



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological evaluation
of land at
South West Sixfields
Northampton



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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
MARCH 2006

NGR SP 7189 6018

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT
SOUTH WEST SIXFIELD
NORTHAMPTON

FEBRUARY 2006

SW SIXFIELDS, NORTHAMPTON

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QUALITY CONTROL

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SW SIXFIELDS, NORTHAMPTON

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	South West Sixfields, Northampton	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological evaluation on 0.79ha of land proposed for an access road situated to the east of the A45 and south of the Sixfields Football Stadium. No archaeological features were present. Although the proposed access road lies within an area of high archaeological potential, modern truncation of the upper levels for the provision of a car park has completely destroyed any potential associated activity.	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Field Evaluation	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)		
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type And period		
Significant finds (artefact type and period)		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address (including postcode)		
Easting (use numerical 100km grid square no.)	472845	
Northing	259950	
Height OD	61.5m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation		
Project brief originator	Halcrow Group Ltd	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Anne Foard-Colby	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	English Partnerships	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	22 February 2006	
End date	23 February 2006	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
Date		

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT
SOUTH WEST SIXFIELDS, NORTHAMPTON
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
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ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological evaluation on 0.79ha of land proposed for an access road situated to the east of the A45 and south of the Sixfields Football Stadium. No archaeological features were present. Although the proposed access road lies within an area of high archaeological potential, modern truncation of the upper levels for the provision of a car park has completely destroyed any potential associated activity.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological evaluation during February 2006 on land proposed for a new access road at South West Sixfields, Northampton, Northamptonshire, (NGR SP 7189 6018 Fig 1).

The work was undertaken in order to inform a planning application for the construction of a new access road (planning application: N/2005/1243). Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Halcrow Group on behalf of English Partnerships.

The evaluation was designed to meet the requirements of a specification written by Halcrow (Halcrow 2006) following the Brief for Archaeological Evaluation issued by Northamptonshire County Council's Historic Environment Team (NNCHET), for archaeological evaluation and the subsequent programme of post-excavation works.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The proposed new access road is situated within the western development of Northampton. The site covers an area of approximately 0.79ha and is situated immediately to the south of two roundabouts, south of the Sixfields complex and north of Duston Mill pumping station and the River Nene. The site is currently given over to an overflow car park for Sixfields football stadium. The topography of the site is flat at an altitude of *c* 61.5mOD.

The British Geological Survey has mapped the development area as inferior Oolite (BGS website).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There are no known archaeological remains from within the application site itself. However, there are numerous settlement remains surrounding the site which have been identified by aerial photography and excavation, and represent a rich history of activity in the valley from prehistoric times to the present day. The position of those listed below is shown in Figure 1.

A round barrow (NSMR 5132/0/3) was identified situated to the south west of the site, north of the River Nene. A further prehistoric enclosure and ditches lie to the north east of Upton mill.

Previous archaeological work to the north and west of the site included the identification of Iron Age enclosures and Roman occupation (NSMR 9549, Prentice 1999, Maull 2001 and Hayward 2001). The Roman town of Duston (which has been extensively quarried during the early 20th century) lies immediately to the north - east. A Roman lead coffin and further cremations have been discovered to the north of the site.

The deserted medieval village of Upton (NSMR 5138) is situated *c* 1km to the west of the site. Trial trenching and a watching brief to the west also revealed the remains of the medieval ridge and furrow field cultivation system (Hayward 2001, Jones 2002, 2003).

Duston Mill (NSMR 656) lies to the south of the site, Upton Mill (NSMR 6274) to the south west. The site of iron works (NSMR 6306) is situated to the south of the site.

4 OBJECTIVES OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

The objectives of the archaeological evaluation were to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of the remains on the site addressing the following specific objectives:

- To determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains within the evaluation area.

- To determine the presence and potential of environmental and economic indicators observed in archaeological features and deposits.
- To inform the assessment of the national importance of such remains to fulfil local, regional and national research agendas and to inform any detailed mitigation required to mitigate the impact of the proposed development.

The national framework for research is set out by English Heritage (1997). An assessment of the resource for the Eastern Counties has been carried out (Glazebrook 1997). The broad research frameworks for the eastern counties of England are set out in Brown and Glazebrook (2000). The Research Aims set out in these documents will be addressed by the project.

5 METHODOLOGY

Six 16m long trial trenches were excavated using a mechanical digger fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision (Fig 2). In all trenches mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the surface of natural orange-brown sand and gravel. However, due to the hardness of the rubble layer a toothed bucket was utilised in a number of trenches. A concrete 'raft' discovered in Trench 4 prohibited the total excavation of the trench.

The trenches were related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid, and levels were related to Ordnance Survey Datum, with contexts recorded on pro-forma sheets with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit and feature.

A full photographic record comprising both 35mm monochrome negatives, with associated prints, and colour transparencies was maintained, with additional digital photographs.

All records were compiled during fieldwork into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive.

All works were carried out according to the Policy and Guidance for Archaeological Fieldwork Projects in Northamptonshire (NCCNH 1995). All procedures complied with the Northamptonshire Archaeology, Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

6 EVALUATION RESULTS

No archaeological features were present in Trenches 1 – 6.

Generally the same sequence of deposits was encountered in all trenches (Fig 3, Plates 1 - 4). Natural orange brown sand and gravel was encountered at a depth of between 0.63m – 1.08m below the present ground surface. Overlying this in Trenches 2, 3 and 5 was a 0.14m – 0.42m thick layer of probable alluvium consisting of dark brown silty clay with some pebble inclusions. The difference in depth of this layer reflected the undulating gravel horizon.

A capping of blue grey and in some trenches blue brown clay 0.3m – 0.51m thick, sealed the gravel and the probable alluvium in all trenches apart from Trench 6, where the clay was not present as a capping across the whole trench, only at the extreme west end. Instead the natural gravel was overlain by a layer of what appeared to be a mix of light blue shale and clay. The clay was subsequently sealed by a fibrous membrane which was overlain by rubble hardcore, consisting of reinforced concrete, bricks etc, 0.22m – 0.38m thick. This subsequently sealed by a temporary car park surface consisting of a layer of grade 1 aggregate, 0.09m – 0.19m thick.

Table 1: Layers by Context

Trench	1	2	3	4	5	6
Description						
Grade 1 aggregate	(101)	(201)	(301)	(401)	(501)	(601)
Rubble hardcore	(102)	(202)	(302)	(402)	(502)	(602)
Fibrous membrane	(103)	(203)	(303)	(403)	(503)	(603)
Rubble loam mix	(104)	(204)	-	-	-	-
Clay capping	(105)	(205)	(304)	(404)	(504)	-
Shale clay mix	-	-	-	-	-	(604)
Silty clay (Probable alluvium)	-	(206)	(305)	-	(505)	-
Natural gravel	-	(207)	(306)	(405)	(506)	(605)

7 CONCLUSIONS

There was no archaeology present on the site. The trial trenches revealed widespread truncation across the entire route of the proposed access road. This truncation had removed any topsoil, subsoil and part of the probable alluvium layer.

Given the nature of the stratigraphy and the inclusions of materials such as plastic and brick paviors in all trenches it seems likely that this area had been levelled for the provision of a car park at some point during the development of the Sixfields complex during the early 1990s.

In summary, although the proposed access route lies within an area of high archaeological potential, modern truncation had completely destroyed any potential associated activity.

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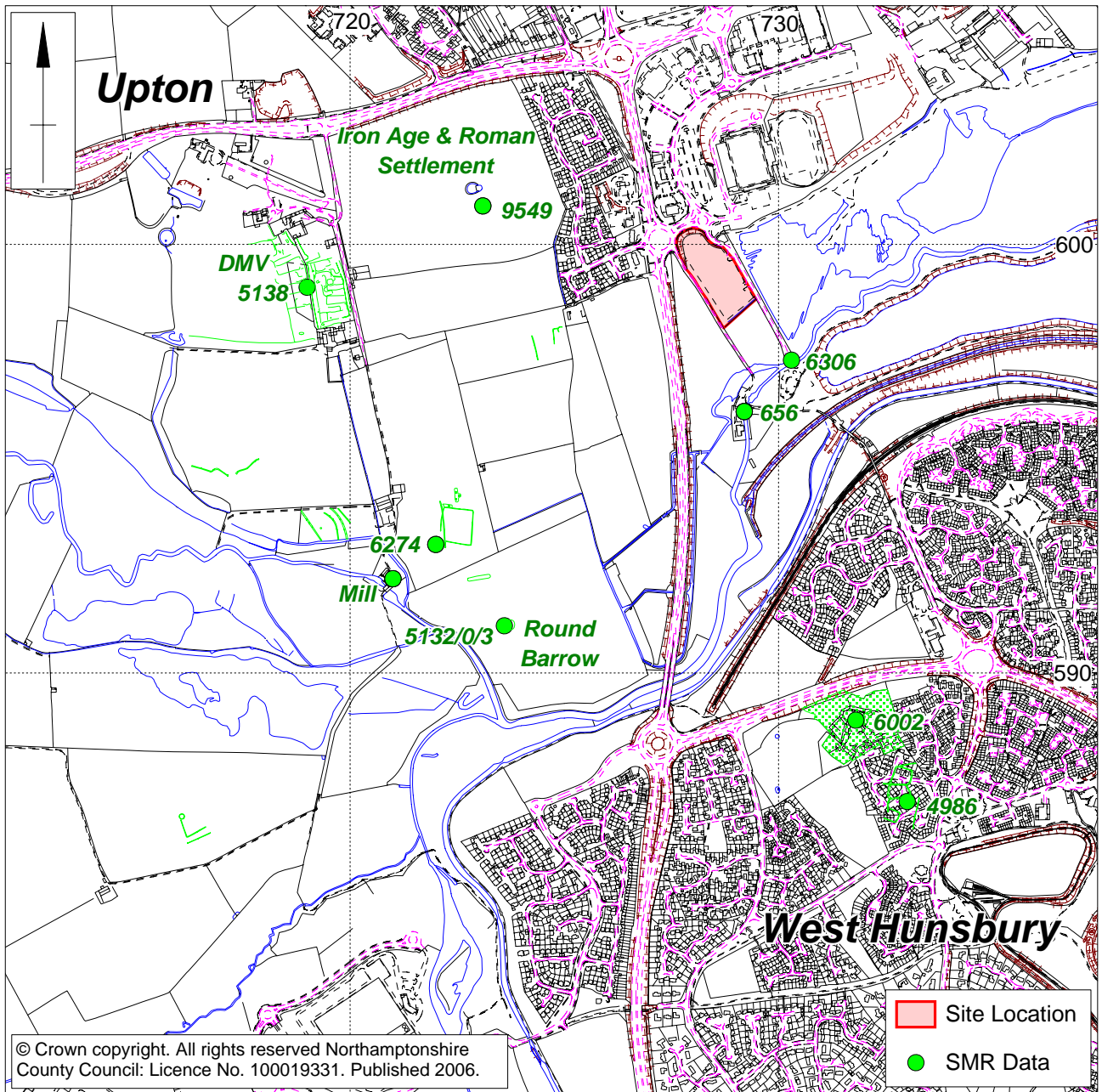
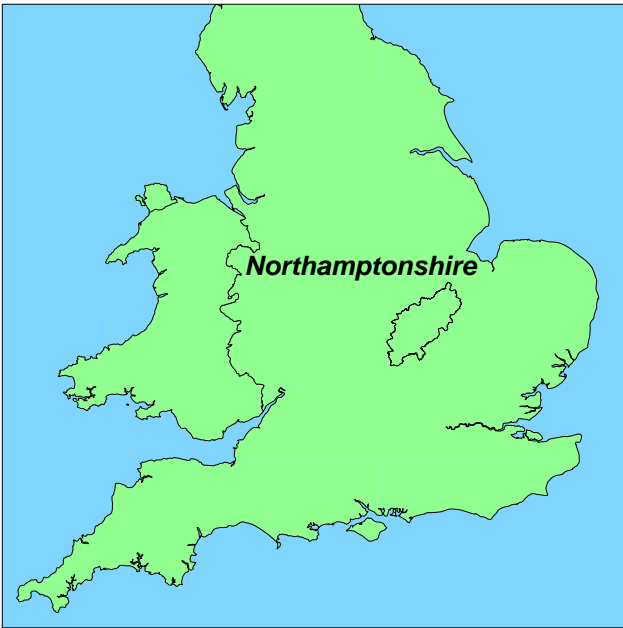
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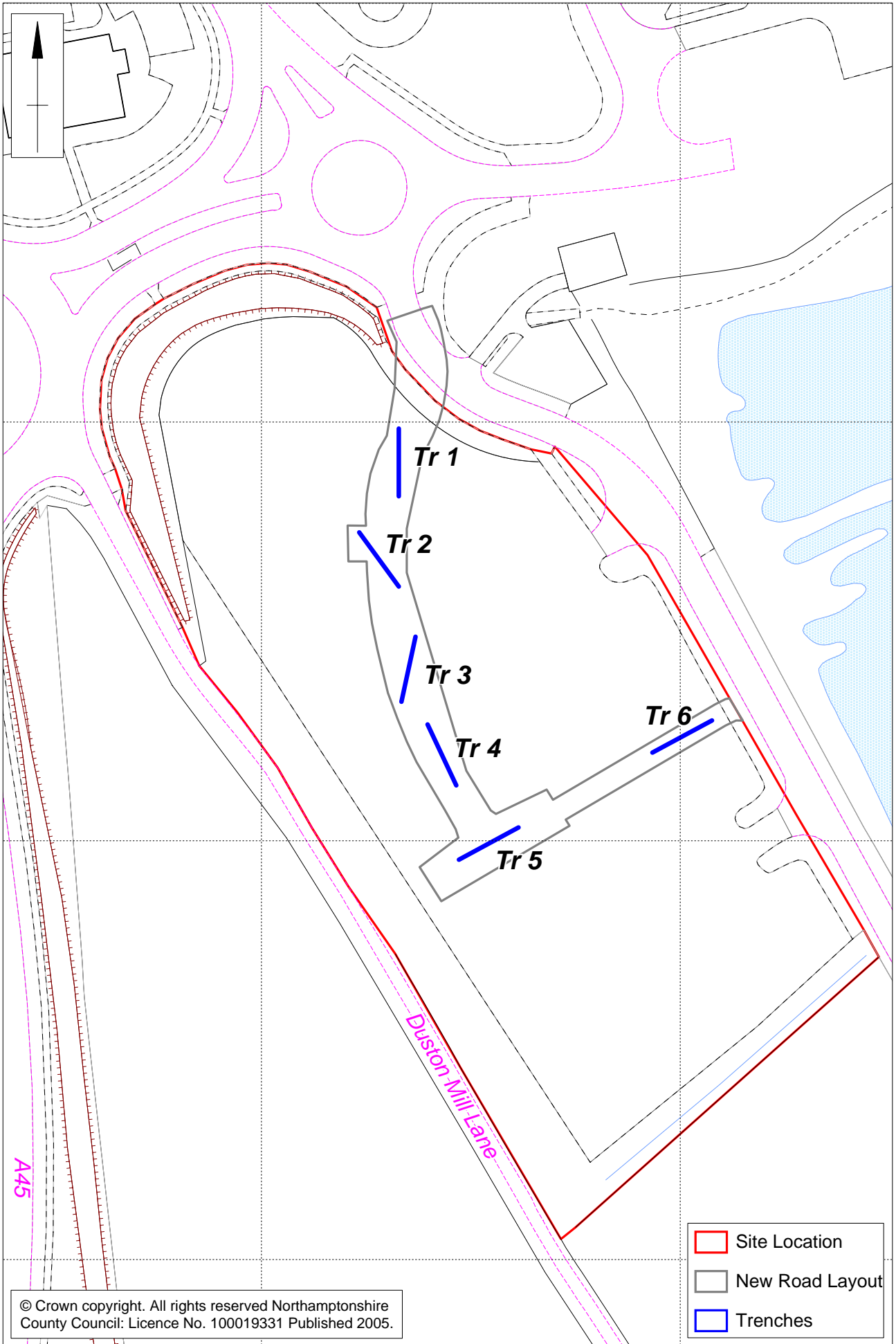
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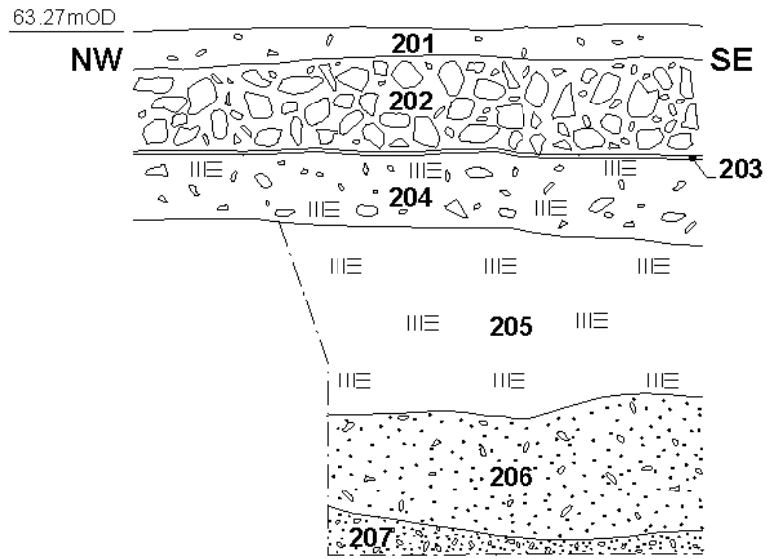


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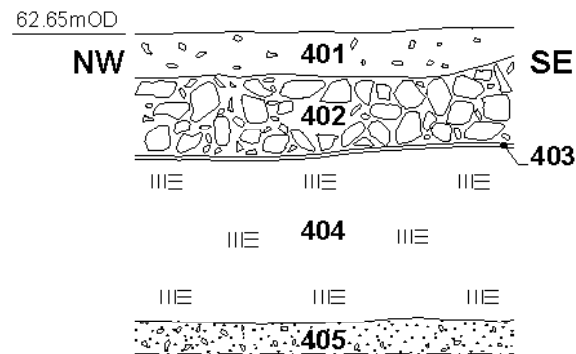
Scale 1:1250

Trench Locations Fig 2

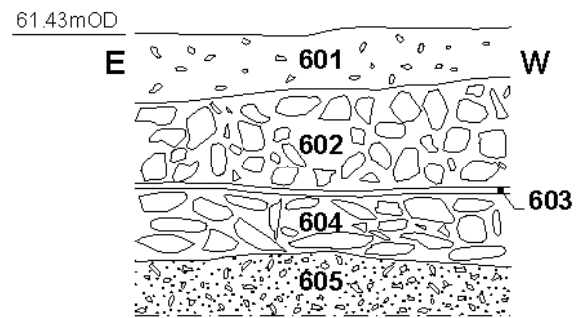
Section 1 - Trench 2



Section 2 - Trench 4



Section 3 - Trench 6



Sections Fig 3



Plate 1: Trench 3 looking south.



Plate 2: Trench 5 looking north east.



Plate 3: Trench 2, Section 1 looking north east.



Plate 4: Trench 6, Section 3 looking north west.