

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:

TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND OFF FYDELL CRESCENT, BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

Planning Reference: pre-planning
NGR: TF 32644 43761
AAL Site Code: BOFC 13
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-158765



Report prepared for
Blue Sky Design Services Limited

By
Allen Archaeology Limited
Report Number 2013110

September 2013



Allenarchaeology



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Executive Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Blue Sky Design Services Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Fydell Crescent, Boston, Lincolnshire, to support a planning application for a proposed new Free School.
- The site is archaeologically sensitive, lying in an area of archaeological interest and potential adjacent to part of the early medieval urban core of the town, with a potential medieval monastic cemetery extending onto the site.
- The evaluation revealed a sequence of modern made ground and levelling deposits beneath recent concrete and tarmac surfaces. Sealed below the modern deposits were alluvial layers, exposed at depths varying from 0.5m to 1.48m below the existing ground surface. There was no evidence for archaeological activity associated with the nearby Carmelite Friary.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Blue Sky Design Services Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Fydell Crescent, Boston, Lincolnshire, to support a planning application for a proposed Free School development at the site.
- 1.2 The fieldwork, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (IfA 1999, revised 2001 and 2008), and the local guidelines in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (LCC 2012), and a specification prepared by this company (AAL 2013).
- 1.3 The documentation and records generated by the evaluation will be assembled in accordance with the UK Institute for Conservation guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage (Walker 1990) and in accordance with guidelines issued by Lincolnshire County Council. The receiving museum will be The Collection, Lincoln, where it will be stored under the accession number LCNCC 2013: 148.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Boston is situated approximately 45km southeast of central Lincoln, close to the outfall of the River Witham into The Wash, which is approximately 8km to the southeast. The proposed development is to the southwest of the historic core of the town, south of Fydell Crescent and west of the High Street, and comprises a broadly rectangular shaped block of land of c.0.48 hectares, currently occupied by a former car showroom and garage. The site is centred on NGR TF 32644 43761.
- 2.2 The bedrock geology comprises Ancholme Group Clays, overlain by Tidal Flat Deposits; marine deposits formed up to two million years ago (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application has not yet been submitted for the development. The development proposals currently entail the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of a new Free School with associated infrastructure. It has been requested by the Senior Historic Environment Officer at Heritage Lincolnshire, advising Boston Borough Council, that a programme of archaeological evaluation by trial trenching be undertaken on the site in order to provide further information concerning the archaeological potential of the proposed development area
- 3.2 The approach adopted is consistent with the recommendations of Chapter 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012).

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 The site is situated in an area of significant archaeological interest. The information below has been prepared from a brief for the works (Young 2013) and also from Allen Archaeology's own reference collection and online sources.
- 4.2 There is no evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity in the vicinity of the site.
- 4.3 The site lies towards the north end of Zone 1 of the Boston Town Historic Environment Baseline Study (Cope-Faulkner 2007), an area viewed as the early medieval urban core of the town.
- 4.4 Boston is first documented c.1130 AD, and became a major port in the medieval period, due to the Haven that allowed sea going vessels access to Lincoln and other inland centres via the Witham. The town was a port of the Hanseatic League, and also attracted the monastic orders of the Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites and Augustinians (Thompson 1856). The decline of the wool trade in the 15th century and the silting up of the Haven caused decline in the trade in the late medieval and post-medieval periods.
- 4.5 It has been suggested that the Carmelite Friary of Boston lay to the north of the site, with its cemeteries extending southwards, potentially onto the site itself.
- 4.6 Previous investigations to the north of the site at Witham Place recorded fragments of probably medieval stone work (Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record No 13547).

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 A brief was prepared by the Senior Historic Environment Officer (SHEO) at Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire for a trial trenching strategy, comprising three 20m long. The position of these trenches was agreed between the client and the SHEO. It was apparent on site that agreed trench locations would not be possible due to access restrictions, services and depth of concrete, including a concrete ramp. In agreement with the SHEO, the trench position and lengths were amended to fit within the site constraints (Figure 2).
- 5.2 The fieldwork was carried out by a team of experienced field archaeologists under the supervision of Maria Piirainen, from Wednesday 28th to Friday 30th August 2013.
- 5.3 Any concrete surfaces or other solid obstructions were broken out by mechanical excavator fitted with a hydraulic breaker, with subsequent excavation undertaken by a wheeled excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. In each trench, topsoil, subsoil and underlying non-archaeological deposits were removed in spits no greater than 0.1m until the natural geology or first archaeological horizon was exposed. All further excavation was then undertaken by hand. Where natural or significant archaeological deposits were not reached by a safe working depth (nominally 1.2m) in each trench, a sondage was excavated, recorded and backfilled, at the supervisor's discretion.
- 5.4 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 1:50). 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.

- 5.5 Each deposit, layer or cut was allocated a three digit unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 2.

6.0 Results (Figures 2 – 3, Plates 1-3)

6.1 Trench 1 (Figure 2, 3 and Plate 1)

6.1.1 Trench 1 was aligned east-west and had to be shortened to 15m due to space constraints on site. This trench revealed a series of recent surfaces and made ground deposits to a depth of 1.48m. The uppermost deposits comprised a reinforced concrete hardstanding layer, 100, with associated hardcore bedding layer 101. 101 sealed a 1.1m thickness of brown silty sand made ground layers, 102 and 103, which contained frequent modern ceramic building material, stone rubble and other demolition material. This in turn sealed a sandy silt flood deposit, 104, which contained shell, charcoal flecks and occasional CBM.

6.1.2 No features or layers of archaeological significance were present in this trench.

6.2 Trench 2 (Figure 2, 3 and Plate 2)

6.2.1 Trench 2 was aligned north-south and again revealed a sequence of made ground deposits of 1.15m thickness which overlay natural silty flood deposits. The deposits comprised a tarmac carpark surface and associated bedding material, 200, which overlay a sequence of dumped deposits 201, 202 and 203. The dumped deposits all contained ceramic building material and other demolition material of 19th to 20th century date.

6.2.2 No features or layers of archaeological significance were encountered in this trench.

6.3 Trench 3 (Figure 2, 3 and Plate 3)

6.3.1 Trench 3 was aligned north-south. It exposed a further series of made ground layers overlaying riverine flood deposits at a depth of 0.5m. Isolated dumps of modern material were noted along the trench extending down to c.1m below the current ground surface and were probably mechanically pushed/rolled into the lower deposit.

6.3.2 The made ground layers were sealed below a reinforced concrete hardstanding layer, 300. This sealed a bedding layer, 301, consisting of frequent crushed ceramic building material, glass and concrete fragments. This sealed a 0.1m thick possible buried soil, 302, which contained occasional 19th to 20th century ceramic building material; this is likely to represent a former ground surface prior to levelling for the current use of the site.

6.3.3 This layer sealed two clayey silt flood deposits 303 and 304, which continued below the depth of the excavation at 1.8m. A single sherd of 19th or 20th century pottery was recovered from flood deposit 303 indicating these events are not of any great antiquity.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1 The evaluation trenches revealed a sequence of recent dump deposits, sealing alluvial layers. A single sherd of early modern pottery was recovered from one alluvial layer in Trench 3, providing a very tentative date for the formation of this horizon. It was noted that the thickness of recent made ground was significantly less in Trench 3, at c.0.5m thickness, compared to Trenches 1 and 2, where these deposits were in excess of 1.15m thickness, although the reason for this was not clear.
- 7.2 There was no evidence for the postulated medieval cemetery associated with the former Carmelite Friary, and it seems highly unlikely that the proposed development will encounter any archaeological features or deposits of significance.
- 7.3 A brief review of historic mapping suggests that the site was unused land in the late 19th century. The 1889 1:500 town map marks the site as vacant land lying just north of a pump house and west of the built up High Street. The land appears to have remained as vacant land during the early 20th century, until the mid 1950s, with the Ordnance Survey map of 1956 showing buildings on the site.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 8.1 The methodology adopted was appropriate to the nature and extent of the proposed development. It has identified no significant archaeological remains at the site.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Blue Sky Design Services Limited for this commission. Jenny Young of the Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire provided advice and support throughout the project.

10.0 References

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Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking north; scales are 2m and 1m.



Plate 2: West facing section of Trench 2. Scales are 2m and 1m.



Plate 3: West facing section in Trench 3. Scales are 2m and 1m.

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Trench 1

Context Number	Type	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
100	Layer	Compact grey reinforced concrete, seals 101	0.2m thick, across trench	Modern surface
101	Layer	Moderately compact light brownish yellow crushed limestone and sand, sealed by 100, seals 102	0.2 – 0.3m thick, across trench	Hardcore/levelling layer
102	Layer	Firm dark greyish brown silty sand with frequent CBM and limestone fragments, sealed by 101, seals 103	0.8m thick, across trench	Dumped deposit
103	Layer	Firm dark brown silty sand with occasional CBM	0.3m thick, across trench	Dumped deposit
104	Layer	Moderately firm dark grey sandy silt with crushed shells, moderate oyster shells, charcoal flecks and occasional CBM	Below excavated depth, >0.4m thick	Flood deposit

Trench 2

Context Number	Type	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
200	Layer	Compact black grey tarmac and bedding material, seals 201	0.22m thick, across trench	Tarmac surface
201	Layer	Compact mottled dark brownish grey sandy silt with frequent shell fragments and CBM flecks, sealed by 200, seals 202	0.18m thick, across trench	Made ground
202	Layer	Firm mid brown sandy silt with frequent CBM, frequent charcoal and limestone flecks, sealed by 201 seals 203	0.14m thick, across trench	Made ground
203	Layer	Friable light to dark greyish brown sandy silt and gravel with moderate CBM, sealed by 202, seals 204	0.7m thick, across trench	Made ground
204	Layer	Saturated mid orange brown silt, sealed by 203	Below excavated depth, >0.64m thick	Natural silts

Trench 3

Context Number	Type	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
300	Layer	Indurated grey reinforced concrete, seals 301	0.21m thick, across trench	Modern surface
301	Layer	Compact reddish brown silt clay with very frequent CBM, glass and concrete fragments, sealed by 300, seals 302	0.22m thick, across trench	Levelling layer
302	Layer	Sticky dark grey organic clay silt with occasional CBM flecks, sealed by 301, seals 303	0.1m thick, across trench	Former topsoil?
303	Layer	Sticky plastic mid grey brown clay silt with occasional shell, sealed by 302, seals 304	1.12m thick, across trench	Flood deposit
304	Layer	Plastic pale grey brown silty clay with occasional shell, sealed by 303	Below excavated depth, >0.2m thick	Flood deposit

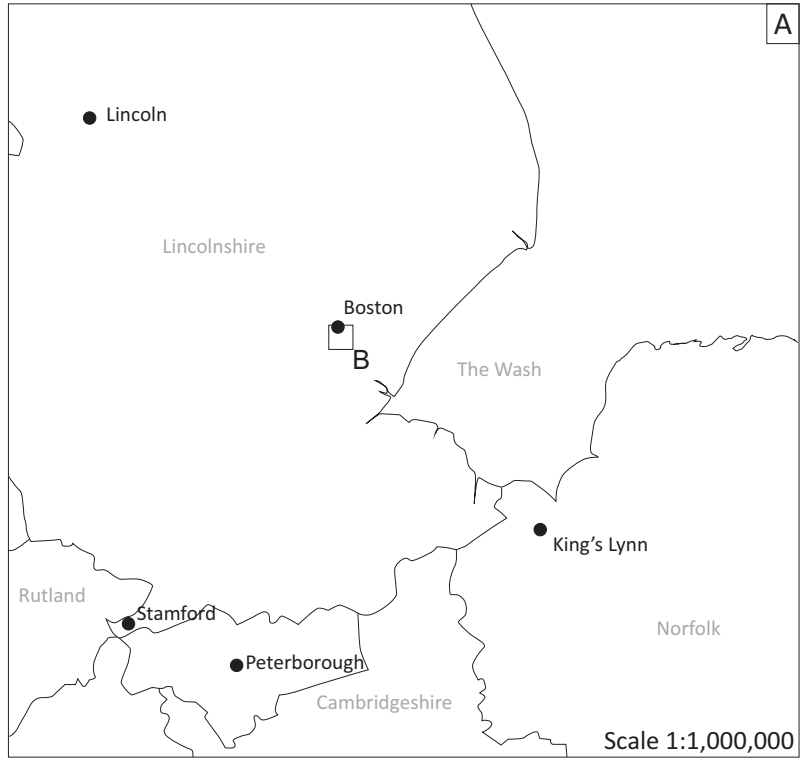
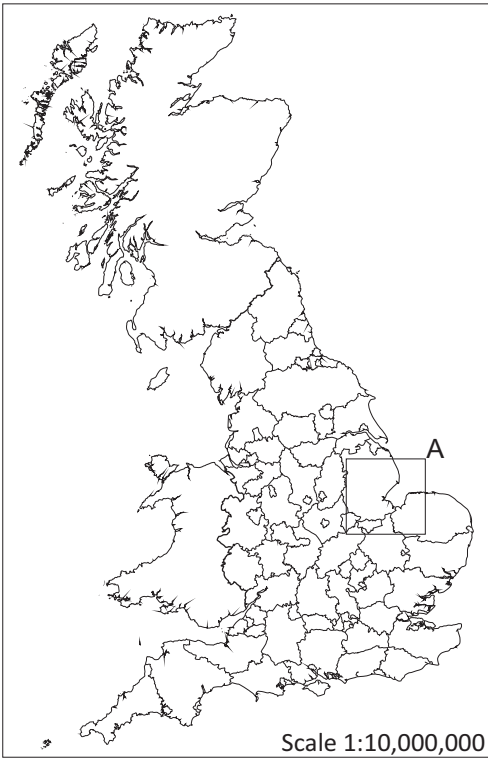


Figure 1: Site location outlined in red

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Site Code	BOFC 13
Scales	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	M Wood
Date	09/09/13

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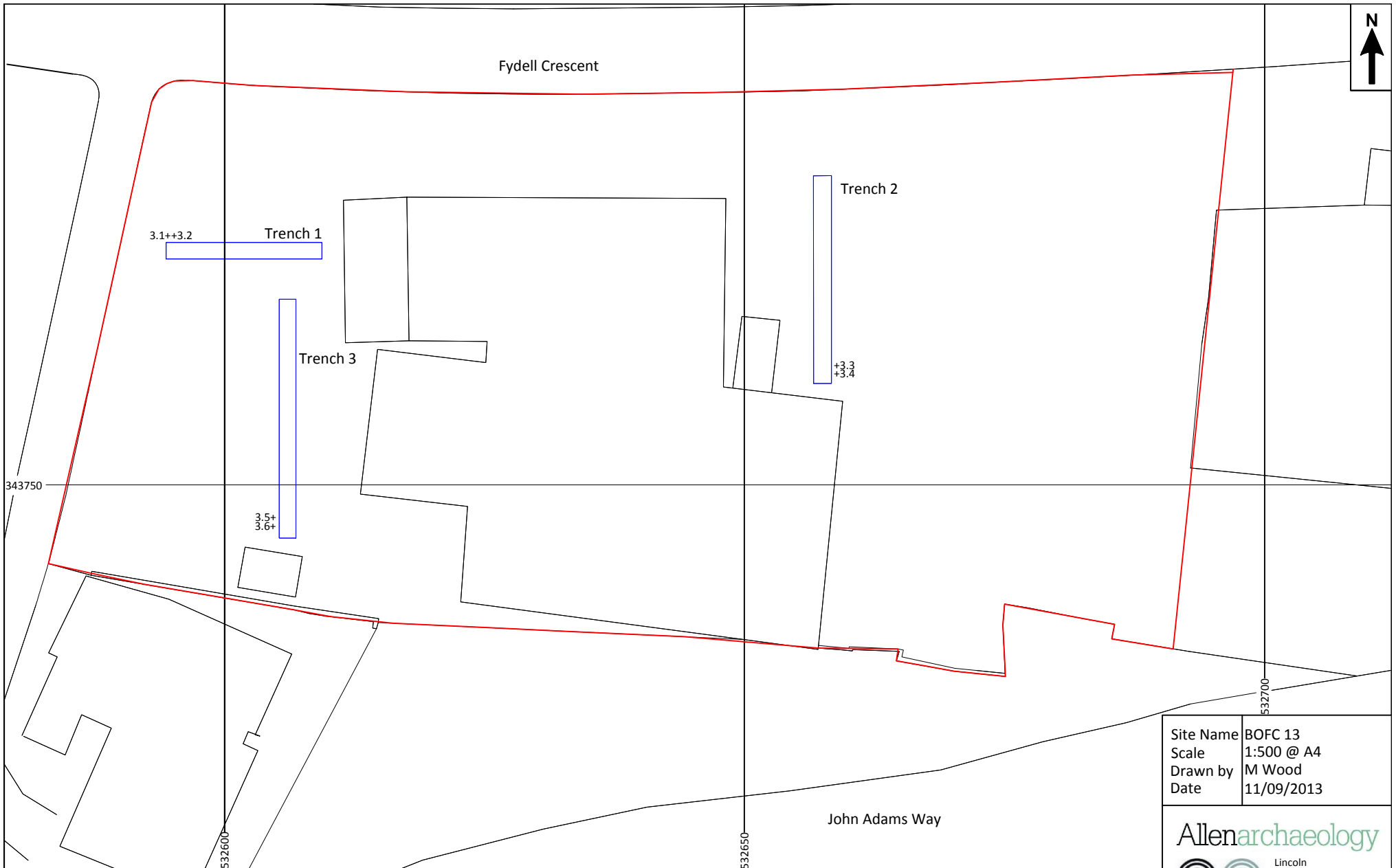


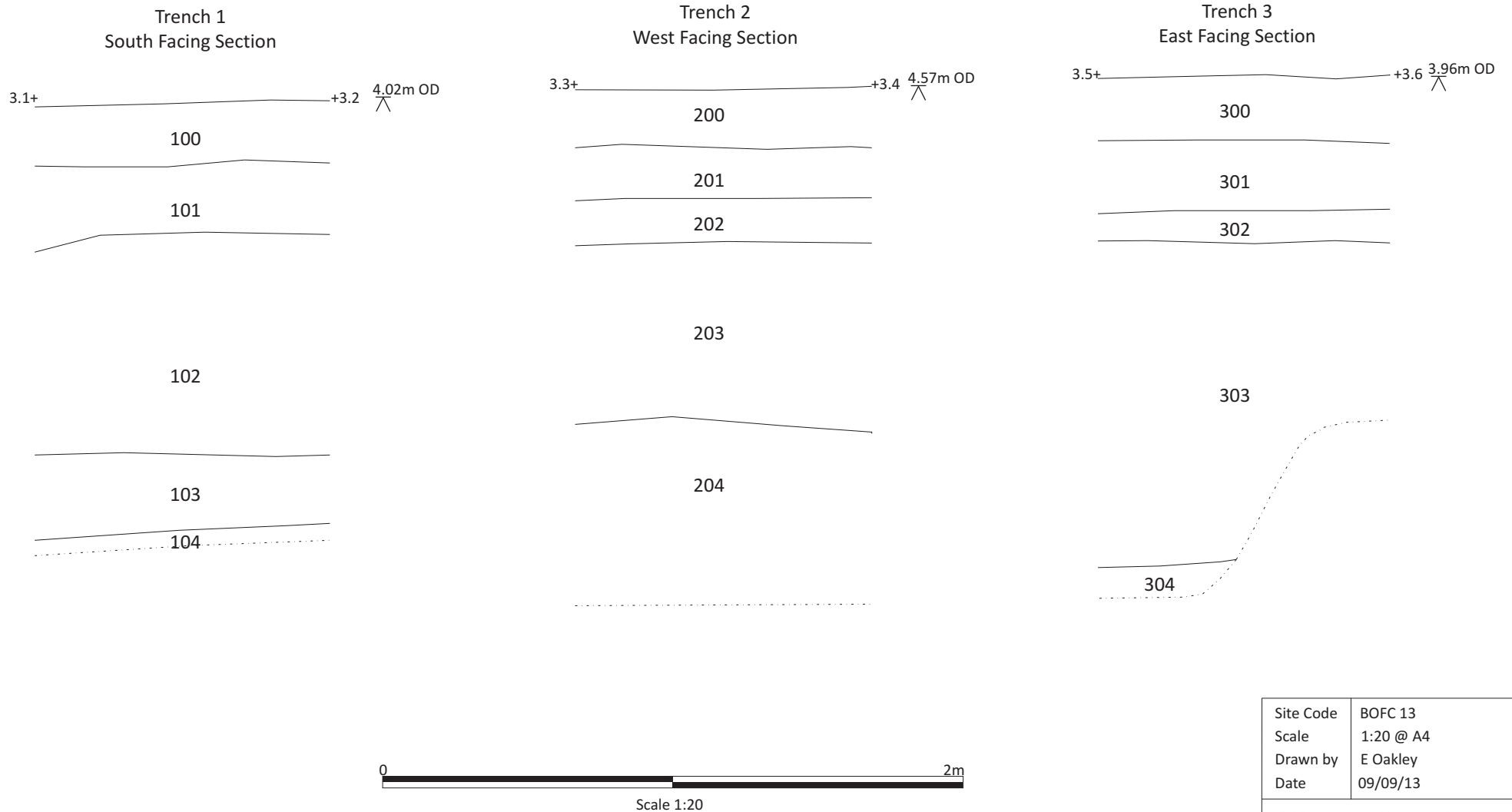
Figure 2: Site boundary in red and trench Locations in blue

Site Name	BOFC 13
Scale	1:500 @ A4
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Site Code	BOFC 13
Scale	1:20 @ A4
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Figure 3: Representative section drawings from the evaluation trenches



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