ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:

TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND AT LANGLEY PARK SCHOOL FOR BOYS, HAWKSBROOK LANE, BECKENHAM, LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

Planning Reference: 08/01372
NGR: TQ 37922 67403
Site Code: LPB 08
OASIS Reference: allenarc 1-51281

Report prepared for

Frankham Consultancy Group Ltd.
on behalf of Langley Park School for Boys

By
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Report Number 2008/061

November 2008

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Document control

Element	Name	Date
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Cover image: Aerial view of Langley Park School for Boys, looking north

Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out on land at Langley Park School for Boys, Hawksbrook Lane, in Beckenham, London Borough of Bromley, prior to a major redevelopment of the school.

The site lies c.2km south of Beckenham town centre, on the north side of Hawksbrook Lane. Bronze Age metalwork was discovered nearby in the 1800s, and a Roman road is also believed to pass through or close to the development area. From the post-Roman period until the 20th century, the site was open agricultural or parkland. It was then redeveloped into a sports ground and is currently in use as the school playing field.

Four trenches were excavated in order to assess the archaeological potential of the development area, the locations of which were based on the results of a preceding geophysical survey. The trenches identified a shallow curvilinear ditch dated to the late 15th to later 18th century, one undated pit and an undated ditch or natural feature; and a series of 20th century land drains representing two phases of land drainage.

The few archaeological features encountered during this evaluation indicate no activity before the late 15th century, and suggest the proposed development will have a negligible impact on the archaeological resource.

Figure 1: Location of site outlined in red, at scale 1:25,000

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Allen Archaeological Associates (hereafter AAA) was commissioned by Frankham Consultancy Group Ltd, on behalf of Langley Park School for Boys in Beckenham, London Borough of Bromley, to carry out an archaeological evaluation by trial excavation on land at the school, as part of a planning condition for development of a new school.

1.2 The excavation, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (IfA 1999), and a specification prepared by this company (Allen 2008).

1.3 The archive will be submitted to an appropriate receiving museum within six months of the completion of the report.

2.0 Site location and description

2.1 Beckenham is situated in south-east London, in the Borough of Bromley. The site lies some 2km to the south of Beckenham town centre with the existing buildings and playing fields of Langley Park School for Boys located on the north side of Hawksbrook Lane. A small watercourse, The Beck, defines the western boundary of the school grounds, while an area of woodland runs along the northern site boundary. Langley Park School for Girls is to the east of the existing boys' school, and the eastern boundary of the playing field is defined by a lane running north – south: St. Dunstan's Lane. The site centres on NGR TQ 37922 67403.

2.2 The site lies at approximately 48m OD and is covered by short grass. It gently rises from north-west to south-east. The local drift geology comprises sand and gravel of the Blackheath Beds, overlying a solid geology of Cretaceous chalk (British Geological Survey 1974).

3.0 Planning background

3.1 Prior to the submission of a planning application for the erection of a new secondary school, the client commissioned AAA to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment to enhance the application (Clay 2007). The planning application was then submitted in April 2008, which was approved with conditions in August 2008 (Planning Application Reference 08/01372). These conditions included the undertaking of a programme of archaeological evaluation to characterise the nature and extent of the archaeological resource within the development area.

3.2 The first phase of the archaeological evaluation consisted of a non-intrusive geophysical survey (Hibbitt and Allen 2008), which revealed a number of anomalies that were predominantly associated with known remains identified in a preceding archaeological desk-based assessment (Clay 2007). The survey formed the basis for the location of the evaluation trenches: the second phase of investigation.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

4.1 The archaeological and historical background has been discussed in detail in the preceding desk-based assessment (Clay 2007) and therefore the information below represents a summary of this data.

4.2 There is limited evidence for prehistoric activity in the surrounding landscape, although this is mostly at some distance from the site. A hoard of Bronze Age metalwork was discovered in 1855, c.800m south-west of the school (SMR Reference MLO9090).

4.3 The desk-based assessment suggested a moderate potential of Romano-British activity on site based on the proximity of a road running from London to Lewes, however the only findspots associated with the line of this road are at some distance from the site (SMR References MLO19469, 070719, 070935, Finch 1999).

4.4 Excavated evidence suggests that Beckenham developed as a permanent settlement in the 9th or 10th centuries, and also appears in the Domesday Book as a holding of Ansgot of Rochester (Harward 2001; Williams and Martin 1992). The current site however is well beyond this settlement and formed part of Langley Manor, a 13th century estate owned by the Longele family (Inman and Tonkin 1993).

4.5 The Tithe Map of 1838 shows the development area as open parkland, in use as a meadow, with two tracks associated with the former Langley Park estate crossing the area (after Clay 2007).

4.6 Until the arrival of the railway in 1858, Beckenham had remained a largely rural settlement. Throughout the following decades however, the population grew and together with the southwards expansion of London, Beckenham became a London borough in 1935, and 30 years later became part of the Borough of Bromley (Jessup 1978). The school was established on the current site in 1969 (Mr Rob Northcott *pers. comm.*).

5.0 Methodology

5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by the author and Chris Clay between the 28th and 30th of October 2008. The trial excavation methodology entailed the excavation of four trenches, each 20m long and 2m wide, the locations of which were based on the results of the preceding geophysical survey, and agreed with the Archaeology Advisor for the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (Figure 2). Trench One was moved slightly to the north to avoid the rugby pitch whilst continuing to target the parallel linear anomalies running north-north-west to south-south-east. Trench 3 was moved to the north-west to limit damage to the school rugby field while still targeting the curvilinear anomaly.

5.2 Machine excavation was carried out using a 3CX JCB excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless dykeing bucket. For each trench modern topsoil and underlying subsoil were removed and kept separately in order to preserve as much of the playing field's turf as possible. Under close archaeological supervision the soil was removed in spits not exceeding 0.1m in depth until the first archaeologically significant horizon was exposed. All further excavation was then carried out by hand.

5.3 Archaeological features were sample excavated in order to determine their depth, profile, orientation and where possible, date and function. A full written record of all archaeological features and deposits was made on Allen Archaeological Associates context record sheets, accompanied by plan and section drawings at appropriate scales (1:50, 1:20 and 1:10). A full colour photographic record was maintained, and selected prints have been included as an appendix to this report (Appendix 1).

6.0 **Results** (Figures 3 - 6)

6.1 **Trench 1** (Figure 3)

6.1.1 The trench was positioned to investigate a series of parallel linear anomalies that were believed to probably reflect agricultural remains such as ridge and furrow or steam ploughing. Trench 1 ran broadly east – west.

6.1.2 The uppermost layer, 100, measured 0.2m in depth and consisted of mid brown silty sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded natural flint pebbles, representing the modern surface for the school playing field.

6.1.3 Topsoil layer 100 sealed seven parallel land drain cuts, aligned north-north-west to south-south-east. A single example was excavated, and exhibited a steep sided cut c.0.5m deep, with a ceramic drainage pipe at its base. All the cuts were backfilled with mid greyish brown, silty sand and abundant cinder (hereafter referred to as 'Type A' drains).

6.1.4 The land drains cut a coarse, mid greyish yellow and gravelly sand layer, 101, with frequent inclusions of sub-rounded and rounded flint pebbles, representing the natural drift geology.

6.2 **Trench 2** (Figure 4)

6.2.1 A curvilinear anomaly that was identified during the preceding geophysical survey was investigated by the excavation of Trench 2. The trench was orientated north-north-east to south-south-west.

6.2.2 Topsoil layer 200 measured 0.2 – 0.3m in depth and consisted of mid brown silty sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded and rounded natural flint pebbles.

6.2.3 The topsoil sealed three land drain cuts (hereafter referred to as 'Type B'). The exposed cuts had slightly concave sides and base, and were significantly shallower than the Type A examples. The cuts were backfilled with mid greyish brown silty sand with frequent inclusions of rounded and sub-rounded flint pebbles, and the exposed drains themselves had a ridged exterior.

6.2.4 The three land drains were cut through layer 207, a c.0.2m deep mid yellowish brown, gravelly sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded and rounded flint pebbles, interpreted as a layer of re-deposited natural, possibly associated with the development of the playing fields.

6.2.5 Sealed by layer 207 was a shallow, concave sided cut [202] of a west-north-west to east-south-east aligned linear feature. It contained two dated fills, 203 and 206. The secondary fill, 203, consisted of a compact, mid grey sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded flint pebbles. Two fragments of late 18th century pottery were recovered from this deposit, as well as one undated fragment of possibly locally produced flat roof tile. 203 sealed the primary silting deposit, 206, a mixture of fine, fairly loose, light to mid grey sand with rare inclusions of rounded flint pebbles. This fill contained two sherds of late 15th to early 17th century pottery and a curved roof tile fragment of possible medieval date. The feature most likely corresponds with the geophysical anomaly that the trench was positioned to investigate.

6.2.6 207 also sealed a small undated, very shallow (c.0.04m deep) and irregular sub-oval pit [204]. No finds were recovered from its naturally silted fill 205, a compact, mid grey sand with moderate inclusions of sub-angular ironstone and sub-rounded pebbles. This may be a natural rather than an archaeological feature.

6.2.7 The two features both cut the natural drift geology 201, mid greyish yellow and gravelly sand layer, with frequent inclusions of sub-rounded and rounded flint pebbles.

6.3 **Trench 3** (Figure 5)

6.3.1 Trench 3 was positioned to investigate a curvilinear anomaly that was identified in the eastern half of the proposed new school. It was broadly orientated east-north-east – west-south-west.

6.3.2 The topsoil, 300, was a 0.25 – 0.3m deep dark greyish brown silty sand with occasional rounded pebbles. It sealed 304, a 0.22m deep layer consisting of a compact, mid grey clayey sand with occasional inclusions of degraded brick and tile fragments as well as frequent rounded flint pebbles. One sherd of late 18th century pottery and one undated roof tile fragment were recovered from this layer, which was interpreted as likely representing a ground raising/levelling deposit associated with the development of the playing fields on former parkland

6.3.3 304 was cut by four Type B land drains, all running on different alignments and sealing three Type A land drains, thus indicating the stratigraphy of the two land drain types (i.e. Type B is later than Type A). One Type A drain running broadly north-east to south-west terminated within the trench and was cut by a Type B drain cut, confirming the stratigraphy of the two phases of land drainage.

6.3.4 At the east end of the trench was a very shallow linear feature, [302]. It was aligned north-west to south-east and had very diffuse edges and survived to a depth of c.0.07m. It contained an undated natural silting deposit 303, comprising compact, dark grey clayey sand with occasional small rounded pebbles. This feature represents the curvilinear anomaly recorded during the geophysical survey.

6.3.5 All features cut the natural geology 301, a mixed layer of light yellowish brown and greyish brown, coarse, clayey sand with frequent inclusions of rounded flint pebbles.

6.4 **Trench 4** (Figure 6)

6.4.1 The trench was located to investigate the same geophysical anomalies that Trench 1 was positioned to investigate, and it ran north-east – south-west.

6.4.2 The topsoil 400 was the same as in Trenches 1 to 3, comprising dark greyish brown silty sand with occasional rounded pebbles, with a maximum depth of 0.30m. At the north-east end of the trench it sealed 403, a layer of very dark grey silty sand with abundant cinder, very similar to the material infilling the Type A drains. It was up to 0.28m deep and extended 4.4m from the north-east end of the trench.

6.4.3 Below 403 was layer 402, a c.0.25m deep mid yellowish brown gravelly sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded flint pebbles. Both 402 and 403 are likely to be associated with the levelling of the sports ground.

6.4.4 402 was cut by two Type B land drains, one running in a north-west to south-east direction and the second north-east to south-west and turning north-westwards at its south-west end. The cut for this land drain also cut two Type A drains.

6.4.5 402 sealed six Type A land drains, all aligned north-north-west to south-south-east.

6.4.6 The natural drift geology, layer 401 consisted of coarse, mid greyish yellow gravelly sand with frequent inclusions of sub-rounded and rounded flint pebbles.

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

7.1 The archaeological evaluation has shown the presence of a small number of archaeological features, in Trenches 2 and 3, as well as two phases of land drainage.

7.2 Trench 2 revealed a shallow ditch that reflects a curvilinear geophysical anomaly. The few finds recovered suggest that it may have been open from the late 15th or early 17th century until at least the 18th century. This indicates that the feature pre-dates or was contemporary with the parkland; however the Tithe Map of 1838 which depicts the parkland does not show the feature, indicating it was probably out of use by the early-mid 19th century. Due to the lack of finds, little can be said of the date and function for the sub-oval pit in the same trench, although both features were very shallow and are likely to have been truncated significantly, perhaps by ploughing, as well as by works associated with the levelling of the area to create the sports ground.

7.3 The location of the shallow feature excavated at the east end of Trench 3 suggests that it is part of a curvilinear feature recorded by the geophysical survey, and targeted by this trench. No dating evidence was recovered and its shallow depth suggests that it represents either a heavily truncated field boundary or drainage feature, although its curving form may suggest a natural feature.

7.4 The development of the area as a sports ground in the mid 20th century may have occasioned the insertion of the Type A drains, which run on a north-north-west to south-south-east alignment and are predominant in the central part of the site (Trenches 1 and 4), with outliers in Trench 3 to the east.

7.5 The Type A drains are sealed by layers 207, 304 and 402. These three deposits are likely to represent part of the same process, having been deposited to level the former parkland into a suitable surface for leisure activities, immediately after the insertion of the Type A drains. Two finds were recovered from 304; an undated roof tile fragment and plant pot fragment likely to date to the later 18th century, which should be considered to be residual in this context.

7.6 Another dumped deposit, 403 was discovered in Trench 4. It consists of similar cinder material to that found backfilling the Type A land drains, and is considered to be associated with the construction of the sports ground. It may have served to provide additional drainage for a square feature visible on the geophysics (Figure 2), that was interpreted as a cricket pitch.

7.7 Because the ground had already been developed as a sports ground before the school took possession in the late 1960s, it is probable that the only additions made were in the insertion of the later land drains of Type B and re-laying of a new surface represented by topsoil 100, 200, 300 and 400, to create the playing field.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

8.1 This scheme of archaeological investigation has enabled an appropriate sample of the proposed development area to be investigated and assessed, and has shown that a small number of archaeological features of limited significance exist on the site. The results of this investigation will inform the planning process, and allow for the creation of an appropriate mitigation strategy for the development, if appropriate.

9.0 Acknowledgements

9.1 Allen Archaeological Associates would like to thank Frankham Consultancy Group Ltd, and their clients, Langley Park School for Boys, for this commission, and for their co-operation during the fieldwork.

10.0 References

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11.0 Site archive

11.1 The documentary and physical archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeological Associates. It will be submitted to an appropriate receiving museum within six months of the completion of the project.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates

Plate 1: General shot of the site, looking north-east. Trench 2 is on the left of the picture and Trench 4 is on the right, with Trenches 1 and 3 beyond Trench 2.

Plate 2: South-facing section of a Type A land drain in Trench 1, looking north.

Plate 3: West-facing section of linear [202] in Trench 2, looking east.

Plate 4: South-east facing section of ditch or natural feature [302], cut by a Type B land drain. Looking north-north-west.

Plate 5: Pre-excavation shot of Trench 4, looking east-north-east. Most notable are the cinder filled cuts for the Type A land drains.

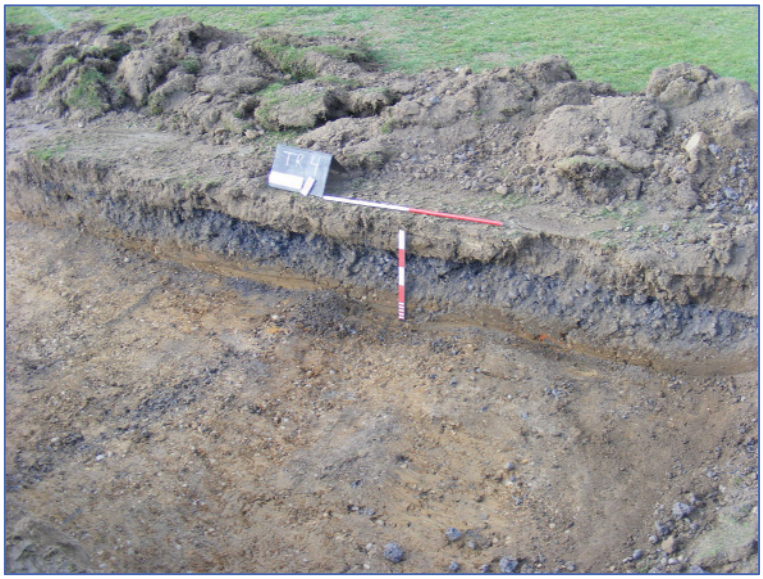


Plate 6: South-east facing section at east end of Trench 4, showing layers 400, 403 and 402. Looking west-north-west.

Appendix 2: Pottery and Ceramic Building Material assessment

by Alan Vince

A small collection of pottery and ceramic building material was recovered from an archaeological evaluation carried out at Langley Park School for Boys, Beckenham, undertaken by Allen Archaeological Associates (Site Code: LPB08).

The ceramic building material cannot be closely dated and the pottery ranges in date from the late 15th/early 17th centuries to the late 18th century.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Three fragments of ceramic building material were recovered. Two come from flat roof tiles and the third from a curved tile (which could be a ridge tile, a hip tile or conceivably a medieval version of the Roman *imbrex* tiles).

All three have a similar appearance at x20 magnification, containing few visible inclusions in the body and a fine quartz moulding sand on the base (and in the case of the curved tile also, more sparsely, on the upper surface). Rare red clay pellets, rounded polished quartz grains with a red earthy coating, and subangular brown-stained flint fragments were present but rare in the fabric.

The fabric contains a much higher proportion of polished quartz grains than wares produced in the suburbs of London (such as Vauxhall and Lambeth) and it is quite likely that they come from a local source.

Pottery

Post-medieval

Two sherds of a red earthenware bowl with an internal white slip covering the lower part of the body and base were recovered (GUYS). Like the ceramic building material, they contain polished quartz grains, although in a much higher frequency. Such vessels are English copies of a form found in the Low Countries in the late medieval period and were probably first produced in the Thames basin in the later 15th or early 16th century. The type continued to be used, however, into the early 17th century.

Early Modern

Small fragments of Creamware (CREA) and Transfer-printed ware (TPW) were recovered. These date to the later 18th century or later. A body fragment of an unglazed plant pot is probably of similar age.

Assessment

Trench 2

Feature 202, a curvilinear feature, contained two deposits which produced finds. The lower, 206, produced two sherds of a late 15th to early 17th century bowl and a fragment of curved ceramic building material, and the upper fill, 203, produced small sherds of Creamware, Transfer-Printed ware which indicate a late 18th century or later date. It is possible that the feature was open for a considerable period of time, or that the pottery from the lower fill is residual.

Trench 3

Layer 304 is interpreted as re-deposited natural, possibly levelling for the playing field. It produced a sherd of plant pot and a fragment of flat roof tile.

Further Work

No further work is recommended.

Retention

All the finds should be retained since they come from stratified deposits.

Pottery and CBM archive

Context	Trench	class	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Description
203	2	POTTERY	TPW		PLATE?	BS	1	1	0.5	WILLOW PATTERN
203	2	POTTERY	CREA		PLATE	R	1	1	0.5	
203	2	CBM	MTIL	ANG FLINT;SPARSE GSQ;FINE SANDY MOULDING SAND	FLAT	BS	1	1	20	
206	2	POTTERY	GUYS	GSQ; ANG FLINT	PANC	BS	1	1	0	SLIPPED INTERIOR UNDER PALE GREEN GL
206	2	CBM	MTIL	FINE SAND MOULDING SAND	CURVED	BS	1	1	0	
304	3	POTTERY	LPMLOC	FE-COATED GSQ	FLP	BS	1	1	10	
304	3	CBM	MTIL	ANG FLINT;SPARSE GSQ;FINE SANDY MOULDING SAND	FLAT	BS	1	1	51	

Appendix 3: Context summary list

Trench 1

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Mid brown silty sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded natural flint pebbles Seals: Land drains Type A	Topsoil - modern playing field surface
101	Layer	Coarse, mid greyish yellow gravelly sand with frequent inclusions of sub-rounded flint pebbles Cut by: Land drains Type A	Natural geology of river terrace deposits

Trench 2

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
200	Layer	Mid brown silty sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded natural flint pebbles Seals: Land drains Type B	Topsoil - modern playing field surface
201	Layer	Coarse, mid greyish yellow gravelly sand with frequent inclusions of sub-rounded flint pebbles Cut by: [202] and [204]	Natural geology of river terrace deposits
202	Cut	Cut of a shallow, curvilinear feature with concave sides and base, aligned WNW-ESE Contains: 206 and 203 Cuts: [201]	Cut of curvilinear feature
203	Fill	Mid grey, compact sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded pebbles Sealed by: 207 Fill of: [202]	Secondary fill of curvilinear feature, possibly naturally silted
204	Cut	Cut of shallow semi-oval pit with concave sides and flat base Contains: 205 Cuts: [201]	Cut of an undated, shallow, possibly natural pit
205	Fill	Compact, mid grey sand with moderate inclusions of sub-angular ironstone and sub-rounded pebbles Sealed by: 207 Fill of: [204]	Natural silting of pit
206	Fill	Light to mid grey fine and fairly loose sand with rare inclusions of sub-rounded pebbles Sealed by: 203 Fill of: [202]	Primary silting of curvilinear feature
207	Layer	Mid yellowish brown, gravelly sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded flint pebbles Cut by: land drains Type B Seals: 203 and 205	Made ground of re-deposited natural and possible levelling of sports ground

Trench 3

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
300	Layer	Dark greyish brown silty sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded natural flint pebbles Seals: Land drains Type B	Topsoil - modern playing field surface
301	Layer	Mixed light yellowish brown and greyish brown, coarse clayey sand with frequent inclusions of rounded flint pebbles Cut by: [302] and land drains type A	Natural geology of river terrace deposits
302	Cut	Cut of a NNW-SSE running, very shallow feature with concave sides and flat base Contains: 303 Cuts: [301]	Cut of a ditch or natural feature
303	Fill	Dark grey, clayey sand with occasional small rounded pebbles Sealed by: 304 Fill of: [302]	Natural silting of ditch or natural feature
304	Layer	Compact, mid grey clayey sand with occasional degraded brick/tile fragments and frequent rounded flint pebbles Cut by: Land drains Type B Seals: [302] and land drains Type A	Made ground of re-deposited natural and possible levelling of sports ground

Trench 4

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
400	Layer	Mid brown silty sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded natural flint pebbles Seals: Land drains Type B	Topsoil - modern playing field surface
401	Layer	Coarse, mid greyish yellow gravelly sand with frequent inclusions of sub-rounded flint pebbles Cut by: Land drains Type A	Natural geology of river terrace deposits
402	Layer	Mid yellowish brown, gravelly sand with moderate inclusions of sub-rounded flint pebbles Cut by: land drains Type B Seals: land drains type A	Made ground of re-deposited natural and possible levelling of sports ground
403	Layer	Black silty sand mixed with abundant coarse cinder Cut by: land drains Type B Seals: 402	Modern layer of cinder possibly associated with construction of sports field

Figure 2: Trench locations in blue, with archaeological deposits shown in black. Superimposed over geophysical survey results, with new school outlined in red. At scale 1:1000

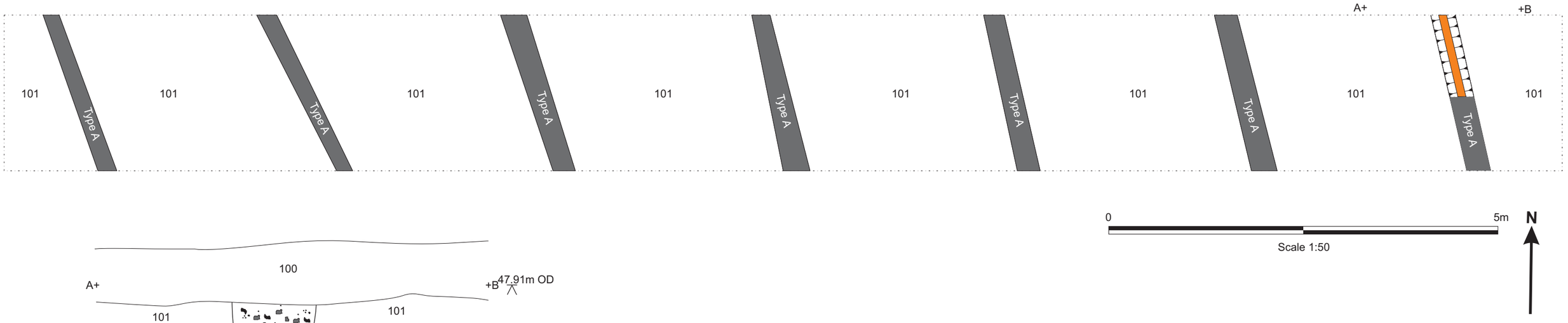


Figure 3: Plans and sections of Trench 1. Plan at scale 1:50 and section at 1:20

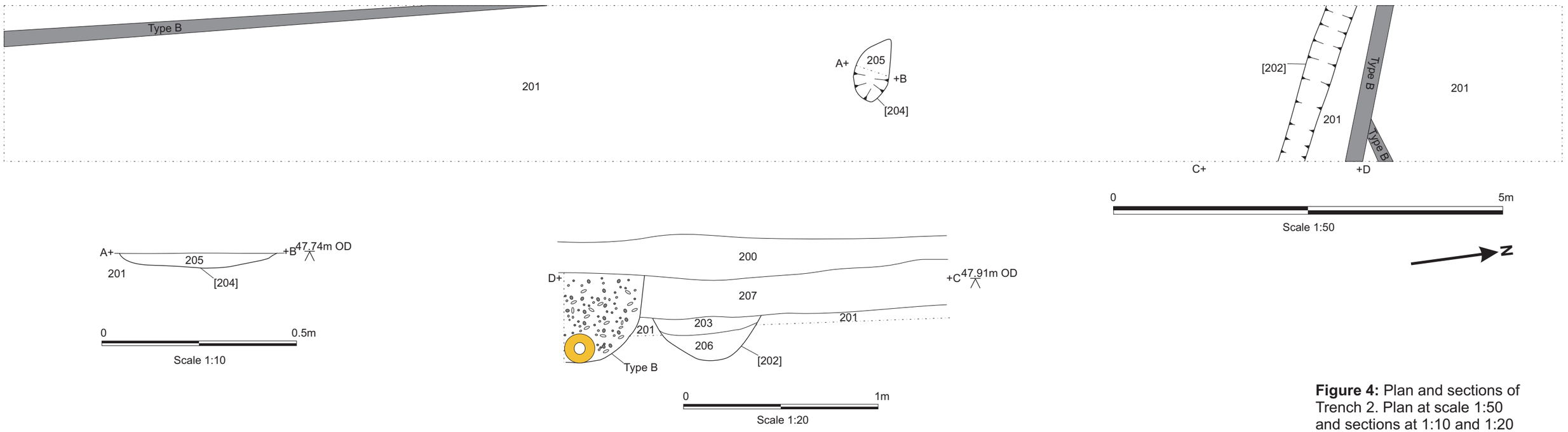
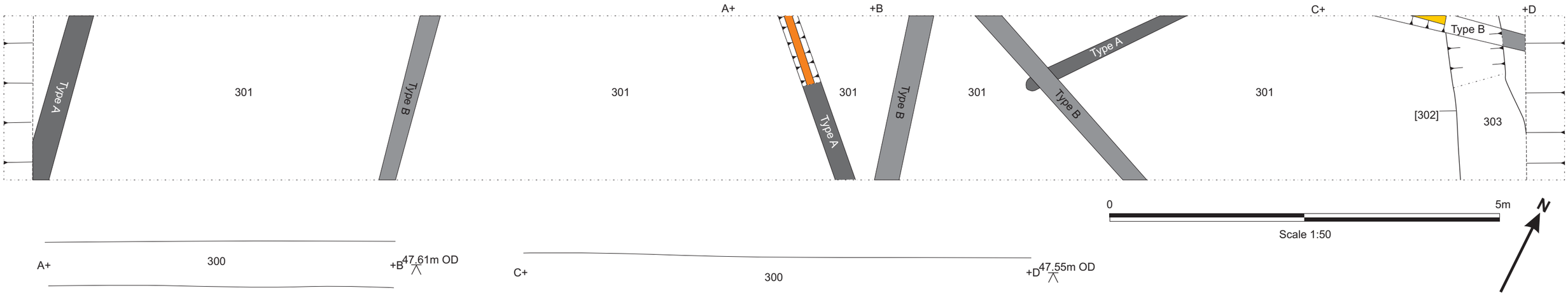


Figure 4: Plan and sections of Trench 2. Plan at scale 1:50 and sections at 1:10 and 1:20



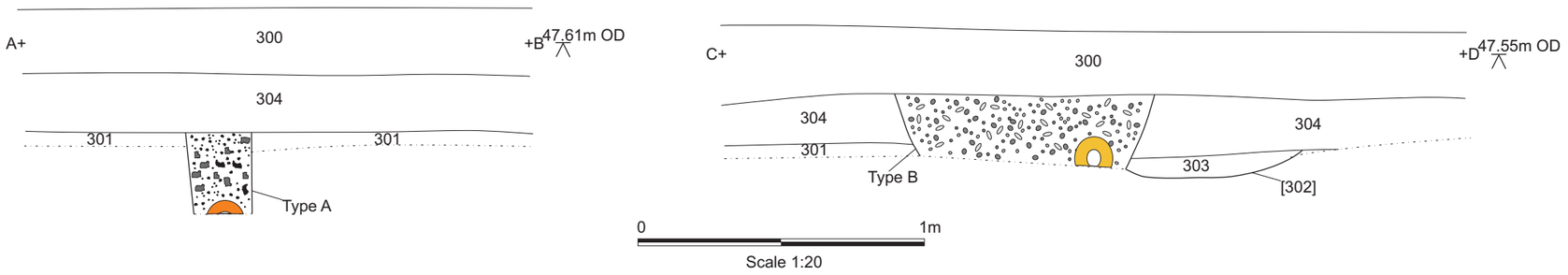
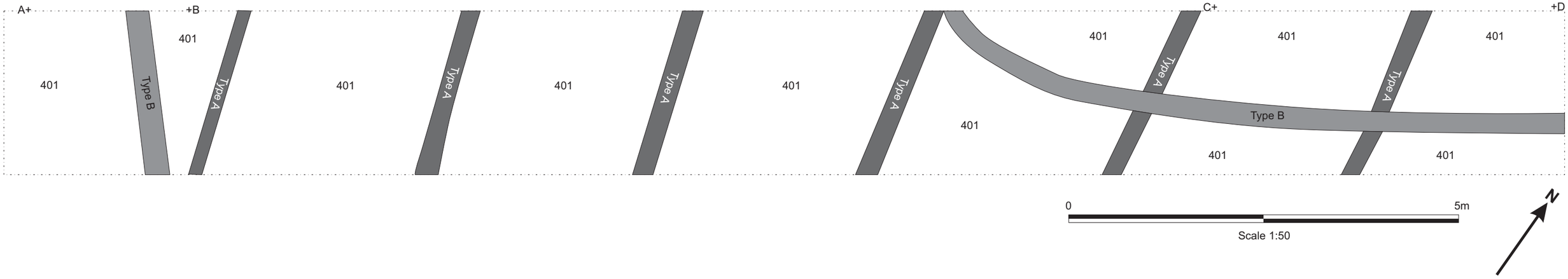


Figure 5: Plan and sections of Trench 3. Plan at scale 1:50 and sections at 1:20



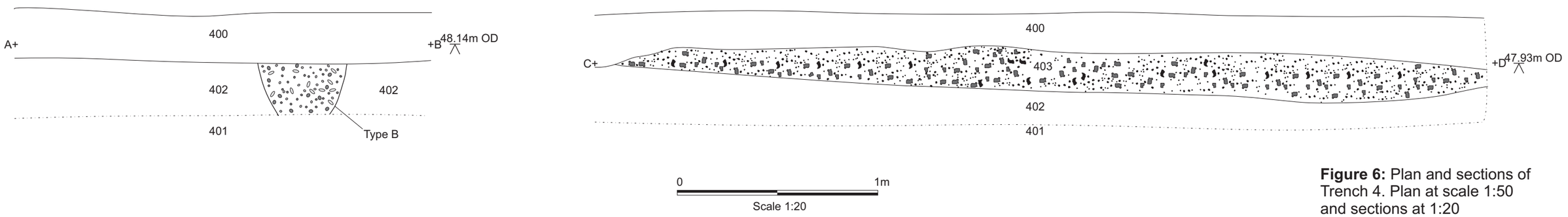


Figure 6: Plan and sections of Trench 4. Plan at scale 1:50 and sections at 1:20