

**LAND AT THE FORMER CASTLE HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE (PROPOSED
PRIMARY SCHOOL), GAINSBOROUGH, DN21 1PY**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR: SK 8182090910
Planning Authority: Lincolnshire County Council
Planning Ref.: PL/0089/14
PCAS job no. 1275
Site code: CHGE14
Archive acc. code: LCNC 2014.133

Prepared for

Mouchel

by

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation consisting of four 20m x 2m trenches was undertaken on the site of the former Castle Hills Community College in Gainsborough, in order to inform planning for the construction of a new primary school.

The site lies on the periphery of Gainsborough, with historic mapping indicating it remained farmland prior to the construction of the college in the 1960's, however it lies less than 500m from the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Castle Hill, a Norman motte and bailey ringwork castle dating from the late 11th century. The site was landscaped to facilitate the construction of the school, removing all traces of the ridge and furrow earthworks which previously occupied the site. It was considered possible that features relating to the Norman castle, medieval agriculture or other activities may survive beneath the now demolished college.

The evaluation encountered only a single cut feature in the southwest of the site in trench one, however this feature is unlikely to be of archaeological interest as it cuts the topsoil. Deposits throughout the site contained finds dating from the post-medieval period. Evidence of the former Castle Hills Community College was also present in deposits to the north and east of the site.

Despite the lack of archaeological features several clay pipe fragments and pot sherds were recovered from sealed contexts, which date to the post medieval period



Figure 1: Site location map at scale 1:25,000. Site location shown in red. OS Explorer map sheet 280. (OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278).

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by Mouchel to carry out an archaeological evaluation on the land of the former Castle Hills Community College, Gainsborough. The evaluation took place in order to inform a planning for the construction of a new primary school.

2.0 Location and description (fig. 1)

Gainsborough is a former port town situated on the east bank of the River Trent on the eastern edge of the West Lindsey district in Lincolnshire, 24km north-west of Lincoln. The town is located at one of only 4 bridges across the River Trent between Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.

The proposed development site lies on the north side of the modern town, to the east of the Sheffield – Cleethorpes railway line and the A159. To the east lies The Avenue. The site is the location of the buildings of the former Castle Hills community college, which was closed in 2008. The college buildings have since been demolished to ground level. The area of the former buildings is currently surrounded by a fence, while the former playing field lies to the north and is currently being considered for residential development. The West Lindsey Leisure Centre lies to the south of the site, and Pitt Hills Plantation forms the western site boundary.

The site is roughly rectangular measuring c. 225m x 100m, flaring at the south end to encompass the existing road access from The Avenue. Since the demolition of the former college buildings the site has remained patchy grassland interspersed with the rubble of the buildings with a small copse of woodland in the southeast corner.

The approximate central NGR of the site is SK 81820 90910.

3.0 Topography and Geology

Bedrock geology for Gainsborough is Mercia Mudstone, predominantly reddish mudstones and subordinate siltstones with thick halite-bearing units in some basinal areas. Thin beds of gypsum/anhydrite are widespread; sandstones are also present. This geology was laid down in the early Triassic – Rhenish period. There are no recorded overlying geological drift deposits, however deposits of alluvium line the course of the River Trent to the west, and Mid Pleistocene – Diamictic Till is recorded to the east. (<http://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html>)

The site lies a little above the 30m OD contour, which follows its western boundary. It occupies a plateau, thought to be the result of landscaping works prior to the construction of Castle Hill College in the late 1960's. This forms a step in the natural slope from east down to the River Trent flood plain in the west. To the east the topography sharply rises to a little above 40mOD and The Avenue. To the west of the site the topography drops again, where Pitt Hills Plantation covers the slopes pitted by former quarrying activity. To the north and south of the school site the ground follows the natural slope and minor undulations and ridge and furrow earthworks, supporting evidence to the supposition the site was landscaped at the time of the schools construction.

4.0 Planning Background

The former Castle Hills Community College is one of three local schools that were selected for redevelopment in 2006, with the aim of creating a Gainsborough Educational Village. Conditional outline planning permission for the residential redevelopment of the site was granted by West Lindsey District Council in July 2007 (application ref: 120344). A simplified planning application, to replace the extant planning permission was granted conditionally in 2010.

The proposed development of the northern half of the Castle Hills site is residential, and is being considered separately. The proposed redevelopment of the southwest corner of the site is for a new primary school, and it is this area which is investigated in this phase of trenching.

The Historic Environment Officer for Lincolnshire County Council advised that due to the proximity of a Scheduled Ancient Monument a scheme of phased archaeological investigation was required to determine the archaeological potential of the site. This scheme of trenching aimed to investigate the survival and character of any archaeological remains which would be impacted by the proposed construction of the new school, and advise on the need for further mitigation.

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

Prehistoric activity in the area of the site is poorly represented; suggesting early activity in the area was transitory. A sparse scatter of Prehistoric artefacts have been recovered, a Palaeolithic – Mesolithic flint blade from Morton over 1km northwest, and a Neolithic – early Bronze Age flake found in the sandy riverside deposits of the River Trent (LHER ref: 56517; 51322). Potentially Prehistoric enclosures have been identified on aerial photographs of the wider area.

Excavations ahead of the development of Gainsborough Golf Club to the north of the site revealed a small farmstead, with occupation from the early 1st – 4th century (LHER ref: 51328). The range of Roman artefacts recovered from the Gainsborough and Thonock parishes is extensive, including coins, weights and brooches, indicating the presence of a large settlement somewhere in the vicinity.

The A631 from the Caenby Corner junction of the A15 Ermine Street is thought to approximately mark the route of a Saxon road, extending from the old Roman road to a crossing of the River Trent at Gainsborough. Gainsborough itself was a significant settlement in the later Saxon period, perhaps developing from a smaller settlement as suggested in the place name; Gainsborough itself is first recorded as *Genesburuh* in 1013, and derives from the Saxon personal name *Gaegn* and the Old English word *burh*, meaning “*Gaegn’s fortified place*” (Cameron, 1998). As an inland port accessible from the east coast, Gainsborough was the landing place of the Danish King Sweyn in 1013, becoming a local base from which the campaign to seize control of England was managed. King Sweyn is said to have died in early 1014 at Gainsborough his remains being returned to Denmark by his son, King Canute.

Castle Hills is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Ref: 1016970) of a Norman motte and bailey castle, lying c.500m north of the site. The monument dates from the late 11th century, a fortification positioned on the edge of the escarpment overlooking the riverside town, the Trent and into Nottinghamshire. Although the majority of the occupational evidence of the castle would have been concentrated within the ringwork, activity on the periphery of the site may have extended into the development site.

The manor of Gainsborough as recorded in the Domesday Book is small, with the population being 4 villagers and 12 freemen (<http://domesdaymap.co.uk>). The settlement is understood to have been close to the riverside, with the surrounding area utilised as grazing, woodland or ploughed farmland. Records from the 13th century mention quarrying activity to the north east of the medieval village, potentially in the vicinity of the site where the later Post-medieval quarrying at what is now Pitt Hills Plantation is recorded. It is likely that the site itself was used as farmland; a sketch plan of ridge and furrow earthworks within the Castle Hills site was made prior to the construction of the school in the 1960's, indicating earthworks on a c. north-south alignment across the current development site.

As a crossing of the River Trent, Gainsborough was considered an important strategic holding during the 17th century Civil War. Initially held by the Royalist forces, the Parliamentary army fought for and won control of the town in July 1643. Occasional lead shots dating from this period are recovered from the surrounding area.

In the 18th century as the River Trent silted up preventing the larger seagoing vessels from sailing further down the Trent to Torksey, Gainsborough became a large inland port, trading goods from the continent and beyond. This prosperity lasted only a century, as the River continued to silt up and the railway and road networks were developed and improved, reducing the demand for access inland via the waterways. By the 20th century trade from the river had all but ceased, and the production of large agricultural equipment (or aircraft during WWII) became the largest economy of the town. Gainsborough had suffered from heavy bombing during WWII, and post-war the town received a grant for redevelopment which was focused around the waterfront. Historic mapping of the site does not identify any development preceding the 1960's school, at which time it is likely the site was landscaped to facilitate the construction of the school.

6.0 Methodology

The evaluation consisted of four 20m x 2m trenches spaced across the south and southwest of the site. The trenches were randomly positioned to sample the areas that would be most impacted by the groundworks of the development proposals.

The trenches were located on the site by triangulation. The trenches were machine excavated under archaeological supervision, using a 180° excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand, and examined for features of archaeological interest.

The evaluation trenches were drawn in plan at a scale of 1:200; excavated features were drawn in section at scales of 1:20 and sample sections of the trench baulks were also drawn. The section drawings were located on the base plans. Deposits were recorded on standard PCAS record sheets, and an excavation site diary was also kept; a digital photographic record, supplemented by colour slide photography, was made, and extracts from this are reproduced in Appendix 1. Finds were stored in labelled finds bags prior to their removal to the offices of PCAS for initial processing.

Following the completion of the fieldwork, the finds were taken to PCAS to be washed, marked and sorted. Pottery was assessed by Johanna Gray and Jane Young (Appendix 3); all other finds were catalogued in-house by Charlotte Bentley (Appendix 4).

The fieldwork was carried out by Mike Rowe, Leigh Brocklehurst and, the author, and took place between the 8th and 19th of August 2014. Weather conditions were variable, but generally favourable. Excavations were hindered by the presence of horses on the site.

7.0 Results

7.1 Trench 1 (figure 2, 3 & 4)

Trench 1 was positioned in the south-western side of the site parallel to the north-south boundary fence.

The trench was excavated to natural (100) at a depth of between 0.50m and 0.56m below existing ground level. According to BGS (2014) there is no recorded overlying geology, but it was determined that the natural overlying geology was a very compact red-brown clay. A single feature [103] was encountered cut into natural clay (100); the feature is considered to be modern as it cuts the topsoil and the vertical sides are suggestive of a machine dug feature.

The natural clay was overlain by two layers that had been removed by machine: the mid brown silty clay topsoil (101), present throughout Trench 1, and the mid brown silty clay subsoil layer (102). Pottery recovered from the topsoil (101) is identified as being 17th-18th century in date, and a frogman of 19th century clay tobacco pipe was also recovered from this horizon.

7.2 Trench 2 (figure 5 & 6)

Trench 2 was oriented east-west and positioned approximately 7 metres east of Trench 1.

The trench was excavated to natural (200) at a depth of 0.50m below existing ground level. According to BGS (2014) there is no recorded overlying geology, but it was determined that the natural overlying geology was a very compact red-brown clay. Deposit (200) is the same layer of natural clay recorded in the base of Trench 1 to the west.

The natural clay was overlain by a single layer of topsoil (201) which is very likely the same deposit recorded as (101) in Trench 1. No features were observed in Trench 2. A single sherd of Staffordshire white salt graze pottery (18th century) was recovered from the area of this trench.

7.3 Trench 3 (figure 7 & 8)

Trench 3 was situated 37 metres north of Trench 2 and orientated east-west.

The trench was excavated to natural (300) at a depth of 0.60m below existing ground level; the natural overlying geology was a very compact red-brown clay similar to that found in both trenches 1 and 2.

The natural clay was overlain by two layers that had been removed by machine: the mid brown silty loam topsoil (301), present throughout Trench 3, and the mid brown mottled clay subsoil layer (302). No archaeological features were observed Trench 3, which had been disturbed by modern services.

7.4 Trench 4 (figure 9 & 10)

Trench 4 was situated 7 metres east of Trench 3 and orientated north-south.

The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.76m below existing ground level; deposit (400) was considered to be natural, however a 1.2m deep sondage lead to a reinterpretation of this deposit as a possible ancient hill wash.

Deposit (400) was overlain by three layers that were removed by machine: the mid brown silty loam topsoil (401), sealing a mid-brown clay mottled with red-brown clay (402), and a very compact mid brown clay with frequent charcoal inclusions (403).

No archaeological features were observed Trench 4. Glass and clay tobacco pipe recovered from deposit (403) is post medieval in date, and pottery from the topsoil dates from the 17th-19th century, consistent with the use of the site as agricultural land in the post-medieval period.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The evaluation undertaken at the former Castle Hills Community College revealed no archaeological features in the four trenches placed across the proposed development area. As noted above, medieval ridge and furrow earthworks were sketched onsite prior to the erection of the college but were removed during the construction process. Stratified and unstratified finds such as pot sherds and clay pipe fragments would appear to date activity on the site to the post medieval period, consistent with the enclosure of the area and utilisation of the site as agricultural land.

Trench 4 lay adjacent to a small wooded area, and significant rooting was noted during the excavation of this trench. It is likely that bioturbation has disturbed the identified horizons, therefore the glass and clay pipe found in (403) may be intrusive. Horizon (400), which was initially identified as the natural geology and later re-interpreted as ancient hill wash, is a natural deposit gradually accumulating on the slope of this hillside.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

Archaeological evaluation was effective in demonstrating the archaeological remains on site. The body of data thus produced will be sufficient to inform the planning and development process.

10.0 Project Archive

The project archive, consisting of the site recording and the finds, will be deposited with printed copies of this report and the forthcoming full report at The Collection, Lincoln, in or before December 2014; following deposition, the archive will be available for consultation under the LCNCC accession number 2014.133. A copy of the full report will also be uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database, where it will be publicly accessible online.

11.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services would like to thank Mouchel for this commission.

12.0 References

Cameron, K., 1998, *A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place Names*, English Place Name Society, Nottingham

<http://domesdaymap.co.uk/>

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/>

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

OS Explorer Map, 2006, *Sheet 280: Isle of Axholme: Scunthorpe and Gainsborough*.
Ordnance Survey, Southampton. (OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved.
PCAS licence no. 100049278).

Appendix 1

Colour plates



1 General shot of open trenches and erected fencing



2 Representative section of Trench 1, west facing



3 Representative section of Trench 2, south facing



4 Representative section of Trench 3, south facing



5 Representative section of Trench 4, west facing

Appendix 2

Context Summary

<u>Context Number</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Dimensions</u>	<u>Findings</u>
100	Natural	Very compact red-brown clay, no inclusions, diffuse horizon.	W= 20m D= 10cm, LoE	
101	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay, compact, heavily rooted.	W= 20m D= 18cm	Clay pipe, pot and shells.
102	Layer	Mid brown silty clay, compact, slight rooting, frequent charcoal inclusions, diffuse horizon.	W= 20m D= 28cm	Brick, glass.
103	Cut	Steep sided, almost vertical, base beyond LoE. Cuts topsoil, therefore a modern feature.	W= 64cm D= 70cm, LoE	
104	Fill of 103	Red-Brown clay, very soft, loose compaction, clear horizon, occasional white shell fragments.	W= 64cm D= 70cm, LoE	
200	Natural	Very compact red-brown clay, no inclusions, diffuse horizon.	W= 20m D= 20cm, LoE	
201	Topsoil	Mid brown silty clay, compact, heavily rooted, diffuse horizon, no inclusions.	W= 20m D= 30cm	
300	Natural	Very compact red-brown clay, no inclusions, diffuse horizon.	W= 20m D= 8cm, LoE	
301	Topsoil	Mid brown silty loam, loose compaction, heavily rooted, diffuse horizon, various inclusions of modern rubble and plastic.	W= 20m D= 26cm	

302	Layer	Mid brown clay mottled with red-brown natural, flecks of charcoal and inclusions of modern debris. Very compact.	W= 20m D= 22cm	
400	Layer	Brown clay with a slight red hue, heavily rooted, diffuse horizon. Drift geology, possible ancient hill wash.	W= 20m D= 1.2m, LoE	
401	Topsoil	Mid brown silty loam with some clay, heavily rooted, compact, no inclusions.	W= 20m D= 24cm	
402	Layer	Mid brown clay mottled with red-brown clay. Heavily rooted, very rare rounded pebbles <4cm, diffuse horizon.	W= 20m D= 26cm	
403	Layer	Mid brown clay, very compact, heavily rooted, frequent charcoal inclusions, very diffuse horizon.	W= 20m D= 26cm	Glass, clay pipe.

Appendix 3:

Ceramic Report: Castle Hill Community College, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire

CHGE 14

By Johanna Gray and Jane Young

Introduction:

Eight sherds of pottery were recovered from the site and presented for examination. The sherds were quantified and archived in accordance with Lincolnshire County Council's *Archaeological Handbook* (sections 13.4 & 13.5) and the guidelines detailed in Slowikowski et al (2001).

Pottery Archive:

Context	Code Name	Fabric	Form	Sherd	Vessel	Weight	Part	Decoration / Description	Date
101	BERTH	Orange sandy fabric	Small Jar	1	1	9g	Rim	Dark brown glaze int. & ext. Rounded rim.	L17th – 18th
101	STMO		Mug?	1	1	3g	BS		L17th –18th
101	STSL	Coarse cream - Fe incs.	Dish	1	1	1g	BS	Press moulded. Glazed int. Brown trailed & combed decoration on yellow glaze.	L17th -18th
TR 2 u/s	SWSG		Tiny vessel	1	1	1g	Rim	Very thin walls	18th
TR 4 u/s	BERTH	Coarse brown fabric	Small c'pot ?	1	1	16g	Rim	Dark brown glaze int. & ext. Highly fired. Probably Staffs/Derbs.	M17th-18th
TR 4 u/s	SLIP	LO fine / med sandy fabric	Dish	1	1	10g	BS	Press moulded. Brown trailed & feathered decoration on yellow glaze. Probably Yorks.	L17th -18th
TR 4 u/s	PEARL		Oval bowl/ dish	1	1	11g	B	Wear on base.	L18th-M19th
TR 4 u/s	PEARL		Bowl	1	1	15g	R	Blue floral transfer print int. Blue "Chinese style" transfer print ext. Decomposed red painted line around rim.	L18th-E19th

Summary:

The three sherds recovered from context (101) are brown earthenware (BERTH), Staffordshire mottled ware (STMO) and Staffordshire slip ware (STSL) which all date from the late 17th to the 18th century. The unstratified sherd of Staffordshire white salt glaze (SWSG) from Trench 2 dates to the 18th century. The unstratified sherds from Trench 4 date from mid 17th to mid 19th century. The vessels represented range from slip wares (STSL/SLIP/STMO), to coarse earthenwares (BERTH), and industrial fine wares (SWSG & PEARL).

No further work is required on this material.

Bibliography:

- 2001, Slowikowski, A. M., Nenck, B., and Pearce, J., *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 2
- 2010, *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* [internet]. Available at <<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk>>

Appendix 4:
Castle Hills Community College, Gainsborough
CHGE14
LCNCC:2014.133

Finds Catalogue

Context	Material	No.	Weight (g)	Description	Date	Action
101	C Pipe	3	9g	Stem fragments	C19th	
101	Shell	1	1g	Oyster shell		
403	Glass	1	11g	Dark Green bottle glass	C19th	
403	C Pipe	1	4g	Stem fragment	C18th/19th	

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: preconst3-189818

Project details

Project name	Castle Hills Community College Evaluation
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation consisting of four 20m x 2m trenches was undertaken on the site of the former Castle Hills Community College in Gainsborough, in order to inform planning for the construction of a new primary school. The site lies on the periphery of Gainsborough, with historic mapping indicating it remained farmland prior to the construction of the college in the 1960's, however it lies less than 500m from the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Castle Hill, a Norman motte and bailey ringwork castle dating from the late 11th century. The site was landscaped to facilitate the construction of the school, removing all traces of the ridge and furrow earthworks which previously occupied the site. It was considered possible that features relating to the Norman castle, medieval agriculture or other activities may survive beneath the now demolished college. The evaluation encountered only a single cut feature in the southwest of the site in trench one, however this feature is unlikely to be of archaeological interest as it cuts the topsoil. Deposits throughout the site contained finds dating from the post-medieval period. Evidence of the former Castle Hills Community College was also present in deposits to the north and east of the site. Despite the lack of archaeological features several clay pipe fragments and pot sherds were recovered from sealed contexts, which date to the post medieval period
Project dates	Start: 08-08-2014 End: 19-08-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHGE14 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	1275 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	NONE None
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE Post Medieval

Significant Finds POTTERY Post Medieval
 Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"
 Development type Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
 Prompt Planning condition
 Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England
 Site location LINCOLNSHIRE WEST LINDSEY GAINSBOROUGH Castle Hills Community College
 Postcode DN21 1PY
 Study area 22500.00 Square metres
 Site coordinates SK 81820 90910 53.4083899436 -0.769022812164 53 24 30 N 000 46 08 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd
 Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
 Project design originator Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd
 Project director/manager Will Munford
 Project supervisor L. Brocklehurst and B. Wheeliker
 Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient The Collection, Lincoln
 Physical Archive ID LCNCC 2014.133
 Physical Contents "Ceramics"
 Physical Archive notes MPost-medieval/modern pottery fragments that may be discarded
 Digital Archive recipient The Collection, Lincoln
 Digital Archive ID LCNCC 2014. 133
 Digital Contents "none"
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient	The Collection, Lincoln
Paper Archive ID	LCNCC 2014.133
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Diary", "Drawing", "Miscellaneous Material", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Former Castle Hills Community College (Proposed Primary School), Gainsborough: Archaeological Evaluation Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Wheeliker, B.
Other bibliographic details	PCAS report no. 1275
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeological Services
Place of issue or publication	Saxilby, Lincolnshire
Entered by	Alison Lane (alison@pre-construct.co.uk)
Entered on	12 September 2014

OASIS:

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Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page

Figure 2

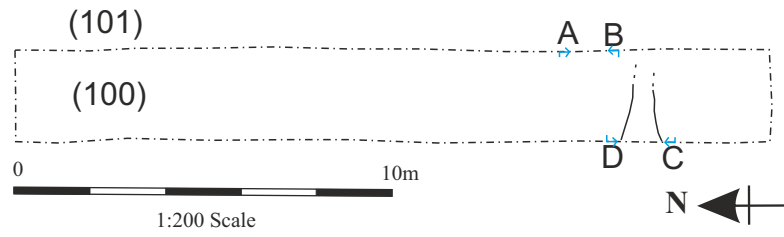


Figure 3

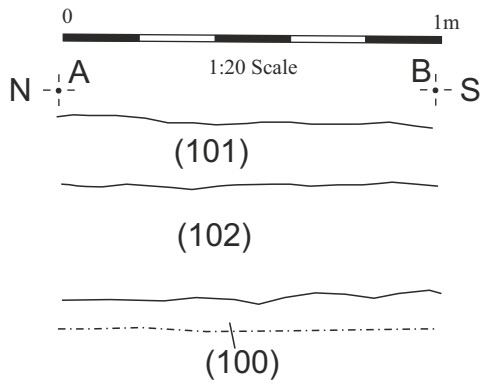


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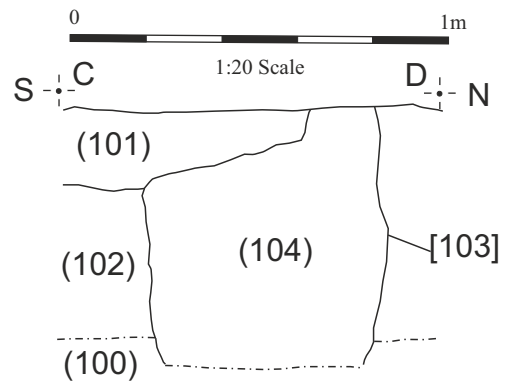


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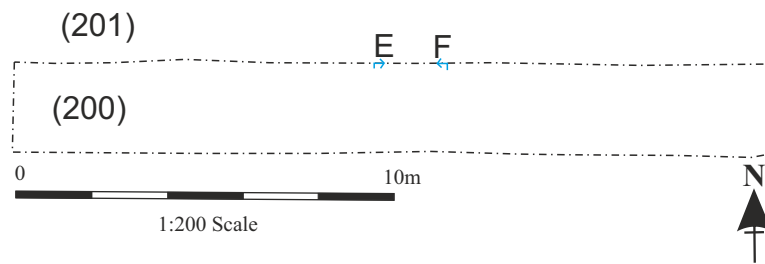


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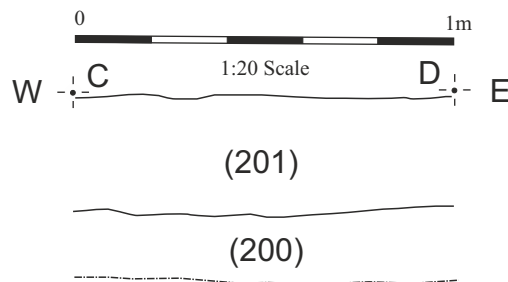


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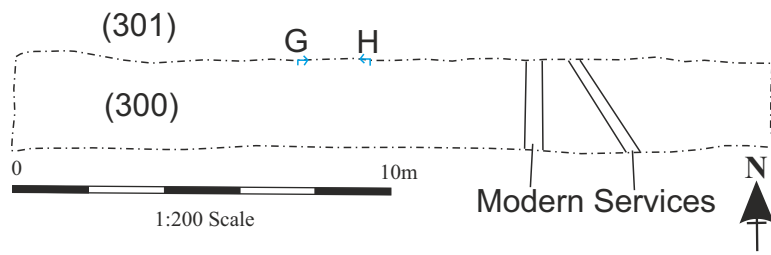


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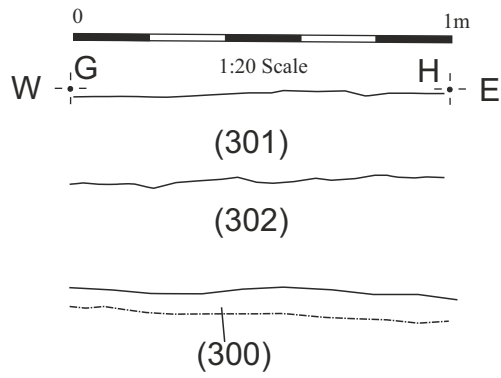


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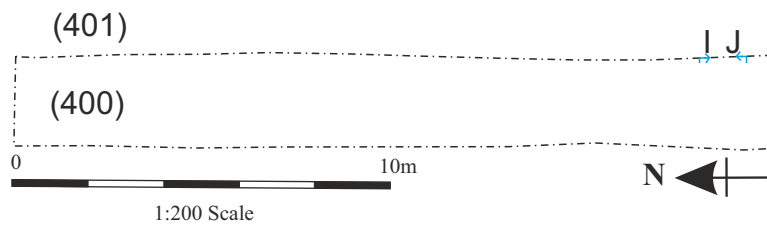


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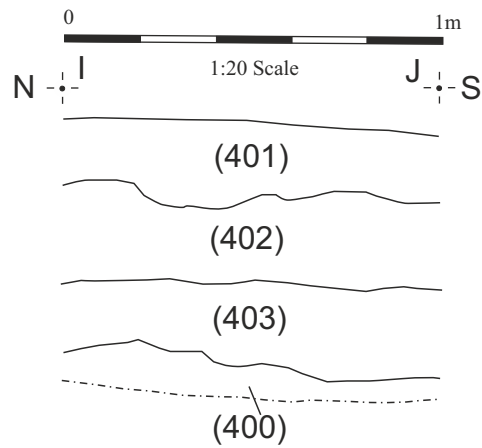


Figure 11: Trench location plan, based on proposed development plan. 1:1000

