

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:  
TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND OFF CREEK ROAD, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

Planning Reference: F/YR10/0363/F  
NGR: TL 4192 9679  
AAL Site Code: MACR 12  
CHER Event Number: ECB3772  
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-128061



Report prepared for Snowmountain Enterprises Limited

By  
Allen Archaeology Limited  
Report Number 2012053

July 2012



The  
Authority on  
Archaeological  
Planning  
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### Document Control

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### **Executive Summary**

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Snowmountain Enterprises Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Creek Road, March, Cambridgeshire.
- The site lies within an area with evidence of later prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and industrial activity. It is situated beyond the historic core of the village and appears to have been open agricultural land until a former garage was constructed on the site in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Four trenches were excavated on the site, two of which were devoid of finds or features. The remaining two trenches exposed a number of linear features of 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date, as well as one modern pit and one undated pit.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by Snowmountain Enterprises Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching in advance of the construction of eleven dwellings on land off Creek Road in March, Cambridgeshire.
- 1.2 The excavating, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008), the regional guidelines in '*Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*' (Gurney 2003), a brief prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (hereafter CHET) (McConnell 2011), and a specification prepared by this company (2012). All relevant English Heritage guidelines on archaeological best practice were also followed ([www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740](http://www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740)).
- 1.3 The documentary archive will be submitted to the Cambridgeshire's County Archaeological Store within six months of the completion of the project and sorted under the CHER event number ECB3772.

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 March is situated approximately 38km north of central Cambridge, and 23km east of central Peterborough, in the administrative district of Fenland District Council. The proposed development area is in the centre of the town, on the south side of Creek Road, and to the north of the River Nene. The site is low lying at c.3.0m above Ordnance Datum, centred on NGR TL 4192 9679.
- 2.2 The local geology comprises superficial deposits of Glacial Till (boulder clay) in the northern portion of the site, with Tidal Flats deposits of clay and silt to the south. These overlie a bedrock geology of Amphill Clay (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

## 3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application has been submitted for the '*Erection of 11 dwellings comprising 5 x 3 bed houses, 4 x 2 bed houses, 1 x 2 bed flat and 1 x 1 bed flat over garage block and associated parking*' (Planning Application Reference F/YR10/0363/F). The application was granted, with conditions, including the undertaking of a programme of archaeological trial trenching in order to determine the archaeological potential of the proposed development area.
- 3.2 This decision was in line with the recommendations of Planning Policy Statement 5 (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010) which was in place at the time of the decision. This was superseded in March 2012 by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with the particular chapter of relevance being '*Chapter 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*' (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012).

#### 4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment was prepared in advance of the current stage of works (Bourn 2005). The information presented below is a summary of this data.
- 4.2 Two find spots of Iron Age date were recorded in the 500m study area, comprising a pit of Iron Age date to the south and an Iron Age bowl to the north (CHER Number 05922).
- 4.3 There is more evidence of Romano-British activity nearby, including evidence for salt making 450m to the north-east, with other features recorded in the study area including a gravel track, a stone platform, coins and pottery scatters. Approximately 1.5km to the north of the site is the approximate line of the Fen Causeway, a Roman road running east – west across the fens, built on a raised bank of fen gravels (erroneously referred to as a canal in the preceding desk-based assessment).
- 4.4 There is no evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the vicinity of the site, and in the medieval period the site appears to have been in agricultural land, as the town was largely focussed to the south of the river. Historic map evidence indicates that the site was on the periphery of the town until the encroachment of development in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. A garage was constructed on the site in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century and demolished in the last five years.

#### 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May by a team of experienced field archaeologists, and supervised by Gavin Glover of AAL. Machine excavation was undertaken using a JCB 3CX wheeled excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless bucket, removing topsoil, subsoil and overlying non-archaeological deposits in spits no greater than 0.1m in depth until the natural geology or the first archaeological horizon was exposed. All further excavation was undertaken by hand.
- 5.2 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard AAL context recording sheets. Archaeological features and deposits were drawn to scale, in plan and section (at scales 1:20 and 1:50). Photography formed an integral part of the recording strategy. All photographs incorporated scales, with an identification board and directional arrow, and a selection of these images has been included in Appendix 1.
- 5.3 Each deposit, layer or cut was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 6. Three digit numbers within square brackets reflect cut features (e.g. ditch [102]).

#### 6.0 Results (Figures 2 – 5)

##### 6.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3)

- 6.1.1 The uppermost deposit in Trench 1 was a c.0.4m thick topsoil 100, comprising dark brown silty clay with abundant demolition debris. This in turn sealed a 0.2m thick buried topsoil 111 of mid brown silty clay. Beneath this was the natural geology 101 of plastic light yellowish orange silty clay.

6.1.2 Two features were exposed in Trench 1. An irregular pit [107] with undated backfill 108 of loose dark orange grey silty clay cut through the end of an earlier ditch [102], in turn cutting natural 101. The ditch was curvilinear in plan turning from a south-west to north-east alignment to an east – west alignment, with a sub-rounded terminus at its east end. The primary silting deposit 104 consisted of bluish grey clay and contained two sherds of 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. The secondary silting deposit 106/110 of firm mid blue grey silty clay with occasional small stones contained a single animal bone fragment, two moderately fresh clay tobacco pipe stems of 17<sup>th</sup> century date and 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century date, one pottery sherd of 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century date, two sherds of 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century date and two 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century brick fragments.

## 6.2 Trench 2 (Figure 4)

6.2.1 Trench 2 was devoid of archaeological finds or features. The sequence comprised a c.0.3m thick topsoil of friable dark brown silty clay, 200, sealing an alluvial deposit 202 of friable mid grey clay, in turn sealing the natural geology of firm light yellowish brown clay 201.

## 6.3 Trench 3 (Figure 4)

6.3.1 The uppermost layer in Trench 3 was topsoil 300, which consisted of loose dark brown silty clay, approximately 0.3m thick. It sealed a modern levelling deposit 302 of firm light brownish grey clay with brick fragments and small stones. Below 302 was a former topsoil 303, of dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks, sealing alluvial deposit 304 of mid grey silty clay. At the base of the sequence was the natural geology 301, a light yellow clay.

## 6.4 Trench 4 (Figure 5)

6.4.1 In Trench 4 a modern dumped deposit 410 of loose yellow sandy clay with moderate brick and tile fragments sealed the underlying topsoil 400 towards the east end of the trench. The topsoil comprised a loose dark brown silty clay up to 0.3m thick, sealing 401, an alluvial deposit of mid grey silty clay, overlying the natural geology 402 of light yellow clay.

6.4.2 Three features were recorded within the trench, and where alluvium 401 was observed it appeared to be cut by all three features. The trench was largely flooded by groundwater making full excavation of features impossible.

6.4.3 At the west end of the trench was a north – south aligned ditch [403] with moderately steep sides. It contained a single fill, 404 of firm dark brown silty clay, which produced a single 17<sup>th</sup> century clay tobacco pipe stem. It had been truncated to the south by modern disturbance.

6.4.4 A sub-circular pit [405] was exposed against the southern baulk. It had moderately steep sides and a flat base and contained a single fill 406 of loose mid greyish orange silty clay. Twenty animal bone fragments were recovered, with the majority being unidentified medium sized mammal bones and one fragment of sheep/goat. It is possible that this represents the remains of a single animal carcass discarded into the pit.

6.4.5 The feature lay adjacent to a north – south aligned ditch [407] with gradual sloping sides. It contained a primary fill 408 of loose light brownish grey silty clay with moderate charcoal

flecks. This contained one 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherd and three sherds of 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century date, as well as a single fragmented dog bone. Secondary deposit 409, a loose mid grey orange silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks was undated.

## **7.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

- 7.1 Five features in total were recorded during the evaluation, generally sealed beneath a former topsoil and cutting through an alluvial deposit that overlay the natural geology. The archaeological features were in Trenches 1 and 4, with no features recorded in Trenches 2 and 3.
- 7.2 The earliest features recorded were two ditches exposed in Trench 4 that contained small quantities of 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century material. A north – south boundary is apparent on historic mapping from at least 1792 (Bourn 2005) that broadly correlates with the easternmost ditch [407], but there are no features shown that correlate with ditch [403], suggesting that this may already have been infilled.
- 7.3 Another curvilinear ditch [102] was recorded in Trench 1 containing finds ranging in date from one abraded 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century sherd to a small group of mid 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This feature is also not apparent on historic mapping of the site, and as such its original form cannot be ascertained.
- 7.4 Two undated pits were also exposed, one of which cut the ditch in Trench 1 and is therefore likely to be of recent date. The second pit, in Trench 4, was undated but contained a small group of animal bone possibly representing a single animal dumped into the feature.
- 7.5 There was significant disturbance of earlier deposits by recent activity recorded in Trenches 1 and 4, as well as a horizon of modern demolition material exposed in Trench 1 reflecting the recent demolition of the former garage.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

- 8.1 The archaeological evaluation methodology was appropriate to the nature and extent of the proposed development. It has demonstrated that there are a small number of post-medieval to early modern and undated features on the site that are of limited local significance.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Snowmountain Enterprises Limited for this commission.



## 11.0 References

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**Appendix 1: Colour Plates**



**Plate 1:** North-east facing section of ditch [102] in Trench 1, looking south-west. Scale is 1m



**Plate 2:** Representative east facing section of Trench 2, looking west. Scales are 1m and 0.3m





**Plate 3:** North facing representative section of Trench 3, looking south. Scale is 1m



**Plate 4:** North-west facing section of ditch [407] and west facing section of pit [405] in Trench 4, looking east. Scales are 1m and 0.3m

## Appendix 2: Post-Roman Pottery Archive

By Dr Anne Irving, The Ceramic Consultancy

### Pottery Archive

Cxt	Cname	Full name	Fabric	Form	NoS	NoV	W (g)	Part	Decoration	Description	Date
104	PEARL	Pearlware		Small jar	1	1	11	Base	Blue transfer print		Late 18 <sup>th</sup> to 19 <sup>th</sup>
104	SLIP	Slipware	Red	Jar/ bowl	1	1	40	Base	White slipped	Yorkshire type	Mid 18 <sup>th</sup> to 19 <sup>th</sup>
110	GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware		Jar/ bowl	1	1	6	BS		Abraded	16 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup>
110	NCBW	19th Century Buff ware		Hollow	2	1	3	BS	White slip bands		19 <sup>th</sup> to early 20 <sup>th</sup>
408	BERTH	Brown Glazed Earthenware		Jar/ bowl	1	1	44	Base		Soot	17 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup>
408	GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware		Jar/ bowl	1	1	31	BS		Soot	17 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup>
408	LERTH	Late Earthenware		Jar/ bowl	1	1	44	Base		Abraded and waterworn; soot	16 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup>
408	SLIP	Slipware	Buff	Hollow	1	1	8	Rim	Brown trailed and feathered slip		Mid 17 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup>

### Ceramic Building Material Archive

Cxt	Cname	Full name	Fabric	NoF	W (g)	Description	Date
110	BRK	Brick	Vitrified	1	988	End; clinkered; clay vessel/fragment adhering to one side; 60 x 111mm; handmade; sunken arrises; deep finger impression?	17 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup>
110	BRK	Brick	Oxidised medium sandy with reduced core	1	543	End; waterlain?; 50 x 102mm; handmade; abraded; strike marks	17 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup>

### Context Dating

Cxt	Date
104	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> to 19 <sup>th</sup>
110	19 <sup>th</sup> to early 20 <sup>th</sup>
408	17 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup>

### Summary

A small collection of post-medieval and early modern pottery and brick was retrieved from contexts 104, 110 and 408. All of the material is stable and poses no problems for long-term storage. No further work is required on the assemblage.

### Appendix 3: Clay Tobacco Pipe Report

By Maria Piirainen

Three fragmented clay pipe stems were found within contexts 110 in Trench 1 and 404 in Trench 4, in total weighing 11g. A summary is shown in Table 1 below.

The secondary deposit 110 within ditch [102] contained two stem fragments of late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century date. Both were moderately fresh suggesting they have not been extensively disturbed post-deposition.

A late 17<sup>th</sup> century stem was recovered from fill 404 within ditch [403], and was moderately abraded.

**Table 1: Clay Tobacco Pipe Archive**

Context	Plain Stem	Marks and comments	Date	Weight (g)	Total
110	1	Moderately fresh	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> century	5	1
110	1	Moderately fresh	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century	4	1
404	1	Moderately abraded	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> century	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>			<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>

### Recommendations

All of the material is stable and should be retained for long-term storage within the project archive.

### References

- Crossley, D., 1990. *Post-medieval archaeology in Britain*. Leicester University Press, Leicester
- Flood, R.J., 1976. *Clay Tobacco Pipes in Cambridgeshire*. The Oleander Press, Cambridge
- Oswald, A., 1975. *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist*. British Archaeological Reports **14**, 52-55. Oxford

## Appendix 4: Animal Bone Report

By Jen Wood

### Introduction

A total of 22 (265g) fragments of animal bone were recovered during archaeological works undertaken by Allen Archaeology Ltd at land off Creek Road in March, Cambridgeshire. The animal bone assemblage was recovered from Trench 1 ditch [103] and Trench 4 pit [405] and ditch [407].

### Results

The remains were of a moderate to poor overall condition, averaging at grade 4 on the Lyman criteria (1996).

No evidence of butchery, pathology, burning or gnawing was noted on any of the remains.

*Table 1, Summary of Identified Bone*

Cut	Context	Taxon	Element	Side	Number	Weight	Comments
103	110	Cattle	Metatarsal	L	1	232	Complete GL=233, Bp=46mm, SD=24mm, Dd=28mm, Bd=51mm
405	406	Medium Mammal Size	Rib	X	15	10	Blade fragments
		Sheep/Goat	Innominate	L	1	5	Ilium with some acetabulum
		Medium Mammal Size	Thoracic	B	2	6	Complete
		Medium Mammal Size	Lumbar	B	2	6	Mostly complete
407	408	Dog	Radius	L	1	8	Complete, GL=114mm, Bp=13mm, SD=9mm, Bd=18mm

As can be seen from Table 1, medium mammal size remains are most predominant within the assemblage; however, it is very possible that these remains are all from a single individual. Sheep/Goat, cattle and dog were also positively identified within the assemblage.

The assemblage is too small to provide meaningful information on animal husbandry and utilisation on site. In the event of further works, the site is liable to yield further bone of a moderate-poor overall condition, with a moderate potential to provide information on site economy or animal husbandry practices.

### References

Lyman, R L, 1996 *Vertebrate Taphonomy*, Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

## Appendix 5: Context Summary List

CBM = Ceramic Building Material (e.g. brick and tile)

### Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Dark brown silty clay with frequent demolition debris, seals 111	Topsoil
101	Layer	Light yellowish orange silty clay, sealed by 111	Natural geology
102	Group	Group number for ditch sections [103] and [105]	Ditch terminating within trench
103	Cut	NE-SW linear with stepped sides and flat base, contains 104, 110	Cut of ditch part of group 102
104	Fill	Moderately firm bluish grey clay, sealed by 110	Primary natural silting of ditch [103]
105	Cut	NE-SW aligned linear with gradual sloping sides and concave base, contains 106	Terminus of ditch, part of group 102
106	Fill	Firm mid blueish grey silty clay with occasional small stones	Fill of ditch [105]
107	Cut	Irregular with gradual sides and concave base, contains 108	Modern pit
108	Fill	Loose dark orange grey silty clay	Backfill of pit [107]
109	Void		
110	Fill	Friable dark brown silty clay, seals 104	Secondary deposit of ditch [103]
111	Layer	Friable mid brown silty clay, sealed by 100 seals 101	Buried topsoil

### Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
200	Layer	Friable dark brown silty clay, seals 202	Topsoil
201	Layer	Firm light yellowish brown clay, sealed by 202	Natural geology
202	Layer	Friable mid grey clay, sealed by 200, seals 201	Alluvial deposit

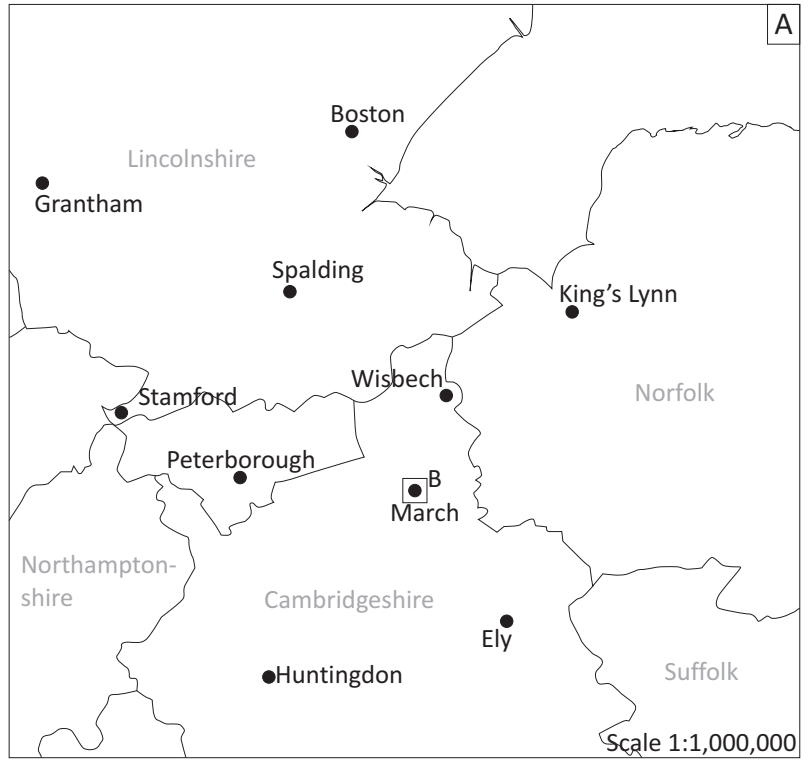
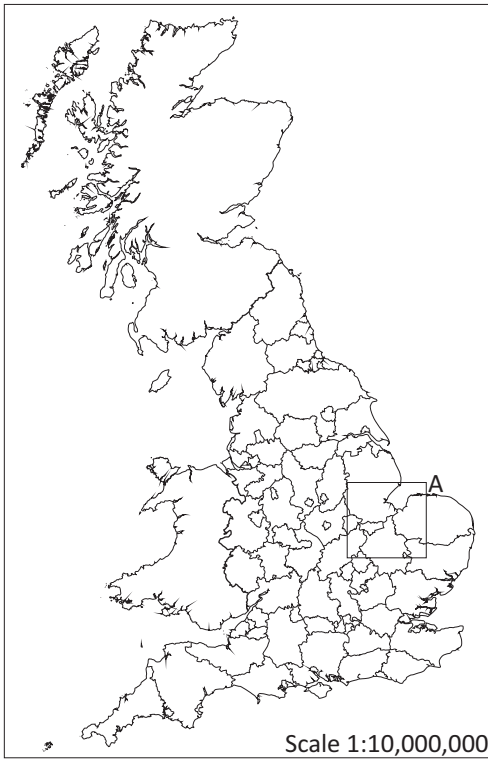
### Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
300	Layer	Loose dark brown silty clay, seals 302	Topsoil
301	Layer	Plastic light yellow clay, sealed by 304	Natural geology
302	Layer	Firm light brownish grey clay with brick fragments and small stones, sealed by 300, seals 303	Modern levelling deposit
303	Layer	Friable dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks, sealed by 302, seals 304	Buried topsoil
304	Layer	Friable mid grey silty clay, sealed by 303, seals 301	Alluvial deposit

### Trench 4

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
400	Layer	Loose dark brown silty clay, seals 401	Topsoil
401	Layer	Friable mid grey silty clay, sealed by 400, seals 402	Alluvial deposit
402	Layer	Plastic light yellow clay, sealed by 401	Natural geology
403	Cut	N-S linear with gradual sloping sides, contains 404	Cut of ditch
404	Fill	Firm dark brown silty clay	Fill of ditch [403]
405	Cut	Sub circular feature with moderate sharp sides and flat base, contains 406	Cut of pit
406	Fill	Loose mid grey orange silty clay	Fill of [405]
407	Cut	N-S linear with gradual sloping sides contains 408, 409	Cut of ditch
408	Fill	Loose light brown grey silty clay with moderate charcoal fleck	Primary fill of ditch [407]
409	Fill	Loose mid grey orange silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks	Secondary deposit of [407]
410	Layer	Loose light yellow orange sandy clay with moderate CBM fragments, seals 400	Modern dumped deposit





**Figure 1:** Site location with proposed development site shown in red  
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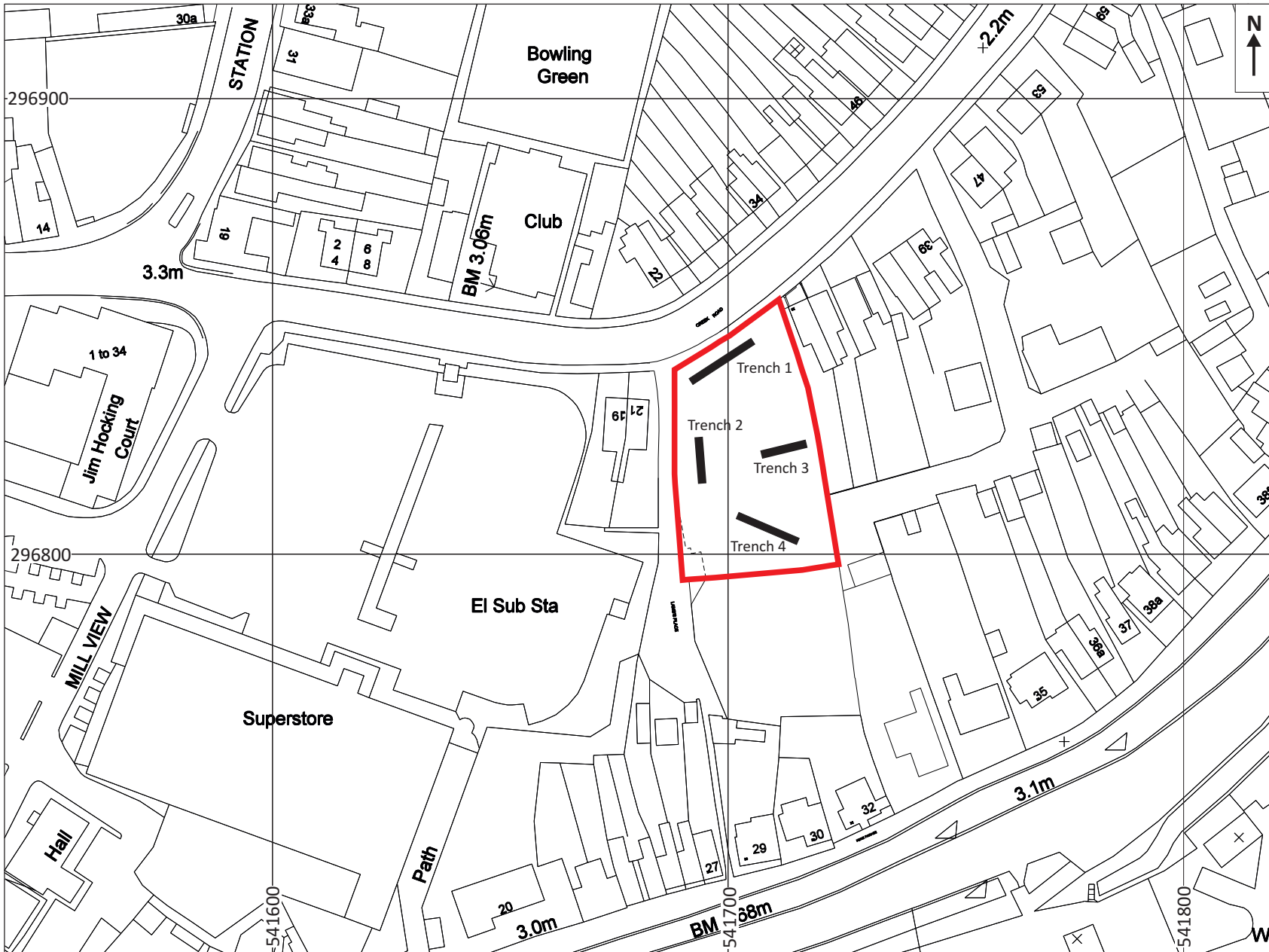


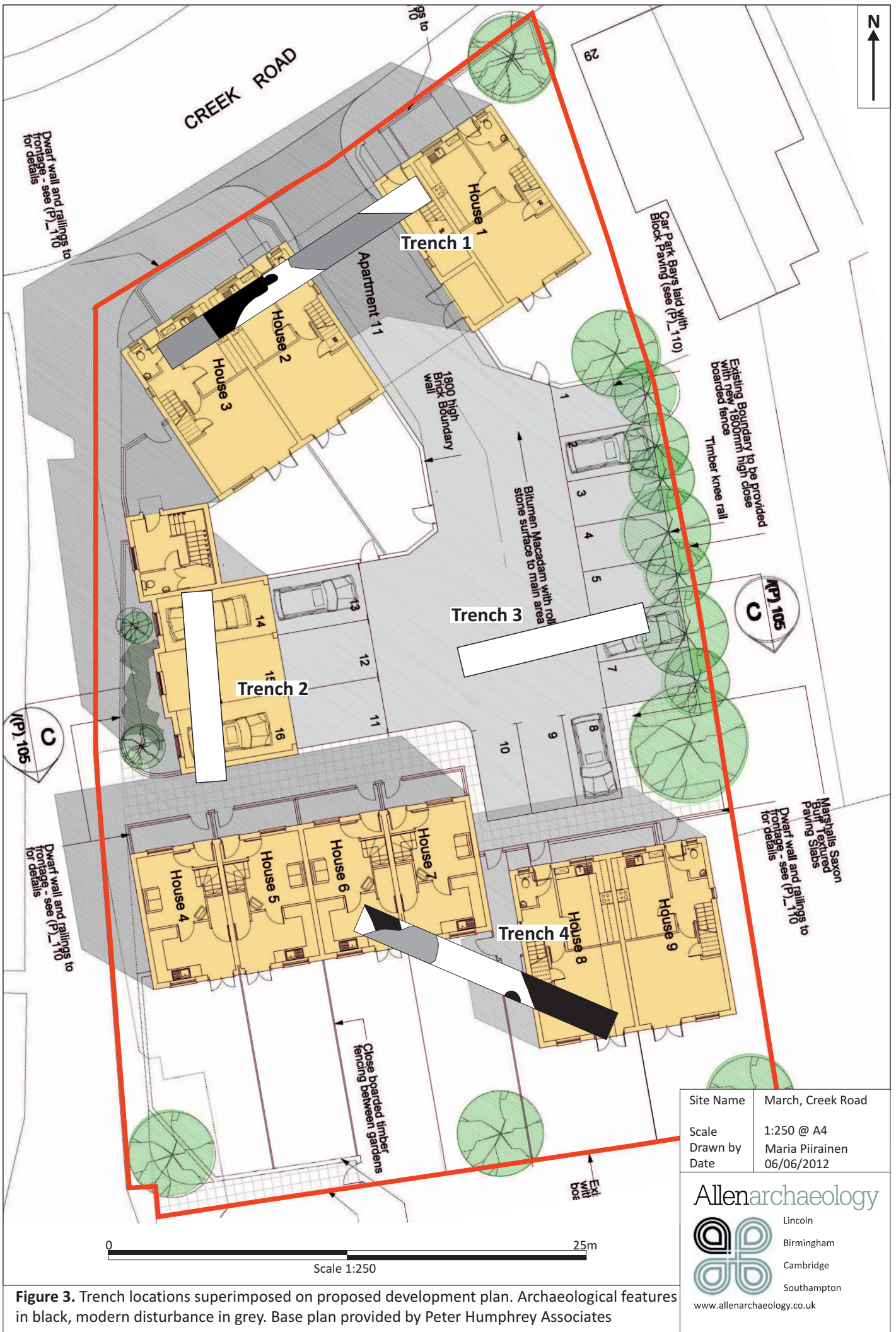
Figure 2: Site location plan with development area outlined in red and evaluation trenches in black (plan provided by Peter Humphrey Associates)

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Scale	1:1,250@ A4
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Date	06/06/2012

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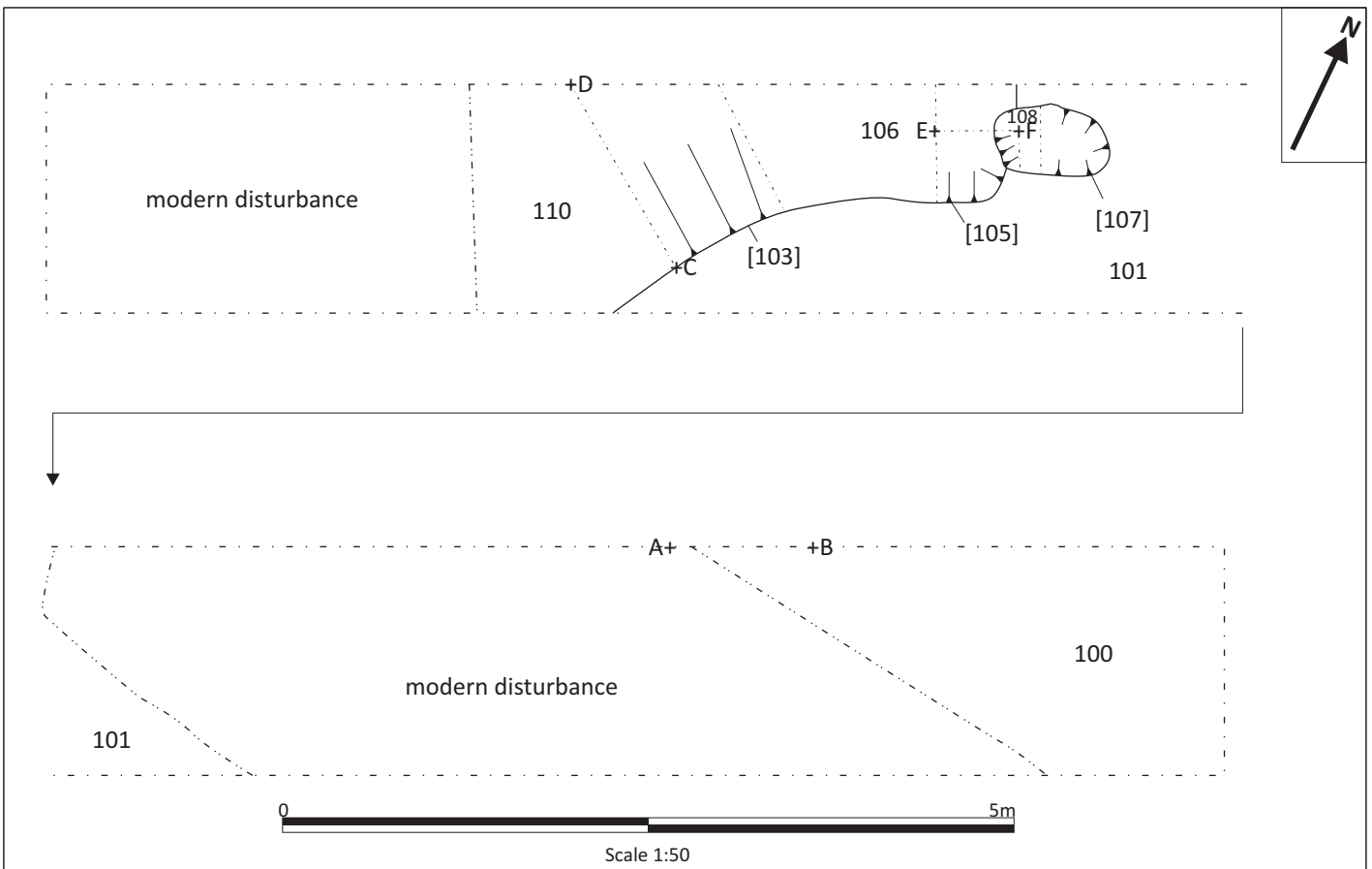
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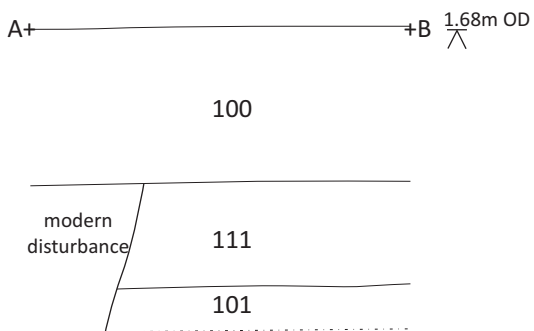
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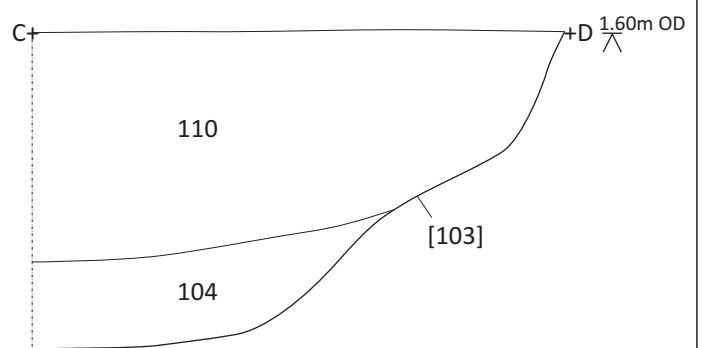




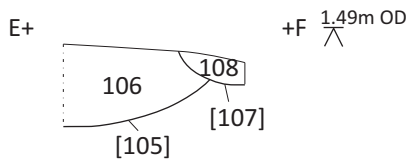
South-South-East Facing Section



North-North-East Facing Section



South Facing Section



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Scale	1:50 and 1:20 @ A4
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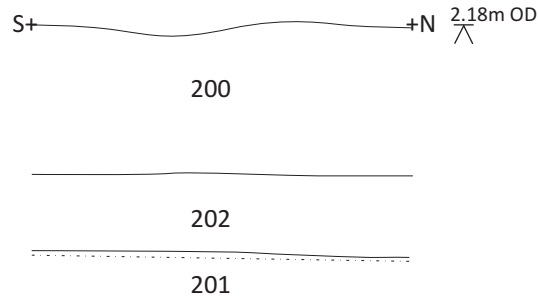
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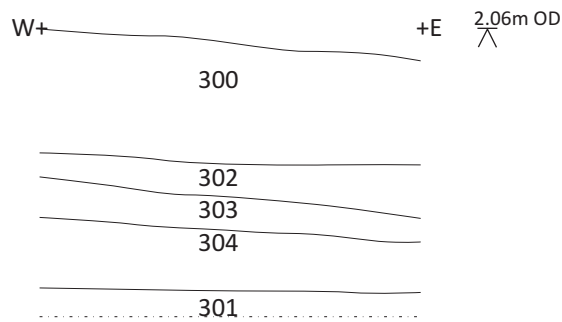
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**Figure 4:** Trench 1 plan and sections

Trench 2  
East Facing Section



Trench 3  
North-North-West Facing Section



Site Name	March, Creek Road
Scale	1:20 @ A4
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Date	06/06/2012

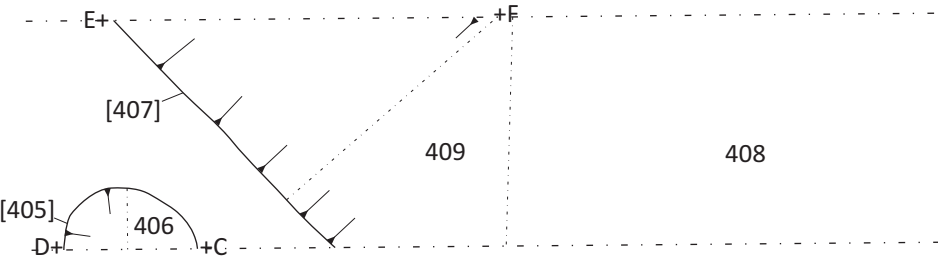
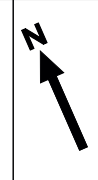
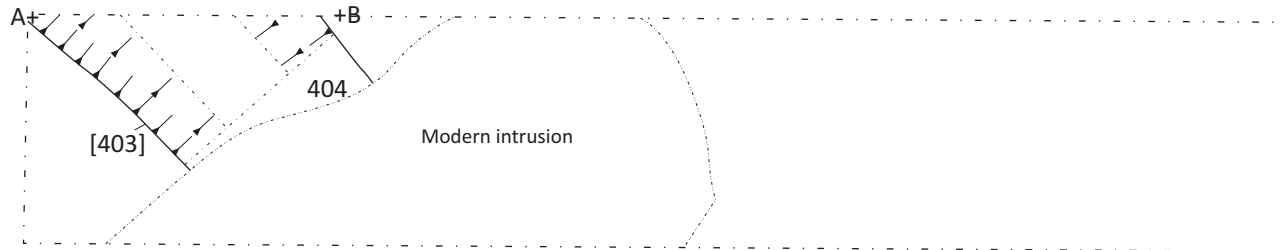
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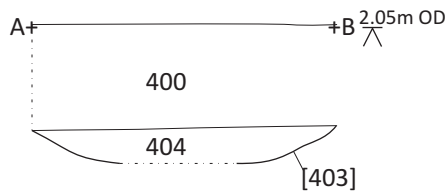
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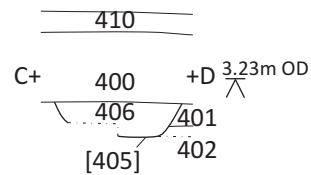
Figure 5: Representative sections of Trenches 2 and 3



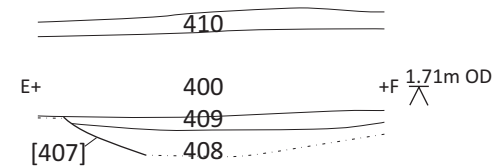
South-South-West Facing Section



North-North-East Facing Section



South Facing Section



Scale 1:50

Site Name	March, Creek Road
Scale	1:50 @ A4
Drawn by	Maria Piirainen
Date	06/06/2012

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Figure 6: Plan and sections of Trench 4



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