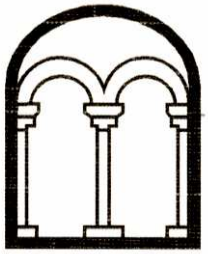
LAND AT TOWLES PASTURES
CASTLE DONINGTON
LEICESTERSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Albion archaeology



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Contents

List of Figures

The figures are bound at the back of the report.

Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of David Wilson Homes Ltd.

This report has been prepared by Marcin Koziminski (Archaeological Supervisor), with contributions from Jackie Wells (Finds Officer) and Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). The fieldwork was undertaken by Marcin Koziminski and Wiebke Starke. The project was managed by Robert Wardill of Albion Archaeology and Michael Dawson of CgMs Consulting Ltd.

The project was monitored by Richard Clark, the Principal Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council.

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Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	*10/08/2012*	*n/a*

Key Terms

Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:

DA	Development Area
DBA	Desk Based Assessment
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
PPA	Principal Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council
LPA	Local Planning Authority

Non-Technical Summary

Planning permission (11/00231/FUL) has been granted for the construction of new dwellings in a former pasture to the rear of Key House at Towles Pastures, Castle Donington, Leicestershire.

Although beyond the historic core of Castle Donington, the development site lies within an area of archaeological interest with the 1779 Enclosure map showing evidence of a possible medieval or post-medieval building within the site. An Archaeological Project Design was submitted to North West Leicestershire District Council in July 2012, containing a strategy for trenching the site of this possible building.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the trial trench evaluation. It initially comprised four trenches measuring 12m by 1.6m located in the south-east quarter of the site. At the request of the Principal Planning Archaeologist of Leicestershire County Council two more trenches measuring 10m by 1.6m were opened in the south-central part of the site.

The trial trench evaluation revealed a small number of probably modern archaeological features, some of which were located in the area where a building was shown on the 1779 Enclosure Award map. However, none of the features represented convincing structural remains. The trenching works also revealed that quarrying or landscaping activity had taken place within the south-eastern quarter of the site, where the ground level visibly dropped. It is probable that this activity was relatively recent in date (i.e. early-mid 19th century), and may have resulted in the removal of any significant remains associated with a post-medieval/medieval structure.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Background

Planning permission (11/00231/FUL) has been granted for the construction of new dwellings in a former pasture to the rear of Key House at Towles Pastures, Castle Donington, Leicestershire. Because the site lies within an area of archaeological interest a condition (27) was attached to the planning consent requiring the mitigation of the impact of the development on the archaeological resource by a programme of archaeological trial trenching. This condition was in accordance with government *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5) (DCLG 2010), and its recent replacement, the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

An Archaeological Project Design for trial trenching was submitted by CgMs Consulting Ltd to North West Leicestershire District Council in July 2012 (CgMs 2012). The document was approved by the Principal Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council (PPA) prior to commencement of fieldwork.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the trial trenching, the results of which are presented in this document.

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

The site is located off Towles Pastures, to the rear of Key House in Castle Donington, Leicestershire. The overall development area (DA) measures approximately 0.52ha in extent and is centred at National Grid Reference SK 443 272 (Figure 1).

The land of the DA is rough grassland sub-divided into two near rectangular plots. The ground level is consistent across the site apart from in the south-east quarter where it appears to step down to a reduced height.

Castle Donington itself is situated on high ground on part of the Mercian mudstone ridge or escarpment which runs along the southern edge of the valley of the River Trent.

The British Geological Survey indicates that the solid geology of the DA comprises the Mercia Mudstone Group, part of the Triassic Series formerly known as the Keuper Marl. This is a sequence dominated by mudstones that underlies much of central and southern England and parts of Northern Ireland.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The archaeological potential of the site was set out in a desk-based assessment (CgMs 2009).

The desk-based assessment indicated that there was a very low archaeological potential for periods from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age and slight potential for evidence from the later prehistoric and Roman periods, based on the topographic situation of the DA (CgMs 2009, 11-12).

The DBA also identified the presence of a building within the south-eastern quarter of the site as shown on the 1779 Enclosure Award map. However, the building appeared to have gone by the late 19th century as it is not shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1882.

1.4 Project Objectives

The project objectives were set out in the Project Design (CgMs 2012, 6), and are reproduced below.

The main objective of the archaeological investigation was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any significant archaeology on the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The general aims of the trial trench evaluation were:

- To determine the presence, date, character, integrity, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits.
- To examine the potential of the site in its relation to its environment, economy, land use and development from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. In particular, the results were anticipated to reflect the medieval origins of the historic village or post-medieval development.
- To examine evidence from the site for palaeoenvironmental and/or economic development.
- To provide sufficient information upon which further mitigation strategies could be designed.

The national framework for research is set out by Knight, Vyner and Allen (2012), updating the earlier Research Frameworks report (Cooper ed. 2006).

In addition to the technical report on the investigation a report on the project will be published in an appropriate place, the location dependent on the results of the archaeological investigation.

1.5 Archiving

The finds and records generated during the project will be archived in line with *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC 1990) and *The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records* (LMARS 2001).

A microform copy of the site archive and narrative will be made to RCHME standards and submitted to the National Archaeological Record.

Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference albionar1-131856) in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage (*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* MoRPHE 2009), and the Archaeology Data Service.

The integrated project archive (including both artefacts and project documentation) will be prepared upon approval of this report and deposited with Leicestershire Museums Service under accession number X.A70.2012.

2. METHODOLOGY

The archaeological investigation was undertaken between 26th and 31st July 2012 and was confined to the south-eastern *c*. 0.13ha of the site (Figure 1). An initial layout of four trenches measuring 12m by 1.6m was agreed with the Principal Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council (PPA).

The trenches were positioned to assess archaeological potential and also to test for the presence of possible building remains (Trenches 3 and 4). At the request of the PPA, two more trenches measuring 10m by 1.6m were opened in the south-central part of the DA (Trenches 5 and 6)

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, operated by an experienced driver, under close archaeological supervision. The overburden was removed down to the top of archaeological or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever was encountered first. Topsoil and subsoil were kept separate and the spoil heaps were scanned by eye and with a metal detector for artefacts. Also, features [106] and [205] were fully excavated for finds recovery. All deposits were recorded in a unique number sequence, using Albion Archaeology's *pro formae* sheets, commencing at 101 for Trench 1, 201 for Trench 2 *etc*. Context numbers in square brackets refer to the cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***). The trenches were subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate. Trenches 1-4 were inspected by the PPA prior to their backfilling.

The methodological approach to the project was detailed in the Project Design (CgMs 2012) which was approved by the PPA prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

The archaeological investigation was conducted in accordance with appropriate national and regional standards and guidelines including:

• IfA	*By-Laws* and *Code of Conduct*
	Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (updated 2009) and finds (updated 2008)
• Albion Archaeology	*Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork (2nd edn, 2001)*
• UKIC	*First Aid for Finds (1998)*
	Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage(1990)
• Archaeological Archive Forum	*Archaeological Archives: A Guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation (2007)*
• English Heritage	*Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation, , 2nd edition (2011)*
	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (2009)
▪ LMARS	*The Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records (2001)*

3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

All significant deposits and features found within the trial trenches are described below and shown on Figure 2. Detailed technical data on all trenches, deposits and archaeological features can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Overburden and Undisturbed Geological Strata

The overburden generally comprised topsoil of dark grey-brown to brown-grey sandy silt to silty loam. This overlay a firmer grey-brown to red-brown sandy to clay silt subsoil. The combined thickness of the above deposits varied from 0.32m to 0.59m. Pottery recovered from subsoil in Trench 2 comprised single body sherds of late medieval/early post-medieval Midland Purple (33g), and post-medieval Midlands black-glazed earthenware (8g).

A red-brown deposit of buried clay silt subsoil (104)/(203)/(603) was encountered in Trenches 1, 2 and 6. This deposit was up to 0.34m deep and formed naturally in an area of a distinct drop-off in ground height from Trench 6 towards the south-east corner of the DA (Figure 2: Image 1). All the revealed archaeological remains within the trenches seemed to be stratigraphically earlier than the buried soil.

The undisturbed geological deposits consisted of grey to brown-yellow clay silt with frequent inclusions of small to large mudstone.

3.3 Archaeological Remains

Archaeological remains of probable modern date (1750 onwards) survived in the form of three post-holes [106], [205], [404] and an irregular shallow pit [304].

The post-holes were 0.35–0.8m wide and 0.11–0.44m deep, with concave to near vertical, U-shaped profiles (Figure 2: Sections 2-3, 6 and Image 3). Post-hole [404] yielded a small sherd of white earthenware pottery (2g), a sand-tempered brick fragment (5g), and a colourless glass bottle body sherd, embossed with the letters ‘I’ and ‘A’. All are likely to be of 19th-century date. Coal fragments weighing 29g were collected from posthole [205].

Pit [304] was at least 2.1m long and 0.16m deep, with an irregular profile. It was encountered in an area where one of the buildings shown on the 1779 map would have been located but is likely to post-date the removal of the building’s remains. The fills of the feature contained six abraded pieces of ceramic brick or roof tile (61g) of 18th-century or later date, and two fragments (3g) of calcined animal bone.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The trial trench evaluation located a small number of probably modern archaeological features, some of which were located in the area where a building was shown on the 1779 Enclosure Award map. However, none of the features represented convincing structural remains. The trenching works also revealed that quarrying or landscaping activity had taken place within the south-eastern quarter of the site, where the ground level visibly dropped. It is probable that this activity was relatively recent in date (i.e. early-mid 19th century), and may have resulted in the removal of any significant remains associated with a post-medieval/medieval structure.

A review of on-line census records for 1841, 1861 and 1881 discovered no reliable evidence for activities or occupations associated with quarrying or industry such as brickmaking around the High Street area of the town. Such activity can, therefore, not be confirmed as the cause of the ground reduction in the south-east quarter of the site.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Cooper N. (ed), 2006 *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda,* Leicester Archaeology Monograph 13.

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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: **Length: 12.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.53 m. Max: 0.92 m.**

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: SK** *(Easting: 44278: Northing: 27153)*

OS Grid Ref.: SK *(Easting: 44289: Northing: 27150)*

Reason: **To assess archaeological potential.**

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
101	**Topsoil**	**Friable dark brown grey silty loam occasional small-large CBM, occasional small-large stones Up to 0.28m thick deposit. CBM not retained.**	☑	☐
102	**Subsoil**	**Firm mid grey brown clay silt occasional small-large CBM, occasional small-medium stones Up to 0.13m thick deposit. CBM not retained.**	☑	☑
103	**Dump material**	**Firm light red grey silty clay Up to 0.17m thick deposit derived from (104) and (105).**	☑	☐
104	**Buried subsoil**	**Friable mid brown red clay silt Sterile and homogenous deposit that was up to 0.34m thick and naturally formed. The same as (203)**	☑	☐
105	**Natural**	**Firm light grey clay silt With moderate medium-large mudstone slabs**	☐	☐
106	**Posthole**	**Sub-square sides: vertical base: uneven dimensions: max depth 0.14m, max diameter 0.4m**	☑	☐
107	Fill	Friable mid orange red clay silt With grey mottling - derived from (104) and (105).	☑	☐

Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 12.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.42 m. Max: 0.44 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SK *(Easting: 44295: Northing: 27154)*

OS Grid Ref.: SK *(Easting: 44290: Northing: 27143)*

Reason: To assess archaeological potential.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
201	**Topsoil**	**Loose dark grey brown silty loam occasional small-large stones Up to 0.17m thick deposit.**	☑	☐
202	**Subsoil**	**Firm mid grey brown clay silt occasional small-medium stones Up to 0.15m thick deposit.**	☑	☐
203	**Buried subsoil**	**Friable mid brown red clay silt Sterile and uniformed deposit that was up to 0.23m thick. The same as (104).**	☑	☐
204	**Natural**	**Firm light grey clay silt With frequent small-large slabs of mudstone**	☐	☐
205	**Posthole**	**Sub-oval sides: near vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.8m, max depth 0.44m, max length 0.5m**	☑	☐
206	Fill	Friable mid orange red clay silt With grey and yellow mottling - derived from depsoits (203) and (204) - possibly deliberate backfill mixed with packing material.	☑	☑

Trench: 3

Max Dimensions: **Length: 12.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.39 m. Max: 0.52 m.**

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: SK** *(Easting: 44298: Northing: 27144)*

OS Grid Ref.: SK *(Easting: 44309: Northing: 27142)*

Reason: **To assess archaeological potential and test for the presence of possible building remains.**

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
301	**Topsoil**	**Loose dark grey brown sandy silt occasional small-large CBM, occasional small-medium stones Thickness: 0.14-0.26m. CBM not retained.**	☑	☐
302	**Subsoil**	**Friable mid red brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones Up to 0.19m thick deposit**	☑	☐
303	**Natural**	**Friable mid brown yellow clay silt frequent medium-large stones With frequent slabs of mudstone**	☐	☐
304	**Pit**	**Irregular E-W sides: irregular base: uneven dimensions: min breadth 1.6m, max depth 0.16m, min length 2.1m**	☑	☐
305	Lower fill	Friable mid red brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones Thickness: up to 0.09m	☑	☑
306	Upper fill	Friable mid yellow grey sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones Up to 0.08m thick deposit. Material mottled yellow grey/brown grey; redeposited reworked natural mixed with soil.	☑	☑
307	**Dump material**	**Friable dark red brown sandy silt occasional flecks charcoal, occasional small-medium stones Layer represents dumped material, observed in entirity of trench. Thickness: 0.1-0.17m**	☑	☐

Trench: 4

Max Dimensions: **Length: 12.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.33 m. Max: 0.46 m.**

Co-ordinates: **OS Grid Ref.: SK** *(Easting: 44318: Northing: 27151)*

OS Grid Ref.: SK *(Easting: 44314: Northing: 27140)*

Reason: **To assess archaeological potential and test for the presence of possible building remains.**

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
401	**Topsoil**	**Loose mid brown black sandy silt frequent small-large CBM, moderate small-large stones Thickness 0.09-0.35m, thickness increasing towards NE end. CBM not retained.**	☑	☐
402	**Subsoil**	**Friable dark red brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones Thickness 0.11-0.24m**	☑	☐
403	**Natural**	**Friable mid brown yellow clay silt frequent medium-large stones**	☑	☐
404	**Posthole**	**Sub-circular sides: irregular base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.35m, max depth 0.11m, max length 0.4m**	☑	☐
405	Fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	☑	☑

Trench: 5

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates:

Reason: To assess archaeological potential.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
501	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional small-large stones Up to 0.18m thick deposit.	☑	☐
502	Subsoil	Firm mid red brown clay silt occasional small-medium stones Up to 0.27m thick deposit - thickens towards NE end of trench	☑	☐
503	Natural	Friable light yellow grey clay silt With brown mottling and frquent mediu-large mudstone inclusions. Drops down at NE end of trench, following the contour of the slope.	☐	☐

Trench: 6

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates:

Reason: To assess archaeological potential.

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
601	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown silty loam occasional small-large stones Moderatley rooted, occasional CBM (not retained). Up to 0.26m thick deposit.	☑	☐
602	Subsoil	Firm mid grey brown clay silt occasional small-medium stones Moderately rooted, up to 0.23m thick deposit, thickens towards NE end of trench	☑	☐
603	Buried subsoil	Friable mid red brown clay silt With mid grey clay mottling. Appears only at NE end of trench and follows the contour of the slope of terrain on site. Up to 0.2m thick deposit	☑	☐
604	Natural	Friable light yellow grey clay silt With occasional small-medium mudstone.	☐	☐

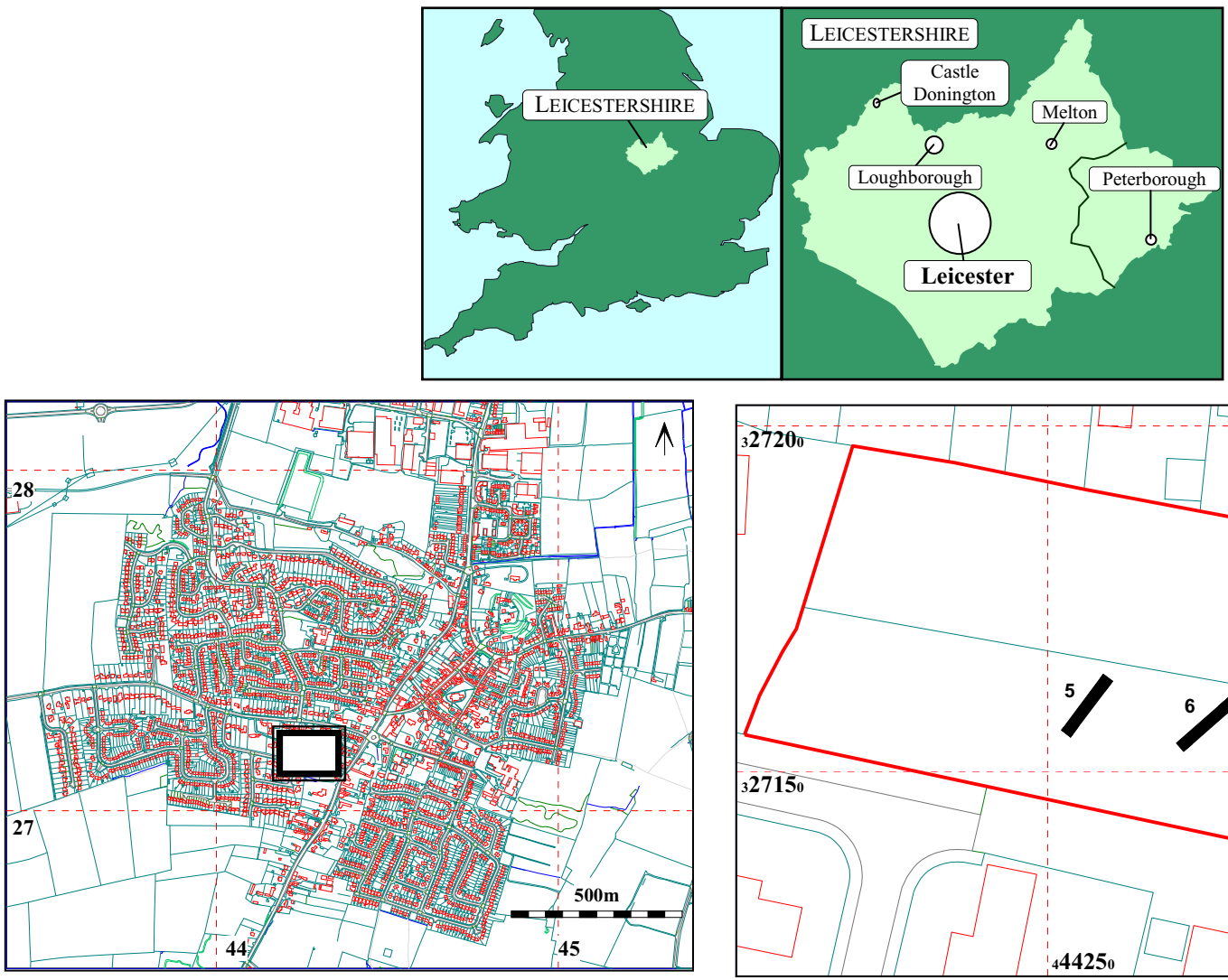


Figure 1: Site location

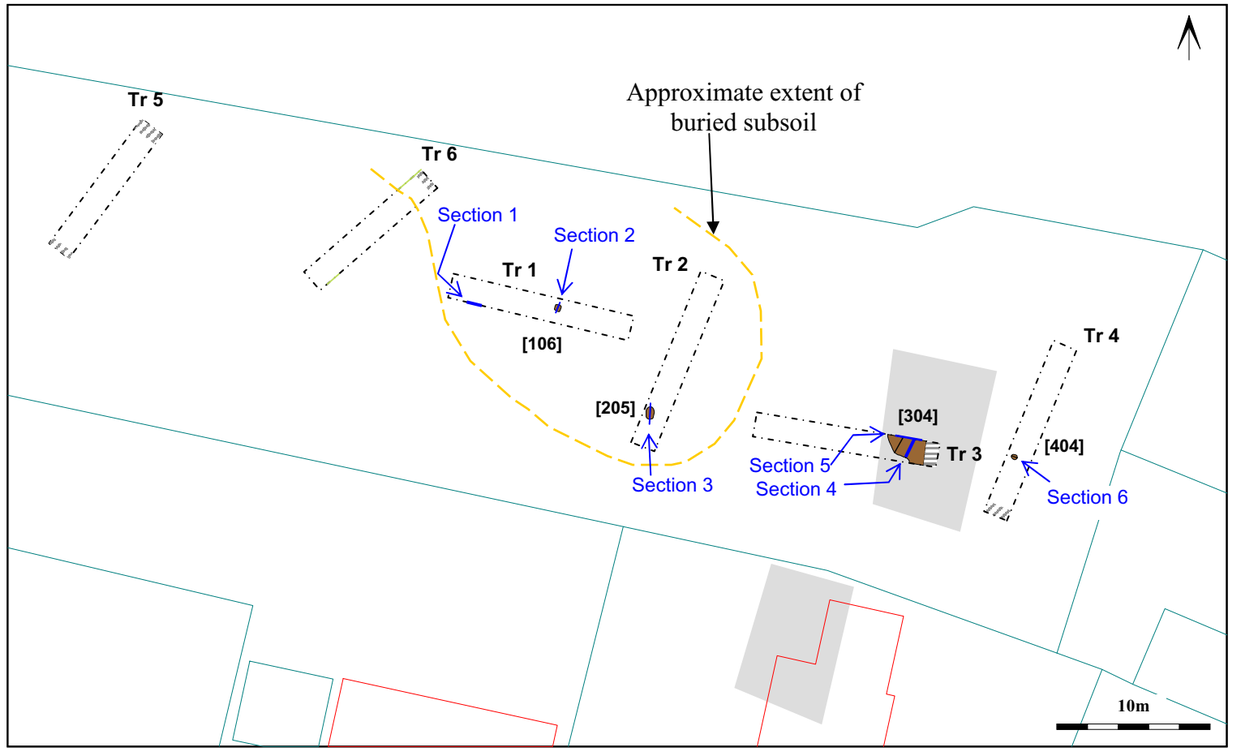
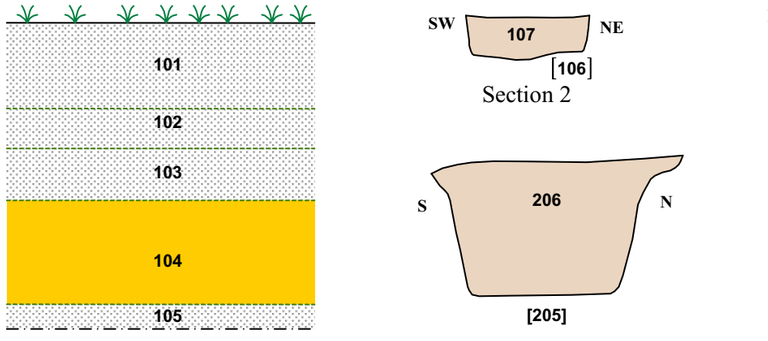


Image 1: Section 1 - looking SW; 1m scale

Image 2: Section 5 of pit [304] – looking N; 1m scale

Image 3: fully excavated post-pit [205]; 0.4m scale

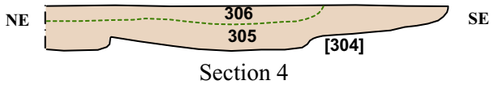
Image 4: baulk section of NE end of Trench 6 – looking NW; 1m scale



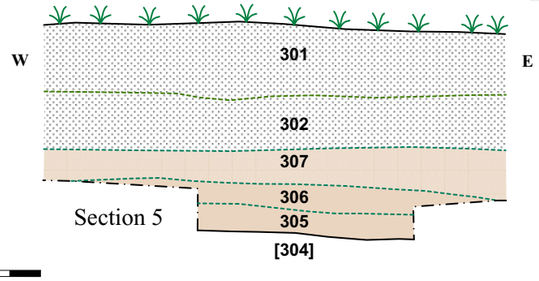
Section 1

Section 2

Section 3



Section 4



Section 5

Section 6

50cm

- Trenches
- Slope at end of trench
- Archaeological feature
- Cross-section of archaeological feature
- Layer
- Buried soil (104)/(203)/(603) and its approximate extent
- Possible position of buildings shown on 1779 Enclosure Award map

Figure 2: All features

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