.
- 1.1.2 During the phase of work reported here 32 trenches were excavated, Trenches 1-21, 71b, 78b and 166-174. A total of 48 trenches (Trenches 82-84 and 113-158) could not be excavated as access to several areas was not possible. These remaining trenches will be excavated once access has been established, towards the end of 2019/early 2020. The results of that phase of trial trenching will be appended to the Interim Report (Doc No: 1EW04-LMJ-EV-PLN-NS06_NL16-029008).
- 1.1.3 A number of archaeological features comprising several undated ditches were encountered in Trenches 71b, 78b and 167. Trenches 1-21, 166 and 168-174 were found to contain no archaeological features.

2 Site Location

- 2.1.1 The evaluation area is located in the Lichfield District of Staffordshire and runs for c. 2.9km just to the north of Watling Street in the south (HS2 Chainage 178500) and Whittington Heath in the north (HS2 Chainage 181450). It is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 414746, 306134 and covers an area of approximately 62ha, mostly comprising agricultural fields subdivided by hedgerows (Figure 1). The project code for this site is IC19WEETT.

3 Methodology

- 3.1.1 The trial trenching was conducted according to the detailed methodology laid out in the Project Plan for Trial Trenching from Weeford to Whittington (Doc No: 1EW04-LMJ-EV-PLN-

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NSo6_NL16-029003). This covers the methodology for all parts of the investigation, including setting out (Section 4.3.13-4.3.16), mechanical excavation (Section 4.3.17-4.3.21), fieldwork recording (Section 4.3.22-4.3.32), human remains (4.3.33-4.3.39), environmental sampling (Section 4.3.40-4.3.52), preservation in situ (Section 4.3.53), backfilling (Section 4.3.54-4.3.55), and post-investigation reporting and archiving (Section 5.1.1-5.1.4). The work also adhered to Technical Standard: Archaeology and Built Heritage Approach to Ground Investigation (Doc No: HS2-HS2-EV-STD-000-000038).

- 3.1.2 The trial trench plan and numbering of trial trenches was specified by the Project Plan for a Trial Trench Evaluation between Weeford and Whittington (Doc No: 1EW04-LMJ-EV-PLN-NSo6_NL16-029003). The trenches were positioned to provide coverage across the entirety of the site. This second phase of trial trenching comprised the excavation of 32 trenches, 30 measuring 50m x 2m (Trenches 1-21 and 166-174) and two box trenches measuring 13m x 7m (Trenches 71b and 78b) (Figure 2). Forty eight trenches (82-84 and 113-158) could not be excavated as access to the areas they were located in was not possible at the time of the works reported here.
- 3.1.3 Eleven of the trenches excavated during this phase of work were contingency trenches (Trenches 71b, 78b and 166-174). These were excavated in order to further characterise the archaeological remains uncovered during the first phase of trial trenching.
- 3.1.4 All archaeological features were metal detected prior, during, and after excavation and recorded using proforma record sheets and surveyed to be tied into the national grid using a Trimble GPS.

4 Factual Summary of Key Archaeological Findings

- 4.1.1 In total 32 trenches were excavated during the second phase of the trial trenching of which 29 (Trenches 1-21, 166 and 168-174) were found to contain no archaeological features.
- 4.1.2 A number of archaeological features were encountered in three trenches (Trenches 71b, 78b and 167), all of which were additional contingency trenches located to establish the extent of previously recorded features.

Trench 167 (Figure 3.2)

- 4.1.3 Two ditch features, both aligned NW-SE [16705] & [16707] crossed the central part of Trench 167. Ditch [16705] was the more substantial of the two. Ditch [16705] was 2.4m wide and 0.58m deep, whilst the second ditch [16707] was 1.10m wide and 0.30m deep. Both had steep sloping sides and a flat base. Although these ditches were comparatively shallow it is likely that their upper levels had been truncated through agricultural activity. Evidence of modern cultivation was noted at the west end of the trench in the form of plough scars. Ditch [16705] was similar in size

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and alignment to a ditch feature [2305] located in the adjacent Trench 23 to the north, during the first phase of trenching. No dating evidence was recovered from Trench 167. The environmental samples taken from the fill (16704) of ditch [16705] produced very limited palaeo-environmental evidence. Three small fragments of slag weighing 0.01g was recovered from fill [16704].

Trench 71b (Figure 3.1)

- 4.1.4 Trench 71b was positioned to further evaluate ditch [7104] in Trench 71, which was excavated during the first phase of trial trenching. Trench 71b exposed more of ditch [7104] which was numbered [71b04] during the second phase of trial trenching. Ditch [71b04] was aligned NW-SE, was up to 0.80m wide and 0.28m deep, with steep sloping sides and a flat base. Similar to ditch features [16705 & 16707] (see above), it is possible that the upper levels of ditch [71b04] have been truncated through agricultural activity though no evidence of modern cultivation was noted in this trench. No dating evidence was recovered from Trench 71b. The environmental samples taken from the fill (71b05) of ditch [71b04] produced very limited palaeo-environmental evidence. A single fragment of oak charcoal weighing 0.02g was recovered from fill [71B05].

Trench 78b (Figure 3.1)

- 4.1.5 Trench 78b was positioned to further evaluate ditch [7805] in Trench 78, which was excavated during the first phase of trial trenching. Trench 78b exposed more of ditch [7804], numbered [78b04] during the second phase of trial trenching. Ditch [78b04] was aligned NW-SE, was up to 1.40m wide and 0.15-0.25m deep, with steep sloping sides and an uneven base. Similar to ditch features [71b04, 16704 and 16705] (see above), it is possible that the upper levels of ditch [78b04] have been truncated through agricultural activity though no evidence of modern cultivation was noted in this trench. The environmental samples taken from the fill (78b05) of ditch [78b04] produced very limited palaeo-environmental evidence. Three fragments of charcoal weighing a total of 0.01g was recovered from fill [78B05]. The charcoal fragments were all smaller than 4mm and unsuitable for species identification.

5 Interim Artefactual Summary

- 5.1.1 No artefacts were recovered during this phase of trial trenching.

6 Interim Palaeo-Environmental Summary

MATERIALS (hand collected)	Quantity	Range of Species (if known)	Preservation	Taphonomy
Bone	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Shells	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Charcoal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Waterlogged wood	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Summary of potential to contribute to HERDS objectives	N/A			
BULK SAMPLES	No. taken	Vol. taken	Vol. processed	No. Assessed
	4 samples	160 litres	160 litres	100%
	Range of materials	Range of species	Preservation and Taphonomy	
	Wood charcoal	Wood charcoal – a single fragment of oak (0.02g) was identified from sample 35 context [71B05]. There were three fragments of charcoal (0.01g) recovered from sample 36 context [78B05] which were all smaller than 4mm and were unsuitable for species identification.	The charcoal was abraded and fragmentary	
	Slag	Three small fragments of slag (0.01g).	Poorly preserved	
Summary of potential to contribute to HERDS objectives	The small quantity of charcoal does not allow for detailed discussion and no further analysis is recommended. Given the small size of the charcoal assemblage this material is unlikely to represent in-situ activity and is probably re-deposited. The oak charcoal is a slow growing species and is unsuitable for AMS dating.			

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	The slag fragments are both small in number and size and do not require any further analysis.			
SPECIALIST SAMPLES	Were any taken?	What was taken?	What were they taken for?	
	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Are they waterlogged?	Have they been processed?	Have they been assessed?	How are they stored?
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

7 Provisional Interpretation and Discussion

- 7.1.1 The following should be read in conjunction with Section 7 of WPO29(B) Historic Environment Works – Weeford to Whittington – Enabling Works North Contract - Interim Report: Trial Trenching (Doc No: 1EW04-LMJ-EV-REP-NS06_NL16-029008).
- 7.1.2 Archaeological remains were recorded within three trenches (Trenches 71b, 78b and 167; Figures 3.1 and 3.2). They comprise a series of ditches of unknown date or function. They were similar in form to the ditch found in Trench 79, during the previous phase of trial trenching. A sherd of Romano-British Pottery was recovered from the fill of ditch [7905] within Trench 79. Although it is possible that this material was residual, it could suggest the presence of Romano-British field systems within the northern part of the survey area.

8 Potential Contribution to Specific Objectives

Table 2 contribution to specific Objectives- Knowledge Creation

Specific Objective (KC)	Potential Contribution	Suggested Methods
KC10: Provide further understanding of the transition between a mobile pattern of settlement in the Early Bronze Age to the development of fixed settlement and enclosure, in the Middle and Late Bronze Age;	No evidence of prehistoric activity has been identified within those trenches which have been excavated at the present time.	None
KC15: Can we identify regional patterns in the form and location of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements across the route, and are there associated differences in landscape organisation and enclosure?	No evidence of prehistoric activity has been identified within those trenches which have been excavated at the present time.	None

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KC16: Investigate the degree of continuity that existed between Late Bronze Age and Iron Age communities in terms of population, mobility and subsistence strategies	None	None
KC18: Explore the evidence for increasing social complexity in the archaeological record in the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age, and identify patterns of intra-regional and regional variation;	None	None
KC19: The Romano-British period saw the beginning of a more established infrastructure network. Can we investigate the development of these routes, trackways and roads and the influence they had on landscape change?;	Remains of potential Romano-British date were identified within the survey area, although none could be explicitly related to roads routes and trackways.	Mitigation works in the form an area excavation would further characterise the possible Romano-British remains.
KC21: Assess the evidence for regional and cultural distinctiveness along the length of the route in the Romano-British period, with particular regard to the different types encountered along the route;	Remains of potential Romano-British date were identified within the survey area, although they may provide no evidence for regional and cultural distinctiveness along the length of the route	Mitigation works in the form an area excavation would further characterise the possible Romano-British remains.
KC23: Identify evidence for late Roman occupation and attempt to identify any continuity in settlement patterns between the end of the Romano-British period and the early medieval period;	Remains of potential Romano-British date were identified at two locations within the survey area and may provide some evidence of continuity in settlement patterns between the end of the Romano-British period and the early medieval period.	Mitigation works in the form an area excavation would further characterise the possible Romano-British remains
KC30: Identify the location and form of Early and Middle Saxon settlement and investigate evidence for land use in the period;	None	None
KC31: Identify the location of Middle to Late Saxon settlement, explore processes of settlement nucleation and understand the development of associated field types and agricultural regimes;	None	None
KC35: Investigate the impacts on rural communities of social and economic shocks in the mid-14th century and thereafter and their contribution to settlement desertion; and	None	None
KC40: Identify patterns of change within medieval rural settlement from the 11th to mid-14th century	None	None

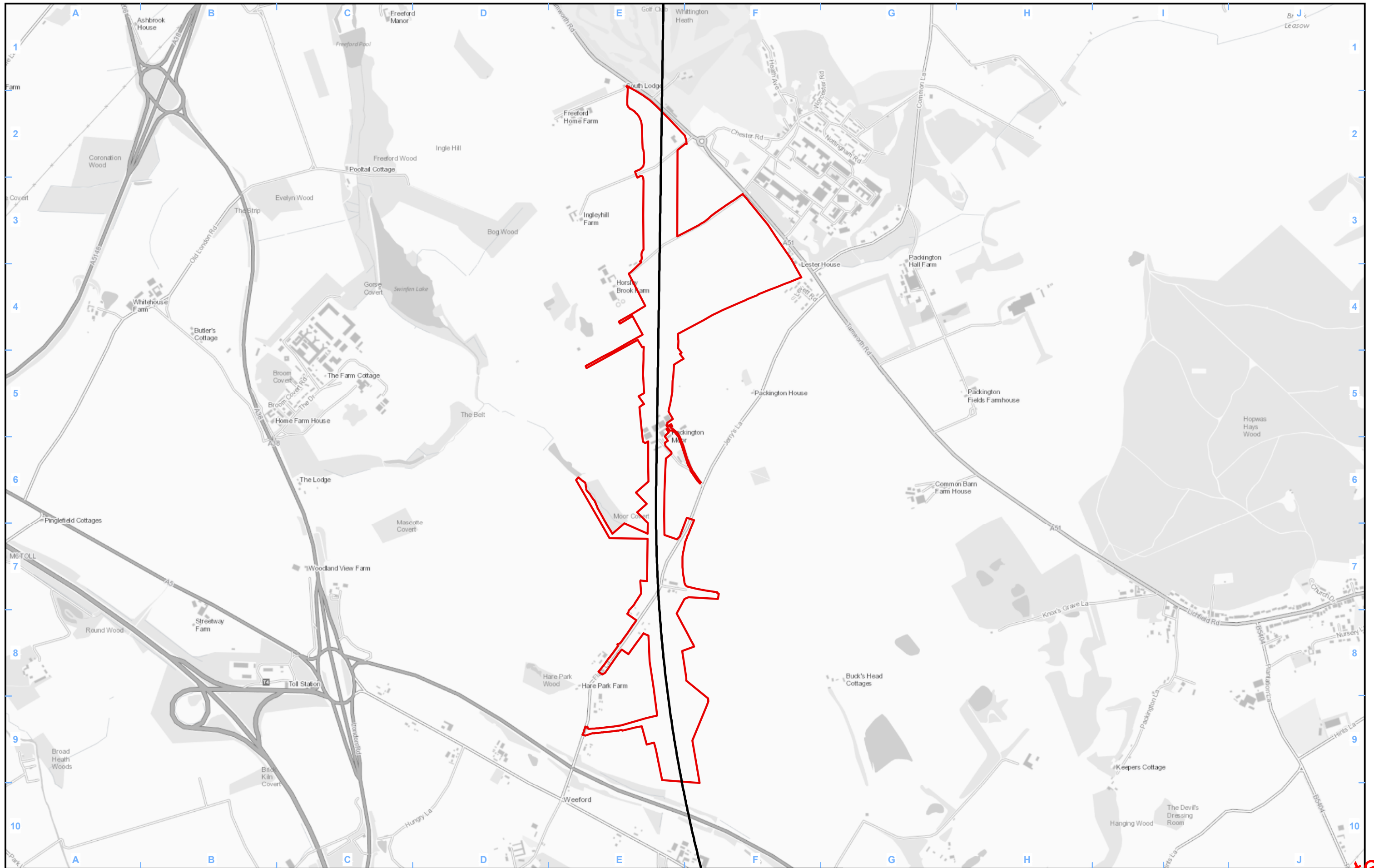
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9 Provisional Conclusion

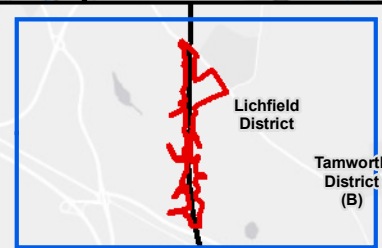
- 9.1.1 The provisional conclusions are based on the trial trenching works carried out to date and should be read in conjunction with Section 9 of WPO2g(B) Historic Environment Works – Weeford to Whittington – Enabling Works North Contract - Interim Report: Trial Trenching (Doc No: 1EW04-LMJ-EV-REP-NS06_NL16-029008).
- 9.1.2 The provisional results from the second phase of trial trenching indicate that the area around Trenches 71b, 78b and 167 have the potential to contribute to specific objectives KC19, 21 and 23. The process of identifying further works will be discussed with stakeholders and agreed with the Employer.

10 Appendix 1

- 10.1.1 Figure 1 Site Location Plan
- 10.1.2 Figure 2 Plan of trench locations
- 10.1.3 Figure 3.1-3.2 Detail of key trenches containing archaeological features



Legend
 Site boundary
 Route on surface



Map Number: **Figure 1**
 Map Name: **Weeford to Whittington Site Location Plan**
 Community Forum Area CFA21 & CFA22

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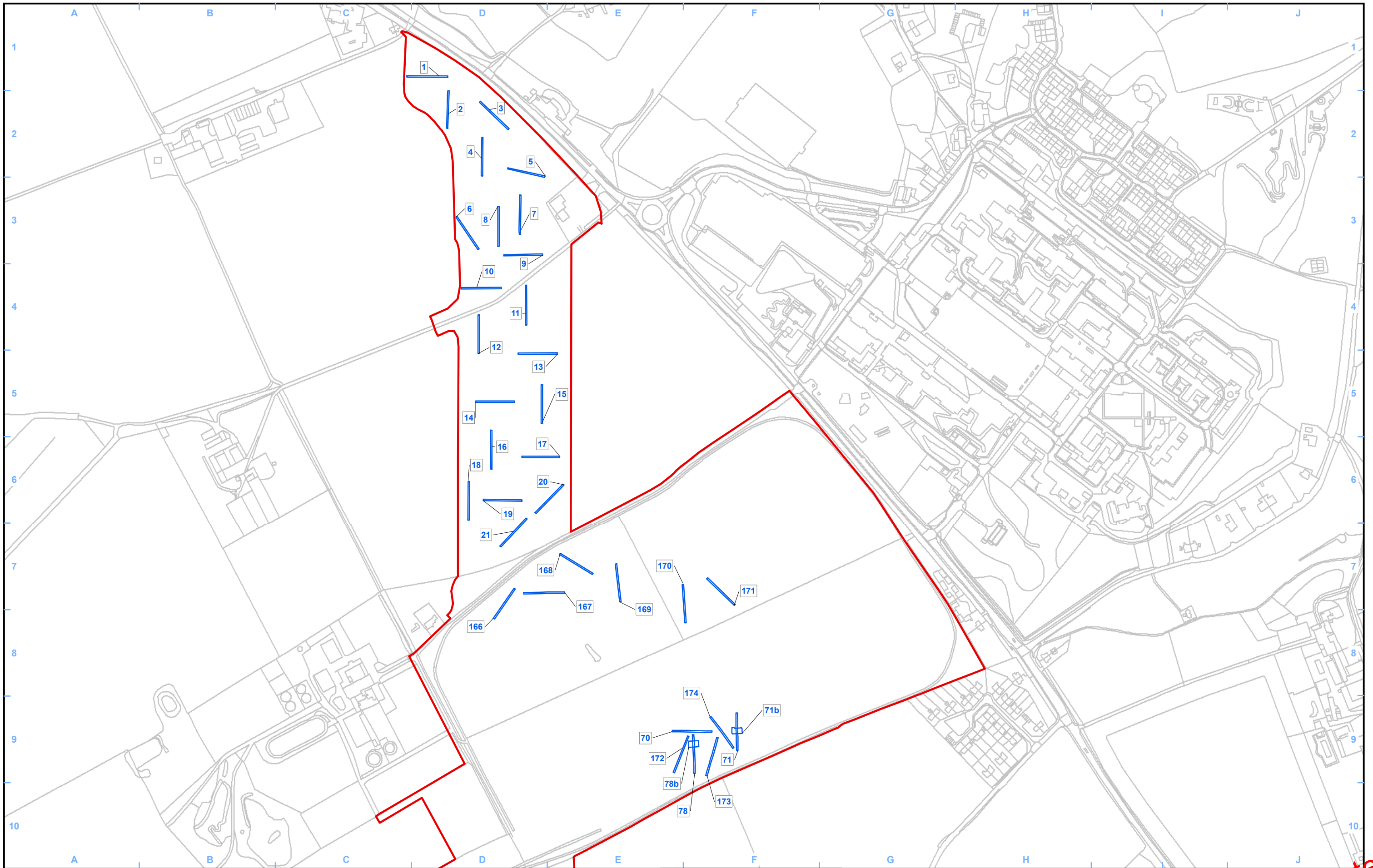
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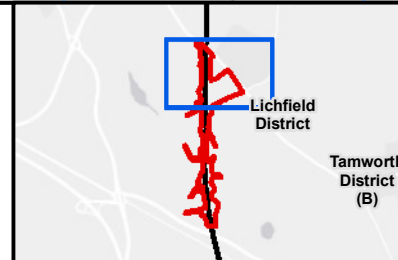
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- Legend
- ▭ Site boundary
 - ▭ Excavated trenches



Map Number: Figure 2

Map Name: Weeford to Whittington Plan of trench locations

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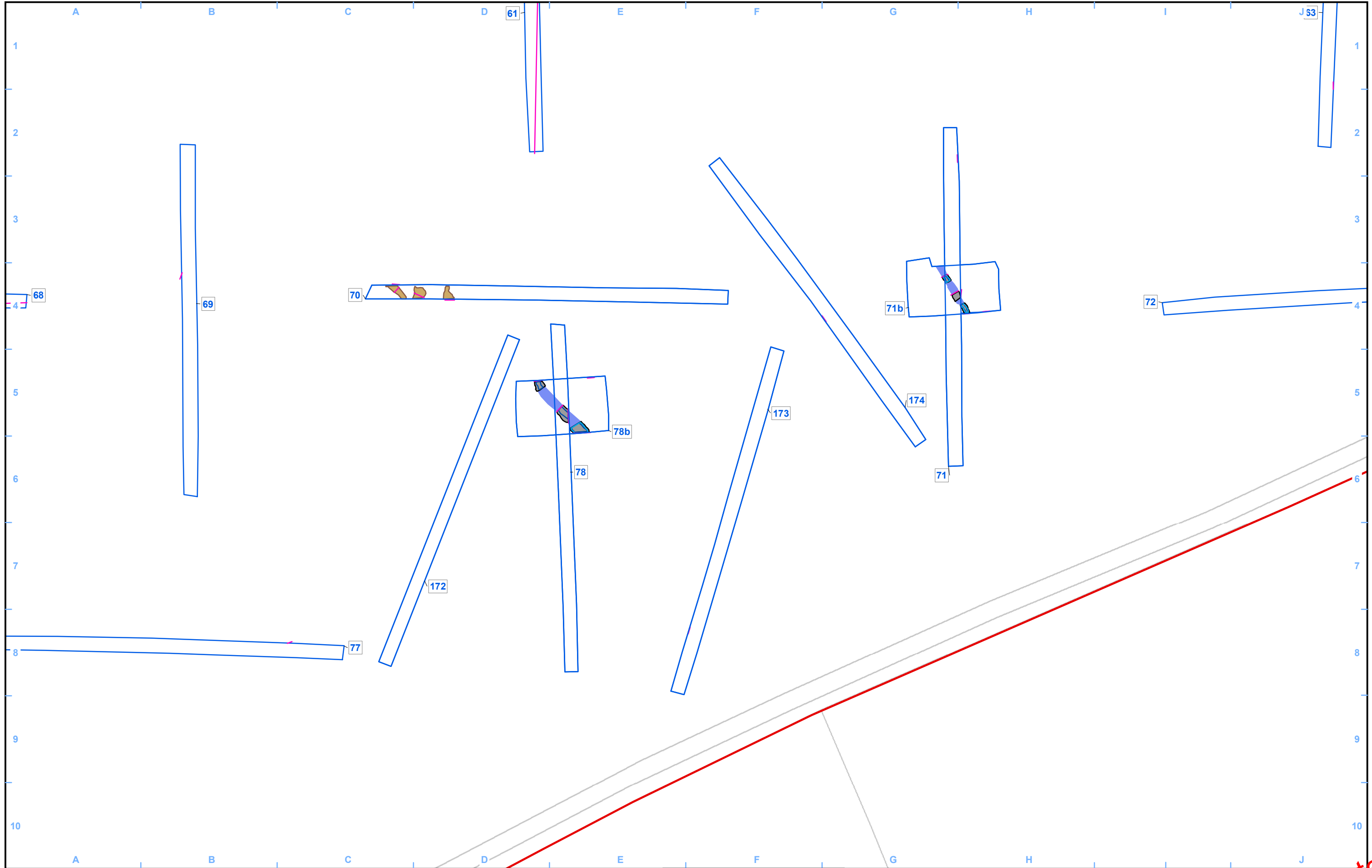
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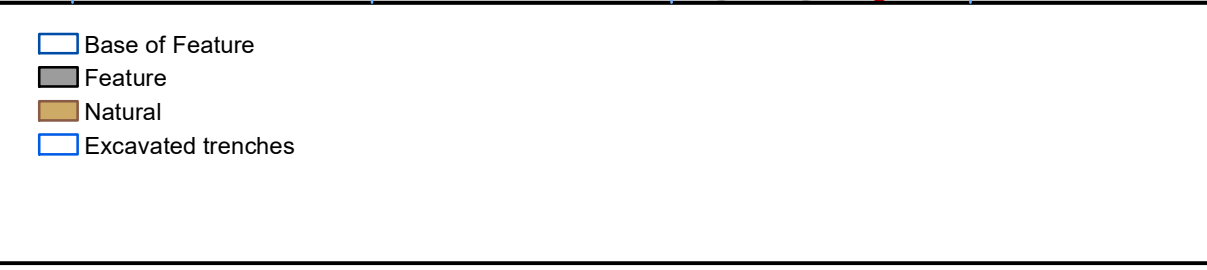
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Legend

- Break of Slope
- Section Line
- Pre Ex
- Base of Feature
- Feature
- Natural
- Excavated trenches



Map Number
Figure 3.1

Map Name
**Weeford to Whittington
Detail of key trenches containing
archaeological features**

Community Forum Area CFA21 & CFA22

Map Name
**Weeford to Whittington
Detail of key trenches containing
archaeological features**

Community Forum Area CFA21 & CFA22

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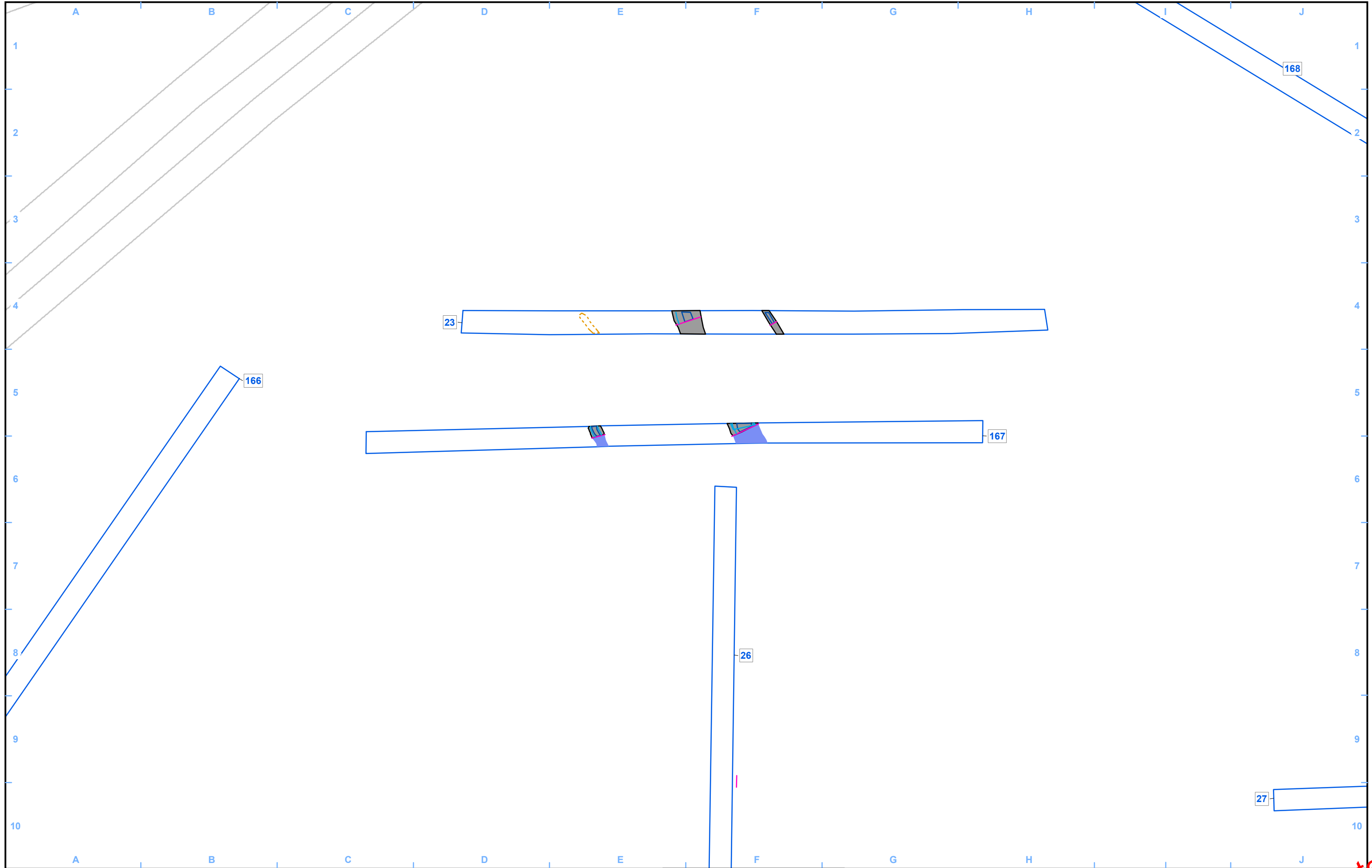
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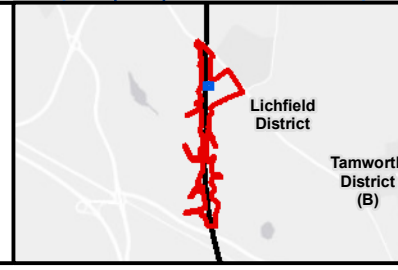
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Legend

Break of Slope	Base of Feature
Service	Feature
Section Line	Excavated trenches
Pre Ex	



Map Number: **Figure 3.2**

Map Name: **Weeford to Whittington
Detail of key trenches containing
archaeological features**

Community Forum Area CFA21 & CFA22

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