# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:

## Land at Rampisham North, Rampisham, Dorchester, West Dorset, DT2 0HS

| | |
|---|---|
| NGR: | ST 55017 01429 |
| Planning Ref.: | WD/D/14/002974 |
| PCAS job No.: | 1398 |
| Site code: | RNDE 15 |
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Report prepared for

Alder King LLP

On behalf of

British Solar Renewables

By

L. Brocklehurst

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Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd
47, Manor Road
Saxilby
Lincoln
LN1 2HX
Tel. 01522 703800
Fax: 01522 703656

e-mail: info@pre-construct.co.uk

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**Summary**

*A programme of archaeological evaluation trenching took place to inform a planning application on land at Rampisham North. The aim of the scheme was to investigate the potential for and survival of any below ground archaeological remains that may be impacted by development proposals for a new large photovoltaic park.*

*There is little evidence of any early occupation around the site. To the southeast are two prehistoric funerary monuments: a possible ploughed out Neolithic long barrow, and a Scheduled Bronze Age round barrow. There are no Roman or Saxon monuments in the area, although Rampisham appears as a manor held by the Bishop of Bayeux in the Domesday Book.*

*The northern boundary of the site is defined by the Scheduled earthworks of a section of the boundary of the Rampisham Pale, a medieval deer park established sometime before the late 13th century. The earthwork boundaries survive in three segments; however a study of historic mapping has identified a former field boundary running through the southern half of the site which appears to be a continuation of the course of the known Pale earthworks. A slight ridge in the topography of the site may be the ploughed out remains of a bank, and this corresponds with parallel linear anomalies identified by geophysical survey.*

*This document describes the results of a thirteen trench evaluation. The ditches of the Park Pale were identified in Trenches 3, 8, 9 and 11, with a small number of features being identified in Trenches 1, 12 and 13. Trenches 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10 were deemed to be archaeologically negative. No finds were recovered from the site.*

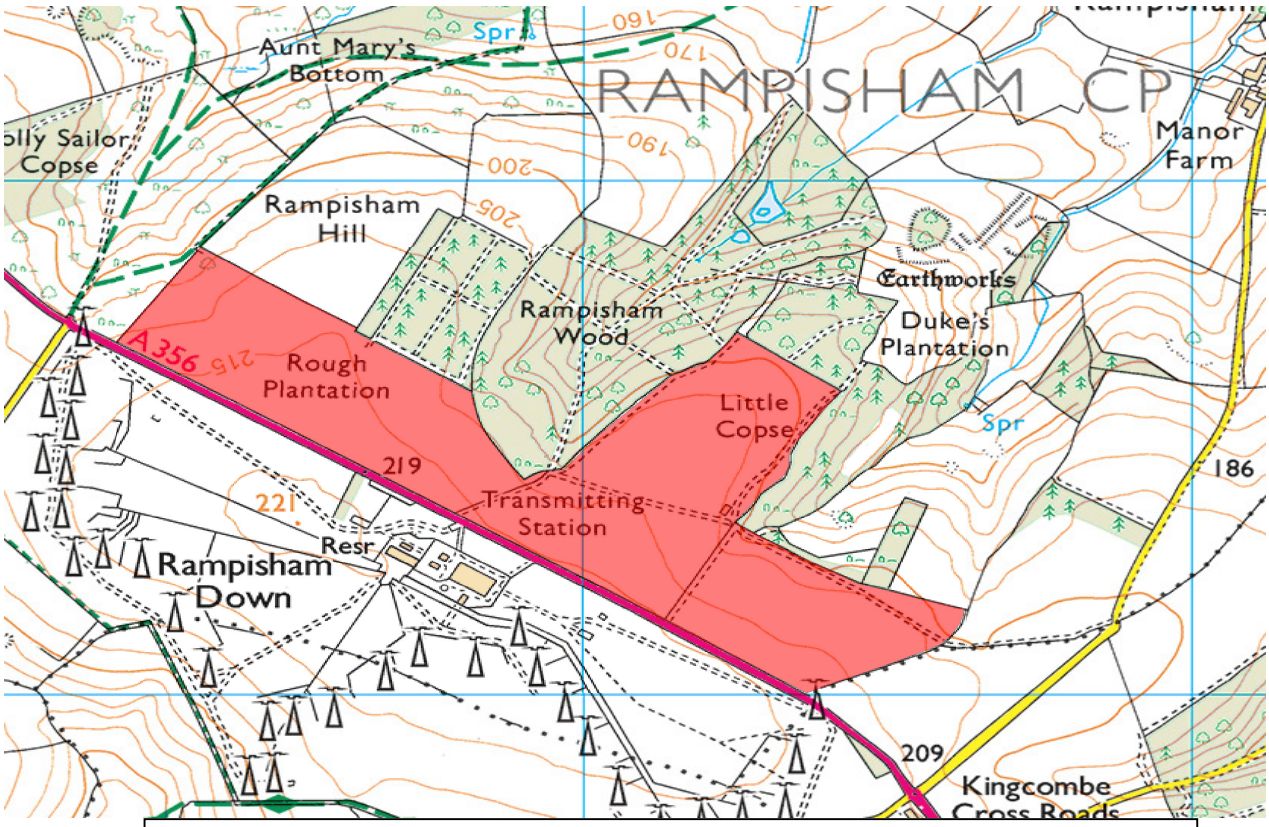



Figure 1: Location plan of the site (shaded red) at scale 1:10000.

## 1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by Alder King LLP on behalf of British Solar Renewables to undertake a scheme of archaeological evaluation trenching on land north of the former Rampisham transmitter station. The scheme was recommended to inform a planning application for a solar park.

## 2.0 Site location and description

The proposed development site is situated on the south-western edge of the parish of Rampisham in Dorset. It lies on the north side of the A356 between Crewkerne (c. 13km northwest) and Frampton (c.10km southeast). The village of Rampisham lies c. 1km to the northeast, on the opposite side of Rampisham Wood. The site lies entirely in the parish of Rampisham, although borders with the neighbouring parishes of Toller Porcorum and Wraxall lie either adjacent to or within 1km.

The site comprises of 2 large fields, forming an approximate inverted T-shape, the south side of which lies alongside the A356. The west arm of the "T" is separated from the remainder of the site by a hedgerow field boundary. The leg of the "T" extends northeast from the approximate centre towards Rampisham. Rampisham Wood and the associated plantations define the northern boundary.

The central NGR of the proposed development site is ST 55017 01429.

## 3.0 Topography and geology

The site lies close to the top of a natural ridge (Rampisham Hill) within a characteristically rolling landscape; the 200m contour skirts around the northern site boundary, and the highest point on site lies at the western end at 215mOD. The summit of the hill lies beyond the southern boundary on the site of the former Rampisham Transmitter; north and east of the site the topography drops dramatically into a tributary valley of the River Frome.

Ground levels within the site generally reflect natural topographic changes, gently undulating to the highest point in the southwest. The bedrock geology of the majority of the proposed development zone is grey Chalk. Areas of the southwest edge of the site are recorded as Holywell nodular chalk, a hard nodular chalk with significant amounts of shell debris, while the majority of the site is Zig Zag Chalk; firm, pale grey – off white blocky chalk.

## 4.0 Planning background

A heritage chapter was prepared as part of an Environmental Statement in support of a planning application submitted to West Dorset Council for a new photovoltaic park with associated equipment, including access and cable routes north of the former transmitter station. The application was submitted in November 2014, reference WD/D/14/002974, and is currently under consideration.

The heritage assessment identified the potential for previously unidentified archaeological remains, potentially relating to the Scheduled earthworks of the Rampisham Pale medieval deer park which forms part of the northern boundary of the site. In view of this, geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation was recommended to investigate the presence or absence of any archaeological remains potentially relating to the Pale and any other archaeological activity which may be impacted by development. The results of this scheme of trenching, in conjunction with the heritage assessment and geophysical survey will be used to inform the planning decision.

## 5.0 Archaeological and historical background

A heritage chapter, assessing the archaeological and historical background has already been compiled as part of the Environmental Statement submitted with the planning application (Lane, 2014), A summary of this follows:

There is little evidence of archaeological activity around the proposed development site prior to the medieval period.

Local prehistoric activity is poorly understood: a largely ploughed out earthwork tentatively identified as a possible Neolithic long barrow, and the Scheduled Monument of a round barrow, both lying to the southeast of the site alongside the A356 comprise the only known prehistoric monuments in the area. Roman activity is similarly represented, with the only known Roman monument within 2km of the site being a mosaic floor revealed in the 18th century; interpreted as part of a Roman villa, although the floor was removed and the area heavily impacted by post-medieval and modern agriculture - it is therefore considered unlikely that significant remains now survive. There are no known Saxon monuments within 2km of the site, although the eastern site boundary is marked by an important hedgerow, which marks the parish boundary and may relate to historic Saxon or early medieval land demarcation. Rampisham appears in the Domesday Book as a modest settlement of 10 villeins and 6 bordars, held by the Bishop of Bayeux.

Parts of the northern boundary of the proposed solar park are defined by the earthworks of the Scheduled Monument of the Rampisham Pale; a medieval deer park, recorded in documentary sources as dating from the late 13th century. Deer parks were introduced by Norman overlords; they enclosed areas of woodland and grassland with hunting lodges and managed game for the pleasure and table of the nobility and their guests. The Pale boundary survives as three sections of well preserved earthwork banks and ditches.

A study of available historic mapping identified a former field boundary extending across the eastern half of the site, appearing to continue the projected line of the surviving earthwork. This field boundary has since been removed, although a shallow ridge noted on its approximate line could be the ploughed out remains of a further section of the Pale boundary.

Rampisham Pale is one of nearly 100 confirmed or possible deer parks in Dorset alone, although few of the other examples have any significant surviving earthworks (**Cantor, L M & Wilson, J D 1967**). A second deer park lies at Hooke Park, to the northwest of the proposed development site; the two features would have been contemporary in the historic landscape, although the relationship between them is unknown. Very little of Hooke Park now remains, excluding a couple of small coppices of woodland.

Deer parks were largely falling out of use by the 16th century, and it is during this period that other activity around the site commences. Much of this area appears to have been utilised for agriculture, with small scale quarrying scattered across the downs. Undated mounds and depressions in the natural topography of the area are thought to indicate gravel and lime or chalk pits - a small concentration of such features lies to the north of the site, and a possible lime kiln is recorded less than 200m from the northeast inverted corner of the site.

The origins of the A356 are unknown, but have been suggested to be Roman; however no serious evidence to support this hypothesis has yet been offered. The road was certainly in existence by the 18th century, when it was part of the Maiden Newton Turnpike Trust.

The Rampisham Transmitter site was bought by the BBC in 1939, after construction funding became available for high power short wave radio stations to assist the war effort. Radio equipment was housed within blast resistant buildings, and the development incorporated other defensive features for fear the station would come under attack. Post-war alterations and improvements were

made in the 1950's and 1980's, before the station was sold in 1997 and finally closed in 2011. The buildings and masts of the former transmitter site remain on site.

A study of historic mapping has confirmed the presence of a former field boundary crossing the site, extending from the known extent of the Scheduled earthworks of the Pale towards the southeast corner. Mapping indicates this boundary was only removed in the later 20th century. The confirmed Pale earthworks were scheduled in 1975, suggesting that either the field boundary had been removed prior to this date or that the field boundary remained extant at this time but was considered unrelated to the deer park.

A geophysical survey of the site was undertaken in late summer 2014 (Bunn, 2014), revealing a number of magnetic anomalies. The majority of these were interpreted as resulting from agricultural practices (probably the remnants of ridge and furrow farming) and featuring as traces of linear features on various alignments. There were also a number of discrete circular features of weak magnetic variation, which are probable small scale quarry pits; although it is possible some could be bomb craters resulting from attempts in WWII to destroy the adjacent transmitter station. There are just two possible curvilinear anomalies in the north-western field, with an irregular pattern of short linear features and a third probable curvilinear feature towards the southern end of the site. Two parallel linear anomalies appear to correspond with the former field boundary on historic mapping, which is postulated as being a part of the earthwork remains of the Rampisham Pale.

## 6.0 Aims and methodology

The evaluation consisted of thirteen trenches, each measuring 30m x 2m, positioned in order to evaluate potential archaeological features identified by the geophysical survey.

The broad aim of the evaluation was:

- To determine the presence/absence, nature, date, depth, quality of survival, importance, extent, form and function of archaeological features;
- To recover stratified artefactual evidence;
- To establish the sequence of archaeological remains;
- To interpret in the context of the known archaeological landscape.

All trenches were accurately fixed into the National Grid using a Leica GS50, Topcom GRS1 global positioning system (GPS). Trench locations were agreed in advance and are shown superimposed on interpretive geophysical survey imagery Figure 2.

The excavation of all trial trenches took place initially using a mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Machine excavation progressed in spits no greater than 200mm and ceased either at the first significant archaeological horizon, or the natural substrate.

All archaeological features were examined sufficiently to determine their date, character, state of preservation and depth, as well as to recover artefactual / ecofactual remains for further study. Features were recorded by measured plan and section drawings at appropriate scales (1:20 and 1:10 respectively). A written record for each stratigraphic horizon and archaeological feature was made on standard PCAS recording forms. A photographic archive and a narrative account in the form of a site diary supplements these records.

The results of the evaluation presented here will be used to provide site-specific archaeological information that will allow the Local Planning Authority to make an informed judgement on any appropriate archaeological mitigation.


Figure 2: Trench location plan (1:4000)

## 7.0 Results

A full descriptive context summary list appears as Appendix 1, whilst selected photographs can be seen throughout the text. A Trench location plan is included as Figure 2.

### *7.1 Trenches containing archaeological features*

*Trench 1 (Fig. 3)*

*Trench 1 was towards the western edge of the site and was orientated approximately NE-SW. It was positioned in to explore a possible feature that was identified by geophysical survey. Excavation exposed a stratigraphy of topsoil (101), subsoil and natural silt clay (103). A single linear feature was exposed towards the centre of the trench, and the trench was excavated to a depth of 0.3m below original ground level.*

Linear feature [104] (looking NW).

The exposed gully, [104], was orientated approximately N-S across the centre of the trench. It had straight edges, with steep sides and a narrow concave base. It was 0.2m wide and 0.18m deep and contained a single silt-clay fill which yielded no finds. It is interpreted as most likely being an agricultural feature, perhaps for a (removed) former land drain.

*Trench 3 (Fig. 3)*

*Trench 3 was on the southern edge of the site, towards its centre, and was orientated approximately NE-SW. It was positioned to section the potential ditches of the medieval Park Pale. Excavations exposed a stratigraphy of topsoil (301), subsoil (302) and natural silt clay (303) beneath. Two large ditches were identified at the north and south ends of the trench, which was excavated to a depth of 0.4m below original ground level.*


The southern of the two ditches, [306], was orientated approximately NW-SE. It had straight, steep sides and a narrow concave base. It was 2.4m wide and 0.9m deep and contained two silt-clay deposits, neither of which produced any finds.

The other ditch, [310], was to the north of [306]. This was of the same orientation and displayed a similar profile. It was wider at 3.7m and was 1.2m deep. It contained three discrete silt-clay fills, none of which yielded any finds.


Ditch [310] (looking W).

*Trench 8 (Fig. 4)*

*Trench 8 was on the southern edge of the site; orientated approximately NE-SW to sample the potential ditches of the medieval Park Pale. Excavations exposed a stratigraphy of topsoil (801), subsoil (802) and the natural substrate (803) beneath. Northern and southern ditches were exposed, and the trench was excavated to a depth of 0.4m below original ground level.*

The northernmost of these two ditches, [805], was wide and shallow. It had undulating, uneven edges and a fairly flat base. It was on a NW-SE alignment and was 4.6m wide, but only 0.22m deep. It contained a single silt-clay fill, which yielded no finds.

The ditch to the south, [808], had much steeper sides and a narrower flat base. It was also orientated NW-SE, but was 3.6m wide and 0.8m deep. It contained two silt-clay fills, which also yielded no finds.

Ditch [805] (looking S).


Ditch [808] (looking SE).

*Trench 9 (Fig. 4)*

*Trench 9 was on the southern edge of the site at its eastern end and was orientated approximately NE-SW to sample the potential ditches of the medieval Park Pale. Excavations exposed a stratigraphy of topsoil (901), subsoil (902) and the natural substrate (903). Two large ditches were*

*identified at the north and south ends of the trench which was excavated to 0.5m below original ground level.*

The northernmost of the ditches, [905], was orientated approximately NW-SE. It had steep but undulating edges and a concave base. It was 2.6m wide and 0.8m deep and contained two silt-clay deposits, which produced no finds.

To the south, ditch [904] was also orientated NW-SE, with steep, fairly straight, sides and a narrow concave base. It was 1.9m wide and 0.8m deep and contained two silt-clay fills. Typically, no finds were recovered.

Ditch [905] (looking SW).

*Trench 11 (Fig. 5)*

*Trench 11 was on the southern edges of the site and was orientated approximately NE-SW. It was positioned to sample the potential ditches of the medieval Park Pale. Excavations exposed a stratigraphy of topsoil (1101) and the natural substrate (1103). As with the previously described trenches targeting the Park Pale, two parallel ditches were exposed and investigated. The trench was excavated to 0.38m below original ground level.*

Ditch [1105] was the more northern of the two features, with ditch [1104] located to the south. Both features had relatively steep SW sides; shallower and stepped on their NE sides. Ditch [1104] contains three silt-clay fills, whilst [1105] contains a seemingly homogenous deposit. The northernmost ditch was 2.1m wide and 0.3m deep; the southern ditch 4.6m wide and 0.8m deep. No finds were recovered from either feature.

*Trench 12 (Fig. 5)*

*Trench 12 was on the western side of the site, orientated approximately NE-SW. It was positioned to target a circular ditch-like anomaly that had been identified by geophysical survey. Excavations exposed a stratigraphy of topsoil (1201), subsoil (1202) and the natural substrate (1203). Two shallow ditch-like features corresponding with the circular anomaly were identified at either end of the trench, as was a smaller, later, gully at the north end of the trench.*

Ditch [1204] was at the north end of the trench, and appeared to correlate with the northern edge of the large circular feature that featured on the preceding geophysical survey. It was orientated SE-NW and had short, shallow sides and a wide flat base. It contained a single silt clay fill, which contained no finds. It was 2.3m wide and 0.24m deep.

The other side of the circular geophysical anomaly was represented by ditch [1206]. This was also orientated SE-NW and also had shallow sides and a wide flat base. It contained a single silt-clay fill, which contained no finds. It was 2.7m wide and 0.3m deep.

A curved gully [1208] was exposed at the very north end of the trench, cut through the fill of [1204]. It had shallow sides and a flat base; 0.6m wide and 0.14m deep, filled with a homogenous silt clay deposit, which contained no finds.


Ditch [1204] (looking SE.


Ditch [1206] (looking SE).

*Trench 13 (Fig. 6)*

*Trench 13 was on the western side of the site and was orientated approximately E-W to target a linear anomaly that had been identified by geophysical survey. Excavations exposed a stratigraphy of topsoil (1301), subsoil (1302) and the natural substrate (1303). A single ditch was exposed at the centre of the trench, which correlates with the geophysical survey.*

The ditch, [1304], was orientated N-S and had shallow, even sides and a concave base. It was 1.2m wide and 0.3m deep and contained a single silt-clay deposit. No finds were recovered. This feature was most likely of agricultural origin; possibly a former field boundary.


Ditch [1304] (looking N).

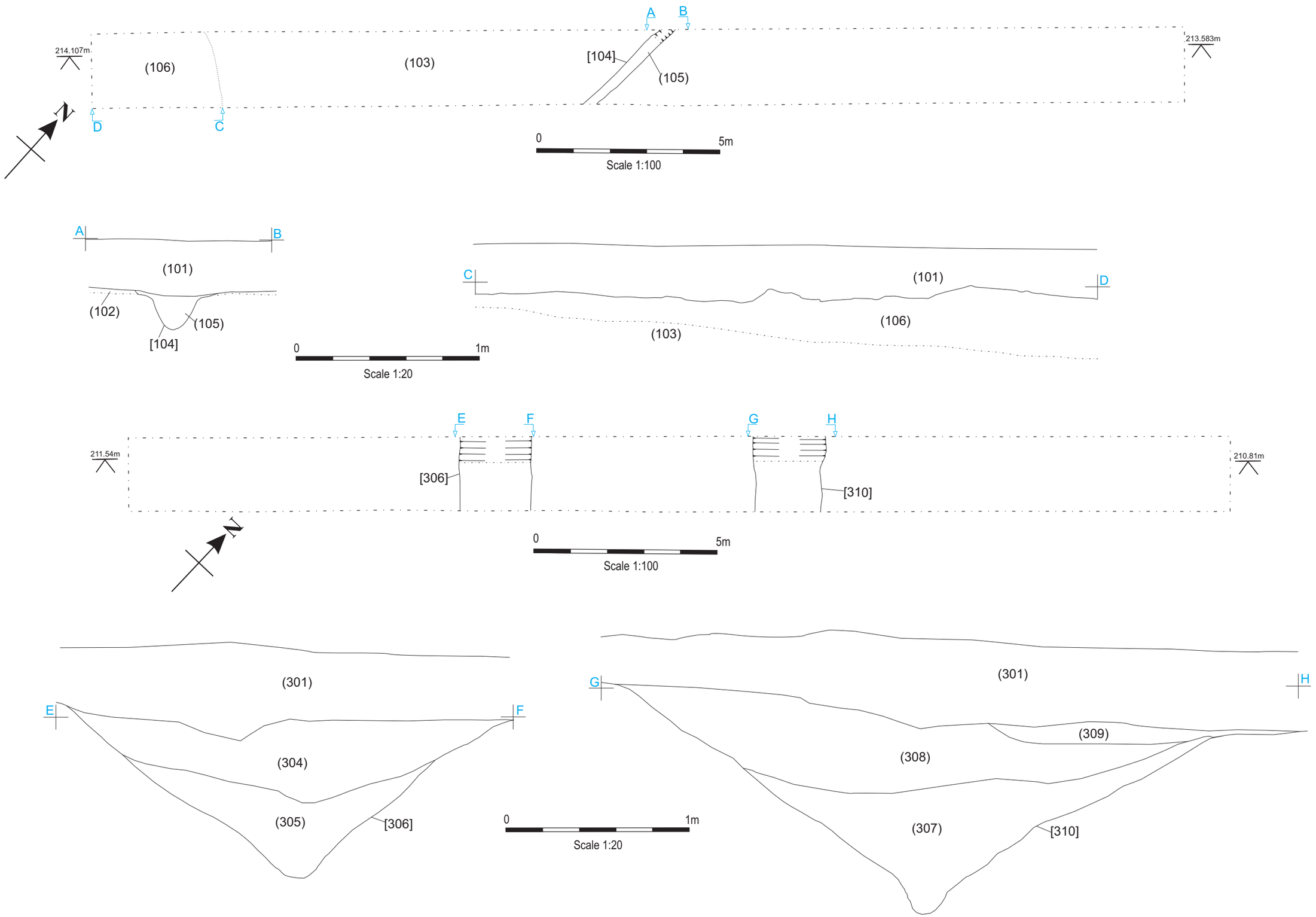



Figure 3: Trenches 1 and 3 plans (1:100) and sections (1:20)

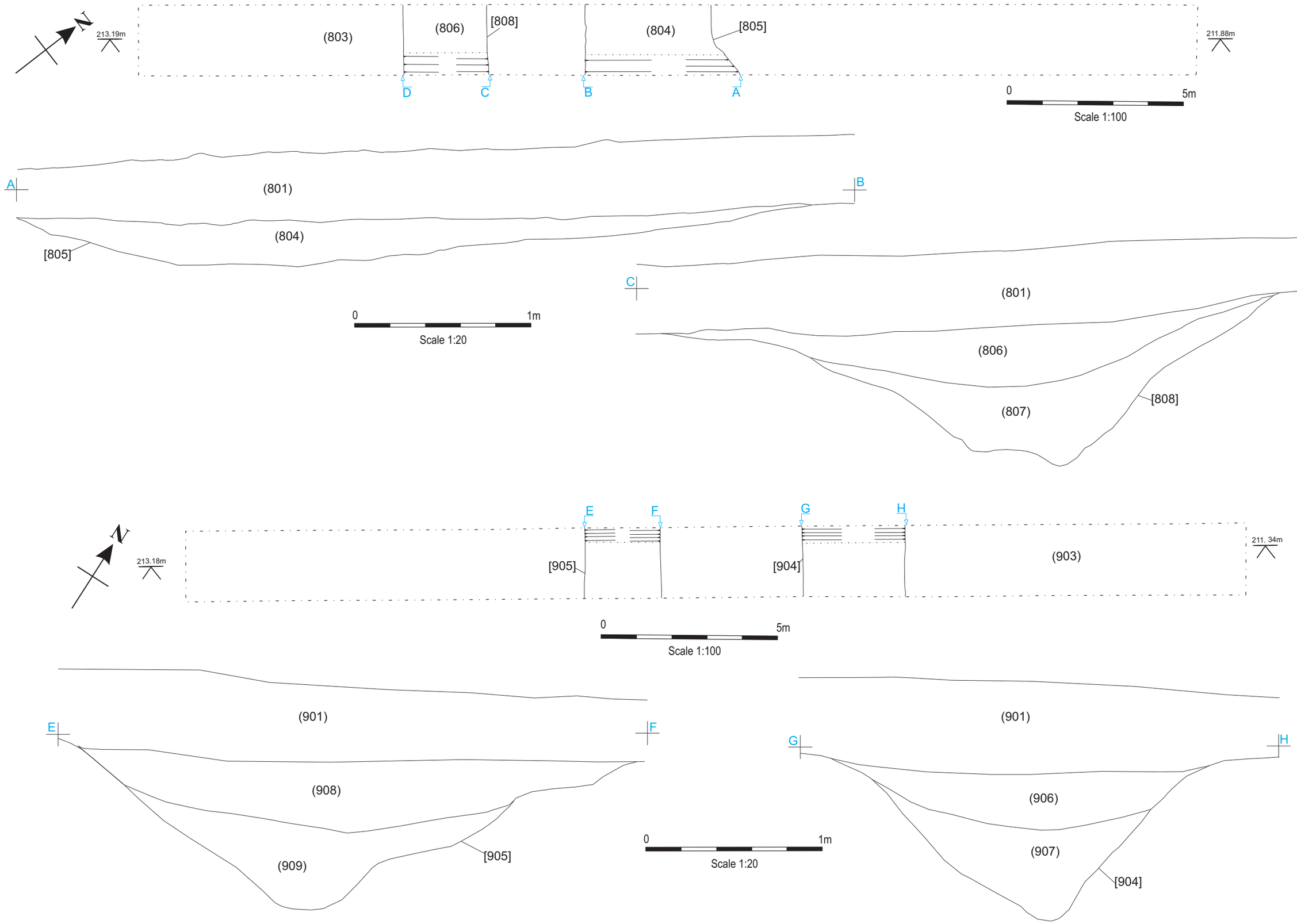



Figure 4: Trenches 8 and 9 plans (1:100) and sections (1:20)

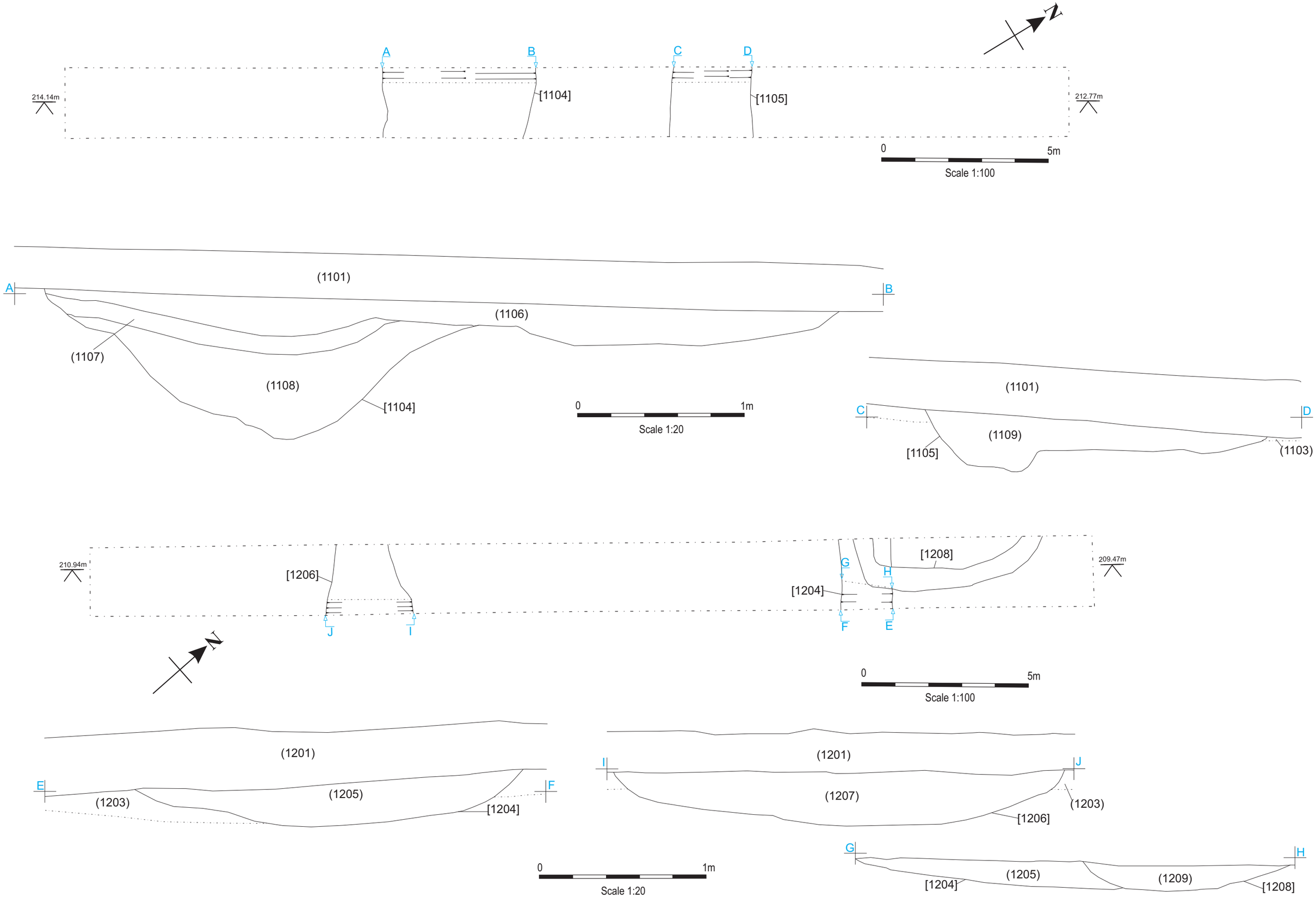
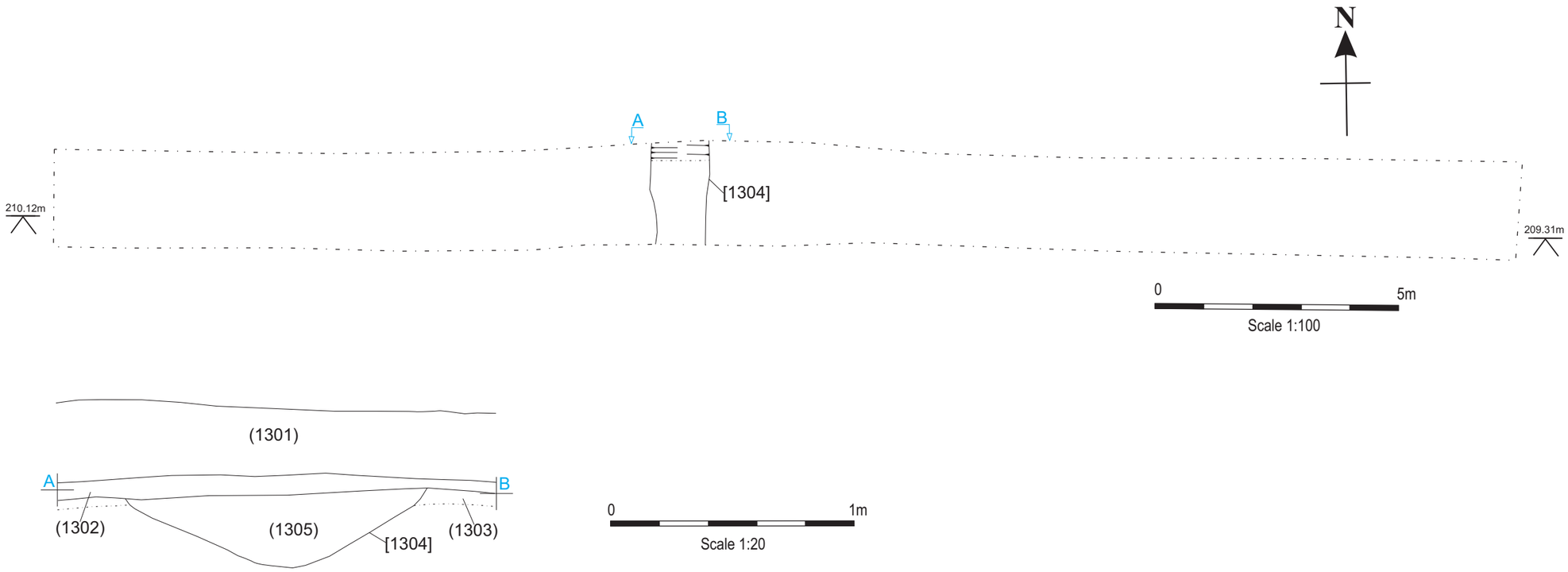



Figure 5: Trenches 11 and 12 plans (1:100) and sections (1:20)



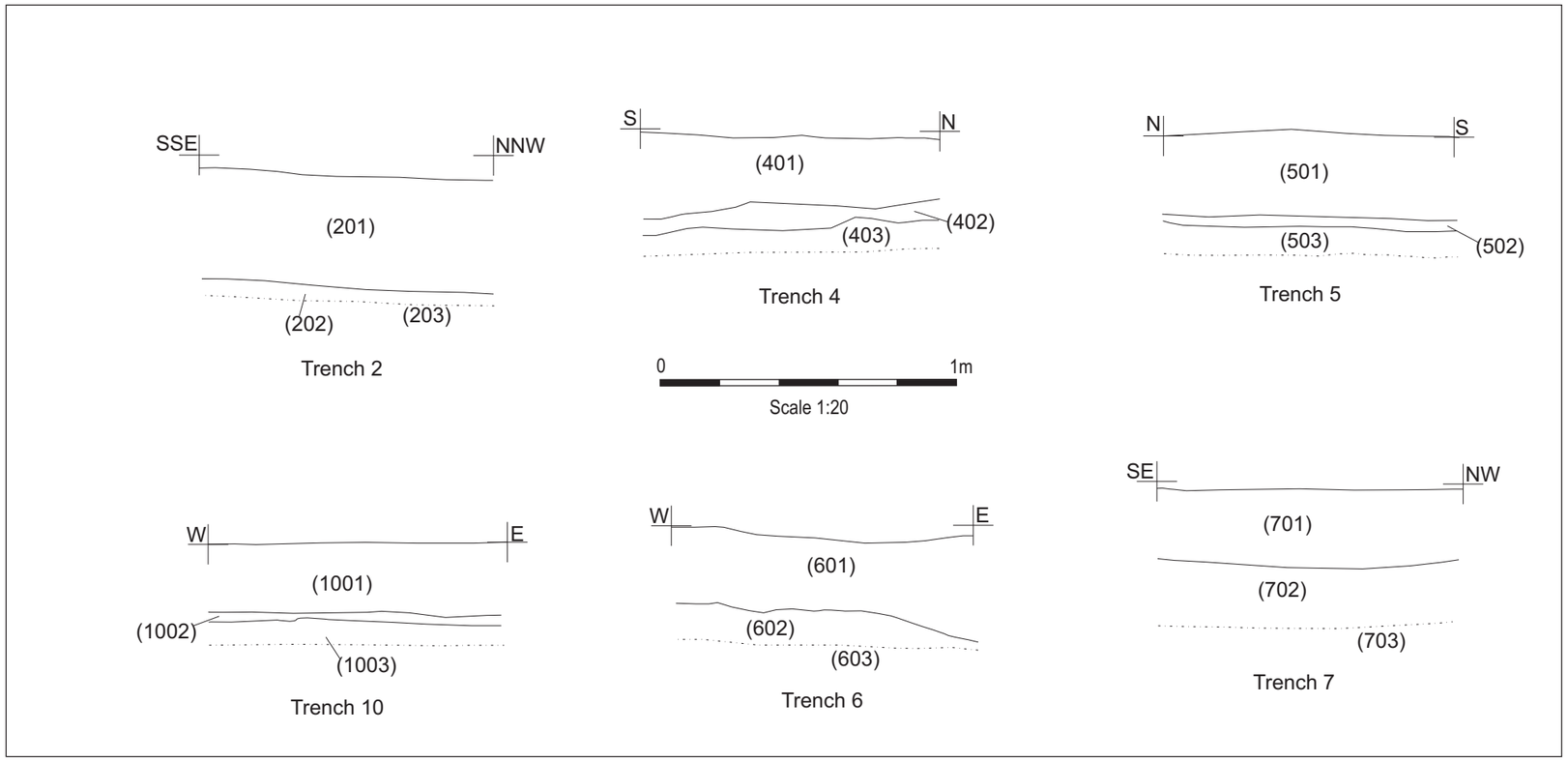




Figure 6: Trench 13 plan (1:100) and section (1:20). Inset; Representative sections (1:20) of archaeologically negative trenches.

### *7.2 Trenches containing no archaeological remains*

Of the 13 trenches excavated, six were identified as being archaeologically negative: Trenches 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10. The depths of these trenches varied between 0.3m and 0.6m, with most containing a stratigraphy of topsoil and subsoil overlying the natural silt clay beneath.

## 8.0 Discussion and conclusion

The scheme investigated thirteen trenches spread over two fields. Some had been located to target and investigate anomalies that were picked up by a preceding geophysical survey. Seven trenches contained archaeological features, with the most significant archaeology being identified along the southern edge of the site. Trenches 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 were archaeologically negative.

Although undated, the most significant archaeology would appear to relate to the Park Pale, a boundary of the medieval deer park, which runs across the southern edge of the site on an approximately NW-SE alignment. This feature featured in Trenches 3, 8, 9 and 11 in the form of two parallel ditches, with the bank that would have been between them seemingly ploughed out. The size of the ditches, where sectioned, ranged from 2.4m to 4.7m wide and 0.22m deep to 1.2m deep, with ditches seemingly ploughed out and disturbed in some areas; for instance in Trenches 8 and 11. No finds were recovered from any of the ditch sections, and recovered samples produced relatively negative results (see Appendix 2).

In addition to the Park Pale ditches observed across the southern half of the site, a small number of ditches and a gully were identified in Trenches 12 and 13 on the eastern side of the site. A single N-S orientated ditch was excavated in Trench 13, and was most likely an agricultural feature, possibly a former field boundary. Trench 12 targeted a circular anomaly, with two segments of this anticipated within the evaluation trench. This scenario was corroborated by the exposed archaeology, with two ditches excavated at either end of the trench (a small gully, presumably localised, had been cut through the northernmost of these ditches).

On the western side of the site in Trench 1 was a single narrow linear feature; most likely an agricultural feature such as a former land drain.

No finds were recovered from any of the exposed features.

## 9.0 Effectiveness of methodology

For the most part, the archaeology identified corroborates with geophysical survey data. Therefore, the methodology employed has achieved its objective by ensuring that the proposed development area has been explored in order to confirm the presence/absence of archaeology. However, the lack of finds in the features excavated has made characterisation in some area more problematic.

## 10.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. is grateful to Alder King LLP and British Solar Renewables for this commission.

## 11.0 References

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Appendix 1 – Context Summary

| Context No. | Type | Description | Finds |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Trench 1** | | | |
| 101 | Layer | Topsoil. Mid brown silty clay. Firm but friable. 0.3m thick. | |
| 102 | Layer | Subsoil. Light orange brown silty clay. Friable. 0.2m thick. | |
| 103 | Layer | Natural substrate. Orange silt clay. | |
| 104 | Cut | N-S orientated gully. Very steep sides and a narrow concave base. Potentially a former land drain, as edges are very straight and uniform. 0.2m wide and 0.18m deep. | |
| 105 | Fill | Single fill of **104**. Mid orange brown silt clay. | |
| 106 | Layer | Natural mottled silty sand. Dark brown to light grey. | |
| **Trench 2** | | | |
| 201 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 202 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 203 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| **Trench 3** | | | |
| 301 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 302 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 303 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| 304 | Fill | Upper fill of **306**. Brown grey silty clay fill. Contained some flint fragments and occasional dark organic fleck throughout deposit. Soft and friable. | |
| 305 | Fill | Primary fill of **306**. Mid grey silty clay with a slight green hue. Very similar to (304), however contained significantly more stones throughout. | |
| 306 | Cut | Southern ditch of Park Pale. V-shaped profile, with rounded base and sides approximately 45°. Orientated NW-SE. 2.4m wide and 0.9m deep. | |
| 307 | Fill | Primary fill of **310**. Mid grey silty clay with a green hue. Contained frequent flint and organic plant material throughout. | |
| 308 | Fill | Main upper fill of **310**. Similar in consistency to (307), however contains fewer flints throughout deposit. | |
| 309 | Fill | Thin deposit at the very top of **310**. Mid grey clay silt. Firm but friable. | |
| 310 | Cut | Ditch cut to the north of the Park Pale. V-shaped with rounded base, and even sides at approximately 45°. Orientated NW-SE. 3.7m wide and 1.2m deep. | |
| **Trench 4** | | | |
| 401 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 402 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 403 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| **Trench 5** | | | |
| 501 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 502 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 503 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| **Trench 6** | | | |
| 601 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 602 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 603 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| **Trench 7** | | | |
| 701 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 702 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 703 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| **Trench 8** | | | |
| 801 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 802 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 803 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| 804 | Fill | Single fill of **805**. Dark grey clay silt. Contained concentration of flint fragments near base of the context. Friable. | |
| 805 | Cut | Possible northern or 'inner' ditch of Park Pale. Long shallow edges and a broad, undulating concave base. NW-SE orientated. 4.6m wide and 0.22m deep. | |
| 806 | Fill | Upper fill of **808**. Mid blue grey clay silt. Firm and friable. Clear of inclusions. | |
| 807 | Fill | Primary fill of **808**. Mid green blue grey clay silt. Firm and friable. Containing plant roots, in addition to bands of flint fragments especially near the base. | |
| 808 | Cut | Appears to be southern or outer ditch of Park Pale. Steep edges and a concave, but undulating base. NW-SE orientated. Edges indicate disturbance by root action/ animal burrow in on southern edge. 3.6m wide and 0.8m deep. | |
| **Trench 9** | | | |
| 901 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 902 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 903 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| 904 | Cut | Northern or inner ditch of Park Pale. Steep edges and a narrow concave base. NW-SE orientated. 1.9m wide and 0.8m deep. | |
| 905 | Cut | Southern or outer ditch of Park Pale. Steep SW edge, whilst the NE edge is stepped. Concave base. NW-SE orientated. 2.6m wide and 0.8m deep. | |
| 906 | Fill | Upper fill of **904**. Mid grey silt clay. Firm. Contained rare angular flints. | |
| 907 | Fill | Primary fill of **904**. Orange silt clay. Firm. Contained moderate angular flints throughout deposit. | |
| 908 | Fill | Upper fill of **905**. Mid orange brown silty clay with natural flint inclusions throughout deposit. | |
| 909 | Fill | Primary fill of **905**. Light brown silty clay. Firm with natural flint inclusions throughout deposit. | |
| **Trench 10** | | | |
| 1001 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 1002 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 1003 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| **Trench 11** | | | |
| 1101 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 1102 | - | Void | - |
| 1103 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| 1104 | Cut | Southern or outer ditch of Park Pale. NW-SE orientated. Steep | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | SW edge, with a wide stepped NE edge. Concave base. 4.6m wide and 0.8m deep. | |
| 1105 | Cut | Northern or inner ditch of Park Pale. NW-SE orientated. Similar in profile to **1104**, but much more shallow. SW edge is steep, whilst NE edge is stepped. Base is concave. 2.1m wide and 0.3m deep. | |
| 1106 | Fill | Upper fill of **1104**. Light orange brown silt clay. Firm with some flint inclusions throughout deposit. | |
| 1107 | Fill | Secondary fill of **1104**. Possibly natural slumping. Light grey with orange brown silty clay. Clear of inclusions. | |
| 1108 | Fill | Primary fill of **1104**. Light orange brown silty clay. Firm and contains natural flint inclusions throughout deposit. | |
| 1109 | Fill | Single fill of **1105**. Light orange brown silty clay. Very firm. Contains a small amount of small flints throughout deposit. | |
| **Trench 12** | | | |
| 1201 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 1202 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 1203 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| 1204 | Cut | NW-SE orientated ditch located towards the northern end of trench. Shallow edges with a broad, near flat, concave base. 2.3m wide and 0.24m deep. Feature cut by gully **1208**. | |
| 1205 | Fill | Fill of **1204**. Mid orange brown silt clay. Firm. Contains frequent small angular flints. | |
| 1206 | Cut | NW-SE orientated ditch located towards the southern end of trench. Shallow edges and a wide flat base. 2.7m wide and 0.3m deep. | |
| 1207 | Fill | Single fill of **1205**. Mid orange brown silt clay. Firm. Contains a small amount of natural angular flints. | |
| 1208 | Cut | Curving linear gully. Cuts through ditch **1204**. Shallow edges and a flat base. 0.6m wide and 0.14m deep. | |
| 1209 | Fill | Single fill of **1208**. Light orange brown silt clay. Firm. Contains some angular flints throughout deposit. | |
| **Trench 13** | | | |
| 1301 | Layer | Topsoil. Same as (101). | |
| 1302 | Layer | Subsoil. Same as (102). | |
| 1303 | Layer | Natural substrate. Same as (103). | |
| 1304 | Cut | N-S orientated ditch located towards the centre of the trench. Fairly steep edges and a narrow concave base. 1.2m wide and 0.3m deep. | |
| 1305 | Fill | Single fill of **1304**. Light orange brown silt clay. Small amount of natural flint throughout deposit. | |

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of
Pre Construct Archaeological Services Ltd

# Rampisham North
# Dorchester
# Dorset

## palaeoenvironmental assessment

report 3783
May 2015

Durham
University

## Contents




South Road · Durham · DH1 3LE · tel 0191 334 1121 · fax 0191 334 1126
archaeological.services@durham.ac.uk · www.dur.ac.uk/archaeological.services

# 1. Summary


## The project

1.1 This report presents the results of palaeoenvironmental assessment of two bulk samples taken during archaeological works at Rampisham North, Dorchester, West Dorset.

1.2 The works were commissioned by Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS), and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

## Results

1.3 The samples comprised small fragments of clinker/cinder, glacially-fractured flint, insect/beetle remains and modern roots. A very small indeterminate bone fragment was recovered from [1108]. A few fragments of charcoal were present in context [308] and a single charcoal fragment was present in [1108]. Charred seeds were absent.

## Recommendations

1.4 No further analysis is required for the samples due to the low numbers of palaeoenvironmental remains. If additional work is undertaken at the site, the results of this assessment should be added to any further palaeoenvironmental data produced.

# 2. Project background

### Location and background

2.1 Archaeological works were conducted by PCAS on the site of a proposed solar farm at Rampisham North (north of the A356), Dorchester, West Dorset. This report presents the results of palaeoenvironmental assessment of two bulk samples comprising fills of unknown origin from a ditch to the north [308] and to the south [1108] of the park pale.

### Objective

2.2 The objective of the scheme of works was to assess the palaeoenvironmental potential of the samples, establish the presence of suitable radiocarbon dating material, and provide the client with appropriate recommendations.

### Dates

2.3 Samples were received by Archaeological Services on 21st April 2015. Assessment and report preparation was conducted between 15th and 20th May 2015.

### Personnel

2.4 Assessment and report preparation was conducted by Dr Carrie Armstrong. Sample processing was by Janice Adams.

### Archive

2.5 The site code is **RNDE15**. The flots and finds are currently held in the Palaeoenvironmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University awaiting collection. The charred plant remains will be retained at Archaeological Services Durham University.

# 3. Methods

3.1 The bulk samples were manually floated and sieved through a 500$\mu$m mesh. The residues were examined for shells, fruitstones, nutshells, charcoal, small bones, pottery, flint, glass and industrial residues, and were scanned using a magnet for ferrous fragments. The flots were examined at up to x60 magnification for charred and waterlogged botanical remains using a Leica MZ6 stereomicroscope. Identification of these was undertaken by comparison with modern reference material held in the Palaeoenvironmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University. Plant nomenclature follows Stace (1997).

3.2 Selected charcoal fragments were identified, in order to provide material suitable for radiocarbon dating. The transverse, radial and tangential sections were examined at up to x600 magnification using a Leica DMLM microscope. Identifications were assisted by the descriptions of Schweingruber (1990) and Hather (2000), and modern reference material held in the Palaeoenvironmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University.

3.3 The works were undertaken in accordance with the palaeoenvironmental research aims and objectives outlined in the regional archaeological research framework (Webster 2007).

## 4. Results

4.1 The samples comprised small fragments of clinker/cinder, glacially-fractured flint, insect/beetle remains and modern roots. A very small indeterminate bone fragment was recovered from [1108]. Although a few uncharred seeds were present, the well-drained nature of the site and the presence of modern roots suggest that these are recent intrusions.

4.2 A few fragments of oak charcoal were noted from context [308] and a single fragment of hazel/alder was present in context [1108]. Charred seeds were absent. Material for radiocarbon dating is available for both of the samples, although this material may be unsuitable due to long-lived species or insufficient weight of carbon. The results are presented in Appendix 1.

## 5. Discussion

5.1 The assessment can provide little information about the nature or date of the features due to the absence of diagnostic palaeoenvironmental remains.

## 6. Recommendations

6.1 No further analysis is required for the samples due to the low numbers of palaeoenvironmental remains. If additional work is undertaken at the site, the results of this assessment should be added to any further palaeoenvironmental data produced.

## 7. Sources

Hather, J G, 2000 *The identification of the Northern European Woods: a guide for archaeologists and conservators*. London

Schweingruber, F H, 1990 *Microscopic wood anatomy*. Birmensdorf

Stace, C, 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles*. Cambridge

Webster, C J, 2007 *The Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Research Framework, Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*. Somerset County Council

# Appendix 1: Data from palaeoenvironmental assessment

| **Sample** | **1** | **6** |
|---|---|---|
| **Context** | **308** | **1108** |
| **Feature number** | **310** | **1104** |
| **Feature** | **Ditch** | **Ditch** |
| *Material available for radiocarbon dating* | (✓) | (✓) |
| *Volume processed (l)* | 35.5 | 20 |
| *Volume of flot (ml)* | 150 | 45 |
| *Residue contents* | | |
| Bone (unburnt) indet. frags | - | (+) |
| Clinker / cinder | (+) | (+) |
| Flint (glacially-fractured) | + | +++ |
| *Flot matrix* | | |
| Charcoal | (+) | + |
| Earthworm egg case | - | + |
| Insect / beetle | + | + |
| Roots (modern) | ++ | ++ |
| Uncharred seeds | + | (+) |
| Wood | (+) | - |
| *Identified charcoal (✓ presence)* | | |
| *Corylus avellana* (Hazel) / *Alnus glutinosa* (Alder) | - | ✓ |
| *Quercus* sp (Oaks) | ✓ | - |

[(+): trace; +: rare; ++: occasional; +++: common; ++++: abundant
(✓) may be unsuitable for dating due to size or species]

# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England



## Printable version

## OASIS ID: preconst3-214004

### Project details

| | |
|---|---|
| Project name | Land at Rampisham North, Rampisham, Dorchester, West Dorset, DT2 0HS |
| Short description of the project | A programme of archaeological evaluation trenching took place to inform a planning application on land at Rampisham North. The aim of the scheme was to investigate the potential for and survival of any below ground archaeological remains that may be impacted by development proposals for a new large photovoltaic park. There is little evidence of any early occupation around the site. To the southeast are two prehistoric funerary monuments: a possible ploughed out Neolithic long barrow, and a Scheduled Bronze Age round barrow. There are no Roman or Saxon monuments in the area, although Rampisham appears as a manor held by the Bishop of Bayeux in the Domesday Book. The northern boundary of the site is defined by the Scheduled earthworks of a section of the boundary of the Rampisham Pale, a medieval deer park established sometime before the late 13th century. The earthwork boundaries survive in three segments; however a study of historic mapping has identified a former field boundary running through the southern half of the site which appears to be a continuation of the course of the known Pale earthworks. A slight ridge in the topography of the site may be the ploughed out remains of a bank, and this corresponds with parallel linear anomalies identified by geophysical survey. This document describes the results of a thirteen trench evaluation. The ditches of the Park Pale were identified in Trenches 3, 8, 9 and 11, with a small number of features being identified in Trenches 1, 12 and 13. Trenches 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10 were deemed to be archaeologically negative. No finds were recovered from the site. |
| Project dates | Start: 09-12-2013 End: 18-05-2014 |
| Previous/future work | No / Not known |
| Any associated project reference codes | RNDE 15 - Sitecode |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Site status | None |
| Current Land use | Cultivated Land 2 - Operations to a depth less than 0.25m |
| Monument type | DITCH Medieval |
| Significant Finds | NONE None |
| Methods & techniques | "Targeted Trenches" |

| | |
|---|---|
| Development type | Solar Farm |
| Prompt | Planning condition |
| Position in the planning process | Between deposition of an application and determination |

**Project location**

| | |
|---|---|
| Country | England |
| Site location | DORSET WEST DORSET RAMPISHAM Land at Rampisham North, Rampisham, Dorchester, West Dorset, DT2 0HS |
| Postcode | DT2 0HS |
| Study area | 0 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | ST 55017 01429 50.8101008183 -2.63852232665 50 48 36 N 002 38 18 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 | S A Savage |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Developer |

**Project archives**

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical Archive Exists? | No |
| Digital Archive recipient | Dorset Museums |
| Digital Contents | "none" |
| Digital Media available | "Database","Images raster / digital photography","Text" |
| Paper Archive recipient | Dorset Museums |
| Paper Contents | "none" |
| Paper Media available | "Context sheet","Diary","Drawing","Map","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey " |

| | |
|---|---|
| Entered by | Leigh Brocklehurst (leigh@pre-consruct.co.uk) |
| Entered on | 12 June 2015 |

# OASIS:

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