

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:
TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND AT FORMER ARBOUR VALE SCHOOL SITE,
STOKE ROAD, SLOUGH, BERKSHIRE**

Planning Reference: P/03896/003
NGR: SU 98100 81100
AAL Site Code: SLAV 15
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-244551



Report prepared for Blue Sky Design Services Limited

By
Allen Archaeology Limited
Report Number AAL 2016052

April 2016



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Cover image: View across site, looking west

Executive Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Blue Sky Design Services Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at the former Arbour Vale School, Stoke Road in Slough, Berkshire. The work was undertaken in order to provide further information concerning the archaeological potential of the site, in advance of the determination of a planning application for the construction of a new school and sports facilities.
- A previous archaeological desk-based assessment of the site highlighted that there is limited evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity in the surrounding area. To the northeast of the proposed development, two early Anglo-Saxon post-built houses were discovered and as such there was potential to find further remains of the same period. There was also potential to find later medieval features as the medieval moated manor for the parish lies just northeast of the development area.
- Six trenches were excavated, each measuring 30m long x 1.6m wide. Trench 1 was relocated 10m to the northeast of the original plan in order to comply with an area of exclusion surrounding a known badger sett.
- The trenching did not reveal any deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest, suggesting that the site is of low archaeological potential and that the proposed development will have no impact upon any archaeological remains.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (AAL) were commissioned by Blue Sky Design Services Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at the former Arbour Vale School, Stoke Road in Slough, Berkshire, in advance of the determination of a planning application for construction of a secondary school.
- 1.2 The site works and reporting conformed to current national guidelines as set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (CIfA 2014) and the Historic England document '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (English Heritage 2006) as well as with regionally specific research aims set out in '*Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment*' (Hey and Hind 2014). The site works were also conducted strictly in accordance with a specification for works produced by this company (AAL 2015).

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Slough is located c.34km west of central London and comprises what were historically a number of parishes: the site being in the parish of Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire. The proposed development area (hereafter referred to as 'the site') lies approximately 1km north of the town centre, west of Stoke Road and north of Shaggy Calf Lane. The site is currently occupied by West Wing Arts Centre to the north, a c.2.6ha playing field to the south and c.1.9ha of green area to the east. The site is centred on NGR SU 98100 81100.
- 2.2 The bedrock geology comprises Lambeth Group (clay, silt, sand and gravel), with an overlying superficial geology of river terrace deposits (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application has been submitted for construction of a new school and sports facilities (Planning Reference P/03896/003). An archaeological desk-based assessment has previously been undertaken (AAL 2014), and identified a low archaeological potential for the proposed development area. A programme of intrusive trial trenching has been requested in order to provide further information concerning the archaeological potential of the site, to provide the planning authority with sufficient information to allow for the determination of the application and to establish any appropriate mitigation measures that may be required.
- 3.2 The approach is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that 'Where a site on which development is proposed includes...heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.' (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012).

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 A desk-based assessment has been prepared for the site (AAL 2014), which highlights and discusses a number of archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed development. A brief summary of the results are set out below.
- 4.2 There is limited evidence of prehistoric activity, mainly limited to findspots, although an early Iron Age enclosure is noted c.780m northeast of the site.
- 4.3 Roman activity is equally limited, with a small number of cut features noted at the edge of the study area. This same site, to the northeast of the proposed development area also contained two early Anglo-Saxon post-built houses.
- 4.4 The medieval moated manor for the parish lies 890m northeast of the development area, and a 16th century timber-framed building was located within the moated area until its replacement by a farmhouse in the 19th century.

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The trial trenching methodology entailed the excavation of six trenches measuring 30m long and 1.6m wide located as shown on Figure 2. It was necessary to relocate Trench 1 10m to the northeast in order to comply with the area of exclusion surrounding a known badger sett. The fieldwork was undertaken by a team of experienced field archaeologists over a period of three days, starting on 8th March 2016.
- 5.2 The evaluation trenches were accurately located using a Leica GS08 RTK NetRover GPS. In each trench, a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth ditching bucket was used to remove topsoil, subsoil and underlying non-archaeological deposits in spits no greater than 0.1m in depth. The process was repeated until the first archaeologically significant or natural horizon was exposed. All further excavation was then undertaken by hand. Machine excavation was monitored at all times by an experienced field archaeologist.
- 5.3 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard AAL context recording sheets. Archaeological deposits were drawn in plan and section at an appropriate scale (1:20 and 1:50), with OD heights being displayed on each class of drawing. Colour photography formed an integral part of the recording strategy, with photographs incorporating scales, an identification board and directional arrow, as appropriate. Each deposit or layer was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and was accorded a written description. A summary of these are included in *Appendix 1*.

6.0 Results

- 6.1 The stratigraphic sequence proved to be ubiquitous across the site, comprising a 0.2m–0.3m thick, soft, mid brown, clayey sand topsoil layer, sealing a layer of firm, mid orange brown, silty clay with occasional small sub-angular flint fragments, which has been interpreted as the natural underlying geology.
- 6.2 Evidence of a recent haul road was also recorded to the east and southeast of the site, in Trenches 1 and 4, comprising a 0.05m thick layer of loose, orange sand and a plastic membrane, 402, sealing a 0.28m–0.35m thick rubble layer made up of fragments of brick, concrete, stone and rubble, 103 and 404.



Plate 1: South-facing representative section of Trench 3, scale 1m

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1 The evaluation trenching was undertaken to assess the potential for archaeological remains to exist on the site and to understand the likely impact of the development upon the proposed development area.
- 7.2 No significant deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest were revealed, suggesting that the site is of low archaeological potential and that the proposed development will have no impact upon any archaeological remains.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 8.1 The trial trenching methodology employed was suited to the scale and nature of the project in determining the nature of the archaeology present and the potential impacts of the proposed development. It has identified a negligible archaeological potential for the site.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology would like to thank Blue Sky Design Services Limited for this commission and the Berkshire Archaeology Officer for their continued guidance throughout this project.

10.0 References

AAL, 2014, *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Arbour Vale Site, Slough, Berkshire*, Allen Archaeology Ltd Report No AAL2014133

AAL, 2015, *Specification for an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching: Former Arbour Vale school Site, Stoke Road, Slough, Berkshire*, unpublished planning document

CIfA, 2014, *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*, Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, London: Department for Communities and Local Government

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Hey, G, and Hind, J, 2014, *Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment*, Oxford: Oxford Archaeology Ltd

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Soft mid brown clayey sand with frequent small stones, 0.28m thick; seals 101	Topsoil
101	Layer	Firm mid orange brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular flint fragments; sealed by 100 and 101	Natural geology
102	Layer	Rubble layer comprise of fragments of brick, concrete, stone and rubble, 0.35m thick; seals 101	Modern haul road

Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
200	Layer	Soft mid brown clayey sand with frequent small stones, 0.3 m thick; seals 201	Topsoil
201	Layer	Firm mid orange brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular flint fragments; sealed by 200	Natural geology

Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
300	Layer	Soft mid brown clayey sand with frequent small stones, 0.2m thick; seals 301	Topsoil
301	Layer	Firm mid orange brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular flint fragments; sealed by 300	Natural geology

Trench 4

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
400	Layer	Soft mid brown clayey sand with frequent small stones, 0.28m thick; seals 401	Topsoil
401	Layer	Firm mid orange brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular flint fragments; sealed by 400	Natural geology
402	Layer	Loose orange sand with plastic membrane beneath, 0.05m thick; seals 403	Part of modern haul road
403	Layer	Rubble layer comprise of fragments of brick, concrete, stone and rubble, 0.28m thick; sealed by 402, seals 401	Modern haul road

Trench 5

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
500	Layer	Soft mid brown clayey sand with frequent small stones, 0.24m thick; seals 501	Topsoil
501	Layer	Firm mid orange brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular flint fragments; sealed by 500	Natural geology

Trench 6

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
600	Layer	Soft mid brown clayey sand with frequent small stones, 0.22m thick; seals 601	Topsoil
601	Layer	Firm mid orange brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular flint fragments; sealed by 600	Natural geology

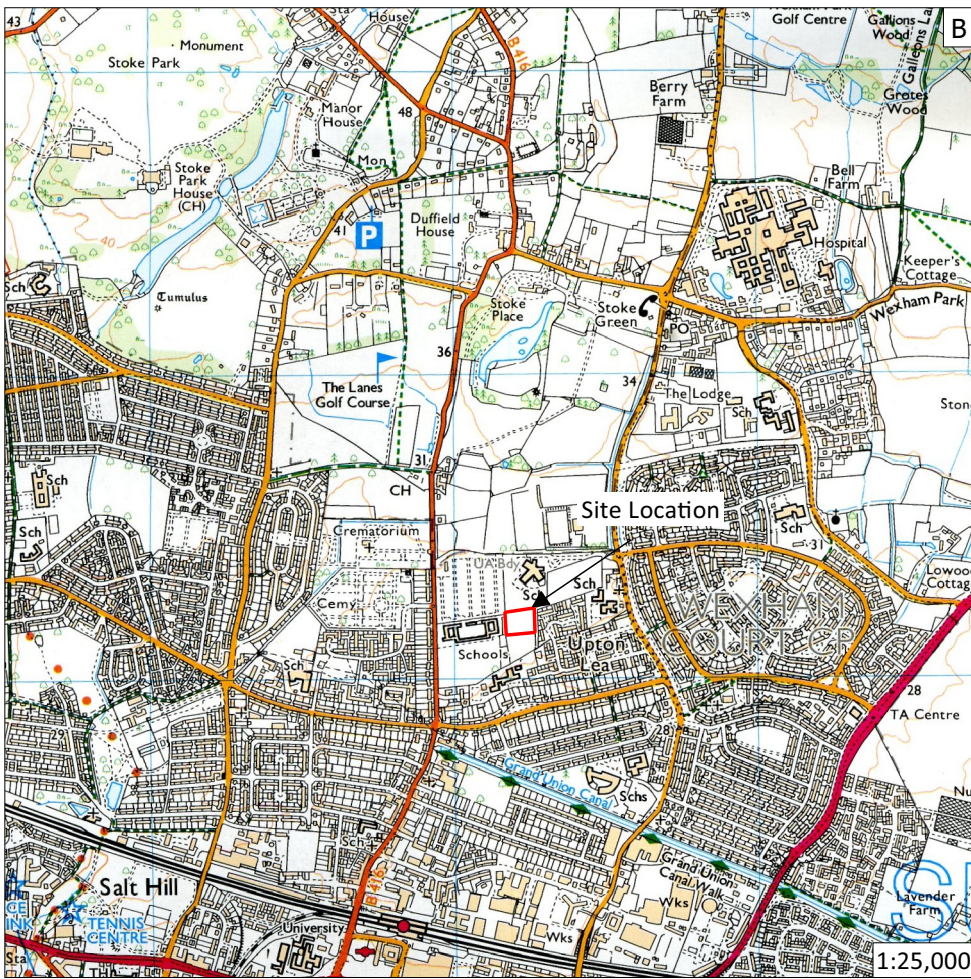
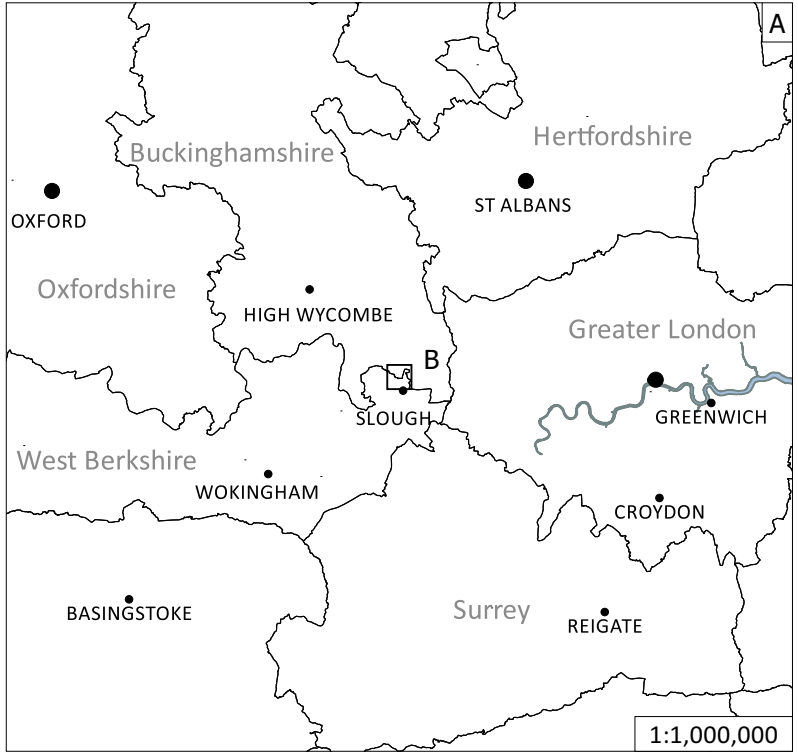


Figure 1: Site location outlined in red

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Site Code	SLAV 15
Scale	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	E Doe
Date	04/03/16

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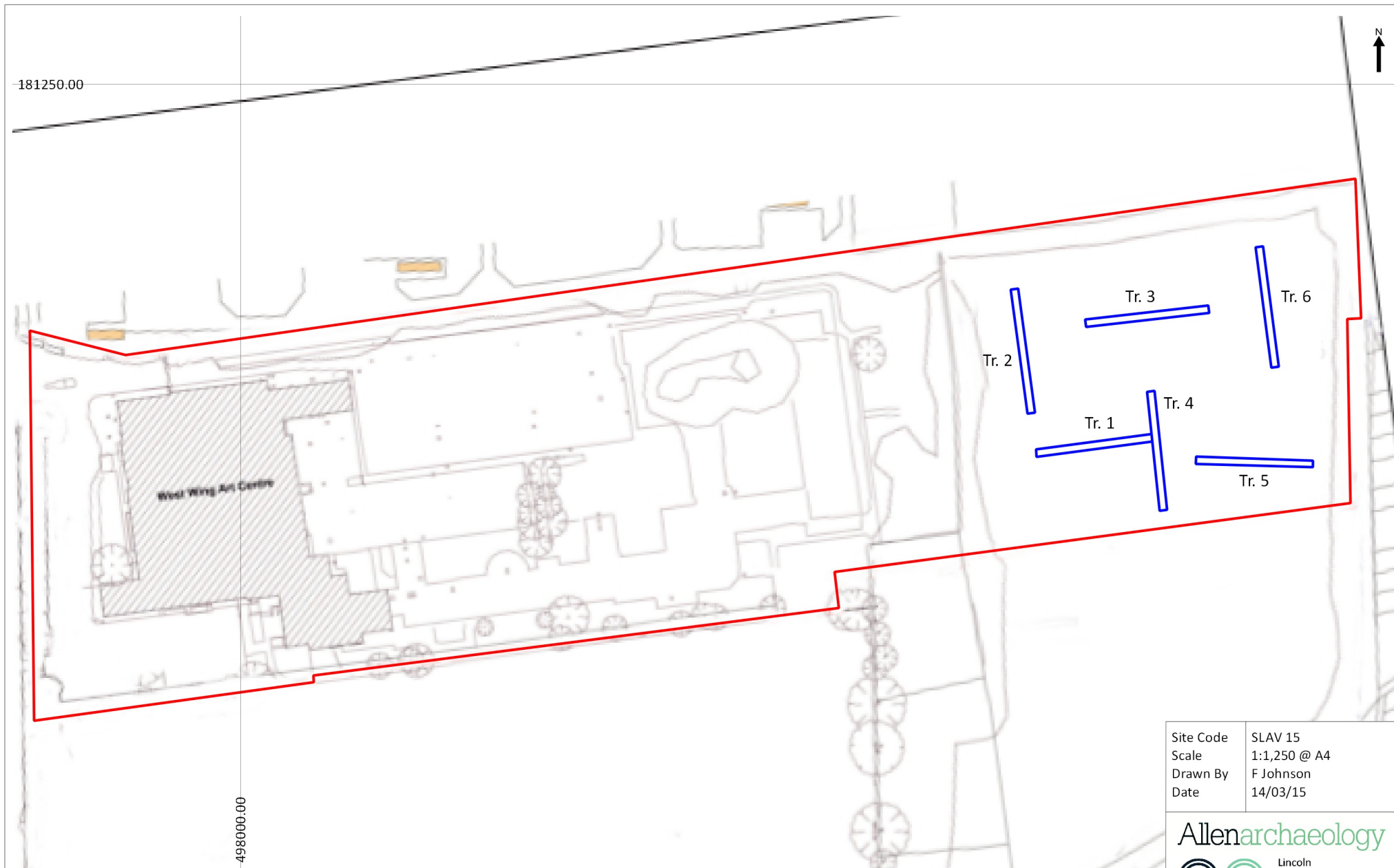
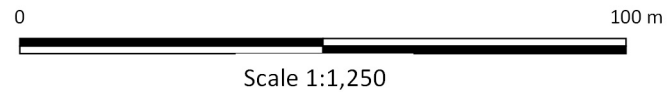


Figure 2: Trench location in blue with site location outlined in red.



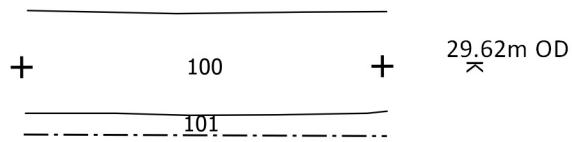
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Scale	1:1,250 @ A4
Drawn By	F Johnson
Date	14/03/15

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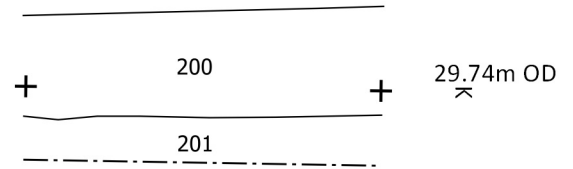
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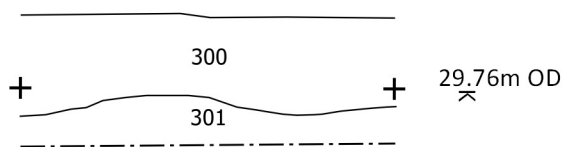
North facing representative section of Trench 1



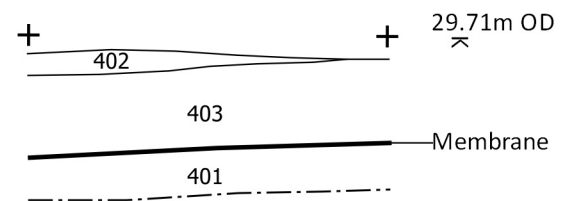
East facing representative section of Trench 2



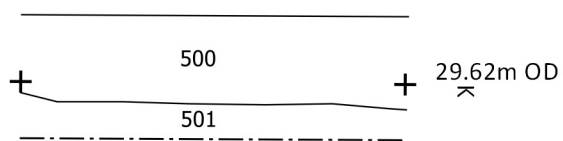
South facing representative section of Trench 3



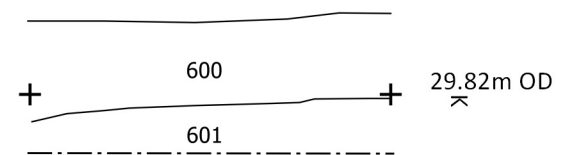
East facing representative section of Trench 4



Southwest facing representative section of Trench 5



East facing representative section of Trench 6



Site Code	SLAV 15
Scale	1:20 @ A4
Drawn By	F Johnson
Date	15/03/2015

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Figure 3: Representative sections



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