

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Tetcott, Devon	National Grid Reference SX 36176 96185	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Nethercott Farm, Tetcott Estate, Tetcott, Devon		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: 1/0036/2014/FULM	Recipient museum: Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon	
OASIS ID: southwes1-209622	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: TNF15	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 9 th -18 th June 2015	
<p>Description of works. Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Chris Croft of Green Cat Renewables (the Agent) during groundworks associated with the construction of three wind turbines and accompanying access track, crane hardstanding areas and electrical switchgear house compounds on land at Nethercott Farm, Tetcott, Devon. The monitoring was carried out by P. Webb between 9th and 18th June 2015. This work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation drawn up in consultation with Ann Marie Dick of the Devon County Historic Environment Team.</p> <p>The site lies in an area where limited archaeological investigation has taken place, though a geophysical survey on the site (Railton 2014) identified features suggested as medieval or later in date, and possibly representing pillow mounds used for farming rabbits. The Devon Historic Environment Record (HER) also records the presence of an enclosure of possible prehistoric or Roman date 180m to the east of the site, whilst aerial photography indicates the presence of a possible barrow.</p> <p>The site is located approximately three kilometres east of the village of Tetcott, on a west-facing valley hillside at a height of between c.143m-148m AOD (Figure 1). The site lies on the boundary of well drained fine loamy soils of the Neath Association and slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils of the Hallsworth 1 Association (SSEW 1983) overlying mudstones and siltstones of the Crackington Formation (BGS 2015).</p> <p>A total of six areas, set within three fields, were excavated under archaeological supervision by a machine using a toothless grading bucket to a depth of between 0.15-0.3m, this being the depth of archaeological layers or natural deposits. The stratigraphy of the site comprised a mid brown friable clay-silt topsoil c.0.1m thick overlying a mid grey-brown soft silt-clay subsoil c.0.1m thick, which overlies the natural firm yellow clay.</p> <p>Area #1, forming the access track to the northern turbine was irregular in plan and measured c.190m x 4-30m wide. The area had been heavily disturbed by plough/subsoiling scores, and contained a single land-drain.</p> <p>Area #2, forming the crane base for the northern turbine at the western end of Area #1, was square in plan and measured 20m north-south x 20m east-west. No features were identified, though it had been heavily disturbed by plough/subsoiling scores.</p> <p>Area #3, forming the access track through the middle field was curvilinear in plan and measured 230m x 4m wide had similarly been heavily disturbed by plough/subsoiling scores. Alongside a backfilled existing field boundary ditch [212], three further ditches [204], [208], and [210] were identified. Linear ditch [204] located centrally along the track, was orientated north-east to south-west, measured 1.2m+ x 0.8m wide x 0.14m deep and contained three grey clays fills (205), (206), and (207). No artefacts were recovered from this feature. Linear ditch [208] located towards the south-east corner of the middle field was orientated east-west and measured 2.5m+ x 0.7m wide x 0.1m deep and contained a single grey clay fill (209). A single greensand chert flake (see below) was recovered from this feature. To the south of this was a further east-west orientated ditch [210] measuring 4.8m+ x 0.9m wide x 0.2m deep. It contained a single fill (211); brown clay. No artefacts were recovered from this feature.</p> <p>Area #4, located towards the north-east corner of the middle field was square in plan, measuring 20m x 20m. Plough/subsoiling scores were evident throughout the area, and no archaeological features were identified. Six pieces of flint, including flakes and cores were recovered from the subsoil (201) in this area (see below).</p> <p>Area #5 comprised the access track into the third, southern-most field, and was irregular in plan and measured 50m long x between 4-30m wide. Numerous field-drains visible as slight earthworks were noted throughout the</p>		

stripped area, along with a backfilled field boundary ditch [303] at the northern limit of the field.

Area #6, towards the southern edge of the third field comprised a square area measuring 20m x 20m. Modern field-drains and plough/subsoiling scars were identified within this area. A single flint flake was recovered from the subsoil (see below).

The Finds

A small assemblage of finds was recovered during the monitoring. A single find was recovered from ditch fill (209): x1 greensand chert flake with possible usewear (18g). The remaining finds were recovered from the subsoil or topsoil layers. From topsoil layer (100): x1 post-medieval Bristol and Staffordshire pottery fragment (2g); x1 nodule flint flake (2g). From subsoil layer (101): x1 post-medieval clay-pipe stem (2g). From subsoil layer (201): x2 cloam oven fragments (124g); 1x nodule flint core rejuvenation flake (15g) from Area #3; and x1 nodule flint core preparation flake (32g), x2 nodule flint flakes (11g), x1 nodule flint flake with possible usewear (2g), x1 cobble flint single platform core (38g), x1 edge-trimmed cobble flint flake (4g) from Area #4. From subsoil layer (301): 1x brown glazed earthenware pottery fragment (4g) from Area #5; and x1 nodule flint core rejuvenation flake (13g) from Area #6.

Only one of these finds comes was recovered from a feature, the flint flake from ditch [208] indicating a possible Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age date, although it could easily be residual. The remaining pieces were recovered from subsoil layers, and despite their disturbance by ploughing/subsoiling, the concentration of lithic artefacts likely indicates the presence of nearby prehistoric activity, including core reduction activities, perhaps related to the features identified in the geophysical survey immediately to the south-west of Area #4.

Conclusions

Whilst only a limited number of features were identified during the monitoring, primarily related to modern field boundaries and field-drains, one ditch of probable Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age date was identified, along with a concentration of lithic artefacts to the north of features identified on the geophysical survey, and which may relate to prehistoric settlement activity on the site.

Bibliography

British Geological Survey 2014: *Geology of Britain Viewer*.

http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html [accessed 26.06.2015].

Railton, M. 2014: *Tetcott Estate, Nethercott, Devon: geophysical survey report*. Wardell Armstrong CP10850.

Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales*.

Recorder: P. Webb

Date sent to HER: 01.07.15

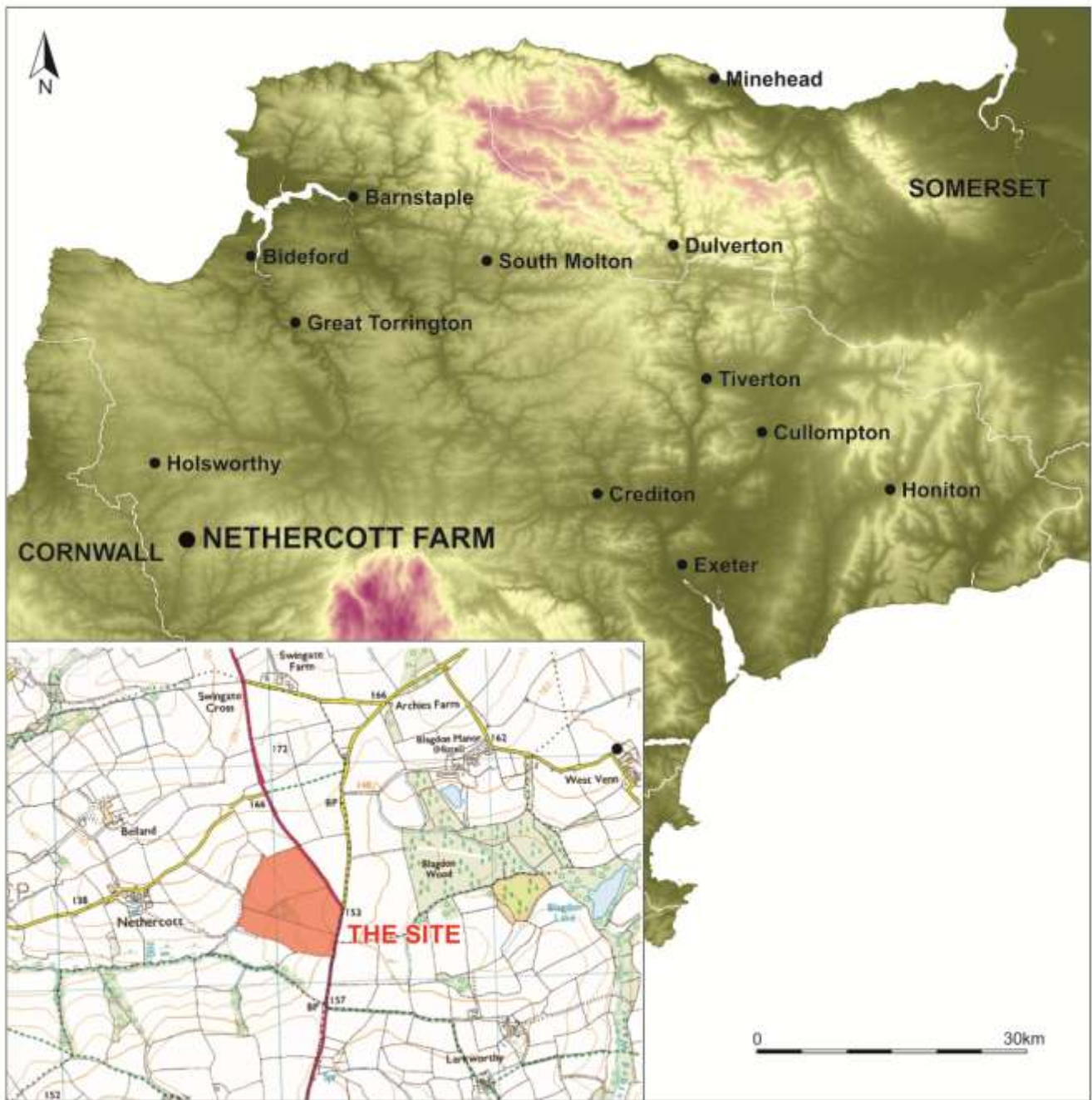


Figure 1: Site location

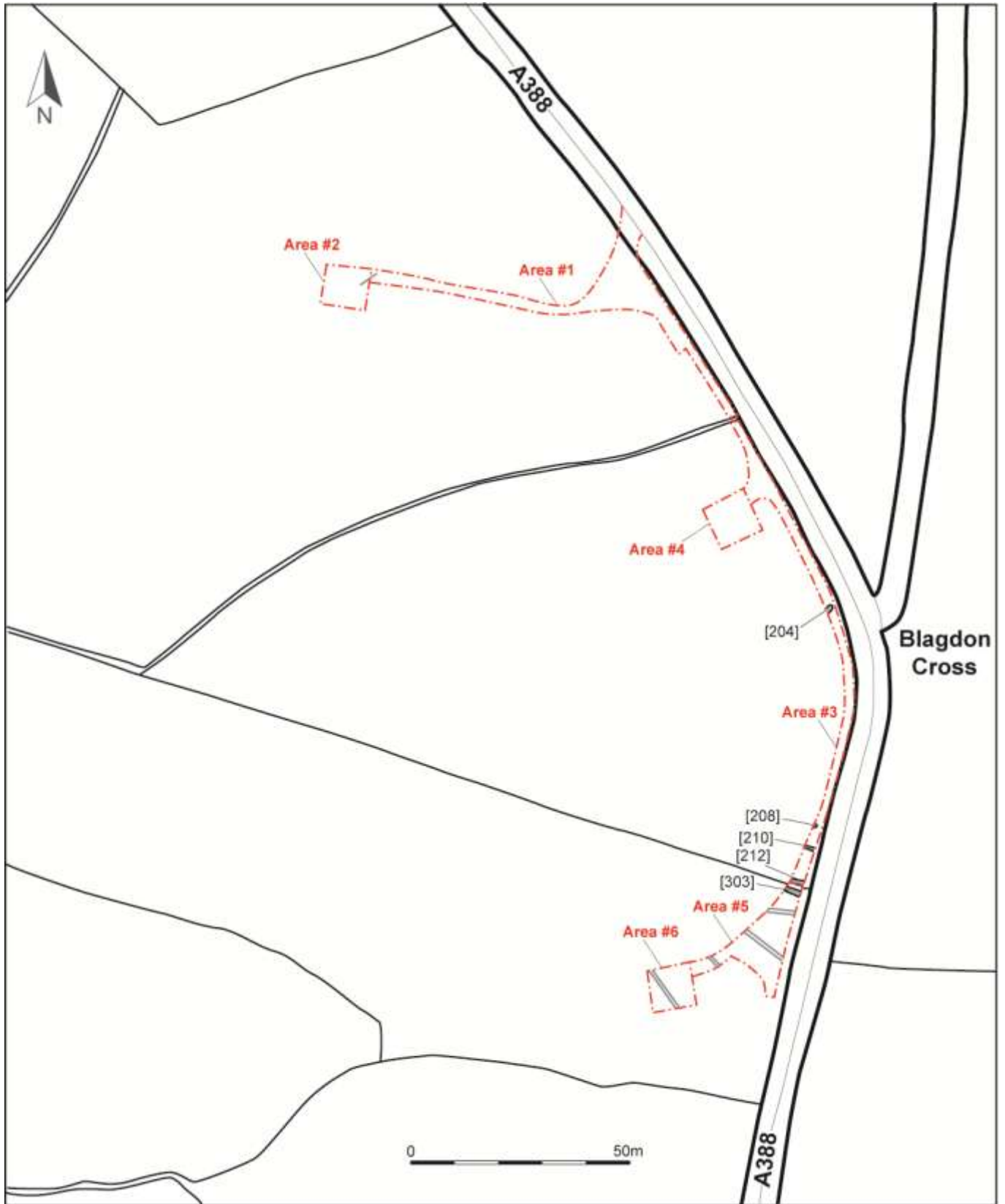


Figure 2: Site plan showing location of excavated areas and archaeological features.

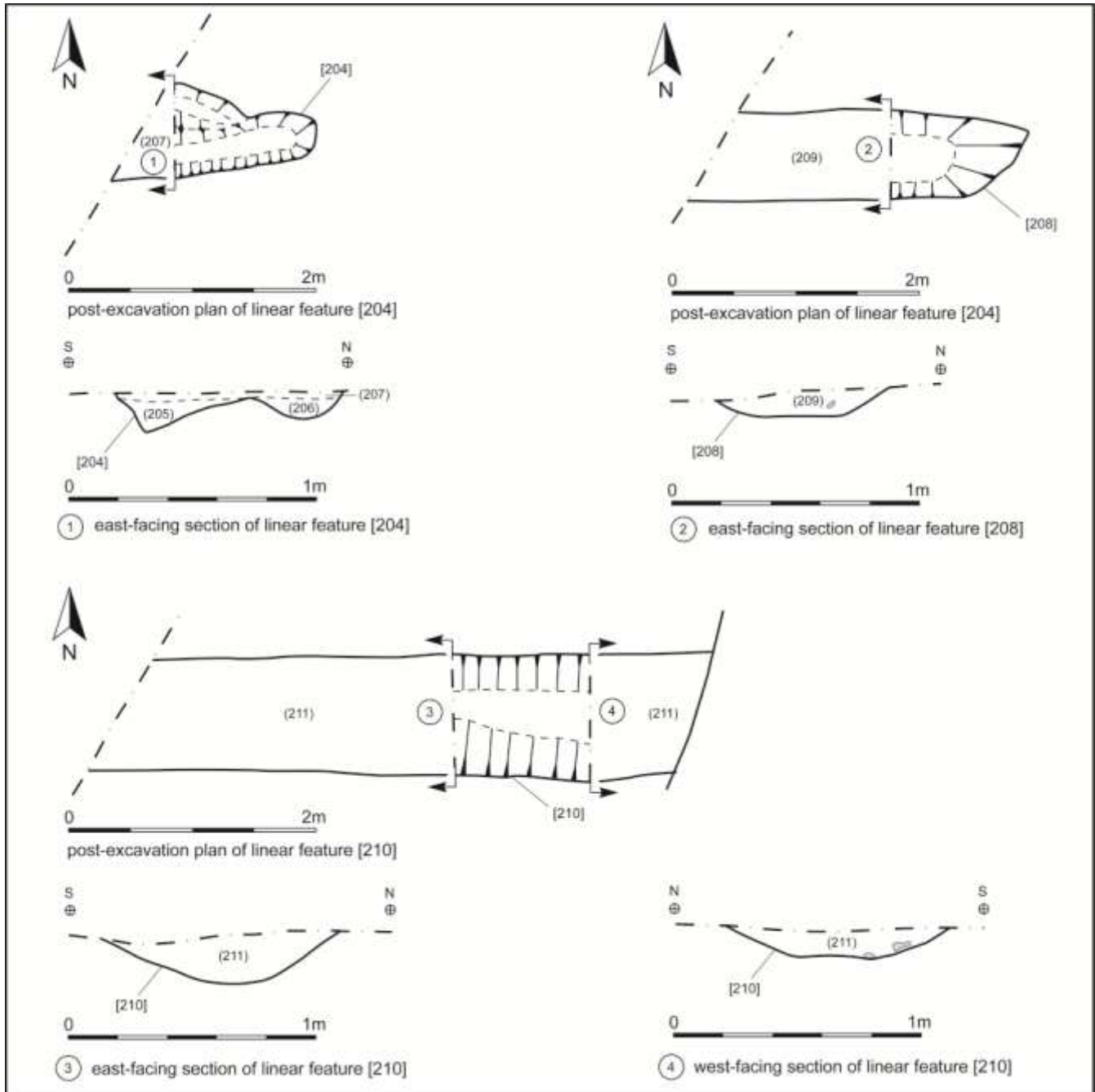


Figure 3: plans and sections of archaeological features



Figure 4: Linear feature [204]; viewed from the east (scale 0.3m).



Figure 5: Linear feature [208]; viewed from the east (scale 0.3m).



Figure 6: Linear feature [210]; viewed from the west (scale 1m).