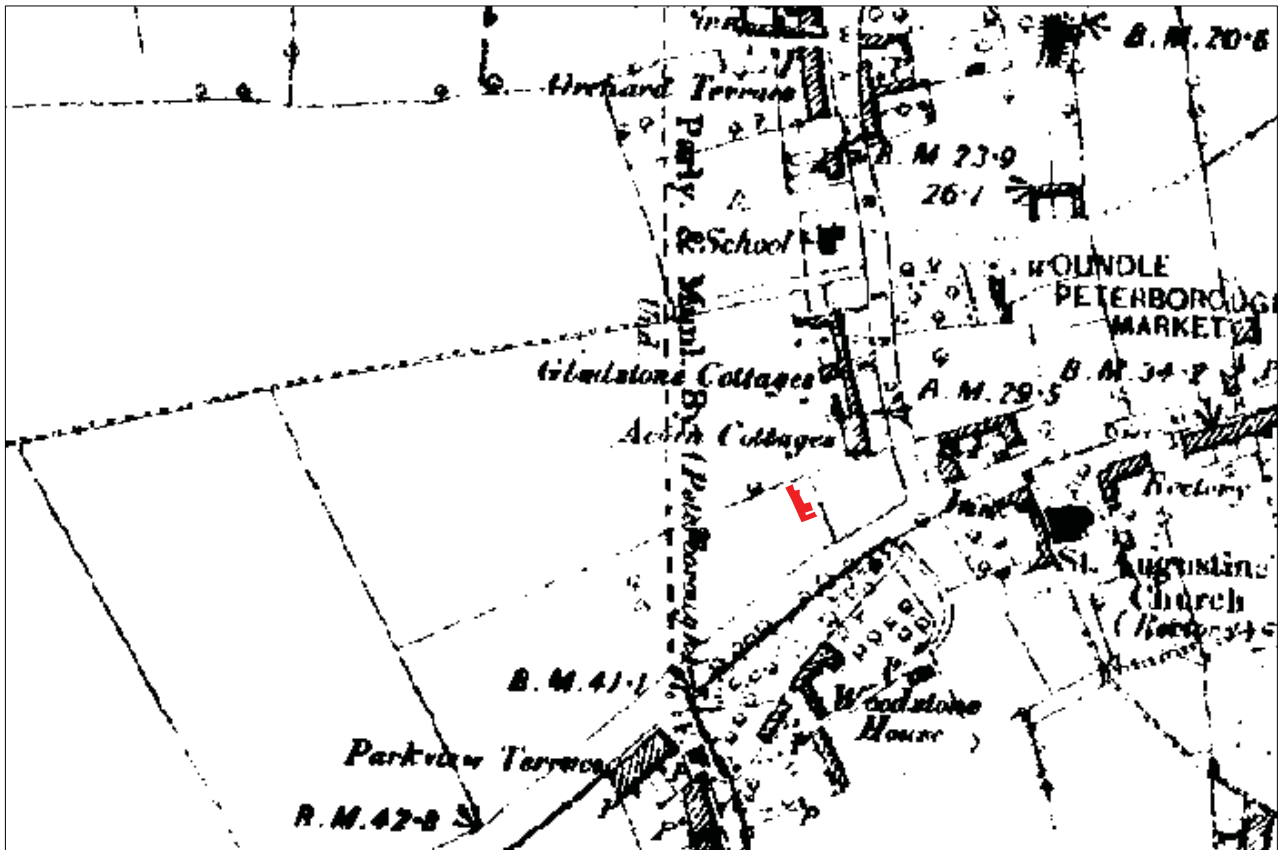


ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:

TRIAL TRENCHING ON LAND OFF ROBINS CLOSE, WOODSTON, PETERBOROUGH

Planning Reference: 08/00147/FUL
NGR: TL 1841 9780
AAL Site Code: WORC 10
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-72576



Report prepared for BM Design Consultancy

On behalf of their client

Orchard Properties (UK) Limited

By
Allen Archaeology Limited
Report Number 2010005

February 2010



The
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Summary

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by BM Design Consultancy on behalf of Orchard Properties (UK) Limited to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land off Robins Close in Woodston, Peterborough. The evaluation was carried out to inform a planning application prior to its determination.
- The site lies in an area of some archaeological potential, with occasional findspots of prehistoric and Roman artefacts. Important medieval remains have been discovered less than 250m to the south-east of the site.
- Four trenches were excavated in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site. These exposed four undated features, three of which were sealed beneath an undated subsoil, and the fourth was found to cut this layer. No other archaeological deposits or features were uncovered during the works.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by BM Design Consultancy on behalf of Orchard Properties (UK) Limited to carry out an archaeological evaluation by trial excavation on land off Robins Close in Woodston, Peterborough.
- 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 1994, revised 2001 and 2008), a brief produced by Peterborough City Council Archaeological Services (hereafter PCCAS) (Hatton-Casa 2009), and a specification prepared by this company (Allen 2010).
- 1.3 Following completion of the scheme, the paper and object archive will be submitted to Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Peterborough lies approximately 48km north-west of Cambridge, with Woodston positioned to the south-west of the centre of the city. The site is located towards the traditional core of Woodston, c.0.4km south of the River Nene, immediately to the west of Robins Close.
- 2.2 The site centres on NGR TL 1841 9780 and lies at approximately 9m above Ordnance Datum. The local geology is recorded as made ground overlying the solid geology of Kellaway Clay (British Geological Survey 1984). The evaluation has showed that there are discrete patches of limestone brash, and the majority of the geological deposits beneath this comprise a mix of clayey silts and clays (See Section 6.0 below).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application was submitted to Peterborough City Council on 4th February 2010 for six new dwellings on land off Robins Close in Woodston, Peterborough (Planning Reference 08/00147/FUL). Peterborough City Council Archaeological Services (PCCAS) requested the archaeological evaluation in advance of the determination of the application, to provide additional information to mitigate for any archaeological deposits of significance.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 A brief provided by PCCAS (Hatton-Casa 2009), information held on the Peterborough City Council Hawkeye Interactive Map (<http://hawkeye.peterborough.gov.uk/hawkeye/default.aspx>), and various published sources have been consulted to compile the archaeological and historical background to the site.
- 4.2 Occasional artefacts of prehistoric date have been discovered in the surrounding area, including a Palaeolithic handaxe c.275m to the south (Peterborough Historic Environment Record (Hereafter PHER) Reference 01795), a Neolithic arrowhead c.600m to the north-west (PHER Reference 01400), and Bronze Age pottery within the River Nene to the north-east of the site (PHER Reference 01665a).
- 4.3 Roman activity is also attested by several scattered finds, including a coin found approximately 275m to the east, off Jubilee Street (PHER Reference 01617), and a Roman urn c.250m to the south-south-west (PHER Reference 01564).

- 4.4 Woodston is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Wodestun* (Williams and Martin 1992). At the time of the survey there was one major landowner; the Abbot of Thorney who had five hides to the geld (*ibid.*). The site lies towards the historic core of the settlement, so it is possible that archaeological deposits of late Saxon and medieval date may be encountered.
- 4.5 Although no known archaeological remains lie within the footprint of the site, important medieval remains have been discovered less than 250m to the south-east, to the south of Oundle Road (Casa-Hatton 2009). The remains included medieval building remains comprising timber buildings and stone walls, a well and an in-filled pond, dating from the 11th to 16th century (PHER Reference 51482).

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The fieldwork was carried out by a team of experienced field archaeologists during the week beginning 9th February 2010. The evaluation entailed the excavation of four trenches; three measuring 15m x 1.6m and one measuring 10m x 1.6m, in locations suggested by the Heritage Access Officer at Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery.
- 5.2 Evidence was gathered in each trench to establish the presence/absence, nature, date, depth, quality, survival and importance of any archaeological deposits to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of the archaeological remains in relation to the proposed development.
- 5.4 Machine excavation was carried out with a 3CX JCB excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless dykeing bucket. Under close archaeological supervision, the overburden was removed in spits not exceeding 0.1m in depth until the first archaeologically significant or natural geological horizon was exposed in each trench. All further excavation was then carried out by hand.
- 5.5 The trenches were cleaned by hand to verify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits and features. A full written record of the archaeological features was made on AAL context record sheets, accompanied by plan and section drawings at appropriate scales (1:20 and 1:50). A full colour photographic record was maintained, and selected prints have been included as an appendix to this report (Appendix 1).
- 5.6 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 2. Two digit numbers within square brackets reflect cut features (e.g. pit [204]).

6.0 Results

6.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3)

- 6.1.1 Trench 1 was at the southern end of the site, running north-west to south-east. Although a significant amount of groundwater was encountered in the trench, it was noted that no archaeological deposits were present during machine excavation. The uppermost deposit encountered was a 0.34m deep dark grey silty loam with frequent roots, modern detritus (for example concrete, brick, pottery, iron, coal), 100. This garden soil sealed 101, a firm dark brown silty clay with some roots, measuring 0.15m deep. Below this subsoil was a mix of yellow/olive clay and orange/brown clayey silt 102, representing the natural geology.

6.2 Trench 2 (Figure 4)

- 6.2.1 The trench was located towards the eastern edge of the site, and ran north-west to south-east. During machine excavation, a modern soakaway was encountered at the south-east end of the trench. Due to the ingress of water from this feature, the south-easternmost 2.5m of the trench was immediately backfilled to prevent flooding and allow investigation of the rest of the trench.
- 6.2.2 The sequence exposed was broadly similar to that exposed in Trench 1. The uppermost garden soil 200, contained abundant modern debris, and was found to seal a dark brown clayey silt subsoil 201 that was devoid of finds. At the north-west end of the trench subsoil 201 overlay 202, a 0.2m thick layer of moderate sized platy limestone, identified as natural limestone brash. Beneath this was 203, naturally formed yellow/olive clay and orange/brown clayey silt.
- 6.2.3 Towards the north-west end of the trench was a sub-oval feature, [204], that was sealed by subsoil 201. The pit was 1.0m long and 0.64m wide, with gradual sides and a fairly flat base. The sole backfill of the pit was grey coarse silt with occasional pebbles and occasional charcoal, 205, which was devoid of finds.

6.3 Trench 3 (Figure 5)

- 6.3.1 Trench 3 was positioned to the west of Number 12 Robins Close, and was aligned north-north-east to south-south-west. The uppermost garden soil 300 sealed 301, light brown clayey silt that was between 0.12m and 0.3m deep. This possible former garden soil overlay a layer of brown clayey silt, 302, that was identified as the subsoil noted across the site. Beneath this was the natural mix of clay and clayey silt, 303.
- 6.3.2 At the centre of the trench was the butt-end of an undated linear feature, [304], which had steep convex sides and a rounded base. The linear was backfilled with a firm mottled grey and dark grey/brown clayey silt with some iron flecking and occasional small pebbles, 305. The feature was found to be sealed by subsoil 302 and cutting natural layer 303.
- 6.3.3 At the north end of the trench was [306], an irregularly shaped feature that mostly lay beyond the machine-excavated area. [306] was c.1.1m wide and 0.5 m deep with a steep north side and stepped south side. The pit, which was found to cut subsoil 302 was backfilled with loose mixed light and dark grey/brown clayey silt with occasional small pebbles, 307, which was devoid of finds.

6.4 Trench 4 (Figure 6)

- 6.4.1 Trench 4 was positioned at the north end of the site, running south-east for 15m from the site boundary. Garden soil 400 overlay the 0.4m deep subsoil 401, which contained some flecks of charcoal and coal. At the north end of the trench it was noted that the subsoil sealed limestone brash 402. This in turn sealed 403, mixed natural clayey silt with gravels and silt.
- 6.4.2 At the south end of the trench sub-oval feature [404] was sealed by subsoil 401. The pit had irregular sides and base, and was c.0.7m long, 0.54m wide and 0.08m deep. The pit was backfilled with soft mid brown coarse silt with very occasional charcoal flecks 405, which was devoid of finds.

7.0 Discussion

- 7.1 The four trenches, which comprised a 10% sample of the total footprint of the proposed development area, contained no features or deposits of archaeological significance, other than four undated features.
- 7.2 The broadly uniform stratigraphic sequence exposed was a 0.3m – 0.4m deep garden soil that contained abundant modern refuse, sealing an undated subsoil (0.24m – 0.3m deep) that in turn overlay several natural limestone brash spreads. Below the limestone brash was a mixed natural clayey sand with gravels and clay layer. This sequence varied only in Trench 3, where the modern garden soil sealed a 0.12m to 0.3m thick silt layer identified as the possible remnants of a former soil.
- 7.3 Three of the four undated features were found to be sealed by the ubiquitous subsoil that itself was undated. The fourth feature, in Trench 3, was found to cut the subsoil, suggesting it was formed at a later date than the other features.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 8.1 Despite relatively intensive trenching of the site, the evaluation has exposed only few archaeological deposits, and these are of limited significance. It is therefore concluded that the development will not impact upon any archaeological deposits of significance.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank BM Design Consultancy and their client Orchard Properties (UK) Limited for the commission.

10.0 References

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British Geological Survey, 1984, *Peterborough. England and Wales Sheet 158. Solid and Drift Geology. 1:50,000 Series*. British Geological Survey, Natural Environment Research Council

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IfA, 1994 (revised 2001 and 2008), *Standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*. Reading, Institute for Archaeologists

Williams A. and Martin G.H., 1992, *Domesday Book: A complete translation*, Alecto Historical Editions, London

11.0 Site Archive

- 11.1 The documentary and physical archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeology Limited. It will be submitted to Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery within six months of the completion of the project.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: Overall site shot taken from north-east corner of site, and looking south. Trench 4 is to the right of shot and Trench 3 is in the background



Plate 2: Trench 1 following cleaning. Looking north-north-east



Plate 3: South-west facing section through pit [204] in Trench 2, looking north-north-east



Plate 4: West facing section through linear butt-end [304] in Trench 3, looking east



Plate 5: North facing section through pit [404] in Trench 4, looking south

Appendix 2: Context Summary List

Trench 1

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Moderately firm and friable dark greyish brown clayey silt with frequent modern waste, debris and vegetation. Seals 101	Modern garden soil
101	Layer	Moderately firm dark brown silty clay with occasional root disturbance. Sealed by 100, seals 102	Subsoil
102	Layer	Mix of firm mid yellow/grey clay and mid orange brown clayey silt. Sealed by 102	Natural geology

Trench 2

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
200	Layer	Soft dark grey silty loam with frequent roots, occasional modern pottery and debris. Seals 201	Modern garden soil
201	Layer	Dark brown clayey silt with occasional roots, rare occurrence of coal, charcoal flecks and limestone pebbles. Sealed by 200, seals 202	Subsoil
202	Layer	Moderate sized platy limestone. Sealed by 201, seals 203	Limestone brash geology
203	Layer	Mix of yellowish green clay and light yellowish orange silt with occasional gravel. Sealed by 202	Natural geology
204	Cut	Sub-oval feature with gradual sloping sides and fairly flat base. Contains 205	Shallow undated pit
205	Fill	Mid grey coarse silt with occasional medium sized pebbles and occasional charcoal.	Backfill of pit [204]

Trench 3

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
300	Layer	Moderately firm dark greyish brown clayey silt with frequent roots and rootlets and modern debris. Seals 301	Modern garden soil
301	Layer	Moderately firm light brown clayey silt with sub-rounded small stone pebbles. Sealed by 300, seals 302	Buried garden soil
302	Layer	Moderately firm light greyish brown clayey silt. Sealed by 301, seals 303	Subsoil
303	Layer	Mix of firm light yellow and grey clay and mid orange brown clayey silt. Sealed by 302	Natural geology
304	Cut	E-W aligned terminus with steep sides and curved base. Contains 305	Undated possible linear
305	Fill	Fairly firm mottled mid grey and dark greyish brown clayey silt with iron staining and occasional rounded stones.	Backfill of [304]
306	Cut	Triangular shaped terminus with slightly stepped sides and curved base. Contains 307	Undated pit
307	Fill	Loose mixed light grey and dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small stone pebbles	Backfill of pit [306]

Trench 4

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
400	Layer	Crumbly dark grey silty loam with frequent tree roots and modern debris. Seals 401	Modern garden soil
401	Layer	Mid greyish brown clayey silt with occasional gravel, coal and charcoal. Sealed by 400, seals 402	Subsoil
402	Layer	Medium large platy limestone. Sealed by 401, seals 403	Limestone brash geology
403	Layer	Mix of light yellow and orange silt with gravel and light greenish yellow clay	Natural geology
404	Cut	Sub-oval feature with irregular sides and base. Contains 405	Undated pit
405	Fill	Loose and coarse mid brown silt with occasional charcoal flecks	Backfill of pit [404]

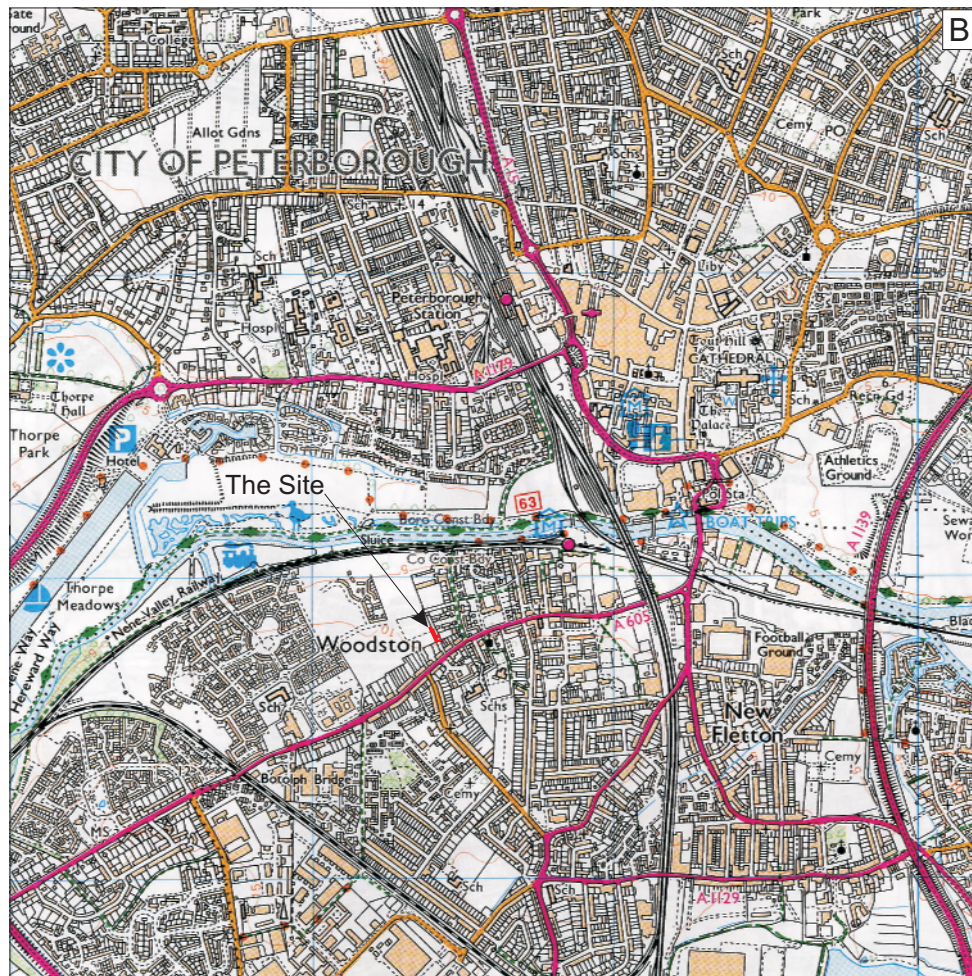
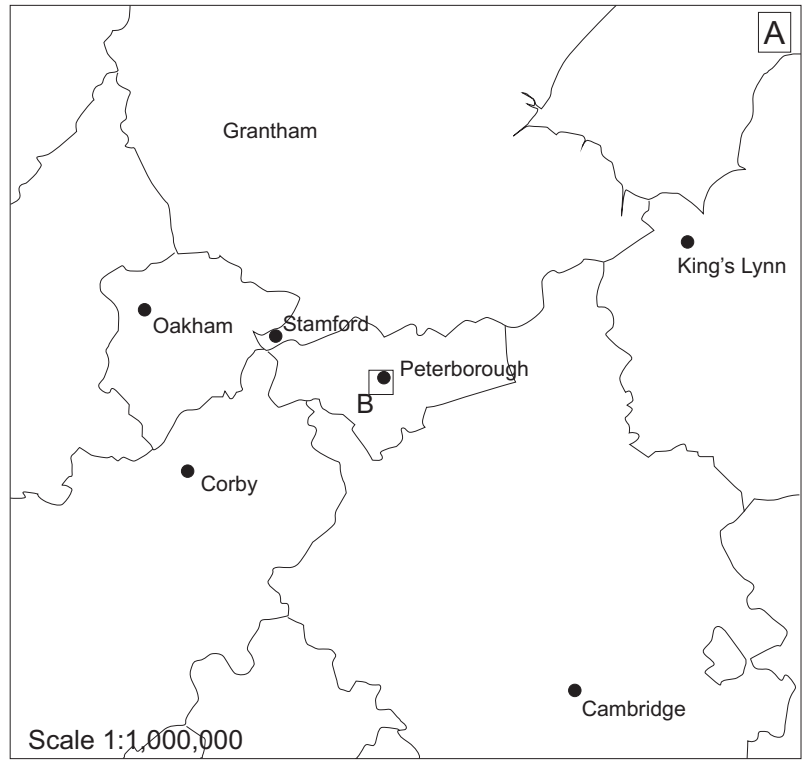
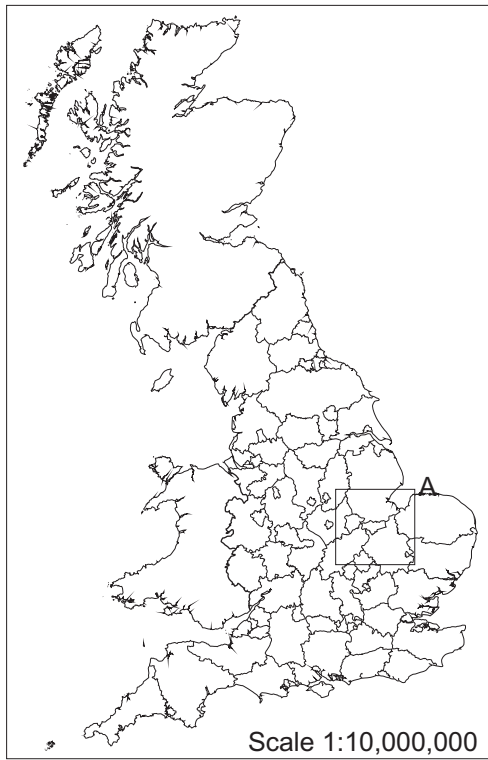


Figure 1: Site location at scale 1:25,000, with site shown in red.

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Figure 2: Trench location plan at scale 1:500, with site outlined in red and trenches shown in blue. Archaeological features are shown in black

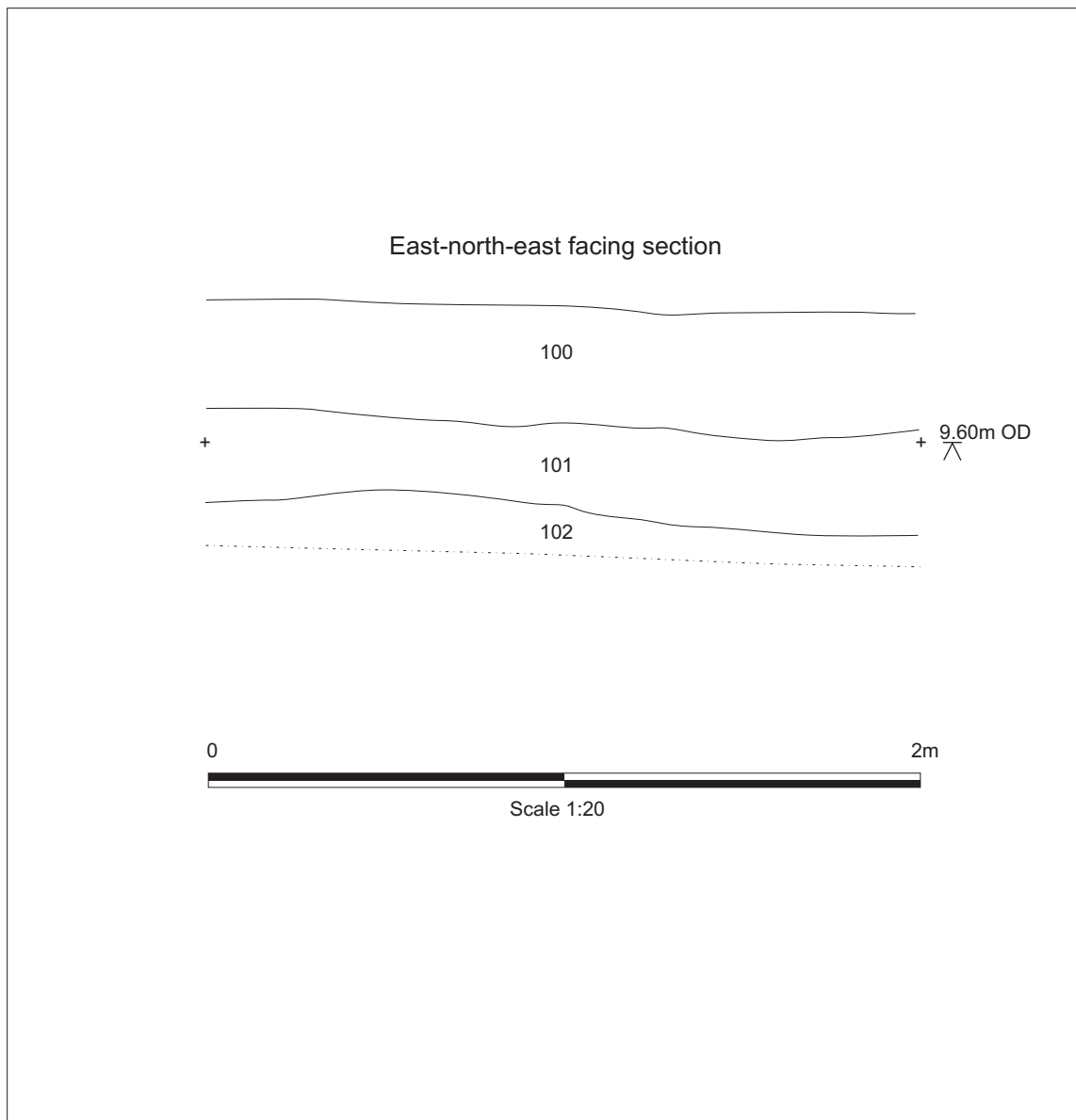
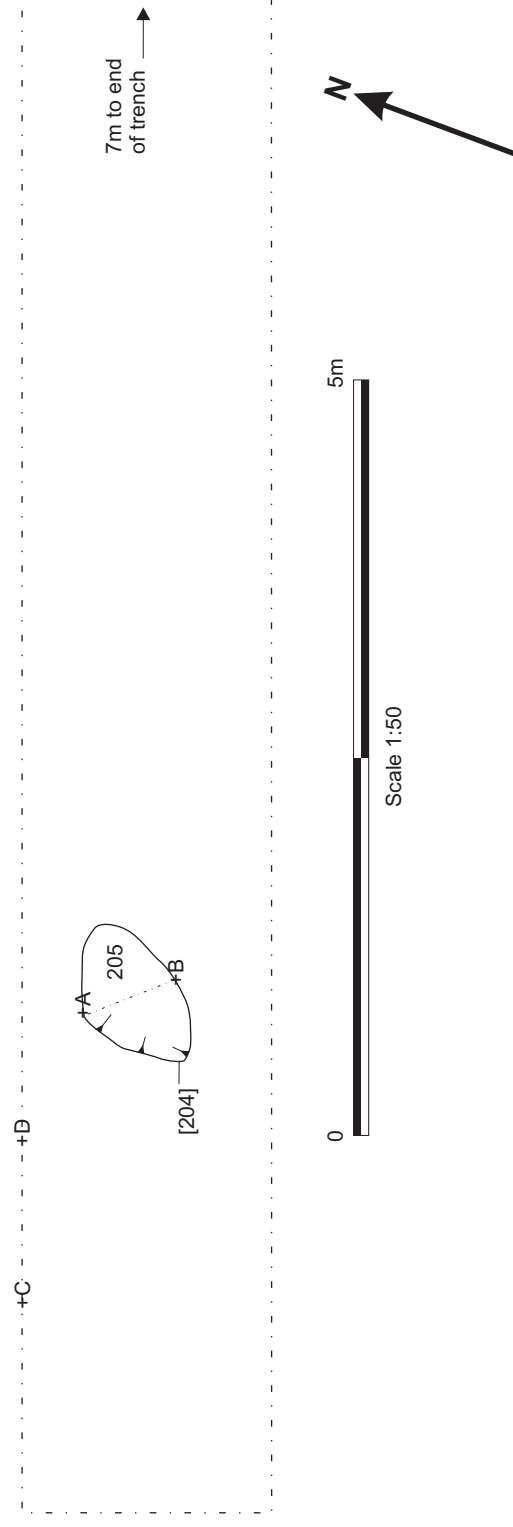
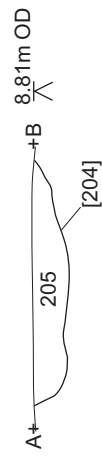


Figure 3: Trench 1 east-north-east-facing representative section at scale 1:20



South-west facing section



South-south-east facing section

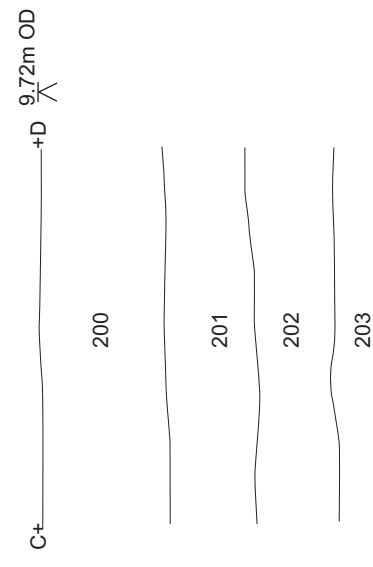


Figure 4: Trench 2 plan at scale 1:50 and sections at scale 1:20

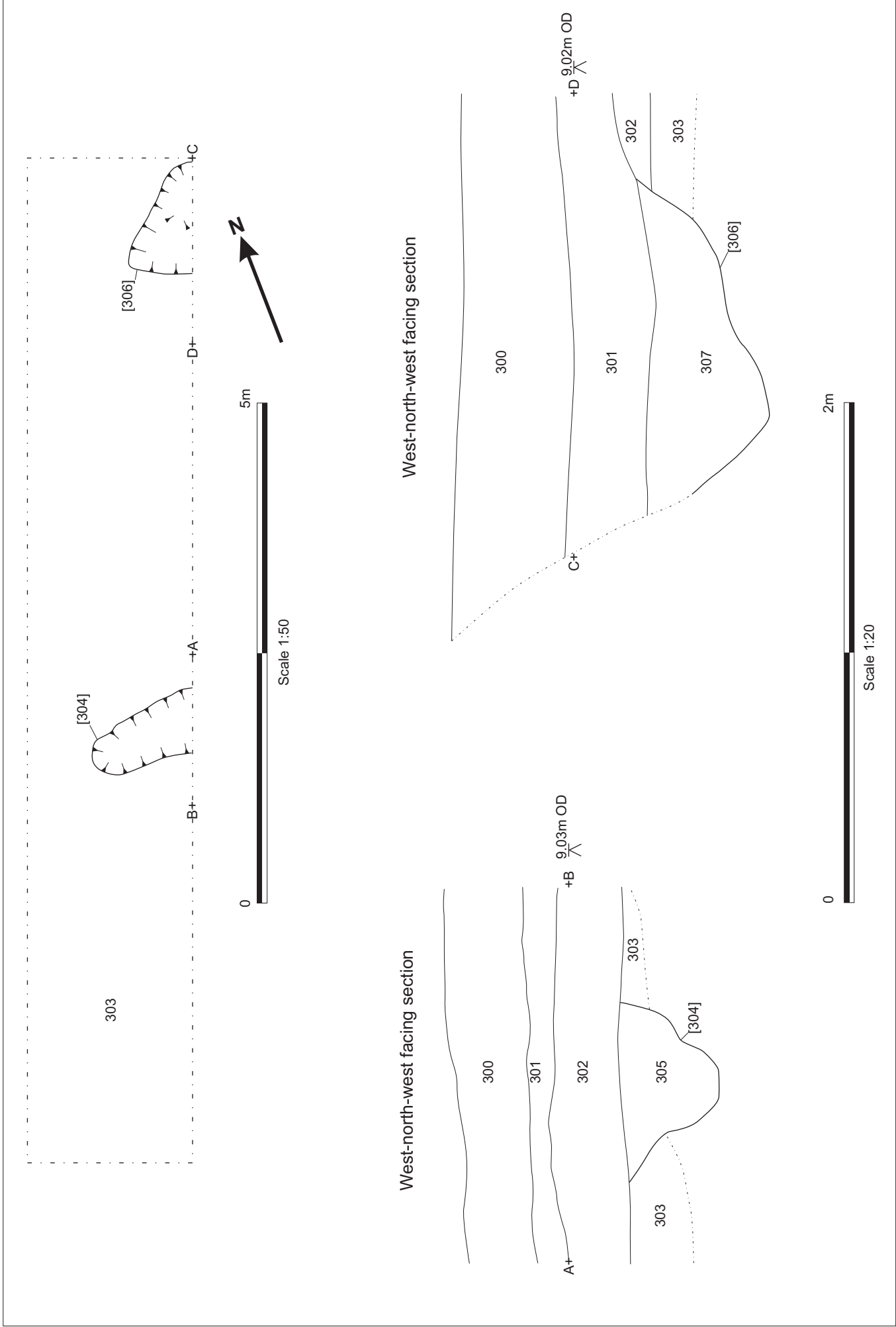
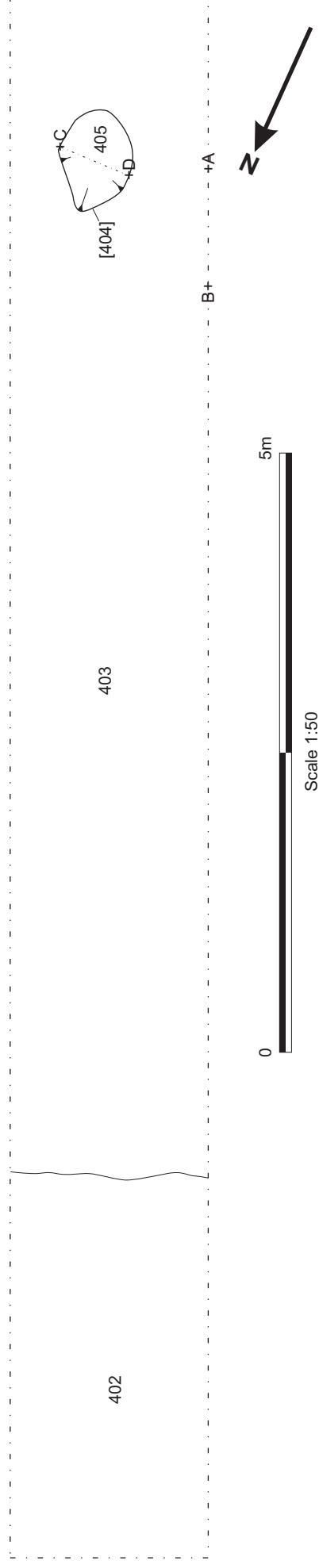
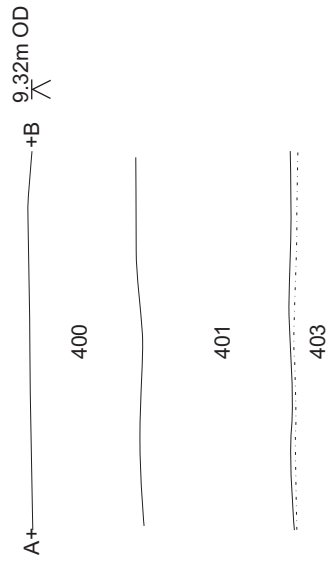


Figure 5: Trench 3 plan at scale 1:50 and sections at scale 1:20



East-north-east facing section



North-facing section

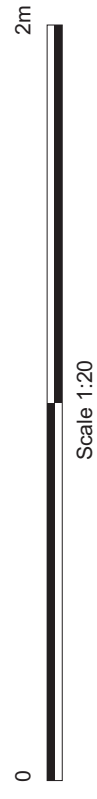
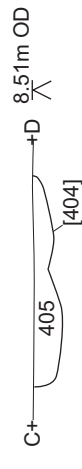


Figure 6: Trench 4 plan at scale 1:50 and sections at 1:20



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