

LOCKING PARKLANDS AREA 4: NOISE BUND BANWELL WESTON-SUPER-MARE NORTH SOMERSET

RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 200229



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Locking Parklands Area 4: Noise Bund, Banwell, Weston-Super-Mare, North Somerset Results of an Archaeological Evaluation

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Work undertaken by SWARCH for Jerry Dalton of Mead Realisations Ltd.

SUMMARY

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Locking Parklands, Banwell, Weston-Super-Mare as an evaluation exercise prior to the construction of a noise bund adjacent to the M5 and part of larger scale development of the site, by Mead Realisations (the Client). The site is located on the south-east edge of Weston-Super-Mare, on the eastern side of a triangular area of land defined by the A370, A371 and the M5; and comprises of the eastern edge of two fields at the southern end of a larger development area.

This is a landscape based upon medieval field patterns; previous desk-based assessment suggested that the site had been under agricultural use since at least the start of the 19th century. The historic maps demonstrate that the site was divided into a larger number of fields, the landscape being much altered when the M5 motorway was built. A previous geophysical survey (Stratascan 2011) and ongoing archaeological excavations (SWARCH forthcoming) have identified an Iron Age and Romano-British fen-edge settlement in the fields to the north of the survey, and a rectangular enclosure on the slopes of the hillside above.

The prior geophysical survey of the Noise Bund evaluation area identified a series of anomalies across the site including linear features relating to historic field boundaries. The evaluation trenches confirmed the presence of these linear features, one of the two larger ditches investigated, revealed a modern ceramic drain. Three smaller linear features were also investigated but revealed no dating evidence but all appear to be modern or post-medieval in date and related to previous agricultural activity (drainage) or field boundaries.

This geophysical survey identified a series of anomalies across the site including linear features relating to historic field boundaries; and linear bank and ditch features and shallow possible ditch features that appear to correspond with existing field boundaries. The most numerous responses across the site correspond with land drainage. On that basis the geophysical survey would suggest that the archaeological potential of this part of the wider site appears low.



December 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

LOCATION: LOCKING PARKLANDS
PARISH: BANWELL
DISTRICT: WESTON-SUPER-MARE
COUNTY: NORTH SOMERSET
NGR: ST 37636 60632
SWARCH REF: BPL18
PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 16/P/2744/OT2
OASIS NO: Southwes1-308881
MUSEUM ACCESSION NO: WESTM 2018.4

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Mead Realisations Ltd. (the Client) to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Locking Parklands, Banwell, Weston-Super-Mare, North Somerset. This work would be undertaken in advance of the creation of a noise bund flanking the M5, to investigate a series of features identified by a geophysical survey (Webb 2019). This work took place in line with the Written Scheme of Investigation for Area 4 (WSI; Morris 2018) and CfA guidelines.

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located on the south-eastern edge of Weston-Super-Mare, to the east side of a triangular area of land defined by the A370, A371 and the M5; within the western edge of Banwell parish and c.1.50km north-west of Banwell itself. Grumblepill Rhyne and the former RAF Locking site define the western boundary. These two fields at the southern tip of the site cover an area of c.7.8ha of gently sloping ground at an altitude of between c.10m to c.21m AOD. The evaluation took place along a narrow strip flanking the side of the M5 (Figure 1).

The soils across the area are the calcareous clayey soils of the Evesham 1 Association and the slowly permeable clayey soils of the Worcester Association (SSEW 1983). To the west these overlie superficial tidal flat deposits of clay, silts and sands. To the east, and across most of the southern fields, these overlie mudstones and halite-stones of the Mercia Mudstone Group, mudstones of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation, and limestones of the Blue Anchor Formation (BGS 2019).

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The development site was subject to a desk-based assessment undertaken by CgMs Ltd. (2012); much of the following background information is summarised from this report. The site is located within the parish of Banwell, mostly within the North Somerset Levels. Banwell is a parish in the Hundred of Winterstoke. Banwell is attested from the 10th century in a series of Anglo-Saxon charters (S373; S806; S825; S1042). Before the Norman Conquest the Manor of Banwell belonged to Harold Godwinson (Harold II). In 1086 the manor of Banwell belonged to the Bishop of Wells and was divided between six sub-tenants. It was worth £30, half of which went to the Bishop (Williams & Martin 2002).

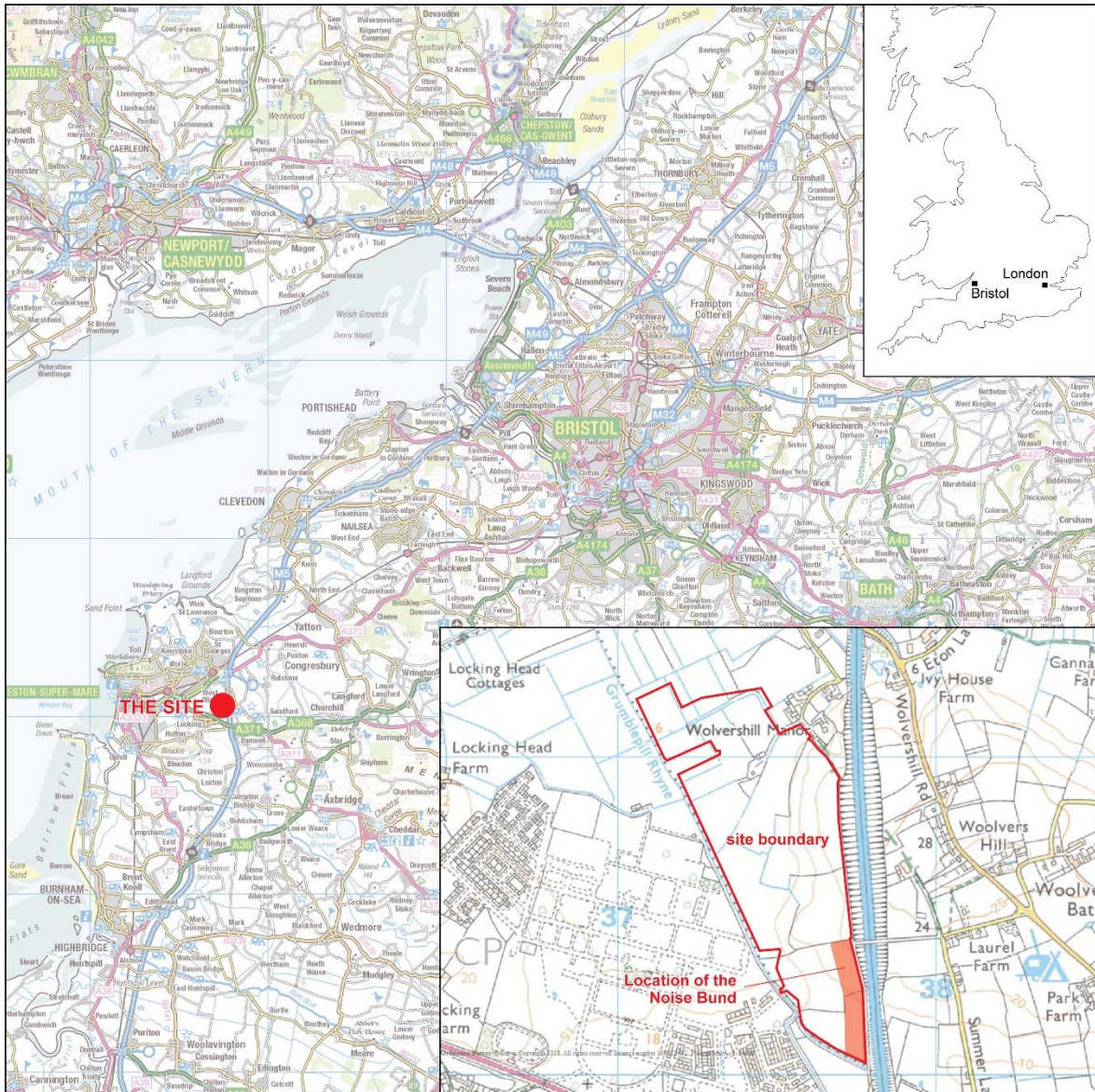


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION.

The fields of the overall site comprise a mix of fairly regular sub-rectangular enclosures bounded by ditches, part of an anciently reclaimed inland moor. This phase of enclosure took place in the 15th-17th century, and these low-lying fields contain numerous regular shallow drainage channels. Less regular fields on more elevated ground are derived from late medieval open fields, enclosed by local arrangement and exchange (HLC 2018). The fields in this area have been enlarged slightly through boundary loss and in the 1970s, when a deep cutting for the M5 was excavated. It is assumed the current landscape is largely a product of late Saxon and medieval reclamation. There are a number of Prehistoric or Romano-British sites in the local area (reported as scatters of pottery and building material: HER00213; 07933; 42978; 46011), all within c.0.5km of the site. Parts of the North Somerset Level were reclaimed during the Roman Period, with the main focus of activity in the 3rd century AD; the marshes were abandoned before the end of the period and the Romano-British landscape was sealed below a layer of alluvium indicating a return to intertidal conditions (Rippon 2000). In c.1840 the fields were held by several different landowners and tenants, another indicator of enclosed open field. The field names are generally prosaic and straightforward (e.g. Five Acres, Paddock), with some exceptions, the fields of the survey area

being known as Martins Hill and Halls Ground; this could refer to a personal name, but equally could be derived from the OE (ge)mære ‘boundary’.

The place name of Banwell (Banuville (AD893) and Bananwylle (AD904)) is derived from the Old English Bana and Wielle meaning ‘Murderer’ and ‘Stream/Spring’ respectively. At times in the past murderers were sometimes ritually drowned, Gelling suggests that in this instance Bana alludes to contamination of the spring (Watts 2010). The ‘Ban-’ element may alternatively be derived from Old English Ban, meaning projecting stones that form part of a boundary (source=website translation). Numerous other suggestions as to the place-name meaning include ‘deep-sea’, ‘Bana’s Well’ and ‘Prayer’s Well’ (CgMs 2012).

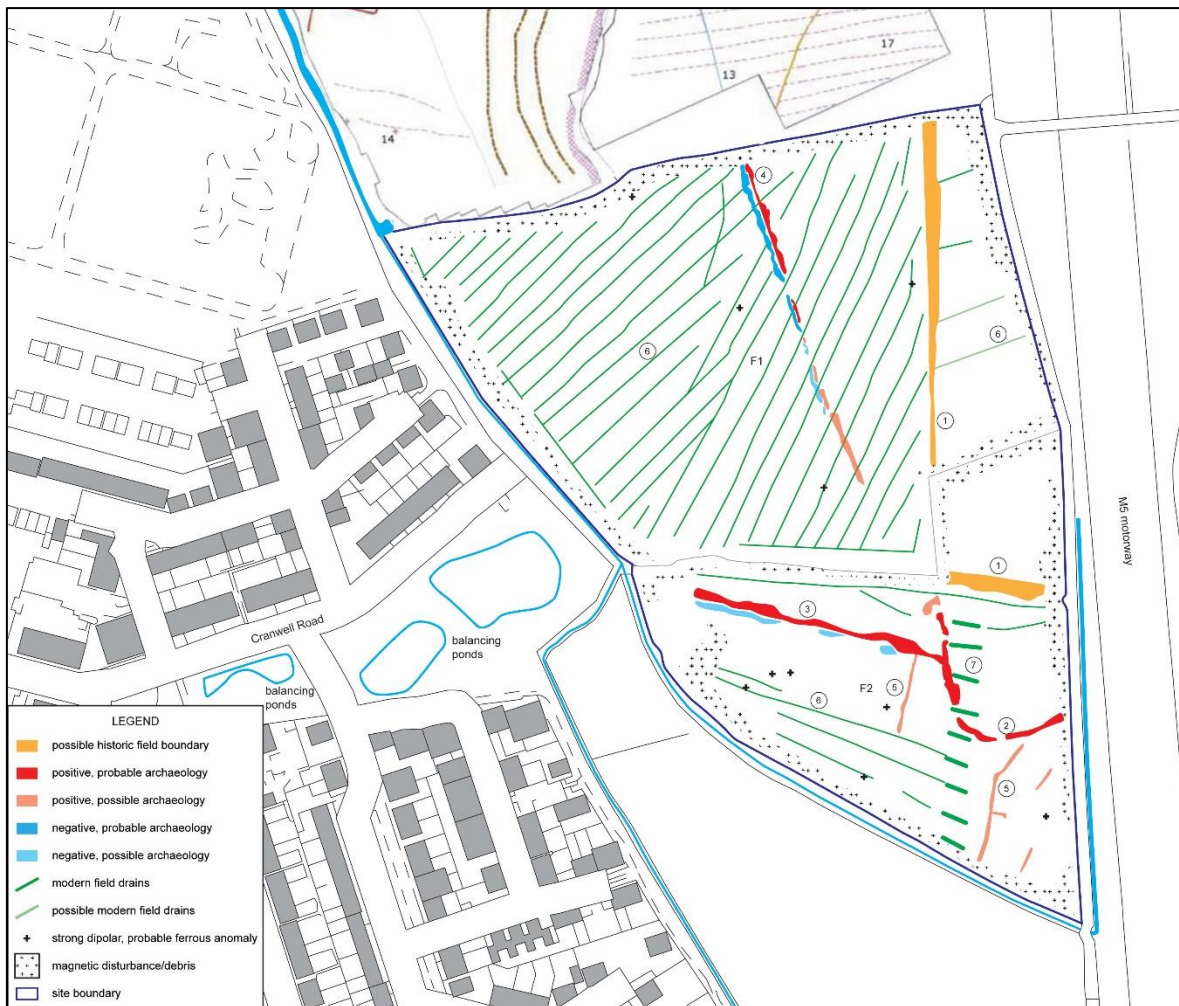


FIGURE 2: INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY (SEE WEBB 2019; AFTER STRATASCAN 2012, FIG.8).

1.4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A magnetic susceptibility survey (Stratascan 2011) and a gradiometer survey (Stratascan 2012) have been carried out on the fields to the north of this study area. The magnetic susceptibility survey was used to identify areas of archaeological activity, which were then subject to gradiometer survey (Stratascan 2012). The latter identified concentrations of probable archaeological features, characteristic of Iron Age or Romano-British activity, possibly settlement related; and a probable double ditched enclosure with similarities to a proto-villa/complex farm. An enclosure c.90m x 80m across and visible as a cropmark was identified towards the eastern side of the site. Works undertaken by SWARCH (ongoing) have confirmed a later Prehistoric and

Roman-British date for this fen-edge settlement. A gradiometer survey (SWARCH 2019) was conducted on the two southernmost fields of the site and cover the southern extents of areas 3 and 4. The results of the gradiometer survey are dominated by a comprehensive system of land drainage, with some historic and relict field boundaries (see Figure 2).

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This document follows the methodology outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation for Area 4 (Morris 2018) drawn up in accordance with the CfA (2014) guidelines and in consultation with Cat Lodge, North Somerset Council Archaeologist (NSCA). The evaluation took place on the 14th-16th October 2019. Five 50m trenches were opened by a 21t tracked mechanical excavator using a toothless grading bucket, to the depth of *in situ* weathered natural. Exposed archaeological deposits were excavated by hand in accordance with the WSI and CIFA guidelines.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The evaluation was undertaken on the 14th to 16th of October 2019 by SWARCH personnel. Five c.50m evaluation trenches were opened by a 21t tracked mechanical excavator to the level of the *in situ* weathered natural using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. Exposed archaeological features and deposits were excavated by hand in accordance with the Area 4 WSI and CIFA guidelines. The conditions were very wet and, given the location of the site relative to the North Somerset Level, most of the trenches immediately filled with water. A total of 5 features were identified (Figure 3), including 2 linear cuts for modern terracotta drainage pipes.

What follows is a summary of the results of the evaluation; context descriptions can be found in Appendix 1, finds in Appendix 2, and a complete set of supporting photographs in Appendix 3.

2.2 DEPOSIT MODEL

The deposit model varies across the site, with the change in the stratigraphy occurring between trenches 2 and 3 or between fields A and B.

The stratigraphy of field A was simple: a mid greyish-brown silt-clay topsoil (100), (200) c.0.22-0.28m thick; which overlay the natural grey to white-yellow clays (101), (201).

The stratigraphy of field B was slightly more complex: a mid greyish-brown silt-clay topsoil (300), (400), (500) c.0.22-0.28m thick; which overlay a light yellow-brown silty clay subsoil (301), (401) c.0.21-0.31m thick in trench 03 and c.0.09-0.16m thick in trench 04. A light orange-yellow-brown silty clay subsoil is present within trench 05 and measures c.0.30-0.36m thick. The natural within trenches 03 (306), 04 (402), (405) and 05 (504), comprises of variable banded natural, with mid-dark red clays and mudstones further to the north and transitions towards mid blue-grey to light yellow banded clays.

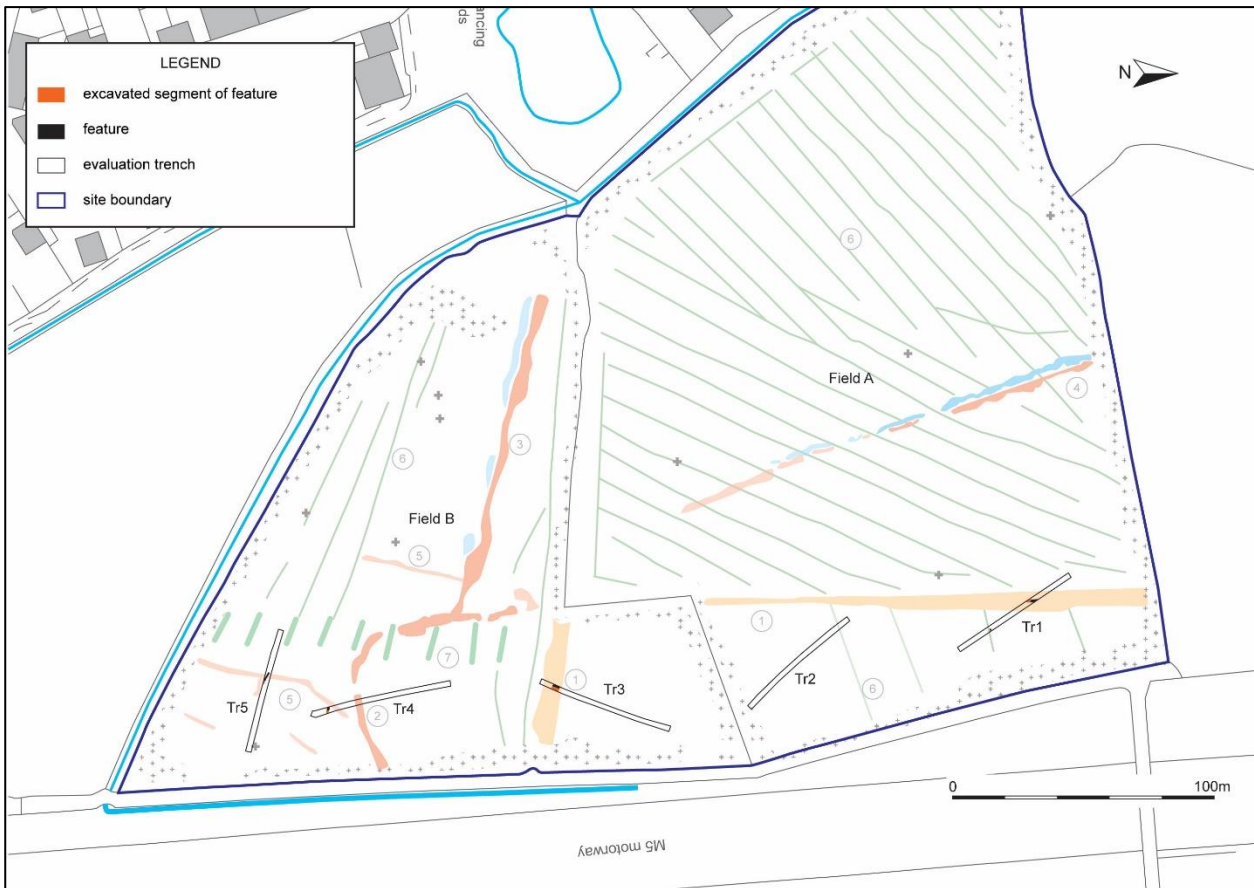


FIGURE 3: GENERAL SITE PLAN, OVERLYING RESULTS OF GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY.

2.3 RESULTS

2.3.1 DITCHES

Four clear ditches [102], [305], [404] and [503] were identified during the evaluation (Figure 3). Ditches [102] and [305] appear to be the most recent, and likely part of the same feature identified within the geophysical survey.

Ditch [102] was orientated roughly north to south, running up the slope of the hill within field A. It was c.1.0m wide and was excavated to a depth of c.0.7m, with steep to near vertical sides. It contained 4 fills, (103) dark grey-black ashy and gritty silt-loam; (104) mottled dark grey-black ashy and gritty silt-loam; (105) re-deposited mid-light grey clay; and (106) light orange gravel. The lower fill (106) is likely the basal fill and is the setting for a ceramic drainage pipe. The majority fill of the ditch (103) produced one 1 of WRE, 1 fragment of C20 glass, 1 fragment of CBM and 1 partial roof tile.

Ditch [305] was orientated roughly east to west, and appears to follow on from a change in the boundary between fields A and B. It was c.3.37m wide and was excavated to a depth of c.0.6m, with evenly sloping sides. It contained three fills, (302) light to mid brown-grey silt clay; (303) mid to dark brown-red redeposited natural; and (304) light orange gravel. The lower ditch of the fill was the same as (106) and was the setting for two ceramic drainage pipes. Fill (302) produced 3 sherds of WRE, 3 fragments of animal bone, 8 fragments of CBM and 1 fragment of coal.

Ditch [404] was orientated roughly east to west, running across trench 04; it was <1.13m wide and 0.29m deep. It contained a single fill, (403) a mid grey-red-brown friable clay-silt. No finds were present within the excavated section.

Ditch [503] was orientated roughly north-east to south-west and was c.0.60m wide and c.0.18m deep, the linear carried on into the section of trench 05. It contained a single fill (502) a light to mid grey-brown soil-like silt-clay. No finds were present within the excavated section.

2.3.2 DITCHES/RECTANGULAR PITS

A single ditch/rectangular pit [107] was identified during the evaluation. Cut [107] was a curved feature extending from the section of trench 01; it was c.0.33m wide, c.0.11m deep and extended c.1.1m out from the section edge. The feature runs approximately east-west but was the terminus of a curved feature that ran into the section edge, so a true orientation cannot be quantified.

FIGURE 4: TRENCH 01 DITCH PLANS AND SECTIONS.

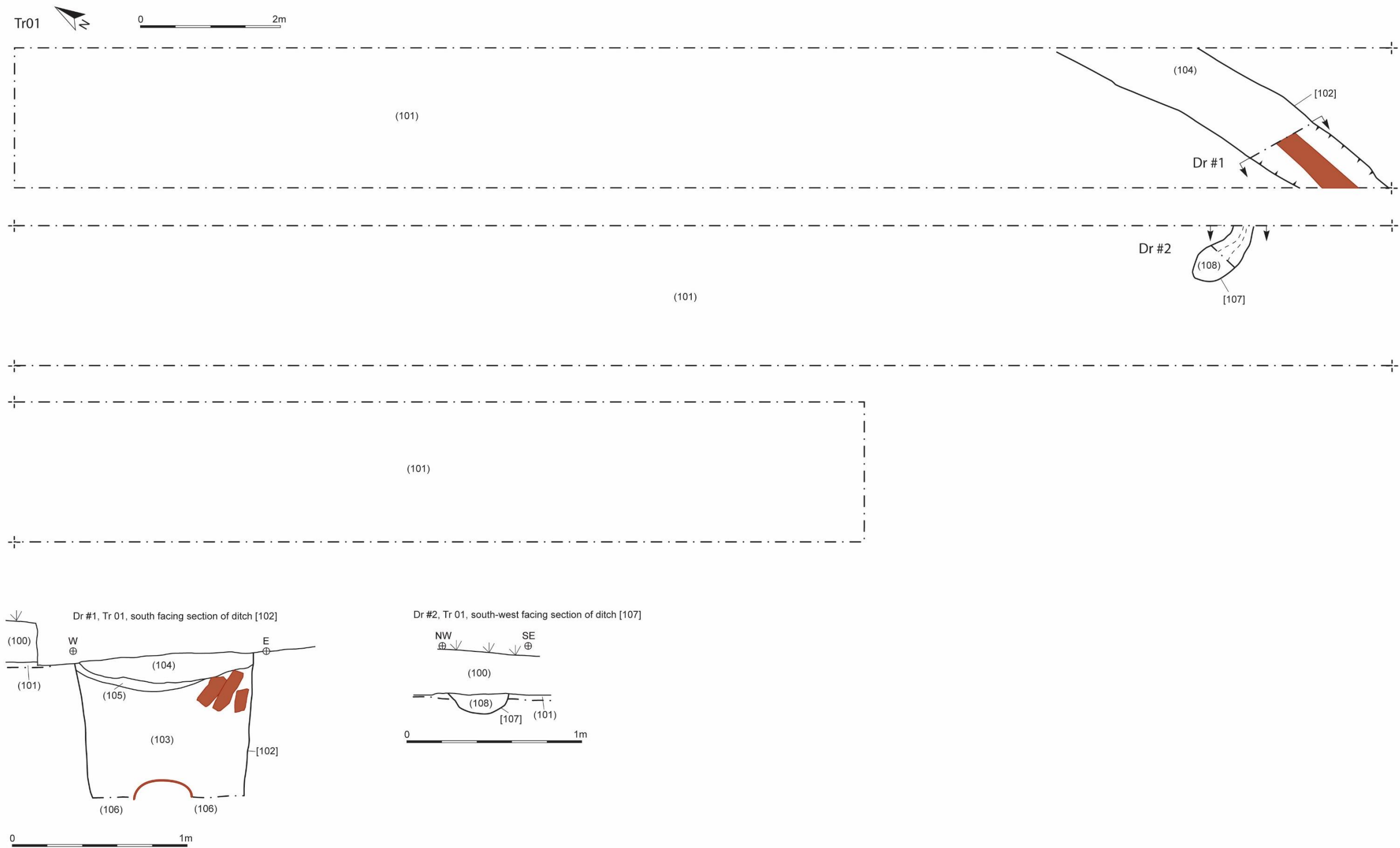


FIGURE 5: TRENCH 02 DITCH PLAN AND TRENCH 02, 03 AND 04 SECTIONS.

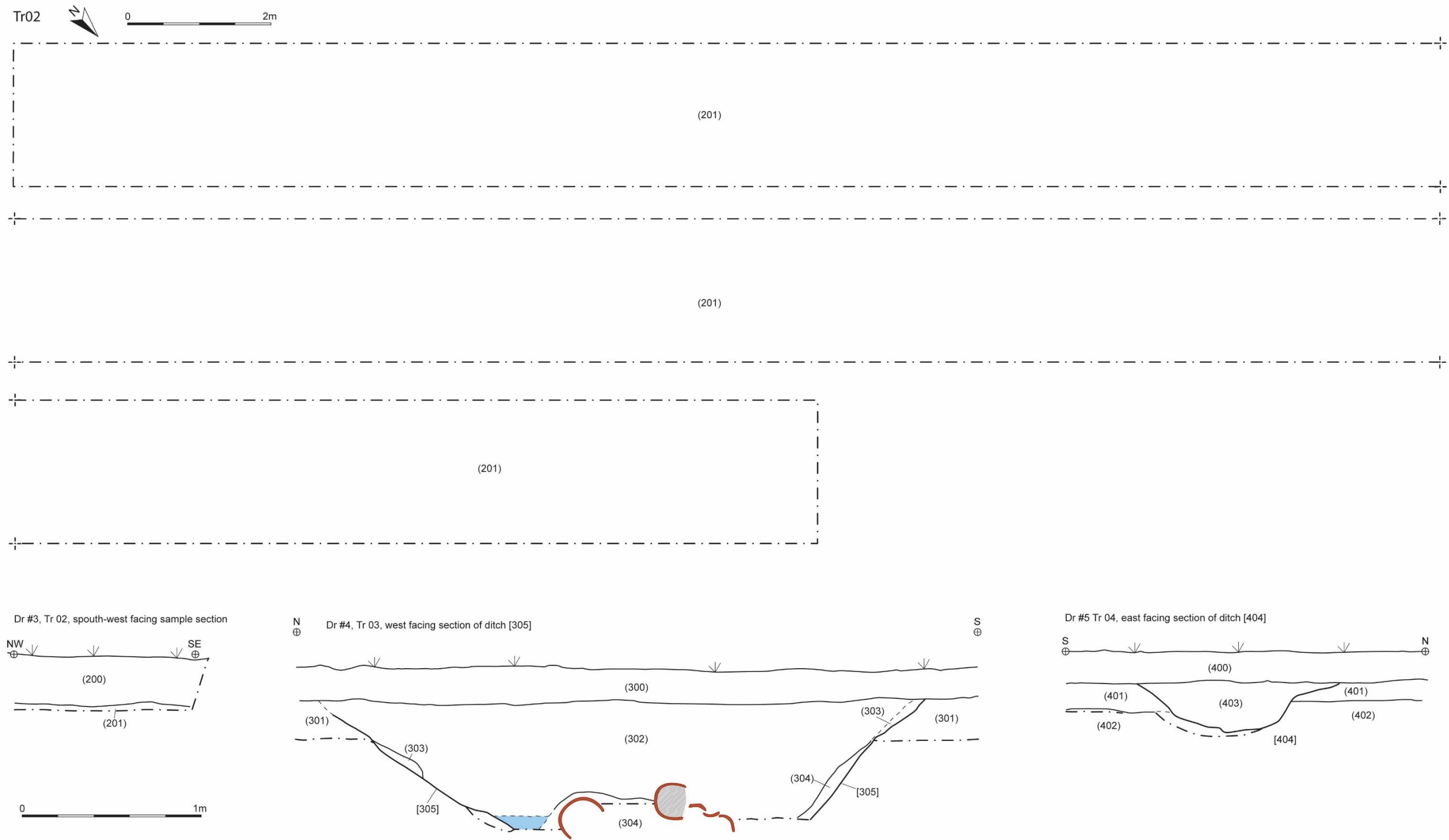


Figure 6: TRENCHES O3 AND O4 DITCH PLANS.

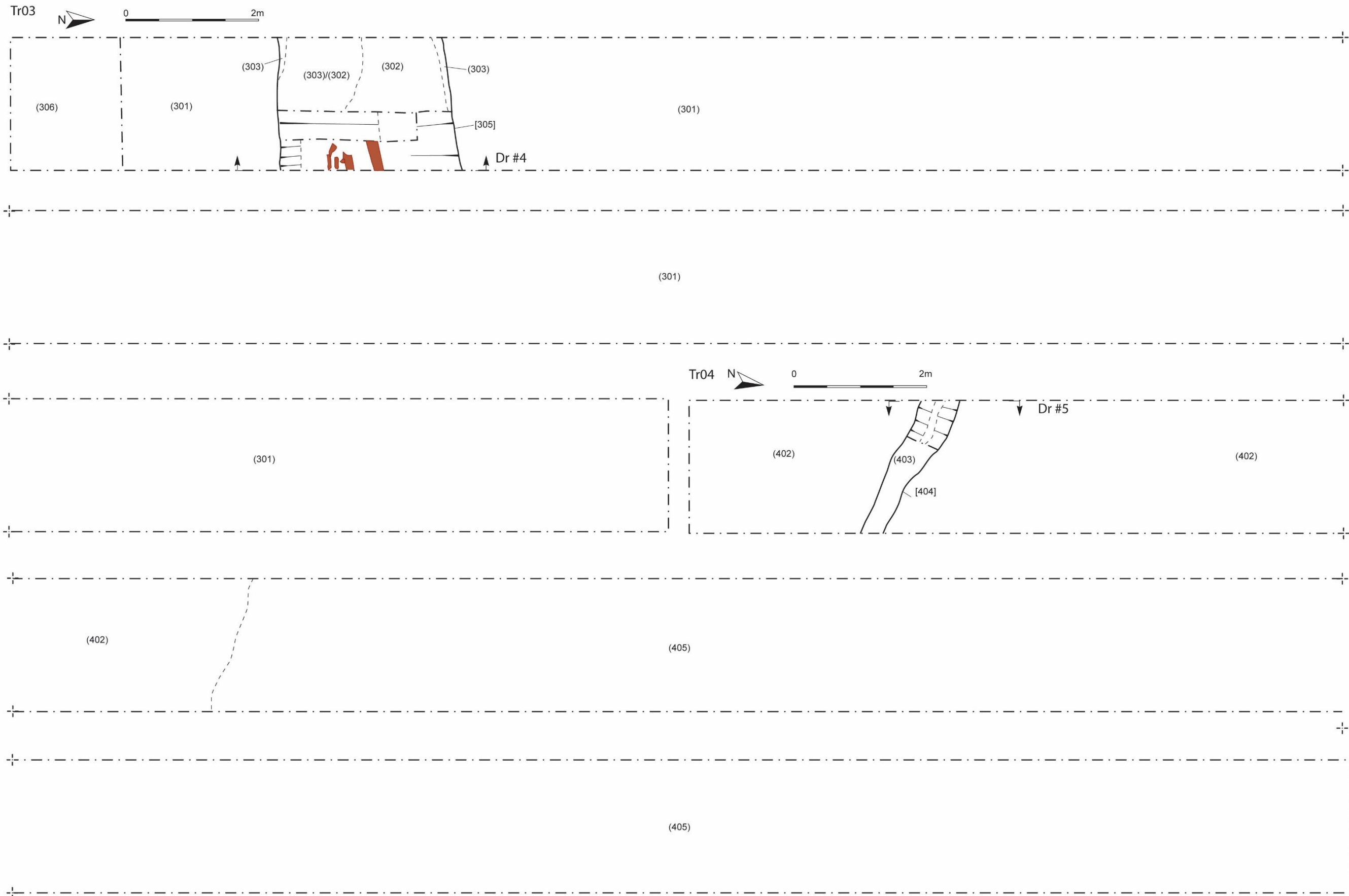
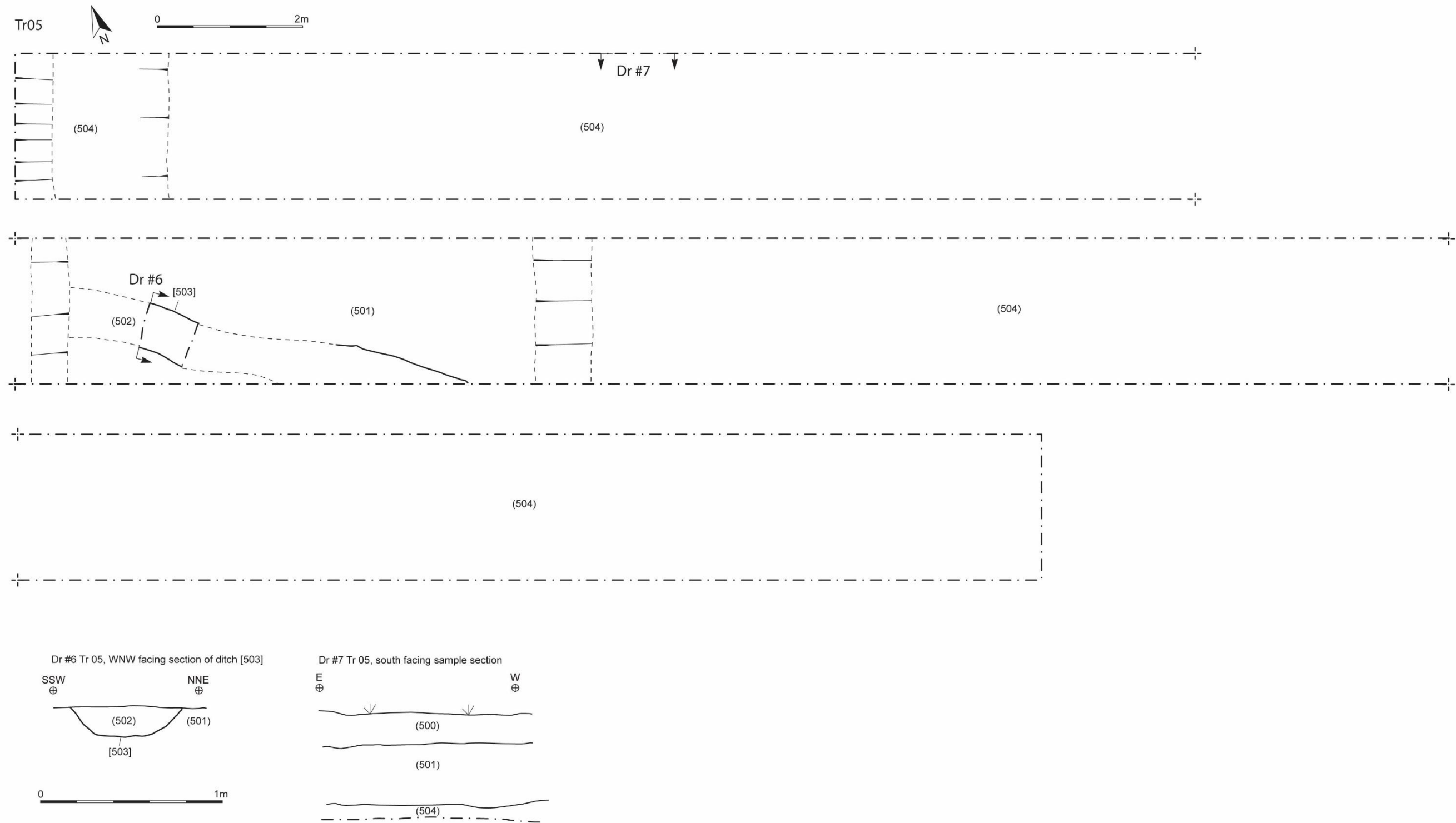


Figure 7: TRENCH 05 DITCH PLANS AND SECTIONS.



2.4 FINDS

The site produced very few artefacts; of the five features identified and investigated only two contained finds: ditches [102] and [305]. The remaining finds were from the topsoil. All finds were subsequently discarded.

2.4.1 TOPSOIL AND SUBSOIL

Topsoil (100) contained: 1 (2g) sherd of WRE, 1 (9g) fragment of C20 glass with embossed pattern, 1 (13g) fragment of CBM and 1(7g) fragment of roof tile. Topsoil (300) contained 5 (83g) fragments of CBM.

2.4.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

Ditch [102] produced 2 (4g) fragments of animal bone, 1 (7g) fragment of clear glass, 1 (15g) fragment of green glass, 2 (26g) fragments of burnt wood, 3 (134g) metallic objects, and 1 (718g) brick with frog and 'PHORPES' inscription, all finds were from context (103). Ditch [305] produced 3 (2g) sherds of WRE, 3 (3g) fragments of animal bone, 8 (80g) fragments of CBM and 1 (4g) fragment of coal.

2.4.3 DISCUSSION

The finds from ditches [102] and [305] both suggest a post-medieval/modern date for these features, corroborated by the modern ceramic drain at the base of both features. The scarcity of finds within the remaining features may suggest an older (post-medieval) date.

2.5 DISCUSSION

The evaluation trenched revealed a total of five features which were identified and investigated. Two undated ditches, [404] and [503] were present immediately below the topsoil in trenches 04 and 05. Ditch [404] does not directly correlate to features identified within the geophysical survey but may correspond to anomaly group 5. Ditch [503] appears to correspond to anomaly group 5. The high position of these features within the stratigraphy may suggest a more modern date.

Feature [107] was an undated ditch/pit terminus present within trench 01, the curvilinear form may suggest an earlier date, although it could be of any date or origin.

Both ditches [102] and [305] correspond to anomaly group 1 identified by the geophysical survey, despite different fills and cut form both are clearly modern features and contain the same ceramic drain supported by a fill of clean orange gravel. The form of ditch [102] suggests a machine cut ditch. With the finds from both features giving a post-medieval/modern date.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The site is located on the south-east edge of Weston-Super-Mare, on the east site of a triangular area of land defined by the A370, A371 and the M5; and comprises of the eastern edge of two fields at the southern end of a larger development area. Historic mapping and other sources show that prior to the creation of the M5, the site was part of a larger complex of fields and an active agricultural and pastoral landscape. A geophysical survey was undertaken across the two fields that the site partially covered, with further surveys and archaeological works having taken place to the north of the site, with further planned works. Iron Age and Romano-British occupation has been found in the field the north of the site.

The evaluation in advance of the works for a noise bund adjacent to the motorway, revealed both modern and undated features. The undated features within field B may correspond to agricultural activity or previous field systems and were present within the subsoil. The undated feature within field A has no clear date or origin. The two larger features excavated within trenches 01 and 03 are cuts for modern drainage. The results of the geophysical survey conducted on this site partially correspond with some of the features identified, with no clear evidence of the agricultural markings seen in the survey continuing into the area covered by the evaluation trenches.

Given the results of the evaluation trenching it is unlikely that any further archaeological works in this area will be required.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT LIST

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION		RELATIONSHIPS	EXTENT: LENGTH X WIDTH X DEPTH/THICKNESS (M)	SPOT DATE
(100)	Layer	TOPSOIL - Mid greyish-brown silt clay.	Overlies (101), (104)	Across full extent of site, c.0.22-0.28m thick.	Modern
(101)	Layer	NATURAL - Grey to white-yellow clays.	Overlain by (100); cut by [102], [107]	Across full extent of field A.	-
[102]	Cut	Cut for ceramic drain; linear cut with steep sides, not bottomed; oriented roughly N-S.	Cuts (101); filled by (103), (104), (105), (106)	c.1m wide, excavated to a depth of 0.7m.	Modern
(103)	Fill	Fill of [102]; homogenous dark grey-black ashy and gritty silt-loam, some brick and burnt twigs/wood.	Overlies (106); overlain by (104), (105); fill of [102]	c.1m wide, c.0.52-0.61m deep.	Modern
(104)	Fill	Upper fill of [102] - mottled dark grey-black ashy and gritty silt-loam.	Overlies (105), (103); overlain by (100); fill of [102]	c.1m wide, up to 0.18m deep	Modern
(105)	Fill	Fill of [102] - redeposited mid/light grey clay band, very mottled/mixed.	Overlies (103); overlain by (104); fill of [102]	c.0.71m wide, up to 0.07m deep	Modern
(106)	Fill	Fill of [102] - light orange gravel, with ceramic pipe set into top of fill, probable basal fill of [102].	Overlain by (103); fill of [102]	c.0.9m wide	Modern
[107]	Cut	Ditch or rectangular pit terminus; linear with gradual curve, gently sloping sides and base; continues into the edge of the trench.	Overlain by (100); cuts (101)	>1.1 x 0.33 x 0.11	-
(108)	Fill	Fill of [107] - light to mid reddish-brown silt-clay, no inclusions	Overlain by (100); fill of [107]	>1.1 x 0.33 x 0.11	-
(200)	Layer	TOPSOIL - Mid greyish-brown silt clay.	Overlies (201)	Across full extent of site, c.0.22-0.28m thick.	Modern
(201)	Layer	NATURAL - Grey to white-yellow clays.	Overlain by (200)	Across full extent of field A.	-
(300)	Layer	TOPSOIL - Mid greyish-brown silt clay.	Overlies (301), (302), (303)	Across full extent of site, c.0.22-0.28m thick.	Modern
(301)	Layer	SUBSOIL - Light yellow-brown silty clay.	Overlies (306); cut by (302)	Across much of field B, c.0.21-0.31m thick.	-
(302)	Fill	Fill of [305] - Light to mid brown-grey silty clay with occasional white flecks.	Overlies (301), (303), (304); overlain by (300); fill of [305]	c.3.37m wide, c.0.5-0.6m deep.	Modern
(303)	Fill	Fill of [305] - Mid to dark brown-red redeposited natural silty clay, some modern finds.	Overlies (304); overlain by (302); fill of [305]	Up to 0.08m deep, heavily variable.	Modern
(304)	Fill	Fill of [305] - light orange gravel, with ceramic pipe set into top of fill, probable basal fill of [305].	Overlain by (302); fill of [305]	<1.5m wide.	Modern
[305]	Cut	Ditch cut for ceramic drain; linear with sloping edges, not bottomed.	Overlain by (300); cuts (301), (306); filled by (302), (303), (304)	>2.0 x 3.37 x >0.6m.	Modern
(306)	Layer	NATURAL - Mid to dark red with blue-grey bandings, clay and mudstone.	Overlain by (301); cut by [305]	Across much of field B.	-
(400)	Layer	TOPSOIL - Mid greyish-brown silt clay.	Overlies (401)	Across full extent of site, c.0.22-0.28m thick.	Modern
(401)	Layer	SUBSOIL - Light yellow-brown silty clay.	Overlain by (400); overlies (402), (405); cut by [404]	Across full extent of trench 04, c.0.09-0.16m thick.	-
(402)	Layer	NATURAL - Variable banded natural, mid bluey grey to light yellow clay with occasional mudstone banding.	Overlain by (401); cut by [404]	Across full extent of trench 05, and southern extent of	-

LOCKING PARKLANDS, BANWELL, WESTON-SUPER-MARE, NORTH SOMERSET

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION		RELATIONSHIPS	EXTENT: LENGTH X WIDTH X DEPTH/THICKNESS (M)	SPOT DATE
				trench 04.	
(403)	Fill	Fill of [404] - Mid greyish-reddish-brown clayey silt, soily friable.	Overlain by (400); fill of [404]	c.1.13m wide, up to 0.29m deep.	-
[404]	Cut	Ditch cut, linear with gently sloping edge to south with a steeper northern edge, and rough/uneven base; continues into the edges of the trench.	Overlain by (400); cuts (401), (402); filled by (403)	>2.3 x 1.13 x 0.29m.	-
(405)	Layer	NATURAL - Mid to dark red clays with occasional blue-grey clay banding, partially waterlogged.	Overlain by (401); cut by [404]	Across full extent of trench 04.	-
(500)	Layer	TOPSOIL - Mid greyish-brown silt clay.	Overlies (501), (502)	Across full extent of site, c.0.22-0.28m thick.	Modern
(501)	Layer	SUBSOIL - Light orange-yellow-brown silty clay.	Overlain by (500); overlies (502), (504); cut by [503]	Across full extent of trench 05. c.0.30-0.36m thick.	-
(502)	Fill	Fill of [503] - Light to mid grey-brown soil-like silty clay	Overlain by (500); fill of [503]	c.0.60m wide, up to 0.18m deep.	-
[503]	Cut	Ditch cut, irregular linear with sloping edges and a gently curved base; continues into the edge of the trench.	Overlain by (500); cuts (501); filled by (502)	>5.62 x 0.60 x 0.18m	-
(504)	Layer	NATURAL - Variable banded natural, mid bluey grey to light yellow clay with occasional mudstone banding.	Overlain by (501)	Across full extent of trench 05, and southern extent of trench 04.	-

APPENDIX 2: FINDS CONCORDANCE

Context	POTTERY			BONE			GLASS			CBM			OTHER		
	Sherds	Wgt. (g)	Notes	Frgs.	Wgt. (g)	Notes	Frgs.	Wgt. (g)	Notes	Frgs.	Wgt. (g)	Notes	Frgs.	Wgt. (g)	Notes
(100)	1	2	WRE – internal slip pattern; green/grey; small rim sherd	-	-	-	1	9	C20 glass – embossed pattern on exterior; brown/caramel colour	1	13	CBM	1	7	Roof tile
(103)	-	-	-	2	4	Animal bone – x1 jaw bone	1	7	Clear body glass sherd	-	-	-	2	26	Burnt Wood
							1	15	Green glass vessel sherd				3	134	Metal objects – x2 nails
(300)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	83	CBM	-	-	-
(302)	3	2	WRE	3	3	Animal Bone	-	-	-	8	80	CBM	1	4	Coal
Totals	4	4		5	6		3	31		15	176		9	935	

APPENDIX 3: BASELINE PHOTOGRAPHS



Ditch [102]; viewed from the south (2x1m scale).



Ditch [102]; viewed from the south (1m scale).



Ditch [102]; viewed from the north (2x1m scale).



Ditch [102]; viewed from the north-east (1m scale).



Ditch [107]; viewed from the south (1m scale).



Ditch [107]; viewed from the west (1m scale).



Trench 01; viewed from the south-east (1m and 2m scale).



Trench 01; viewed from the north-west (1m and 2m scale).



Ditch [107]; viewed from the east (1m scale).



Trench 02; viewed from the south-east (1m and 2m scale).



Trench 02; viewed from the north-west (1m and 2m scale).



Ditch [302]; viewed from the west (2m scale).



Ditch [302]; viewed from the north-west (2m scale).



Ditch [302]; viewed from the east (2m scale).



Ditch [302]; viewed from the south-west (1m and 2m scale).



Ditch [302] section; viewed from the west (1m and 2m scale).



Ditch [302]; viewed from the west (1m and 2m scale).



Trench 03; viewed from the south-west (1m and 2m scale).



Trench 03; viewed from the north-east (1m and 2m scale).



Drainage sump at northern end of trench 03; viewed from the east (no scale).



Ditch [404]; viewed from the west (1m scale).



Ditch [404]; viewed from the west (1m scale).



Trench 04; viewed from the north (1m and 2m scale).



Trench 04; viewed from the south (1m and 2m scale).



Ditch [503]; viewed from the south-east (1m scale).



Ditch [503]; viewed from the north-west (1m scale).



Trench 05; viewed from the east-south-east (1m and 2m scale).



Trench 05; viewed from the north-west (1m and 2m scale).



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