

LAND TO SOUTH OF CHURCH FARM, SLAPTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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Prepared for

RSK Environment Ltd.

by

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Summary

To inform a planning application for the construction of a solar farm, an archaeological evaluation consisting of eleven 30m x 2m trial trenches was undertaken on land to the south of Church Farm, Slapton, Buckingham.

The development site is 750m to the south east of the village of Slapton. A desk based assessment identified known archaeological remains dating to the Iron Age and early Roman periods immediately adjacent to the application site and within the 1km study area. There was, therefore, a high potential for archaeological remains of dating to these periods to survive within the application site.

Of the eleven trenches excavated, seven were archaeologically negative, whilst four contained multiple archaeological features dated to the Iron Age/Romano-British periods. These features were mainly linear and curvilinear ditches which contained finds indicative of domestic activity.

Most of the significant archaeology was identified towards the west side of the site and may have been associated with a Romano-British farmstead, the focal point of which probably lies beyond the west/northwest boundaries of the evaluated area.

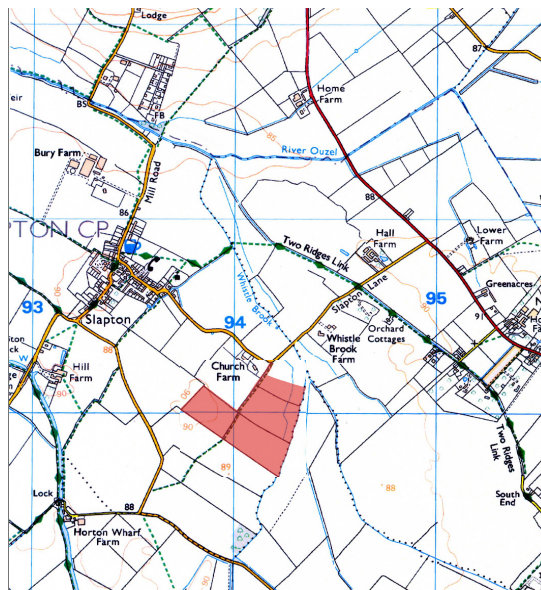


Figure 1: Location plan of the site at scale 1:25,000. The position of the proposed development site is marked in red. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by RSK Environment Ltd. to carry out an archaeological evaluation at Church Farm in the village of Slapton in the Aylesbury Vale district of Buckinghamshire. The evaluation took place to inform a planning application for the construction of a solar farm and its associated infrastructure, under recommendation from the Senior Archaeology Planning Officer for Buckinghamshire County Council.

2.0 Location and description (figs. 1 and 2)

The application site is located 750m to the south east of the village of Slapton, at NGR 494090 219990 (Figure 1) and covers an area of approximately 14.89Ha. It is generally level and lies at approximately 90m AOD. The site consists of three fields that lie to the south of Church Farm, all of which are currently used as pasture for livestock. It is bordered on its north, south and western sides by further fields, whilst Whistle Brook is located at its eastern edge.

3.0 Geology

The site is situated on alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel; deposits that overlie the mudstones of the Gault Formation. This is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 94 to 112 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period in a local environment that was previously dominated by shallow seas.

No superficial deposits are recorded in this area (BGS, 1999).

4.0 Planning Background

The approved planning application (14/02302/APP) is for the construction of a solar farm and its associated infrastructure. A desk based assessment (Owen 2014) highlighted four known archaeological remains dating to the Iron Age and early Roman periods, located immediately adjacent to the application site and within the 1km study area.

A programme of archaeological trial excavation was recommended by the Senior Archaeology Planning Officer for Buckinghamshire County Council. The results of this are presented and will be used to inform the planning process.

On 27 March 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replaced PPS5. The NPPF places the responsibility for dealing with heritage assets affected by development proposals with the developer. Local planning authorities now need to be assured by those applying for planning permission that heritage assets are not under threat. Where such assets are under threat, developers are required to provide methods of mitigating the effects of development on the historic environment within the planning process.

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

The desk based assessment (Owen 2014) undertaken prior to the scheme of archaeological trial trenching highlighted five records from the Buckinghamshire HER on site or directly adjacent to the site dating from the Iron Age through to the Roman period. These consisted of:

- two findspots of Iron Age pottery (**HER No.** 0535701001-MBC1374 and 0535702000-MBC137)

- a pit (**HER No.** 0535701000-MBC1374) identified during the construction of a pipeline, which also produced multiple sherds of Roman-British pottery (**HER No.** 0535700001-MBC1373).
- directly on or adjacent to the proposed development site, a post-medieval coprolite quarry (**HER No.** 0582903000-MBC1506).

Multiple records feature within a 1km radius of the site. Archaeological works associated with pipeline construction identified a Roman settlement (**HER No.** 0535800000-MBC1374) approximately 750m to the south east of the application site; this included associated archaeological features and finds. Also from this period, a late Iron Age or early Romano-British fitting for a horse harness (**HER No.** MBC29720) was recovered 1km to the north west of the site boundary.

6.0 Methodology

The evaluation consisted of eleven 30m x 2m trenches (Fig 2). Field 1 contained Trenches 1 - 4; Field 2 Trenches 5 and 6; Field 3 contained Trenches 7 - 9; whilst Field 4 contained Trenches 10 and 11.

All trenches were positioned specifically based on the results of a preceding geophysical survey.

The broad aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine the presence/absence, nature, date, depth, quality of survival, importance, extent, form and function of any archaeological features to inform the proposed development;
- To recover stratified dating evidence;
- To establish the sequence of archaeological remains;
- To interpret the archaeology in the context of known remains in the vicinity.

Trenches were located using GPS. Each of the trenches were machine excavated under archaeological supervision, using a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand, and the features encountered were sample excavated.

The evaluation trenches were drawn in plan at a scale of 1:50; excavated features were drawn in section at scales of 1:20 or 1:10 as appropriate, and sample sections of the trench baulks were also drawn. The section drawings were located on the base plans; Ordnance Datum levels were taken using a Global Positioning System. Deposits were recorded on standard PCAS record sheets, and an excavation site diary was also maintained; 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 bags prior to their removal to the offices of PCAS for initial processing.

Stable finds were washed, marked and segregated and dispatched to specialists for assessment.

The fieldwork was carried out by Simon Markus and took place between the 13th - 24th October 2014. Weather conditions were variable, with heavy rain encountered at times.

7.0 Results (Figs 2 – 5)

7.1 Trenches containing no archaeology

Of the eleven trenches excavated seven were identified as being archaeologically negative: Trenches 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11. Trench depths when fully excavated varied between 0.4m and 0.8m, with most exposing a stratigraphy of topsoil overlying subsoil and the natural substrate. The depth and extent of subsoil varied between trenches.

7.2 Trenches containing archaeology

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 (30m x 2m) was orientated E-W and was located in the west of Field 1. It was machined to a depth of 0.74m. Seven features were identified; [205], [209], [212], [215], [217], [219] and [221].

An oval shaped pit, [209], on the very western edge of the trench, had steep edges that stepped slightly towards a concave base. It was 1.26m in diameter and 0.5m deep, filled by multiple silt clay deposits, from which Roman pottery dated from the 2nd century was recovered. This pit was cut by a N-S orientated ditch, [205]; 1.12m wide and 0.22m deep. It was filled by a single deposit which also contained Roman pottery, similar to that within [209].

Five further linear features were identified and excavated, all of which were orientated N-S. Towards the western half of the trench, ditch [212] had irregular, stepped edges and was 3.8m wide and 0.64m deep. Further to west, ditch [215] had a wide U-shaped profile, was 1.24m wide and 0.44m deep. This feature was the re-cut of an earlier ditch, [217], which had a steep eastern edges and flat base. Ditches [212] and [215] both contained pottery dated to the later Roman period, between the 3rd and 4th century. Ditch [212] also contained eleven fragments of animal bone from various mammals, including cattle, sheep, and pig.

Ditch [219] was identified in the centre of the trench; a re-cut of an earlier ditch, [221]. It had steep edges, stepped on its western side and a flat base. It was 1.46m wide and 0.34m deep and was filled by a single deposit which contained no finds.

All of the features in this trench were sealed by topsoil (201) and subsoil (202), and were cut into the natural substrate (203).

Trench 3 (Fig. 4)

Trench 3 (30m x 2m) was orientated E-W and located in the west of the development site, also in Field 1. It was machined to a depth of 0.62m. Five features were identified: [307], [310], [313], [315] and [317].

Of the five features excavated, four were characterised as ditches. Ditch [307], occupying a central position, had a V-shaped profile, with steep sides and a narrow concave base. It was orientated NNE-SSW and was 3m wide and 1.35m deep. It was filled by three silt clay deposits.

Two further ditches, both on the same alignment, [310] and [313], were located towards the west end of the trench. Ditch [310] was 1.06m wide and 0.5m deep and was filled by two deposits. Ditch [313] was 1.3m wide and 0.5m deep and was also filled by two deposits. Each of these features produced Roman pottery dated approximately to the 3rd – 4th century. A single large fragment of Roman floor tile was also recovered from a fill of [307].

The final ditch, [317], was orientated NNW-SSE and was filled by a single deposit, (316), which contained fragments of pig skull. It was 1.3m wide and 0.16m deep. This ditch was on a different alignment to the others, suggesting perhaps a different phase of occupation.

In addition to the ditches, a single pit, [315], was identified towards the eastern end of the trench. It was circular in plan, with irregular edges and an uneven base; filled by a single deposit, (314), devoid of finds. It was 0.84m in diameter and 0.2m deep. Given its irregular profile, it was suggested this feature is most likely of natural origin - such as a tree bole.

All of the features in this trench were sealed by topsoil (301) and subsoil (302), and were cut into the natural substrate (303).

Trench 4 (Fig. 5)

Trench 4 (30m x 2m) was orientated NE-SW and was located in the south corner of Field 1. It was machined to a depth of 0.45m. Two features were identified: [405] and [407].

Located at the western end of the trench, ditch-like feature [405] had shallow edges and a flat base. It was orientated E-W and filled by a single deposit, (404), which contained no finds. It was 1.2m wide and 0.1m deep. It was suggested on site this feature may be of natural origin; a possible variation in the natural substrate.

To the immediate east was 'ditch' [407]. This had irregular, shallow edges and an uneven base. It was orientated ESE-WNW and filled by a single deposit, (406), which contained no finds. It was 1.34m wide and 0.24m deep. As with [405], it was suggested this feature was natural in origin.

All of the features in this trench were sealed by topsoil (401) and subsoil (402), and were cut into the natural substrate (403).

Trench 9 (Fig. 5)

Trench 9 (30m x 2m) was orientated NE-SW and was located in the centre of the site in Field 3. It was machined to a depth of 0.41m. Two features were identified: [906] and [909].

In the western half of the trench, curved ditch [906] had a U shaped profile, with steep edges and a flat base. It was filled by two deposits, (904) and (905), which produced four sherds of later prehistoric shelly ware pottery (pottery of this type often continues into the early Roman period). The ditch was 1.46m wide and 0.66m deep, and the morphology of its upper fill, (904), suggests it had been recut, at least once.

The other curvilinear ditch, [909] also had a U shaped profile with steep edges and a flat base. It was orientated NW-SE, turning to NE-SW and was filled by two deposits, (907) and (908), which incorporated a fragment of medieval/post-medieval pottery. It was 0.76m wide and 0.48m deep.

Features in this trench were sealed by topsoil (901) and subsoil (902), and were cut into the natural substrate (903).

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The scheme of trial trenching consisted of eleven trenches spread over four fields. They had been located to target and investigate anomalies that were picked up by a preceding geophysical survey. Of the eleven trenches, seven were archaeologically negative, and the most significant archaeology has been identified on the western side of the site, within Field 1.

Trenches 2 and 3 contained the most convincing indicators of domestic occupation, with multiple boundary or enclosure ditches being present in both of these trenches. The features in these trenches all produced multiple sherds of Romano-British pottery and animal bone; indicators of domestic activity, probably a farmstead in the vicinity.

Trench 9, farther to the northeast in Field 3, also exposed evidence of Romano-British activity, although less dense (one feature) than that seen on the west of the site. The other curvilinear in this trench, [909], contained a sherd of medieval/post-medieval pottery; however this was from the top of the feature, which could be out of context or simply reflect later activity in the area. It may be that these were not two separate features, rather a single annular or pennanular ditch, representing a possible enclosure or roundhouse.

Trench 4, located in the south eastern corner of field 1, contained two linear features, but these were quite probably of natural origin – neither contained any finds, and both were morphologically problematic as archaeological features.

The majority of the pottery recovered from site was of Romano- British date, with dates ranging from the 2nd century through to the 3rd/4th century. This would seem to indicate a perhaps sustained occupation in this area, and again presumably associated with a farmstead situated somewhere to the west or northwest of the evaluated area. Four sherds of late Iron Age tradition pottery were also recovered, although it is not unusual for such pottery to persist into the early Roman period (Appendix 3).

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

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

10.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services would like to thank RSK Environment Ltd. for this commission.

11.0 References

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

Owen, P. 2014. *Church Farm Solar Development—Cultural Heritage Desk-Based Assessment*. Hyder Consulting (UK) Limited.

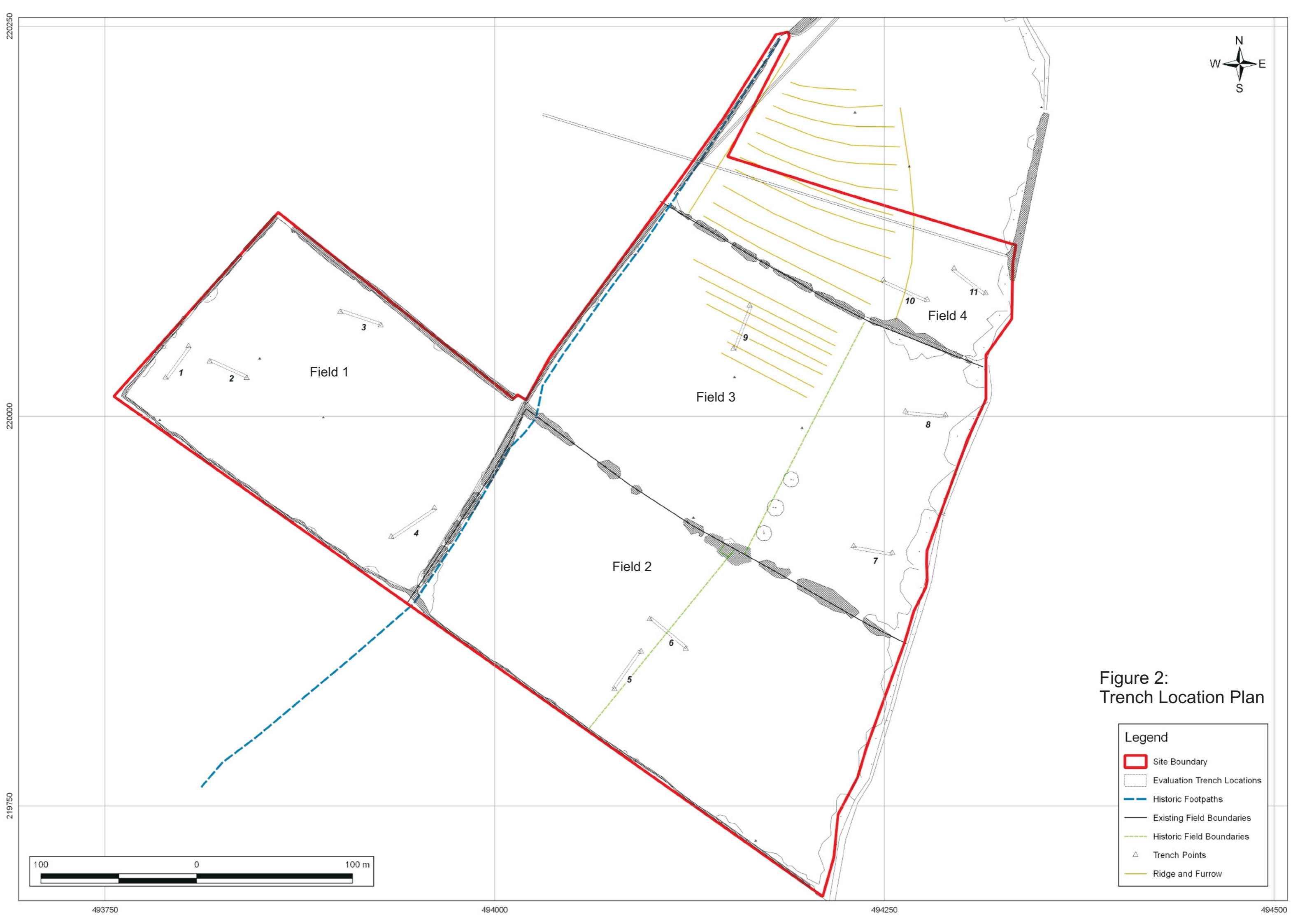


Figure 2:
Trench Location Plan

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Evaluation Trench Locations
- Historic Footpaths
- Existing Field Boundaries
- Historic Field Boundaries
- Trench Points
- Ridge and Furrow

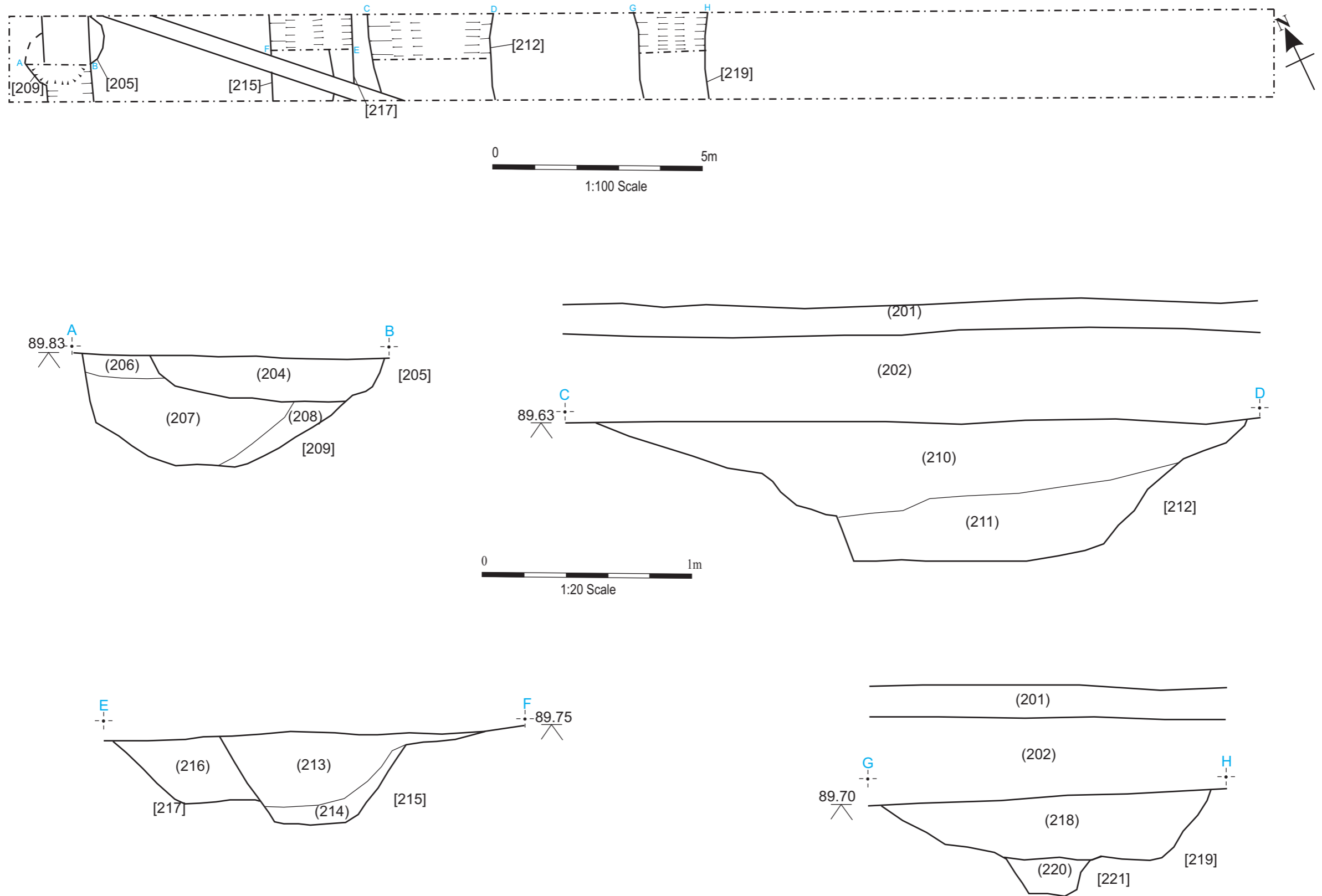


Figure 3: Plan (1:100) and sections (1:20) from Trench 2

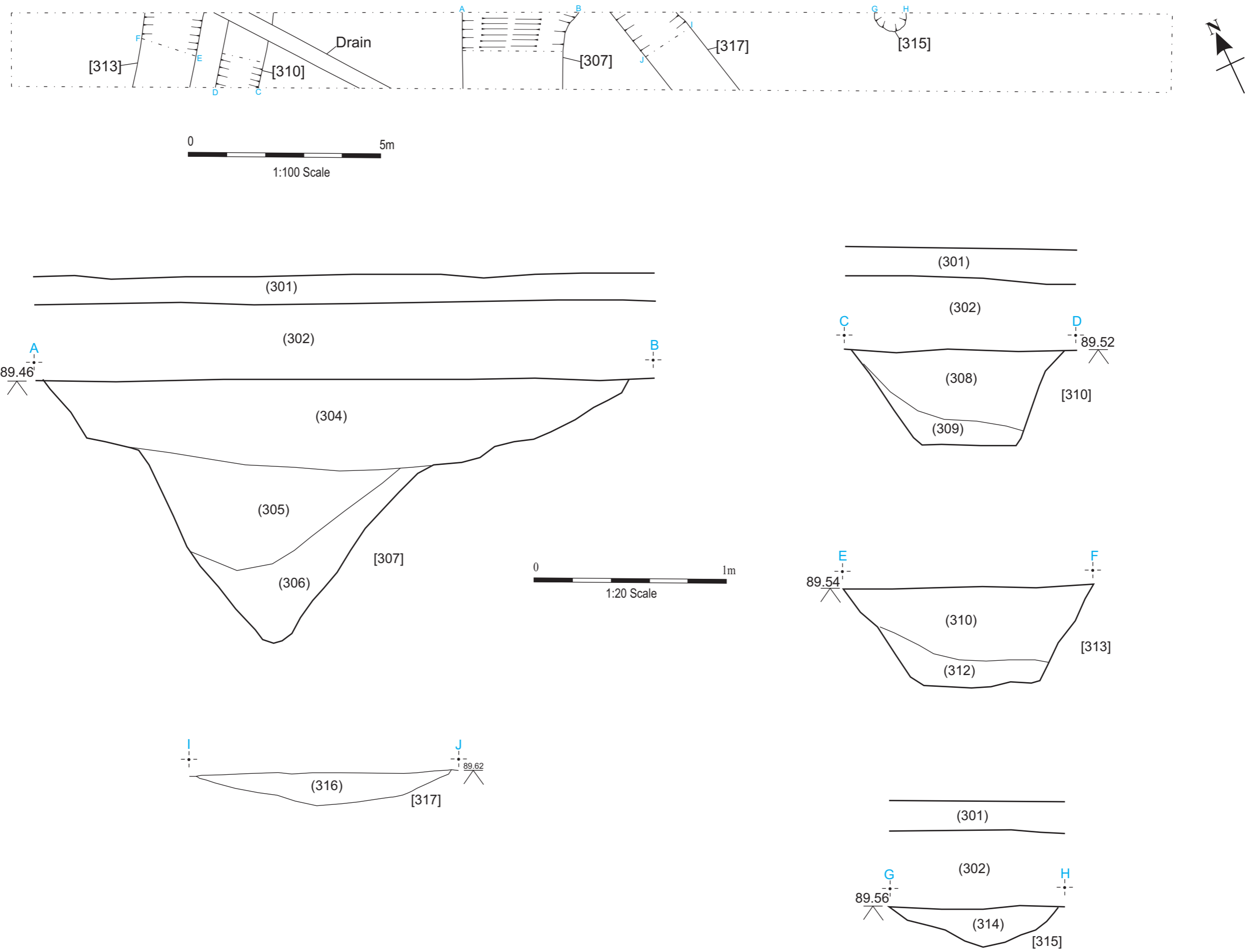


Figure 4: Plan (1:100) and sections (1:20) for Trench 3.

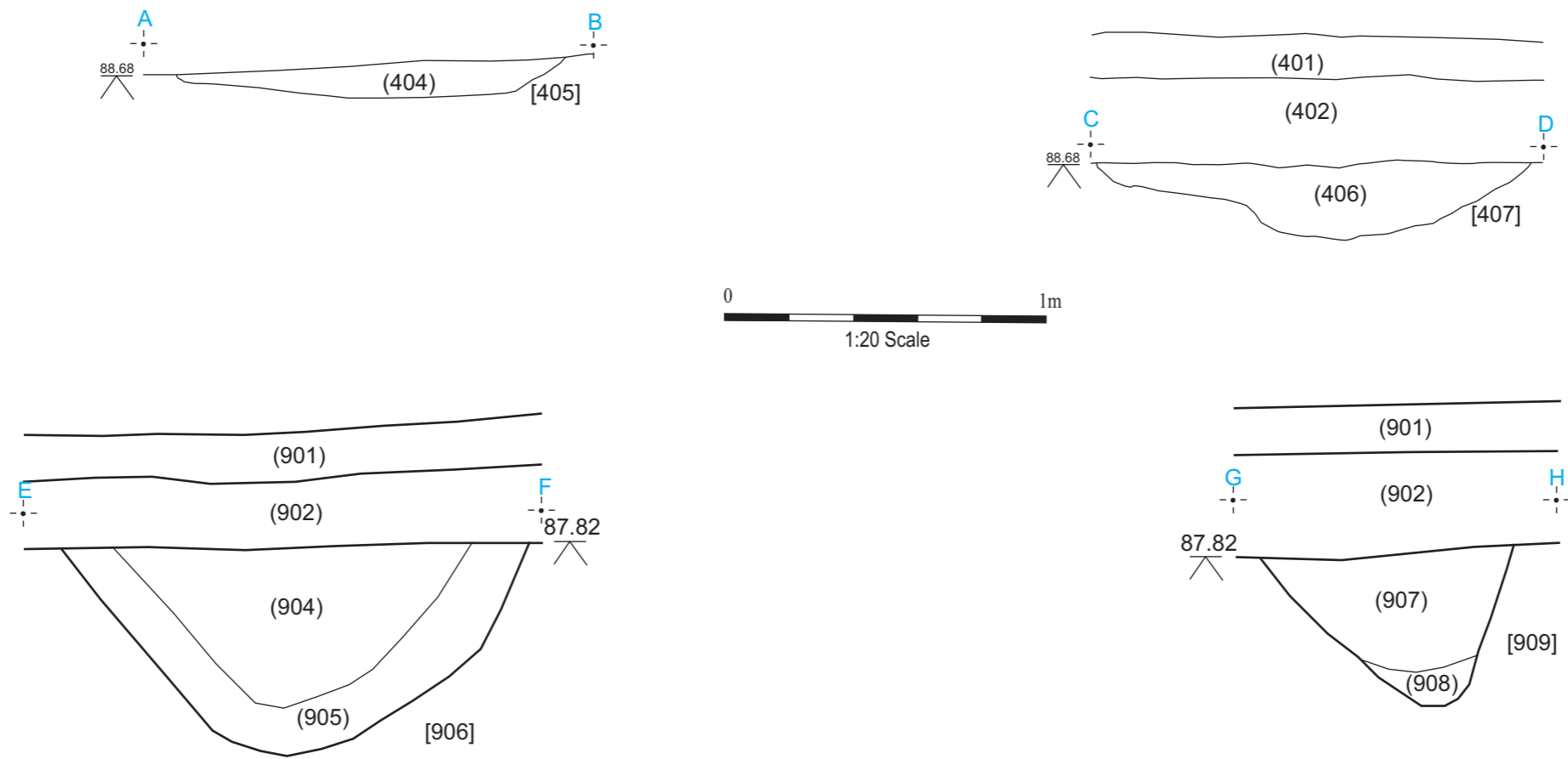
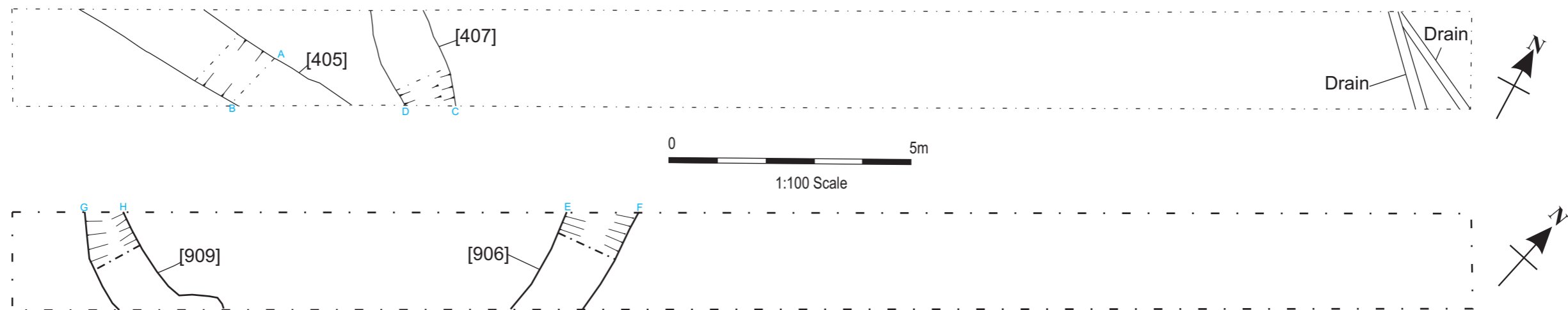


Figure 5: Plans (1:100) and sections (1:20) from Trench 4 and 9.

Appendix 1 – Colour Plates



Plate 1: General shot of site pre excavation (looking N).



Plate 2 (left): Trench 2 pre-excitation (looking SE).



Plate 3 (right): Trench 3 pre-excitation (looking SE).



Plate 4 (left): Trench 4 pre-excitation (looking SW).



Plate 5 (right): Trench 9 pre-excitation (looking NE).



Plate 6: Ditch [205] and pit [209] (looking NNE).



Plate 7: Ditch [212] (looking NNE).



Plate 8: Ditches [215] and [217] (looking SSW).



Plate 9: Ditches [219] and [221] (looking NNE).



Plate 10: Ditch [307] (looking NNE).



Plate 11: Ditch [310] (looking SSW).



Plate 12: Ditch [313] (looking SW).



Plate 13: Ditch [317] (looking S).



Plate 14: Ditch [405] (looking E).



Plate 15: Ditch [406] (looking W).



Plate 16: Ditch [906] (looking NW).



Plate 17: Ditch [909] (looking NW).

Appendix 2 – Context summary

Context no.	Type	Description	Findings
Trench 1			
101	Layer	Topsoil. Dark brown clay loam. Some gravel inclusions. 0.15m thick .	
102	Layer	Subsoil. Mid grey-brown silt clay. 0.4m thick.	
103	Layer	Natural substrate. Light orange-grey silty clay. Some gravel inclusions.	
Trench 2			
201	Layer	Topsoil. 0.14m thick.	
202	Layer	Subsoil. Dark grey blue silty clay. 0.44m thick.	
203	Layer	Natural substrate. Light grey mixed with light orange brown silt clay.	
204	Fill	Of [205]. Dark grey silty clay. Firm with charcoal inclusions.	Pottery and burnt clay
205	Cut	Linear feature with steep edges and a flat base. It is orientated N-S and is filled by a single deposit, (204), which contained Roman pottery. It is 1.12m wide and 0.22m deep. This feature cuts through the upper deposits of pit [209].	
206	Fill	Of [209]. Light grey orange silty clay. Firm with no inclusions.	
207	Fill	Of [209]. Dark grey with light yellow green mottled silty clay. Firm with gravel and charcoal inclusions.	Fe. nail
208	Fill	Of [209]. Dark grey silty clay. Firm with gravel, chalk and charcoal inclusions.	Pottery
209	Cut	Oval shaped pit located beneath linear [205]. It has very steep edges that step slightly towards the base, which is concave in shape. It is filled by multiple deposits, (206), (207) and (208), which contained Roman pottery. It is 1.26m in diameter and 0.5m deep.	
210	Fill	Of [212]. Dark grey silty clay. Firm with chalk, gravel and charcoal inclusions.	Pottery and Animal bone
211	Fill	Of [212]. Dark grey and light grey silty clay. Firm with chalk, gravel and charcoal inclusions.	Pottery
212	Cut	Linear feature with irregular and stepped edges with a flat base. It is orientated N-S and is filled by two deposits, (210) and (211), which contained animal bone and Roman pottery. It is 3.8m wide and 0.64m deep.	
213	Fill	Of [215]. Dark grey silty clay. Firm with chalk, gravel and charcoal inclusions.	Pottery
214	Fill	Of [215]. Dark grey and light grey silty clay. Firm with charcoal inclusions.	
215	Cut	Linear feature with a wide U-shaped profile, which consists of steep sides and a flat base. It is orientated N-S and filled with two deposits, (213) and (214), which contained Roman pottery. It is 1.24m wide and 0.44m deep. This feature is a re-cut of the ditch [217].	

216	Fill	Of [217]. Dark grey silty clay. Firm with gravel and chalk inclusions.	
217	Cut	Linear feature with a steep eastern edge and a flat base. The western edge of the feature has been destroyed by the re-cut [215]. As with [215] it is orientated N-S, whilst it is filled by a single deposit (216), however no finds were recovered. It is 0.68m wide and 0.32m deep.	
218	Fill	Of [219]. Dark grey silty clay. Firm with charcoal, gravel and chalk inclusions.	
219	Cut	Linear feature with steep edges, which is stepped on its western side, and fairly flat base that slopes to the east. It is orientated N-S and filled by a single deposit (218), which contained no finds. It is 1.46m wide and 0.34m deep. This feature is a re-cut of the ditch [221].	
220	Fill	Of [221]. Dark brown and light orange grey mixed silty clay. Firm with some charcoal inclusions.	
221	Cut	Linear feature that is located beneath its re-cut [219]. Where visible it has a V shaped profile, with steep sides and a narrow flat base. It is orientated N-S and is filled by a single deposit (220), which contained no finds. It is 0.38m wide and 0.18m deep.	
Trench 3			
301	Layer	Topsoil. 0.15m thick.	
302	Layer	Subsoil. Dark blue grey silt clay with chalk and gravel inclusions. 0.42m thick.	
303	Layer	Natural substrate. Light grey mixed with light orange brown silt clay with patches of chalk.	
304	Fill	Of [307]. Dark grey blue silty clay. Firm with chalk and gravel inclusions.	Pottery and Tile
305	Fill	Of [307]. Mid grey silty clay. Firm with, chalk, gravel and charcoal inclusions.	Pottery and Animal bone
306	Fill	Of [307]. Mid grey mottled with light green yellow silty clay. Firm with chalk, gravel and charcoal inclusions.	Pottery and Animal bone
307	Cut	Linear feature with a V shaped profile, with steep but stepped sides and a narrow concave base. It is orientated NNW-SSW and is filled by multiple deposits, (304), (305) and (306), which produced Roman pottery throughout the feature. It is 3m wide and 1.35m deep.	
308	Fill	Of [310]. Dark grey and light grey mixed silty clay. Firm with chalk and charcoal inclusions.	Pottery
309	Fill	Of [310]. Dark grey and light orange brown mixed silty clay. Firm with charcoal inclusions.	
310	Cut	Linear feature with steep edges and a wide, flat base. It is orientated NE-SW and filled by two deposits, (308) and (309), which contained Roman pottery. It is 1.06m wide and 0.5m deep.	
311	Fill	Of [313]. Mid grey silty clay. Firm with chalk and charcoal inclusions.	Pottery
312	Fill	Of [313]. Mid grey and light orange brown mixed silty clay. Firm	

		with some charcoal inclusions.	
313	Cut	Linear feature with a U shaped profile, with steep, even edges and a wide, flat base. It is orientated NE-SW and is filled by two deposits, (311) and (312), which contained Roman pottery. It is 1.3m wide and 0.5m deep.	
314	Fill	Of [315]. Dark grey silty clay. Firm with gravel inclusions.	
315	Cut	Pit that is circular shaped in plan, with irregular edges and an uneven base. It is filled by a single deposit, (314), which contained no finds. It is 0.84m in diameter and 0.2m deep. Due to its irregular profile it was suggested on site that this feature is most likely natural in origin, such as a tree bole.	
316	Fill	Of [317]. Dark grey silty clay. Firm with charcoal inclusions.	Animal bone
317	Cut	Linear feature that has very shallow, even edges and a flat base. It is orientated NNW-SSW and is filled by a single deposit, (316), which contained fragments of an animal skull. It is 1.3m wide and 0.16m deep. This feature is on a different alignment to the other features in the trench suggesting a different phase of occupation on site.	
Trench 4			
401	Layer	Topsoil. 0.15m thick.	
402	Layer	Subsoil. Mid orange brown silty clay. 0.25m thick.	
403	Layer	Natural subsoil. Light grey silty clay with patches of mid orange brown silty clay filling natural hollows.	
404	Fill	Of [405]. Mid orange brown silty clay. Firm with gravel inclusions.	
405	Cut	Linear feature that has shallow edges and a flat base. It is orientated E-W and is filled by a single deposit, (404), which contained no finds. It is 1.2m wide and 0.1m deep. Due to the lack of finds and diffuse edge, it was suggested on site that this feature may be of natural origin, such as a variation in the natural substrate.	
406	Fill	Of [407]. Mid orange brown silty clay. Firm with gravel inclusions.	
407	Cut	Linear feature that has irregular, shallow edges and an uneven base. It is orientated ESE-WNW and is filled by a single deposit, (406), which contained no finds. It is 1.34m wide and 0.24m deep. As with [405], it was suggested that this feature was natural in origin.	
Trench 5			
501	Layer	Topsoil. 0.2m thick.	
502	Layer	Subsoil. Mid grey brown silty clay. 0.34m thick.	
503	Layer	Natural substrate. Mid orange brown mixed with a light grey silt clay.	
Trench 6			
601	Layer	Topsoil. Contained frequent modern waste. Possibly asbestos tiles. 0.15m thick.	
602	Layer	Subsoil. Mid grey brown silt clay with some gravel inclusions. As well as some modern waste material. 0.38m thick.	

603	Layer	Natural substrate. Mid grey silt clay.	
604	Deposit	Dark brown clay loam. Contained modern waste, such as tile, brick, plastic, iron. Located between (601) and (602). 0.15m thick and approximately 10m wide.	
Trench 7			
701	Layer	Topsoil. 0.15m thick.	
702	Layer	Subsoil. Dark grey blue silty clay, with some chalk inclusions. 0.25m thick.	
703	Layer	Natural substrate. Mid brown orange silt clay mixed with dark grey blue silt clay.	
Trench 8			
801	Layer	Topsoil. 0.15m thick.	
802	Layer	Subsoil. Dark grey blue silty clay, with some chalk inclusions. 0.25m thick.	
803	Layer	Subsoil. Mid grey brown silty clay. 0.15m thick.	
804	Layer	Natural substrate. Light orange white clay with some chalk inclusions.	
Trench 9			
901	Layer	Topsoil. 0.15m thick.	
902	Layer	Subsoil. Mid grey brown silt clay with chalk and gravel inclusions. 0.24m thick.	
903	Layer	Natural substrate. Light grey silty clay.	
904	Fill	Of [906]. Dark grey blue silty clay. Compact with charcoal and gravel inclusions.	Pottery
905	Fill	Of [906]. Light brown grey silty clay. Compact with charcoal and chalk inclusions.	Animal bone
906	Cut	Linear feature that has a U shaped profile, with steep edges and a flat base. It is orientated N-S and is filled by two deposits, (904) and (905), which produced Roman pottery. It is 1.46m wide and 0.66m deep. The shape of the upper fill, (904), suggests that the ditch was managed, with it being emptied and re-shaped at least once.	
907	Fill	Of [909]. Mid blue grey silty clay. Compact with no inclusions.	Pottery
908	Fill	Of [909]. Light grey silty clay. Very compact with some rare chalk fragments.	
909	Cut	Curvilinear feature that has a U shaped profile, with steep edges and a flat base. It is orientated NW-SE, turning to NE-SW. Filled by two deposits, (907) and (908), which contained no finds. It is 0.76m wide and 0.48m deep.	
Trench 10			
1001	Layer	Topsoil. 0.15m thick.	
1002	Layer	Subsoil. Dark grey brown silty clay with some chalk inclusions. 0.3m thick.	
1003	Layer	Natural substrate. Light yellow grey silty clay with some chalk inclusions. Varies in places to a dark grey blue silt clay.	
Trench 11			
1101	Layer	Topsoil. Similar to rest of site, however slightly more loose. 0.15m thick.	
1102	Layer	Subsoil. Dark grey blue silt clay. 0.32m thick.	
1103	Layer	Natural substrate. Light grey brown silt clay.	

1104	Deposit	Mixed colour and consistency. Contained modern CBM, plastic, rope, metal, etc. Modern dump deposit. 0.4m thick.	
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For: PCA
Site: Church Farm, Slapton, Buckinghamshire
Site Code: CFSE 14
Acc code: AYBCM 2014.127
Author: Jane Timby
Date: December 2014

POTTERY

1 Introduction and methodology

- 1.1 The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of a small assemblage of 100 sherds of pottery weighing *c* 2176 g. The material mostly dates to the Roman period with a few sherds of later prehistoric date. In addition there are three fragments of fired clay and a single fragment of ceramic building material.
- 1.2 The assemblage was sorted into fabrics based on the colour, texture and nature of the inclusions present in the clay. The later prehistoric material was classified following the recommended nomenclature in PCRG (1997) where the letters denote the main inclusions present. Known names traded wares are codes following the National Roman fabric series (codes in brackets) (Tomber and Dore 1998). Other wares, generally of local origin, were coded more generically according to colour and main characteristics.
- 1.3 The sorted assemblage was quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. Freshly broken sherds were counted as single pieces. Rims were additionally coded to general form. A catalogue of the main fabrics for each context can be found summarised in Table 1 along with a provisional date for that context.
- 1.4 In general terms the assemblage was in moderately good condition with an overall average sherd weight of 21.7 g and the sherds in quite fresh condition. Surface preservation was quite good and surface finish could be detected. There were very few diagnostic rim sherds present in the group.
- 1.5 Pottery was recovered from 10 features, a total of 13 contexts associated with trenches 1, 2, 3 and 9. The quantity of sherds per features ranged from single sherds up to a maximum of 48 sherds from linear [212].
- 1.6 In the following report the general composition of the assemblage is briefly described followed by an overall assessment of the potential of the material.

2 Later prehistoric

- 2.1 Five sherds appear to be of later prehistoric date; four from linear [906] and one residually in linear [212]. Certain fabrics, most notably the shelly wares continue to feature in the early Roman period and are thus difficult to date as isolated sherds.

- 2.2 The sherds from linear [906] comprised two handmade shelly wares, one a jar rim, and two handmade, dense sandy wares. The sherd from linear [212] is a rim from a small jar or bowl with a carinated shoulder.

3 Roman pottery

- 3.1 Roman pottery accounts for the remaining assemblage and is dominated by 'local' coarse wares with a few recognisable imported traded wares.
- 3.2 Imported wares include a single sherd of Central Gaulish samian (LEZ SA) from linear [212]; single sherds of Dorset black burnished ware bowl (DOR BB1); Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware (LNV CC) and Hadham colour-coated ware (HAD OX) and a number of products from the Oxfordshire industries including white wares (OXF WH), grey wares (OXF RE/OXF FR) and colour-coated ware (OXF RS).
- 3.3 The main local wares include wheel-made and handmade shelly ware, grey sandy wares, a pink grog-tempered ware, a black sandy ware oxidised ware and other miscellaneous sandy wares. Of note is a single glazed sherd from curvi-linear [909] which is probably of Roman date and from a source in the Midlands.
- 3.4 Amongst the Oxfordshire products are examples of a white ware mortarium Young (1977) type M22, a flask, probably type W8, a rolled rim necked jar W33, a colour-coated mortarium base and beaker bodysherds.
- 3.5 Other forms of notes include several pink grogged ware (PNK GT) storage jar sherds and the complete top of a grey sandy ware narrow necked jar from pit [209].
- 3.6 The Roman wares appear to span the 2nd through to the later 3rd-4th centuries. The earlier features provisionally include pit [209], curvi-linear [909], linear [205] and linear [215] although it should be noted that the number of sherds from all these cuts are very low.
- 3.7 Of later Roman date are linears [212], [307], [310] and [313].

4 Fired clay and ceramic building material (CBM)

- 4.1 Three pieces of fired clay (59 g) were recovered from linear [205]. The pieces have no shape or surviving surfaces to indicate their original purpose.
- 4.2 A single large fragment of well-fired CBM flat tile of Roman date came from [307]. This had a thickness of 37 mm and weighed 283 g and would have been used in construction or flooring.

5 Summary and potential

- 5.1 The work at Church Farm produced a fairly modest assemblage of pottery which seems to indicate two main phases of activity; one in the mid-later Iron Age; the other

in the Roman period (2-4th century). With such a small group it is difficult to identify whether it represents two discrete phases of activity or a continuum but the latter seems most likely on the present evidence.

- 5.2 The very small size of the assemblage limits both the precision which can be given to the dating and the potential for any further work on this particular group of material. The character of the assemblage as it stands suggests a very modest low status rural settlement in the area.

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**Land at Church Farm, Near Slapton,
Buckinghamshires (CFSE 14)**

The Animal Bone

By Jennifer Wood

Introduction

A total of 40 (2093g) refitted fragments of animal bone were collected by hand, during a scheme of archaeological works undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd on Land at Church Farm, near Slapton, Buckinghamshire.

Animal bone was recovered from contexts within Trenches 2, 3 and 9, originating from ditch deposits, all mostly dated from the late prehistoric to Romano-British period.

Methodology

The entire assemblage has been fully recorded into a database archive. Identification of the bone was undertaken with access to a reference collection and published guides. All animal remains were counted and weighed, and where possible identified to species, element, side and zone (Serjeantson 1996). Ribs and vertebrae were only recorded to species when they were substantially complete and could accurately be identified. Undiagnostic bones were recorded as micro (rodent size), small (rabbit size), medium (sheep size) or large (cattle size). The separation of sheep and goat bones was done using the criteria of Boessneck (1969) and Prummel and Frisch (1986) in addition to the use of the reference material. Where distinctions could not be made the bone was recorded as sheep/goat (S/G).

The quantification of species was carried out using the total fragment count, in which the total number of fragments of bone and teeth was calculated for each taxon. Where fresh breaks were noted, fragments were refitted and counted as one. The data produced the basic NISP (Number of Identified Specimen) counts.

The condition of the bone was graded using the criteria stipulated by Lyman (1996). Grade 0 being the best preserved bone and grade 5 indicating that the bone had suffered such structural and attritional damage as to make it unrecognisable. Also fusion data, butchery marks (Binford 1981), gnawing, burning and pathological changes were noted when present.

Tooth eruption and wear stages were measured using a combination of Halstead (1985), Grant (1982), Levine (1982) and Payne (1973), and fusion data was analysed according to Silver (1969). Measurements of adult, that is, fully fused bones were taken according to the methods of von den Driesch (1976), with asterisked (*) measurements indicating bones that were reconstructed or had slight abrasion of the surface.

Results

Condition and Taphonomy

The remains were generally of a good to moderate overall condition, averaging at grade 3 on the Lyman criteria (1996).

Butchery

A single fragment of cattle scapula recovered from Trench 9 ditch [906], displayed cut mark evidence consistent with jointing of the carcass.

Gnawing

An *equid* radius and ulna recovered from Trench 3 ditch [307] displayed evidence of gnawing which is thought to be canine in origin.

Burning

A total of 2 fragments of bone recovered from Trench 9 ditch [906] displayed evidence of burning. These bones probably represent hearth sweepings or incidental burning events.

No evidence of working or pathology was noted within the assemblage.

Species Representation

Table 1, Summary of the Identified Taxa, by Cut

	Trench 2	Trench 3		Trench 9	
Taxon	Ditch [212]	Ditch [307]	Ditch [317]	Ditch [906]	Total
<i>Equid</i> (Horse Family)	1	1		2	4
Cattle	2	7		5	14
Sheep/Goat	2			1	3
Sheep				2	2
Pig	1		1		2
Domestic Fowl (<i>Gallus Sp.</i>)				1	1
Large Mammal	5	2		5	12
Medium Mammal				2	2
N=	11	10	1	18	40

Table 1 summarises the identified taxa identified within the assemblage by cut. As can be seen cattle are the most abundant species identified within the assemblage. Followed by sheep/goat, with sheep positively identified within the assemblage. *Equid*, pig and domestic fowl (*Gallus sp.*) was also identified.

Discussion

The assemblage recovered from the Land at Church Farm, near Slapton, Buckinghamshire, is relatively small but well preserved. Due to the small size of the assemblage, limited information can be gained save the presence of the remains on site.

Animal bone was recovered from stratified contexts from three trenches, however, the distribution off the assemblage is relatively uniform with no obvious areas which would indicate a concentration of deposition.

The animal bone assemblage suggests that cattle were the main focus of the underlying economy with sheep/goat and pig being of lesser importance. The skeletal elements represented suggest the remains were probably from a mixture of food and butchery waste, with a slight emphasis on butchery discard.

In the possible event of further archaeological works, the site would be liable to produce further remains of a similar condition and nature, with good potential to provide further information on dietary economies and underlying husbandry practices for the site.

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Land at Church Farm, near Slapton, Bucks
CSFE14
AYBCM:2014.127

Finds Catalogue

Context	Material	No.	Weight (g)	Description	Date	Action
905	Shell	1	5g	Oyster shell		Discard

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: preconst3-199514

Project details

Project name	Land To South of Church Farm, Slapton, Buckinghamshire
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation consisting of eleven 30m x 2m trenches was undertaken on land to the south of Church Farm, Slapton, Buckingham. It was advised by the Senior Archaeology Planning Officer that a geophysical survey and scheme of trial trenching should be completed in order to inform a planning application that is currently under consideration for the construction of a solar farm and associated infrastructure.. The development site is situated 750m to the south east of the village of Slapton. A desk based assessment identified known archaeological remains dating to the Iron Age and early Roman periods immediately adjacent to the application site and within the 1km study area. There is, therefore, high potential for archaeological remains of dating to these periods within the application site. Out of the eleven trenches excavated seven were archaeologically negative, whilst four contained multiple archaeological features that have been dated to the Iron Age/Roman period. These features were mainly linear in nature, with the finds suggesting domestic activity in the area.
Project dates	Start: 01-10-2014 End: 30-10-2104
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CFSE 14 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	AYBCM: 2014.127 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland use
Monument type	DITCH Roman
Monument type	PIT Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Late Iron Age
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	TILE Roman

Methods & techniques "Targeted Trenches"

Development type Solar Development

Prompt National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AYLESBURY VALE SLAPTON Land to South of Church Farm, Slapton, Buckinghamshire

Study area 15.00 Hectares

Site coordinates 494090 219990 494090 00 00 N 219990 00 00 E 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 S. Markus

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Buckinghamshire County Museum

Digital Contents "Animal Bones", "Ceramics"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Spreadsheets", "Survey", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient Buckinghamshire County Museum

Paper Contents "Animal Bones", "Ceramics"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Diary", "Drawing", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey "

Entered by Leigh Brocklehurst (leigh@pre-construct.co.uk)

Entered on 9 January 2015

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