

Archaeological Evaluation Report

RADNOR GREEN CONGLETON

For Stewart Milne Homes

Author Griffiths, K

L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Evaluation Report

RADNOR GREEN CONGLETON

Client: Stewart Milne Homes

Local Authority: Cheshire East Council

NGR: SJ84250 64225

Planning App: 16/1824M

Author(s): K Griffiths

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Abstract

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at Radnor Green, Back Lane, Congleton prior to the development of the site. This included the excavation of seven evaluation trenches to identify and record any surviving below ground remains. The fieldwork was carried out in March 2022 by L - P : Archaeology on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes.

The site does not lie within a Conservation Area, Area of Archaeological Importance, nor is it within any Registered Parks and Gardens or Battlefields; there are no Listed buildings or Scheduled Monuments on the site.

The trenches targeted historic field boundaries seen in the historic mapping and a possible spread of burnt material in the north-east of the site.

Trenches 2 and 7 were devoid of any archaeological features. Three modern field drains in a waterlogged area of the site were present in trench 6. In trenches 1 and 3, the linears identified correspond to the field boundaries in the historic mapping. In trench 5, the east-west linear identified is likely a boundary ditch also seen in the historic mapping.

The possible spread of burnt material corresponds to an irregular dark deposit in trench 4. However, with under 5% charcoal inclusions and rooting visible, it is thought to be a natural feature such as a tree bole.

The Archaeological Evaluation trenches did not show any evidence of Prehistoric, Roman or Medieval activity within the site. No further archaeological work is recommended in relation to the proposed development.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This evaluation report has been prepared by Kelly Griffiths of L - P : Archaeology on behalf of Stewart Milne Homes.
- 1.2. The fieldwork was carried out by Ric Buckle, Patrycja Kalinowska and Kelly Griffiths of L – P : Archaeology between 7th and 11th March 2022. This report was written by Kelly Griffiths of L - P : Archaeology.
- 1.3. The site is located on land to the north of Radnor Green, Back Lane, Congleton within the historic township of Radnor (FIGURE 1) The National grid reference number (NGR) is (SJ) 384282 364192
- 1.4. The site code allocated by L - P : Archaeology is LP4209C.
- 1.5. Seven evaluation trenches were excavated targeting historic field boundaries, areas of archaeological potential (such as artefact scatters and possible spreads of burnt material) as described in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (ORION HERITAGE LTD 2019).

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

- 2.1.1. The site at Radnor Green, Back lane has been approved for 172 residential dwellings with Stewart Milne Homes and is part of a wider approved scheme.
- 2.1.2. The planning application Decision Notice is (16/1824M).
- 2.1.3. The site is not within any conservation areas. There are no scheduled monuments, registered battlefields, Historic parks, gardens or World Heritage sites within the site.
- 2.1.4. The local planning authority is Cheshire East Council and the planning decision was made in consultation with the Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service (APAS).
- 2.1.5. Under the application Decision Notice (16/1824M) planning condition 35 was made with Cheshire East Council. This states that:

No development shall take place on each phase of the development until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure there is no damage to any archaeological potential on the site. The use of such a condition is in line with the guidance set out in Paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 2.1.6. APAS and L - P : Archaeology have agreed the methodology for these works as detailed in the WSI (ORION HERITAGE LTD 2019).

2.2.GEOLOGY

- 2.2.1. The site lies in an area where the solid geological deposits are Sidmouth Mudstone Formation and the superficial deposits are described as Glaciofluvial Deposits, Devensian Sand and Gravel (BGS 2022).
- 2.2.2. The stratigraphy noted on site consisted of a mid brown organic sand topsoil

between 0.2m-0.6m thick, overlaying a mid brown grey silt sand subsoil, not seen in all trenches. The natural sand was encountered in all trenches between 0.4m – 0.6m below ground level(bgl).

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

2.3.1. The site lies approximately 1.5km to the northwest of Congleton town centre and to the south of the river Dane (FIGURE 1).

2.3.2. The site is currently open fields of grassland and is bounded by fencing to the west and south (FIGURE 2).

2.3.3. The site is mainly flat with an average height of 96 mOD.

2.4.SITE CONDITIONS

2.4.1. There was no demolition or standing buildings on the site.

2.5.ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

2.5.1. The wider area in the scheme, including the site area, has been subject to a previous desk based assessment and metal detecting survey (AEON ARCHAEOLOGY 2016).

2.5.2. Prehistoric activity is well-attested in the Congleton area with the The Bridestones Neolithic Chambered cairn within 5km of the site. Prehistoric find spots are known within the wider area such as a polished stone axe and a Bronze Age flat axe. There are no known Prehistoric find spots within the site area.

2.5.3. Evidence of Roman activity in the wider area has been confined to a coin hoard and coin find spots. There is no known Roman activity within the site area.

2.5.4. There is no known Medieval activity within the site. In the wider area; Congleton is mentioned in the Domesday book and medieval settlements are known to the south and southwest of the area. The manor and village of Radnor is mentioned in the 13th Century as containing water mills and 200 acreage of pasture (OMEROD, G N.D.)

2.5.5. On the 1840 tithe map (FIGURE 4), the site area can be seen to lie just within

the township of Radnor with the border to Congleton township just to the south of the site. The site lies over four full or partial plots. The plot names and state of cultivation show that the land was used for agricultural purposes. Both field names with Gorsty and Greave may suggest that the land may have had shrubs or thickets. Similarly, Fox Holes could suggest land that was prone to shrub land.

Plot number	Owner	Tenant	Name of Plot	Cultivation
32	William Starkey	Thomas Lea	Clover field	Pasture
33	William Starkey	Thomas Lea	Gorsty field	Mowing
34	William Starkey	Thomas Lea	Hollins Greave	Pasture
35	William Starkey	Thomas Lea	Fox Holes	Mowing & oats

2.5.6. On the 1897 OS 25' mapping (FIGURE 5), the northern plot has the addition of a track dividing the plot. A group of structures are depicted adjacent to the west of the site with associated gardens.

2.5.7. On the 1945 OS 6" mapping, the field boundaries remain the same and there are no further changes to be seen in the historic mapping.

3. Aims

3.1. The general aims of the archaeological evaluation were to assess the character, date, type, state of preservation, and extent of any archaeological remains on site.

3.2. The objectives of the target trenching were to:

- ◆ Ensure the recording of any archaeological assets discovered during the archaeological evaluation;
- ◆ Ensure that any below ground archaeological deposits exposed are promptly identified;
- ◆ Ensure the recording of all archaeological remains, to place this record in its local context and to make the record available;
- ◆ Undertake a programme of post-investigation assessment;
- ◆ Produce a report and disseminate the results;
- ◆ Make provision for archive deposition and placed in the public domain by depositing the results with the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

4. Methodology

- 4.1. For a full description of the archaeological methodology please refer to Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (ORION HERITAGE LTD 2019).
- 4.2. All works were carried out in accordance with the approved WSI (ORION HERITAGE LTD 2019) the Code of Conduct as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CHARTERED INSTITUTE FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS 2021) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (CIFA 2020).
- 4.3. The archaeological evaluation consisted of 7 trenches. Trenches 1, 3 and 5 were 30m x 1.8m and 4, 6 and 7 were 40m x 1.8m. Trench 2, in agreement with APAS, was reduced to 15m in length (rather than the 30m stipulated in the WSI) due to the original trench location extending beyond the boundary of the site.

5. Results

5.1. Results are given below trench by trench. Not all context numbers referred to in the text are illustrated, but all are in the archive. Deposit numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets].

5.2. TRENCH 1

- 5.2.1. Trench 1 was located at the north western end of the site on a level area and was aligned north-south. 30m x 1.8m, it was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.94 m (PLATE 1)(FIGURE 7).
- 5.2.2. The upper deposit was a light grey brown silty sand topsoil (100) of between 0.3 – 0.4m thick. Below this was a mid grey brown silty sand subsoil (101) of between 0.08- 0.15m thick.
- 5.2.3. In the middle of the trench a ditch was identified [102] aligned east-west, measuring 2.1m wide and a maximum depth of 0.45m. In profile, the sides showed a gradual and then a steep gradient with a concave base (PLATE 2). There was one fill (103) of a mid grey brown sandy silt, with rooting apparent in the section. It is most likely that [102] corresponds to the field boundary shown in the historic mapping and as such probably pre-dates the draughting of the Radnor tithe map in 1840.
- 5.2.4. At the southern end of the trench was a circular pit [104] 0.5m x 0.5m(PLATE 3), the sides were very steep and the pit appeared modern as turf within the backfill (105) suggests recent excavation. In the dark black grey silt (105) there were decomposing sheep bones, at the top of the pit a sheep skull was retained. However, the fill was very waterlogged and the disarticulated bones near the bottom still had flesh attached therefore, the pit was not excavated to the bottom.



Plate 1- Trench 1-general shot - direction north. 2x1m scale.



Plate 2- East facing section of field boundary [102]. 2x1m scale.



Plate 3- View of pit [104]. 1m scale.

5.3.TRENCH 2

5.3.1. Trench 2 was located at the northern end of the site on a level area and was aligned north-south. 15m x 1.8m, it was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.61m. (PLATE 4)(FIGURE 8).

5.3.2. The upper deposit was a mid grey brown sand topsoil (200) between 0.27-0.38m thick. Below this was the natural of mid brown orange sand (201).

5.3.3. There were no finds from this trench.



Plate 4- Trench 2-general shot- direction north- 2x1m scale

5.4.TRENCH 3

- 5.4.1. Trench 3 was located at the north end of the site on a level area and was aligned east-west. 30m x 1.8m, it was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.45m. (PLATE 5)(FIGURE 9).
- 5.4.2. The upper deposit was a mid grey brown sand topsoil (300) between 0.3m - 0.45m thick. Below this was the natural of mid brown yellow sand (301).
- 5.4.3. There were striations of darker and lighter sand running north to south at intervals across the middle to western end of the trench. Investigatory slots showed the marks to likely be part of the natural geology.
- 5.4.4. At the eastern end of the trench a linear feature orientated north-south [302] with one fill of a mid orange brown sand (303) could be seen, with a depth of 0.93 m and width of 2.7 m. The non-silty fill showed rooting and with irregular sloping sides(PLATE 6). The feature corresponds to the field boundary shown in the historic mapping and as such probably pre-dates the draughting of the Radnor tithe map in 1840.
- 5.4.5. There were no finds from this trench.



Plate 5- Trench 3- general shot- direction east- 2x1m scale



Plate 6- North facing section of [302]- 1m scale

5.5. TRENCH 4

5.5.1. Trench was located at the north eastern end of the site and was aligned east-west. 40m x 1.8m, it was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m (PLATE 7) (FIGURE 10).

5.5.2. The upper deposit was a dark grey brown sand topsoil (400) of 0.28- 0.38m thick. Below this was a brown grey sand subsoil (401) of 0.15-0.18m thick.

- 5.5.3. At the western half of the trench below the subsoil (401) there was a dark black brown deposit (402) with <5% charcoal of maximum 0.2m thick (PLATE 8). Two investigatory slots (slots 1 and 2) showed the deposit to be irregular, with apparent rooting and as such it has been interpreted as a possible tree bole (PLATE 9), a sample from slot 1 was taken and retained.
- 5.5.4. The natural of a light yellow brown sand was encountered at between 0.5-0.6m depth.
- 5.5.5. There were no finds from this trench.



Plate 7- Trench 4- general shot- direction west- 2x1m scale



Plate 8- Plan shot of deposit (402)- 1m scale.



Plate 9- Plan of slot 1 showing irregular deposit (402)- 1m scale

5.6. TRENCH 5

5.6.1. Trench was located at the south eastern end of the site and was aligned north-south. 30m x 1.8m, it was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m (PLATE 10) (FIGURE 11).

5.6.2. The upper deposit was a mid grey brown silty sand topsoil (500) of 0.46-0.55m thick. Below this was the natural mid brown orange sand (503) with

<2 % stone.

5.6.3. At the northern end of the trench was a cut [501] for a linear feature of 1.4m wide. The profile of [501] showed it to be a ditch with gently sloping sides to the north where a modern field drain aligned east-west had been placed, the southern side showed a steeper gradient (PLATE 11). There was one fill (502) of a dark black brown sandy silt which contained one fragment of a Post Medieval pottery. The feature corresponds to the field boundary shown in the historic mapping and as such probably pre-dates the draughting of the Radnor tithe map in 1840.

5.6.4. There were no other finds or features in this trench.



Plate 10- Trench 5-general shot-direction south-2x1m scale



Plate 11 - East facing section of ditch [501] -1m scale

5.7.TRENCH 6

- 5.7.1. Trench 6 was located in the middle of the site and was aligned north-south. 40m x 1.8m, it was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m (PLATE 12)(FIGURE 12).
- 5.7.2. The upper deposit was a mid black brown silty sand topsoil (600) of 0.40-0.6m thick. Below this was the natural mid brown orange sand (601).
- 5.7.3. Two modern field drains aligning northeast–southwest ran across the southern half of the trench.
- 5.7.4. The trench was positioned on a slope and over a circular indentation in the topography. The ground was very wet and the northern half of the trench filled with water rapidly, the natural sand was seen before the trench filled with no features visible.
- 5.7.5. There were no finds from this trench.



Plate 12- Trench 6- general shot-direction south-2x1m scale

5.8.TRENCH 7

5.8.1. Trench 7 was located at the southern end of the site on a level area and was aligned east-west. 30m x 1.8m, it was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.73m (PLATE 13)(FIGURE 13).

5.8.2. The upper deposit was a mid brown grey silty sand topsoil (700) of 0.30-0.40m thick. Below this was a mid brown sand subsoil (701) with <1% stone inclusions of 0.20m thick. Beneath this was the natural light brown orange sand (603) with 1-3 % stone.

5.8.3. There were no finds from this trench.



Plate 13-Trench 7- general shot- direction west- 2x1m scale

6. Finds

- 6.1. There were only two finds recovered from the evaluation trenching, a single sherd of Pearl glazed earthenware handle with hand-painted blue leaf pattern c.1780+ weighing 11g found in deposit (502) from the boundary ditch [501]. This dates the filling of the ditch to the Post Medieval period.
- 6.2. A sheep skull was retained from the pit [104] in Trench 1. Only the lower left mandible was present, with teeth p2, p3, M1, M2 M3 present. Therefore, the sheep is thought to be that of an adult animal of approximately >2 years. No further biometrics were considered necessary as the skull is demonstrably from a modern animal. As such it is recommended for discard.

7. Environmental Sampling

7.1. A soil sample from trench 4 from the dark brown black deposit (402) was taken. As there was no definable cut to the deposit and the deposit was irregular with evidence of rooting, it is thought likely that (402) represents a tree bole. Deposit (402) had <5% charcoal within its matrix and it is unlikely to be indicative of in situ burning. As such the soil sample has not been processed and is recommended for discard.

8. Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1. A site at Radnor Green, Back Lane, Congleton is proposed for redevelopment. The proposed redevelopment involves 172 residential dwellings and is part of an approved wider scheme.
- 8.2. Examination of the available data indicates that the site does not contain any Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings.
- 8.3. An Archaeological evaluation consisting of seven targeted trenches was approved. The trenches targeted historic field boundaries seen in historic mapping, blank areas and a spread of burning in the north-east part of the site.
- 8.4. The natural sands were encountered in all trenches between 0.3 and 0.6m bgl.
- 8.5. Trenches 2 and 7 were devoid of any archaeological features.
- 8.6. The site is currently an open field with no sub-divisions or field boundaries. The linear features in trenches 1 and 5 were east-west aligned and correspond to the historic field boundaries seen in the historic mapping back to the title map of 1840 (FIGURE 14). In both trenches the field boundary was represented by a ditch. In trench 3, the linear identified in the trench was aligned roughly north-south, in the historic mapping the field boundary appears just to the east of the trench. It is highly likely however, that the linear in the trench is the historic field boundary.
- 8.7. Modern field drains encountered in trenches 5 and 6 suggest that the area to the centre of the site would habitually become waterlogged and the function is likely to be related to use of the land for agricultural activity.
- 8.8. There was a small, modern cut pit with sheep remains in trench 1 at the north-west of the site.
- 8.9. Trench 4 targeted a spread of burnt material in the north-west area of the site. Deposit (402) had an irregular shape in plan with apparent rooting and contained under 5% charcoal. Therefore, it is unlikely to be the source of the spread of burnt material and more likely represents a tree bole.
- 8.10. The Archaeological Evaluation of 7 trenches did not show any evidence of Prehistoric, Roman or Medieval activity within the site.

- 8.11. The evaluation showed the location and alignment of former historic field boundaries seen in the historic mapping and no longer in use.
- 8.12. No further archaeological work is recommended in relation to the proposed development.

9. Archive

9.1. The paper archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x Drawing Register
- ◆ 1 x Photographic Register
- ◆ 1 x Context Register
- ◆ 7 x Trench sheets
- ◆ 3 x Permatrace drawings
- ◆ 8 x Context sheets

9.2. The archive is to be deposited at the Cheshire Museum Service.

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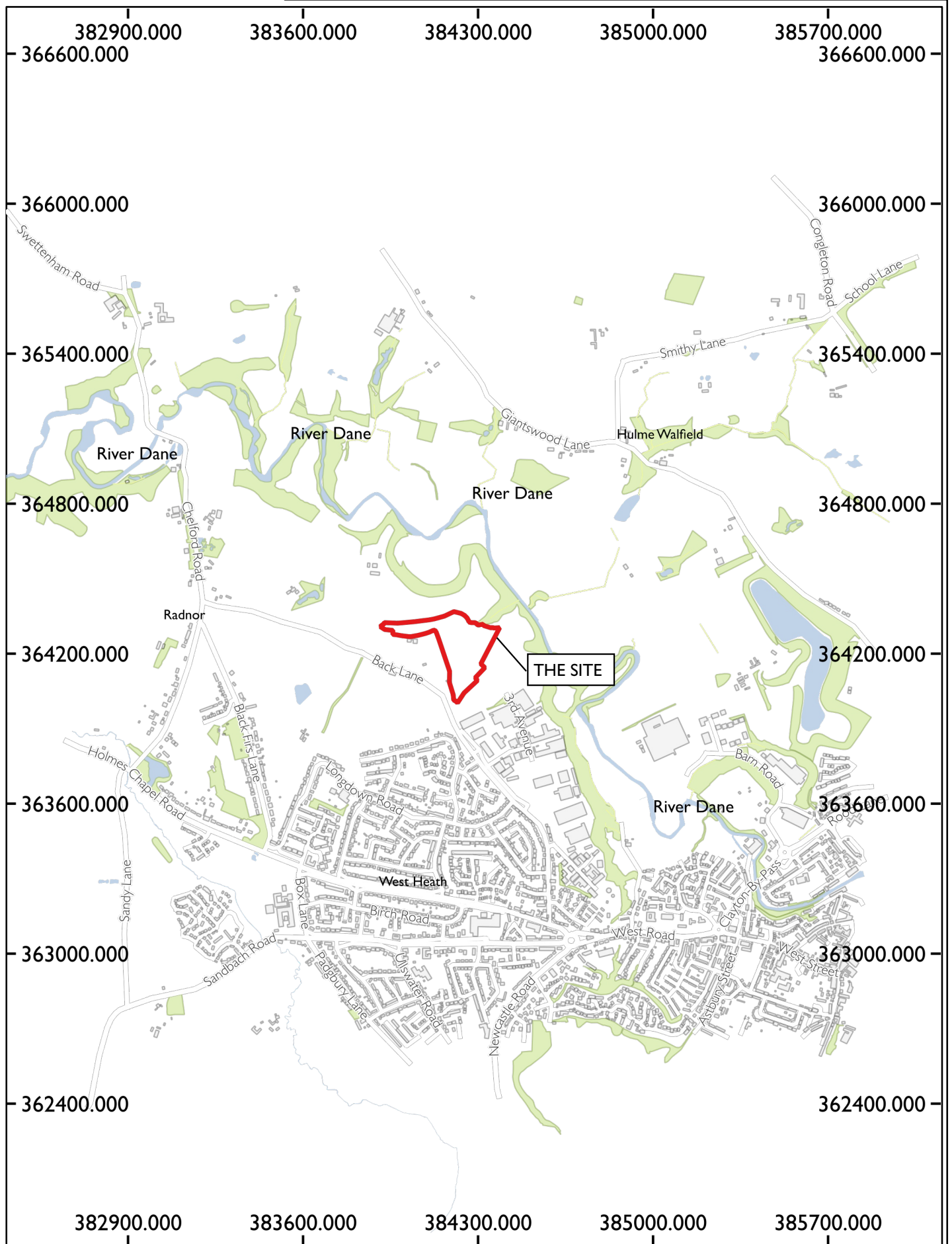
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FIGURES

FIGURE 1 // Site Location - General



0 100 m



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DESCRIPTION // Site Location

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FIGURE 2 // Site Location - Detail



THE SITE

0 50 m



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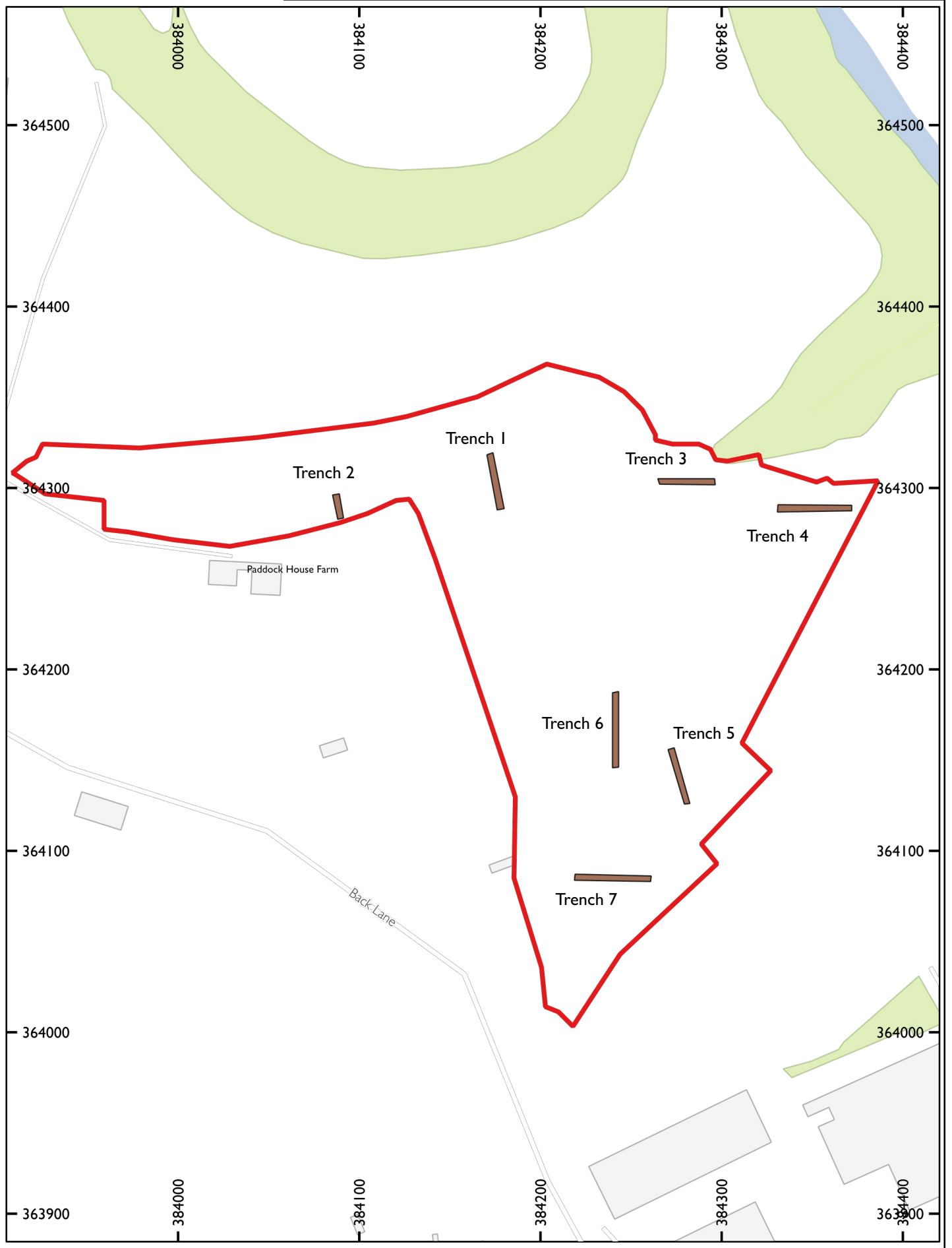
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FIGURE 3 // Trench Locations



0 50 m



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DESCRIPTION // Trench Locations

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FIGURE 4 // Township Map of Radnor 1840



0 50 m



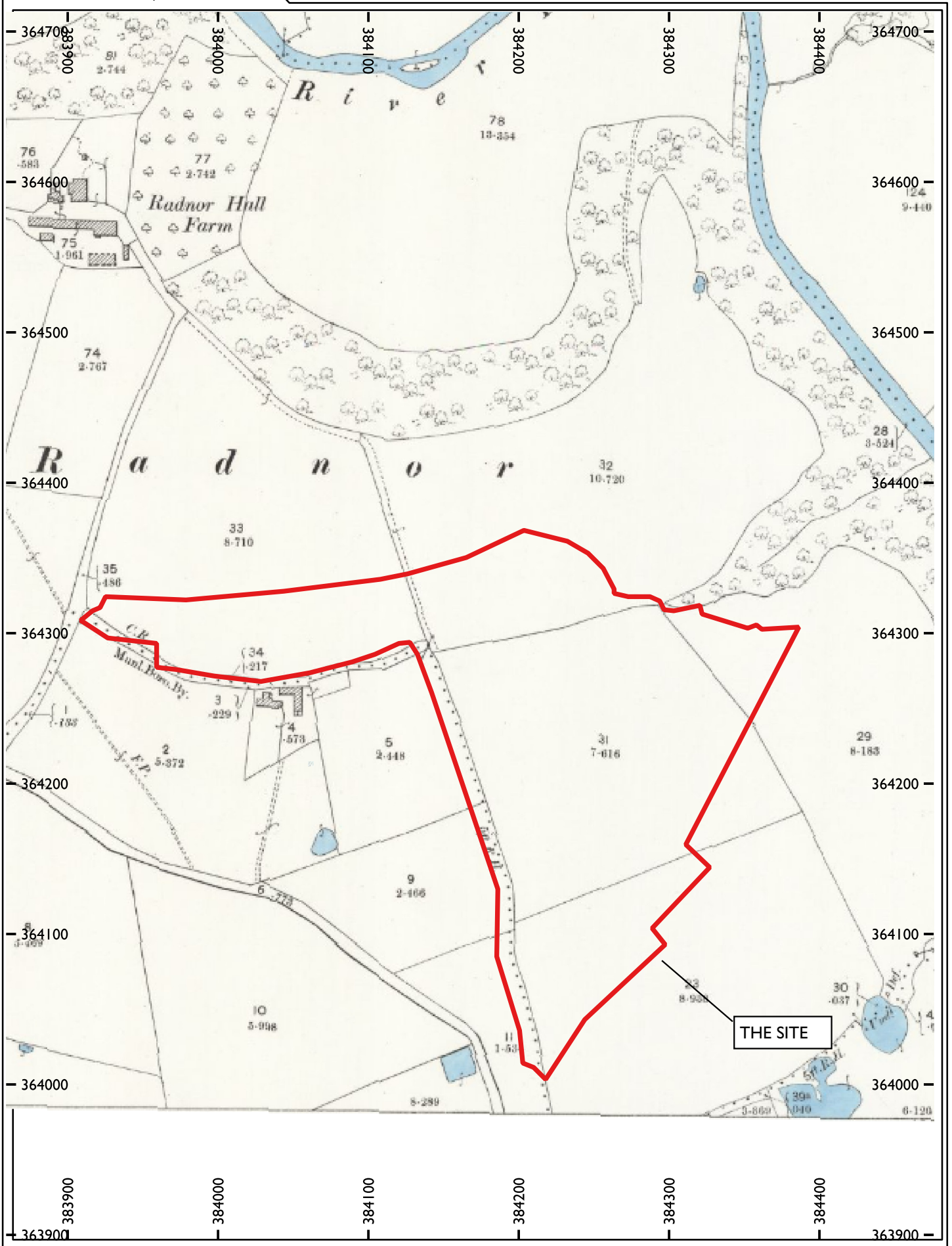
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DESCRIPTION // Township map of Radnor 1840

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FIGURE 5 // 1897 OS Map 25"



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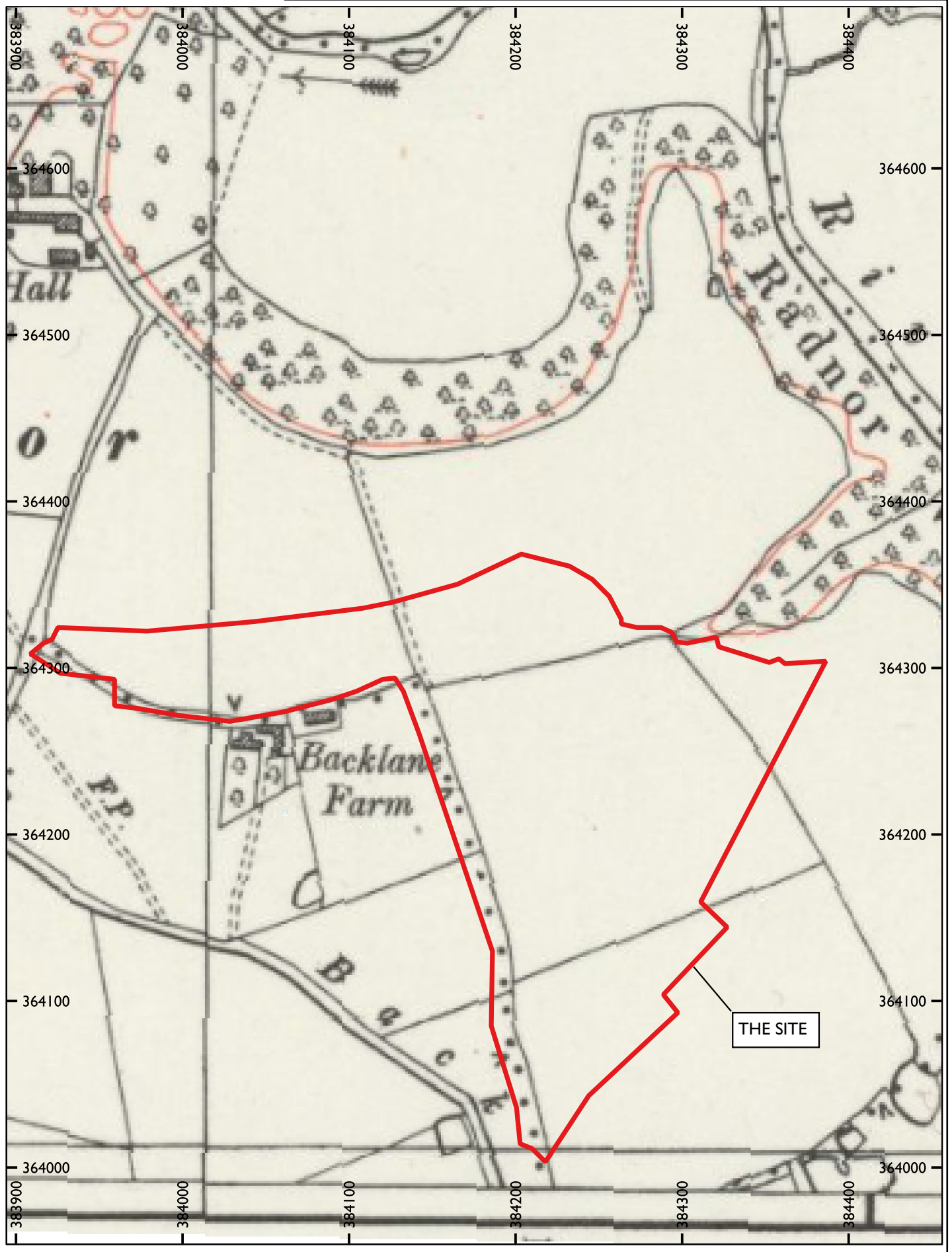
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FIGURE 6 // 1945 OS Map 6"



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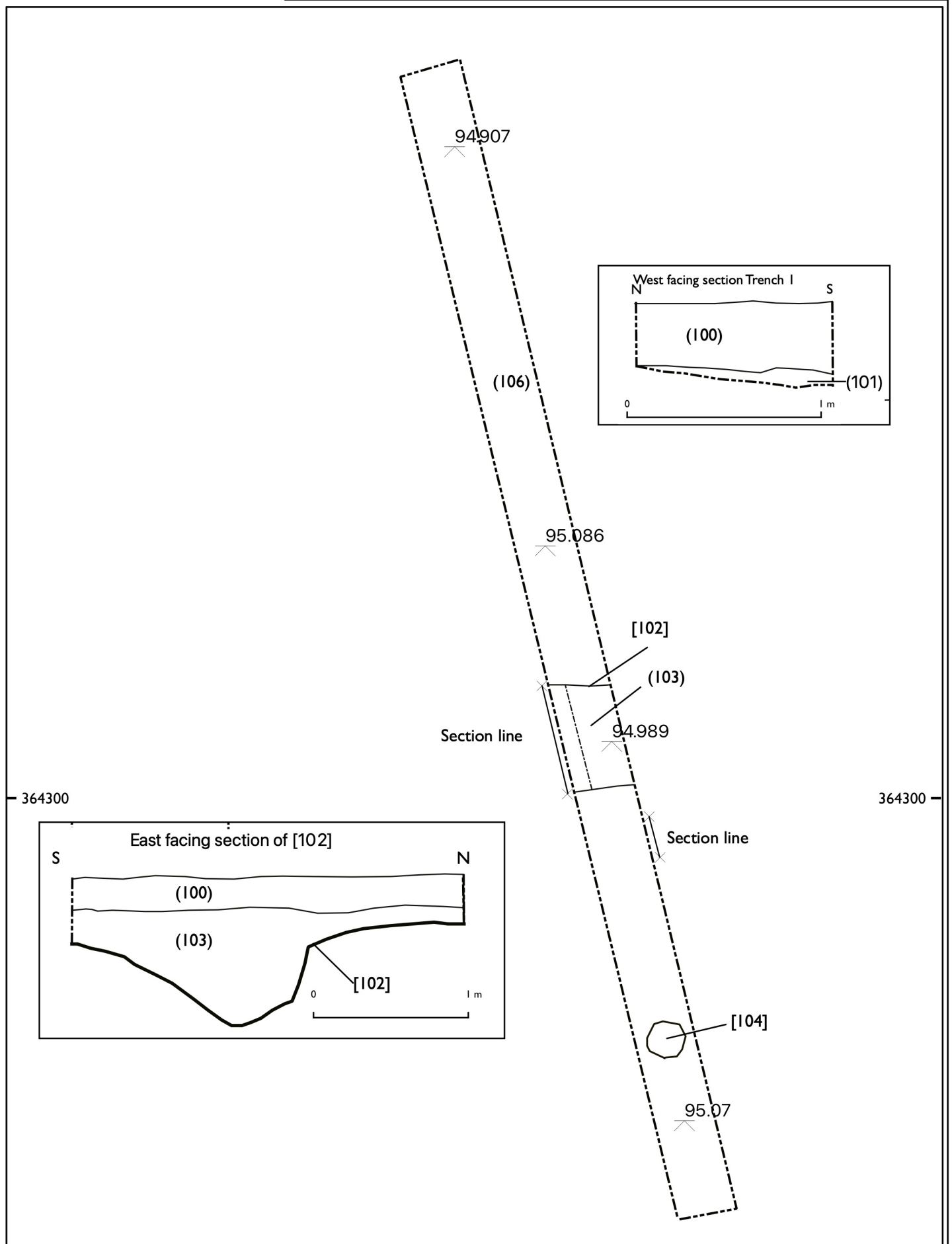
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FIGURE 7 // Plan of Trench I



- cut
- context
- ⋈ level
- - - - slot
- - - - LOE

0 1 m



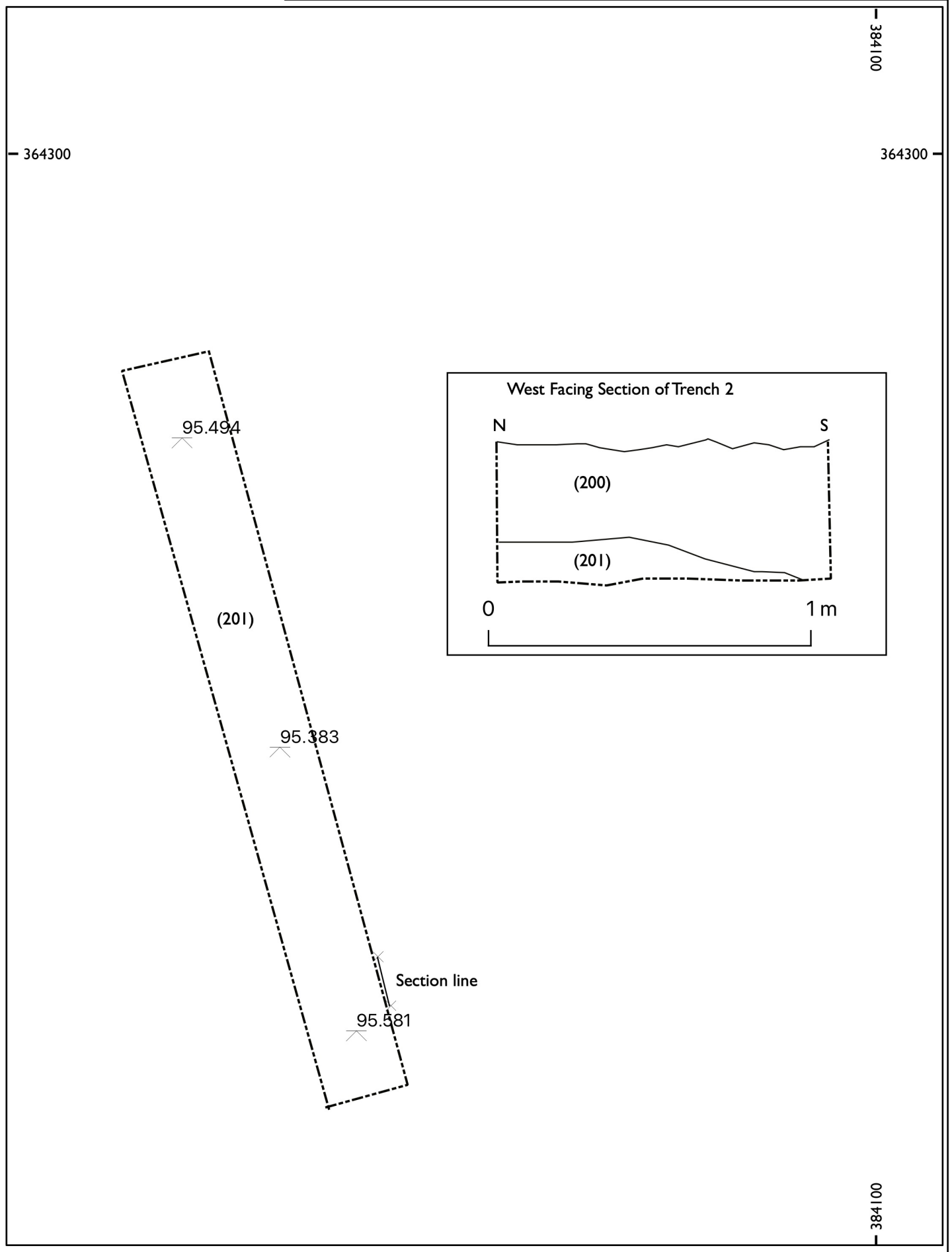
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FIGURE 8 // Plan of Trench 2



0 1 m



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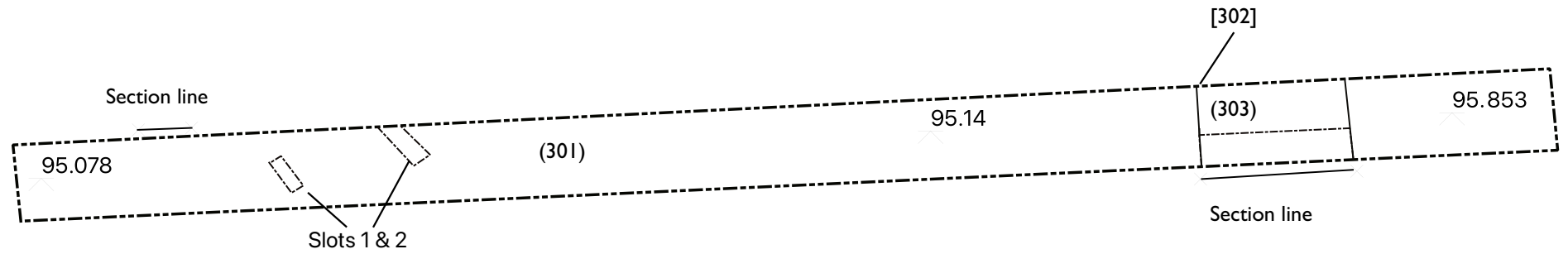
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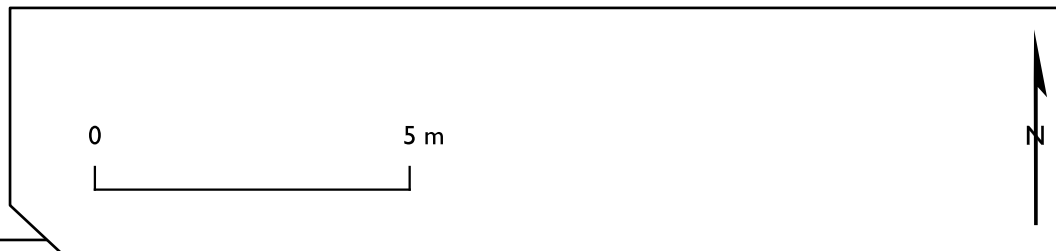
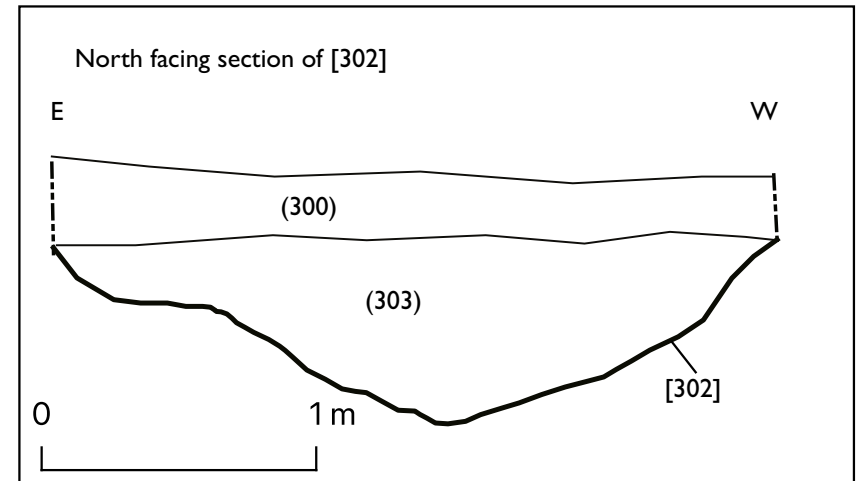
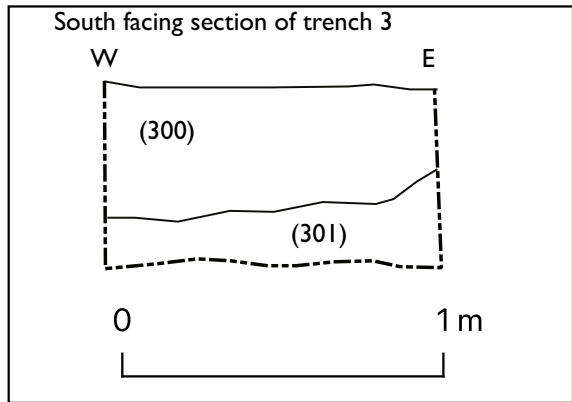
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FIGURE 9 // Plan of Trench 3



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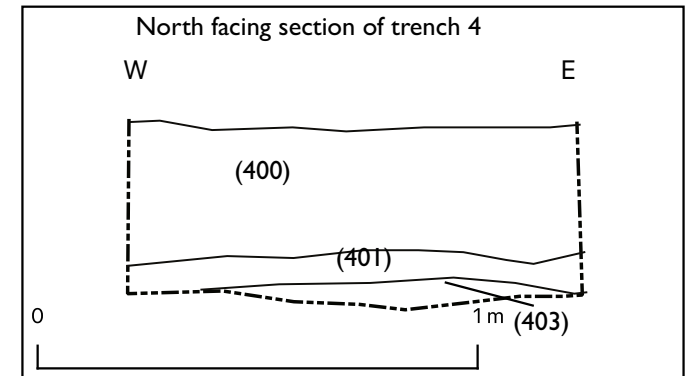
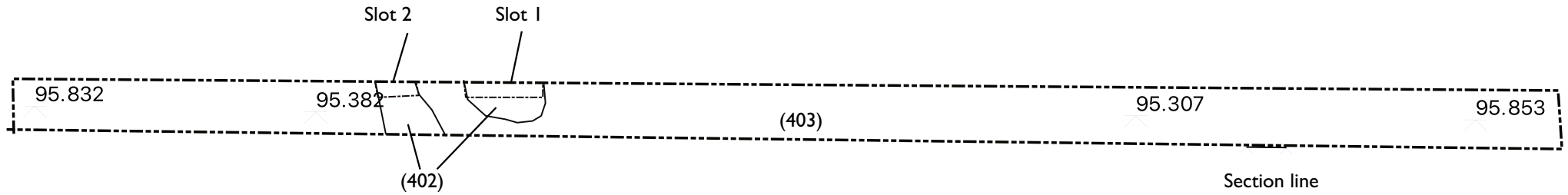
DESCRIPTION // Plan of trench 3 and sections

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FIGURE 10 // Plan of Trench 4



0 5 m



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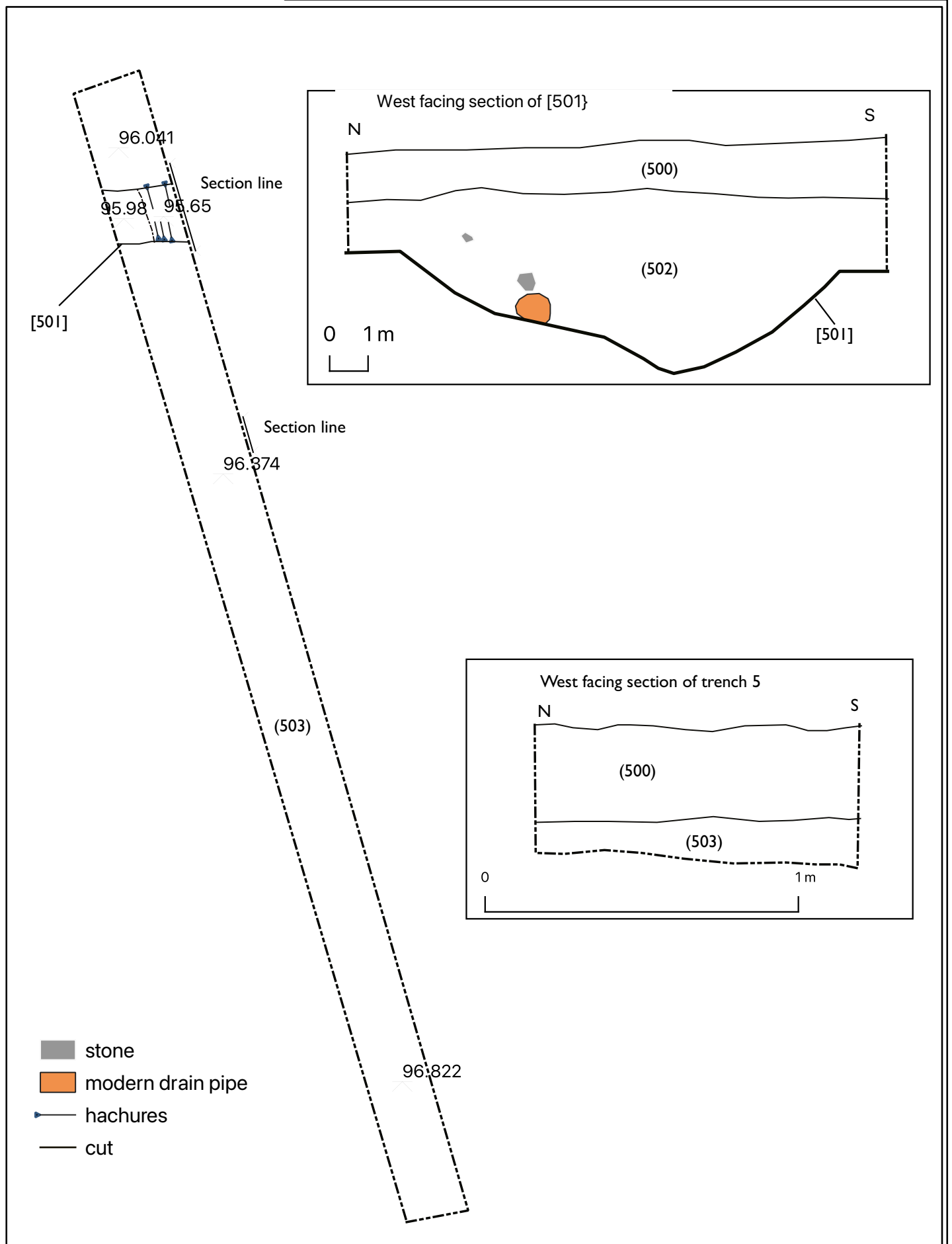
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FIGURE 11 //Plan of Trench 5



PROJECT // 4209C - Radnor Green, Back Lane, Congleton

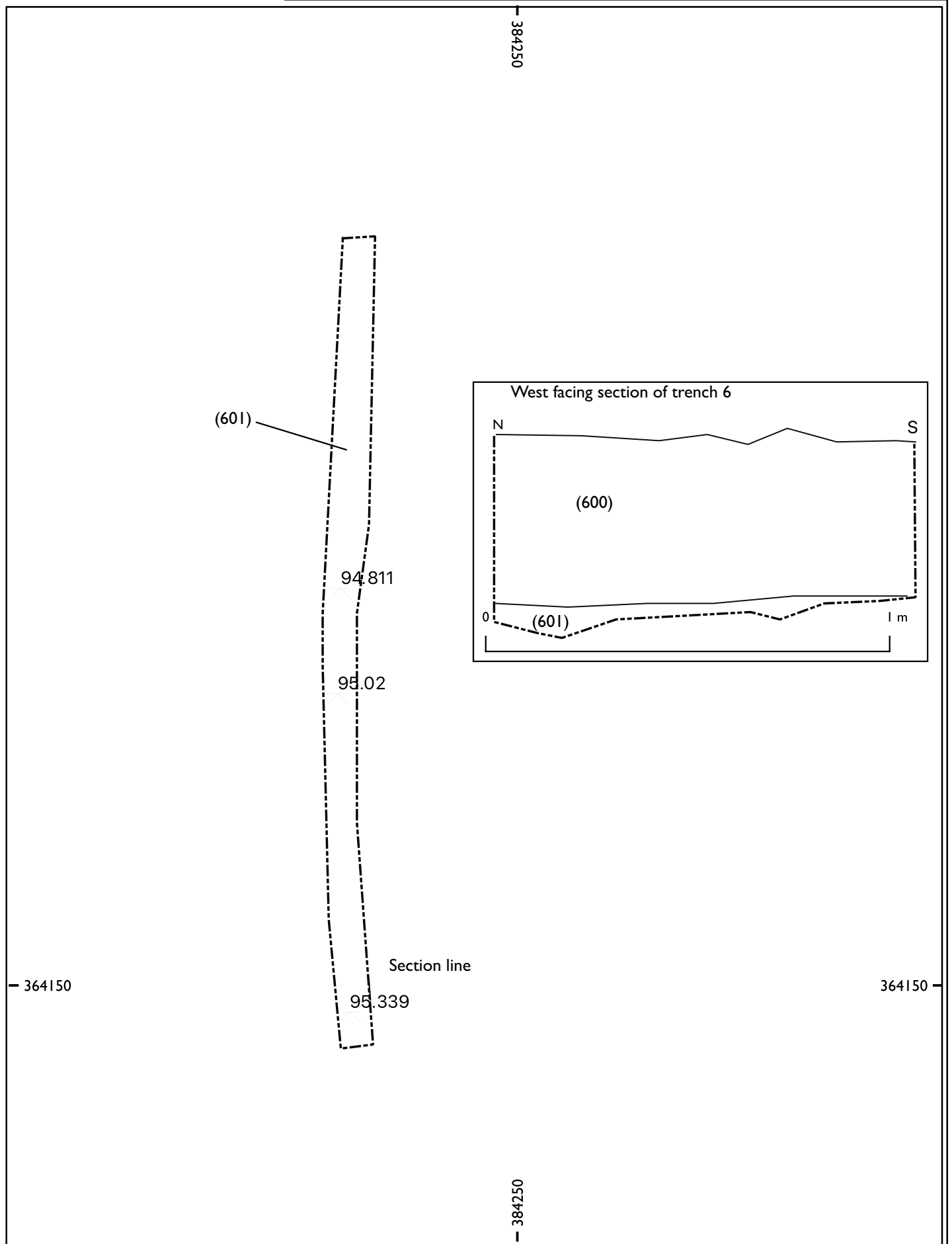
DESCRIPTION //Plan of Trench 5 and sections.

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DOC REF: LP4209C-AER-v1.1

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FIGURE 12 // Plan Trench 6



PROJECT // 4209C - Radnor Green, Back Lane, Congleton

DESCRIPTION // Plan of trench 6 and section.

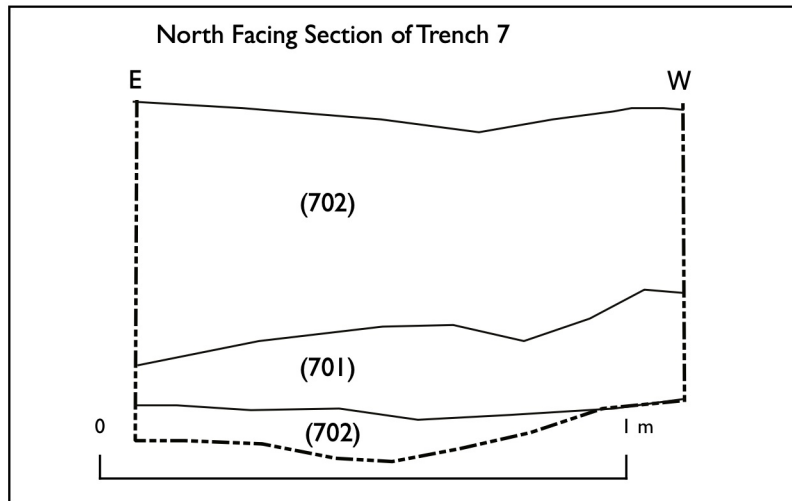
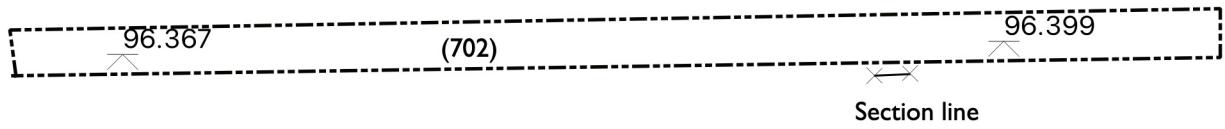
DOC REF: LP4209C-AER-v1.1

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FIGURE 13 // Plan of Trench 7

364100

364100



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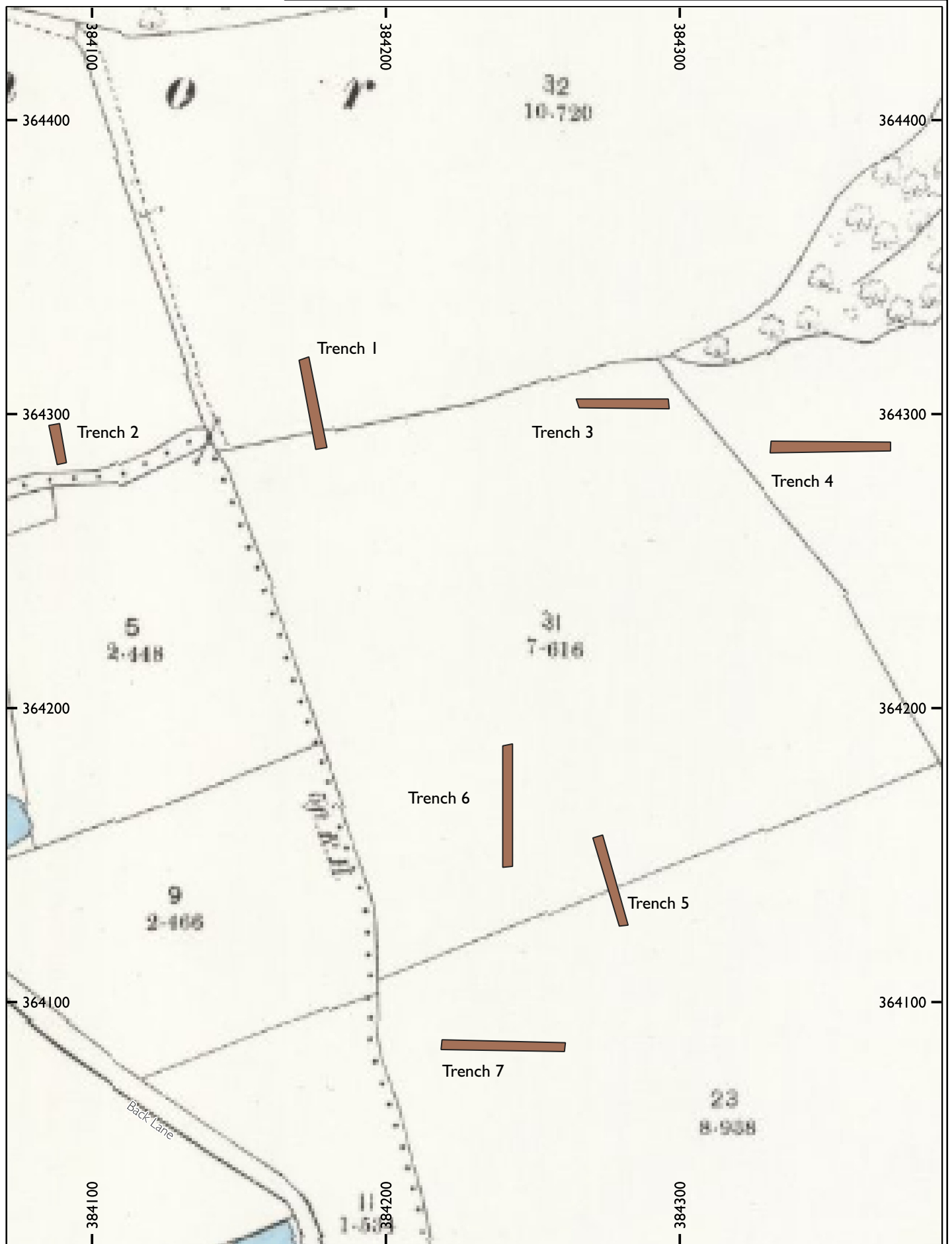
DESCRIPTION // Plan of Trench 7 and section

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FIGURE 14 // Field boundaries 1897 OS map



0 50 m



PROJECT // 4209C - Radnor Green, Back Lane, Congleton

DESCRIPTION // 1897 OS Map with trenches showing proximity to historic field boundaries.

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OASIS FORM

APPENDIX I

Summary for Iparchae1-505738

OASIS ID (UID)	lparchae1-505738
Project Name	Evaluation at Radnor Green, Congleton,
Sitename	
Activity type	Evaluation
Project Identifier(s)	LP4209C
Planning Id	16/1824M
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Between application and determination
Organisation Responsible for work	L - P : Archaeology
Project Dates	07-Mar-2022 - 11-Mar-2022
Location	Radnor Green, Congleton, NGR : SJ 83950 64317 LL : 53.175712, -2.241576 12 Fig : 383950,364317
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Cheshire District : Cheshire East Parish : Somerford
Project Methodology	For a full description of the archaeological methodology please refer to Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Orion Heritage Ltd 2019) All works were carried out in accordance with the approved WSI (Orion Heritage Ltd 2019) the Code of Conduct as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2021) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (CIfA 2020) The archaeological evaluation consisted of 7 trenches. Trenches 1,3 and 5 were 30m x1.8m and 4,6 and 7 were 40m x 1.8m. Trench 2 in agreement with APAS was 15m in length rather than 30m due to the fencing around the site.

Project Results	<p>8.4. The natural sands were encountered in all trenches between 0.3 and 0.6m bgl.</p> <p>8.5. Trenches 2 and 7 were devoid of any archaeological features.</p> <p>8.6. The site is currently open fields with no field boundaries. The linear features in trenches 1 and 5 were east-west aligned and correspond to the historic field boundaries seen in the historic mapping (Plate 14). In trench 1, it is likely that the field boundary was a hedgerow whereas in trench 5 it is likely to be a boundary ditch. In trench 3, the linear identified in the trench was aligned roughly north-south, in the historic mapping the field boundary appears just to the east of the trench. It is highly likely however, that the interpreted hedgerow in the trench is the historic field boundary.</p> <p>8.6.1. Modern field drains encountered in trench 6 suggest that the area to the centre of the site would habitually become waterlogged and the function is likely to be related to use of the land for agricultural activity.</p> <p>8.6.2. There is a small, modern cut pit with sheep remains in the north-west of the site.</p> <p>8.6.3. Trench 4 targeted the possible burning spread in the north-west area of the site. Deposit (402) showed it to have an irregular shape with apparent rooting and under 5% charcoal. Therefore, it is highly likely that this represents a tree bowl.</p> <p>8.6.4. The Archaeological Evaluation of 7 trenches did not show any evidence of Prehistoric, Roman or Medieval activity within the site.</p> <p>8.6.5. The evaluation showed the location and alignment of historic field boundaries seen in the historic mapping and no longer in use.</p> <p>8.6.6. No further archaeological work is recommended in relation to the proposed development.</p>
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Cheshire Historic Environment Record - noRev - LITE
Person Responsible for work	
HER Identifiers	
Archives	