

# Woodcote Wood Weston Heath Shropshire

*Archaeological Watching Brief*

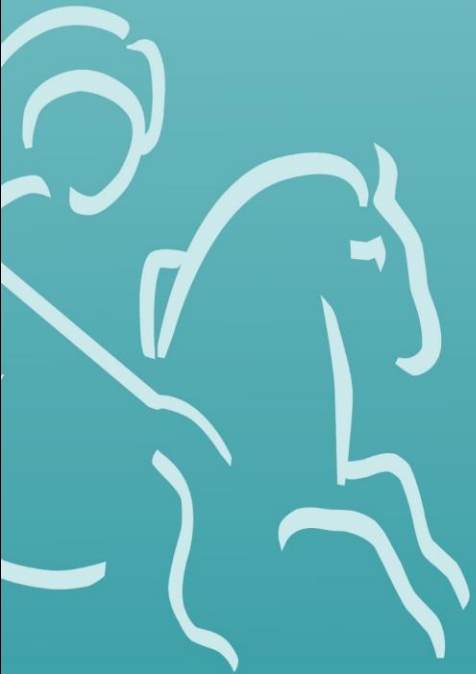


*for:*  
Alder Mill

*on behalf of:*  
NRS Woodcote Holdings Ltd

CA Project: 6464  
CA Report: 6464\_1

February 2022



Woodcote Wood  
Weston Heath  
Shropshire

*Archaeological Watching Brief*

CA Project: 6464  
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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	23 February 2022	Peter Busby	Monica Fombellida	Internal review	–	Alex Thomson

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## CONTENTS

SUMMARY .....	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
4. METHODOLOGY.....	6
5. RESULTS.....	7
6. DISCUSSION.....	7
7. CA PROJECT TEAM.....	7
8. REFERENCES.....	8
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS .....	9
APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM.....	10

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 The site, showing monitored groundworks, archaeological features and previous works  
(1:3000)

Fig. 3 Trench plan (1:500)

Fig. 4 Section drawings (1:20)

Fig. 5 Photographs

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Woodcote Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Weston Heath, Shropshire
<b>NGR:</b>	377302 314936
<b>Type:</b>	Watching brief
<b>Date:</b>	7 March 2018 – 14 February 2022
<b>Planning reference:</b>	Shropshire Council ref: 17/03661/EIA and SC/MB2005/0336/BR
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Shropshire Museum Services the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
<b>Site Code:</b>	WOOW18

Between March 2018 and February 2022, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an earthwork survey and archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with Woodcote Wood Quarry at Weston Heath, Shropshire.

An undated east/west orientated ditch and bank was identified in the north of the site, believed to be a historic administrative boundary.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Between March 2018 and February 2022, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an earthwork survey and archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with Woodcote Wood Quarry at Weston Heath, Shropshire (centred at NGR: 377302 314936; Fig. 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Alder Mill, on behalf of NRS Woodcote Holdings Ltd.
- 1.2. Shropshire Council (SC) has granted planning permission for quarrying and processing of sand at Woodcote Wood Quarry (planning ref: 17/03661/EIA and SC/MB2005/0336/BR). Conditions 26 and 21 of the planning permissions, require the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved WSI.
- 1.3. The scope of this watching brief was outlined in a briefing note compiled by Hugh Hannaford, Senior Archaeological Advisor, SC, on 8 August 2016. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2018) and approved by Hugh Hannaford.
- 1.4. The watching brief was also in line with *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### The site

- 1.5. The development site is approximately 4.8ha in extent and comprises woodland, containing residential properties (pheasantry and associated keepers cottage) and associated gardens. The site is bounded to the east by the A41, to the south by the B4379, to the west by further woodland and to the north by agricultural land. The site lies at approximately 154m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and is broadly flat.
- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Chester Formation dated from the Triassic Period (BGS 2022). The natural geological substrate recorded during the course of the watching brief consisted of orange/red brown sand with frequent pebbles.

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## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The site has previously been subject to archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Wardell Armstrong 2017). The following is a summary of information taken from this assessment, along with any publicly available information pertinent to the site.
- 2.2. An east/west orientated boundary ditch (Shropshire Historic Environment Record PRN 08634), thought to be associated with the historic Chapelry of Woodcote, is located within the woodland in the northern part of the site. It was not traceable within the arable fields beyond the woodland.
- 2.3. A pheasantry (PRN 31877) and associated late 19th century keeper's cottage (PRN 08635) are located within the eastern portion of the site.
- 2.4. A possible ironworking site, indicated by the place name '*Bloomsbury*' (PRN 20688) on historic Ordnance Survey mapping, lies in the far south-eastern corner of site.
- 2.5. The site is also located within the extensive former 18th-century and later park (No. PRN 07781) associated with Woodcote Hall, a Grade II Listed Building (National Ref. 1351992).
- 2.6. An archaeological walkover survey (CA 1999) confirmed the line of the chapelry boundary bank and the 2006 evaluation demonstrated that it was a bank with a ditch to its north, which measured between 5.5m and 9m in width (CA 2006). No dating evidence was recovered during the investigation.

## 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### *Earthwork Survey*

- 3.1. The objective was to produce a record of the earthwork in its current state, comprising measured survey and photographs, to mitigate changes consented under any planning application.
- 3.2. The earthwork survey was undertaken during the 6th and 7th of March 2018, which results are shown in Fig.2.

### *Watching Brief*

- 3.3. The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- 
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks. Investigation would include the excavation of three sections across the Chapelry boundary bank and ditch;
  - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### *Earthwork Survey*

- 4.1. The earthwork survey methodology was guided by *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes* (Historic England 2017), *Traversing the past* (HE 2016), *The Role of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) in Archaeological Field survey* (HE 2015) and *Metric Survey Specifications for Cultural Heritage* (HE 2015), and was carried out using a combination of Leica Viva series “SmartRover” (real-time kinematic) RTK GPS and Leica TS12/TS15 robotic Total Station (TST) instruments. The Leica RTK GPS is quoted as +/- 20mm in accuracy for all 3D observations and measurements and the Leica TS15 has a quoted horizontal and vertical accuracy of 5”. The topographical features such as earthworks were surveyed as breaks-of-slope

### *Watching Brief*

- 4.2. The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development. These works comprised the machine stripping of topsoil and subsoil. In addition, three trenches measuring 15m long by 2m were excavated across the probable Chapelry boundary ditch in the north of the site (Fig. 2).
- 4.3. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.4. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential, but no deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 4.5. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The digital archives will be prepared and deposited in accordance



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with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).

- 4.6. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A.

- 5.2. The natural geological substrate was revealed within all observed groundworks, at an average depth of 0.3m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by subsoil, measuring c. 0.09m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by 0.2m of dark grey-brown silt-sand topsoil.

### *Trenches 1-3 (Figs 3-5)*

- 5.3. Ditches 104, 204 and 304 were identified in Trenches 1, 2 and 3 respectively, and likely represent continuations of the broadly east/west aligned Chapelry boundary. It measured up to 4.3m in width and 0.74m in depth and contained a single undated fill. No bank was recorded, which contrasts with the two sections excavated across the same boundary during the evaluation in 2006.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. The watching brief and preceding evaluation identified the line of the Chapelry boundary. This boundary was found to consist of a ditch and bank. The bank was only identified during the previous evaluation, and its lack of survival in the current site may be due to differential survival levels and truncation.

- 6.2. The date of the ditch is unclear as no finds were retrieved. However, it is possible that the ditch represents a historic boundary between Staffordshire and Shropshire, the administrative boundary between Bradford and Cuttlestone Hundreds, or that it relates to the manorial estate of Woodcote, and its associated chapelry.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Paolo Guarino, Tom Weavill and Peter Busby. This report was written by Peter Busby. The report illustrations were prepared by Helena

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Munoz-Mojado. The project archive has been compiled by Peter Busby and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neil. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

## 8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2022 *Geology of Britain Viewer*

<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/> Accessed 9 February 2022

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2006 *Woodcote Wood, Newport, Shropshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. Typescript report **05107**

CA 2000 *Woodcote Wood, Newport, Shropshire: Archaeological Walkover Survey*. Typescript report **001122**

CA 2018 *Woodcote Wood, Weston Heath, Shropshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Works*

Wardell Armstrong 2017 *Woodcote Wood Site Access and Processing Plant: Archaeological and Built Heritage Desk Based Assessment*

Watt, S (ed) 2011 *The Archaeology of the West Midlands – A framework for research*

## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	101	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown organic silty sand,	>15	>2	0.24
1	102	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid grey brown sand with frequent pebbles	>15	>2	0.09
1	103	Layer		Natural substrate	Orange/red brown sand with frequent pebbles	>15	>2	-
1	104	Cut		Ditch	E/W orientated linear with moderately sloping sides and rounded base	4.3	>2	0.74
1	105	Fill	104	2nd ditch fill	Dark red brown clay sand	4.3	>2	0.47
1	106	Fill	104	1st ditch fill	Orange brown silty sand	1.75	>2	0.29
2	201	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown organic silty sand	>15	>2	0.22
2	202	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid grey brown sand with frequent pebbles	>15	>2	0.08
2	203	Layer		Natural substrate	Orange/red brown sand with frequent pebbles	>15	>2	>0.23
2	204	Cut		Ditch	E/W orientated linear with moderately sloping sides and rounded base	1.96	>2	0.44
2	205	Fill	204	Fill of ditch	Dark red brown clay sand	1.96	>2	0.44
3	301	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown organic silty sand,	>15	>2	0.14
3	302	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid grey brown sand with frequent pebbles	>15	>2	0.07
3	303	Layer		Natural substrate	Orange/red brown sand with frequent pebbles	>15	>2	-
3	304	Cut		Ditch	E/W orientated linear with moderately sloping sides and rounded base	3.56	>2	0.62
3	305	Fill	304	Fill of ditch	Dark red brown clay sand	3.56	>2	0.62

## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Woodcote Wood, Weston Heath, Shropshire	
Short description	<p>Between March 2018 and February 2022, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an earthwork survey and archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with Woodcote Wood Quarry at Weston Heath, Shropshire.</p> <p>An east/west orientated ditch and bank was identified at the north of the site, believed to be the historic Chapelry boundary. Its extent within the woodland and was not visible in the ploughed fields beyond.</p> <p>No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the watching brief and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	7 March 2018 – 14 February 2022	
Project type	Watching Brief and Earthworks survey	
Previous work	Field evaluation (CA 2006)	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Woodcote Wood, Weston Heath, Shropshire	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	4.8ha	
Site co-ordinates	377302 314936	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Hugh Hannaford, Senior Archaeological Advisor	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Paolo Guarino, Tom Weavill and Peter Busby	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	none	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	none	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	<b>Intended final location of archive</b>	<b>Content</b>
Paper	Shropshire Museum Service	Context, drawings
Digital	Shropshire Museum Service	Photographs
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2022 <i>Woodcote Wood, Weston Heath, Shropshire: Archaeological Watching Brief CA typescript report 6464_1</i>		

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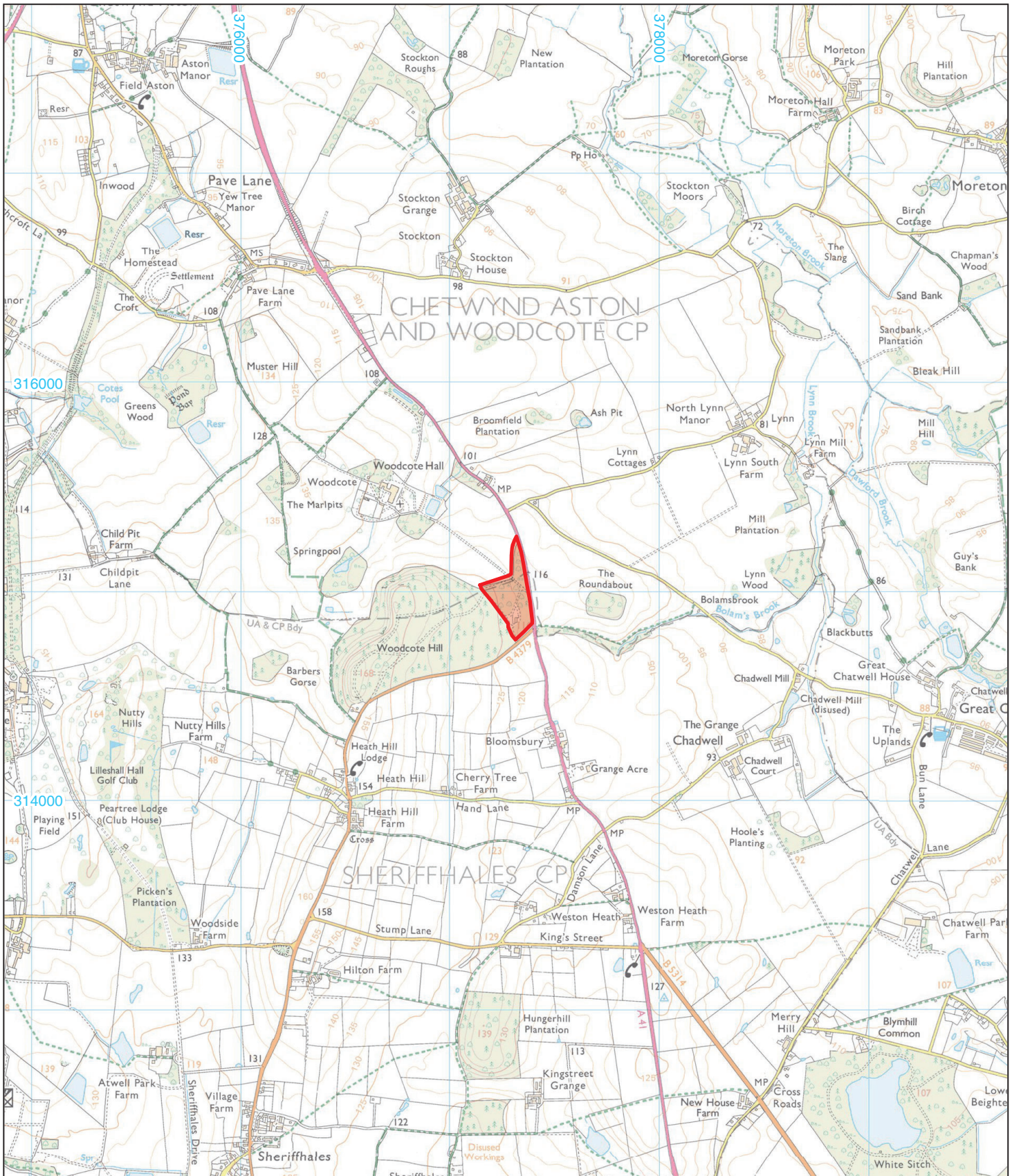
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 Site boundary



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Ordnance Survey 0100031673

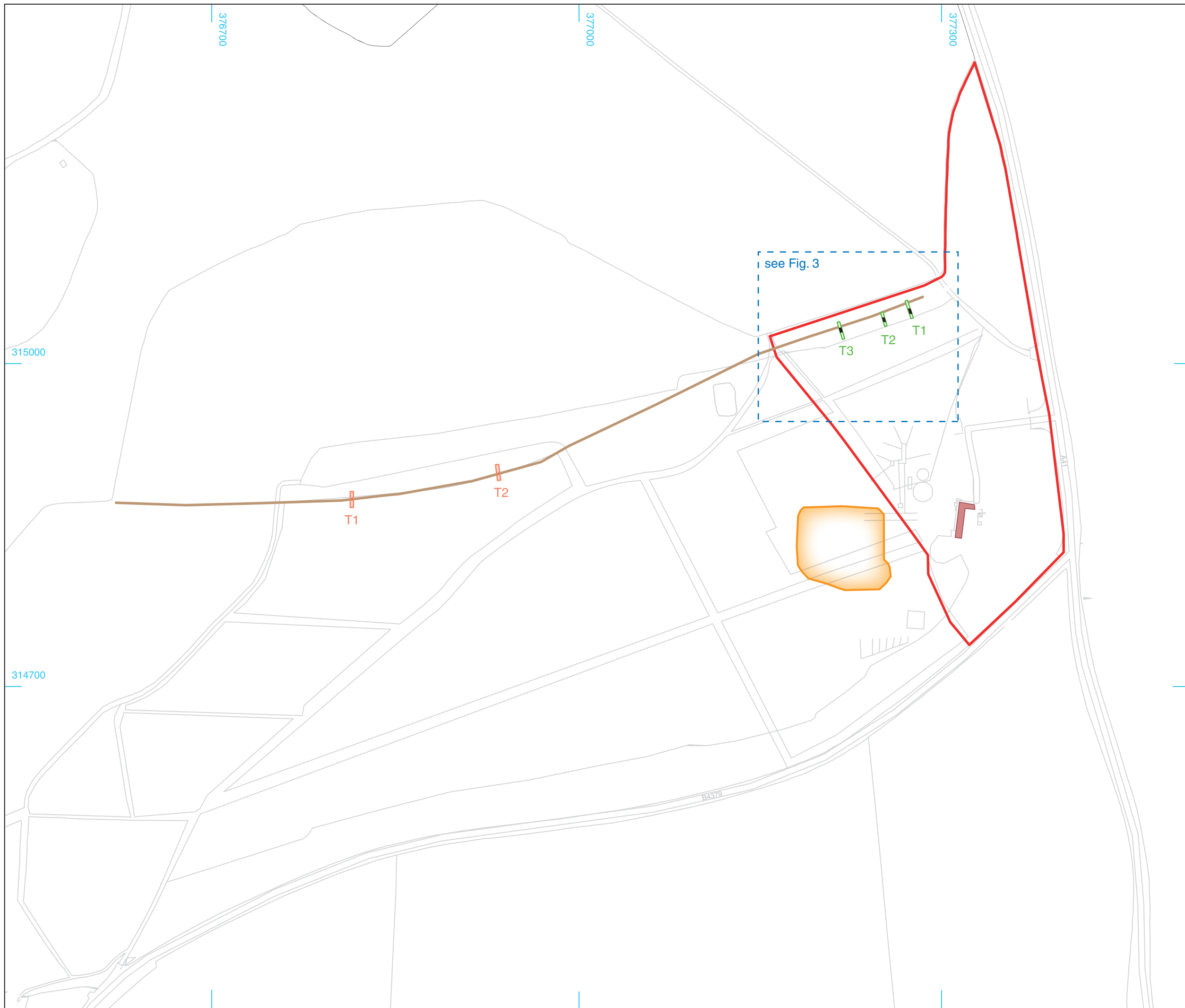


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**PROJECT TITLE**  
Woodcote Wood, Weston Heath  
Shropshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
Site location plan

DRAWN BY	HMM	PROJECT NO.	6464	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	21/02/2022	1
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- Site boundary (CA 2022)
- Evaluation trench (CA 2022)
- Archaeological feature
- Previous excavation trench (CA 2006)
- Earthwork
- Pheasantry
- Cottage



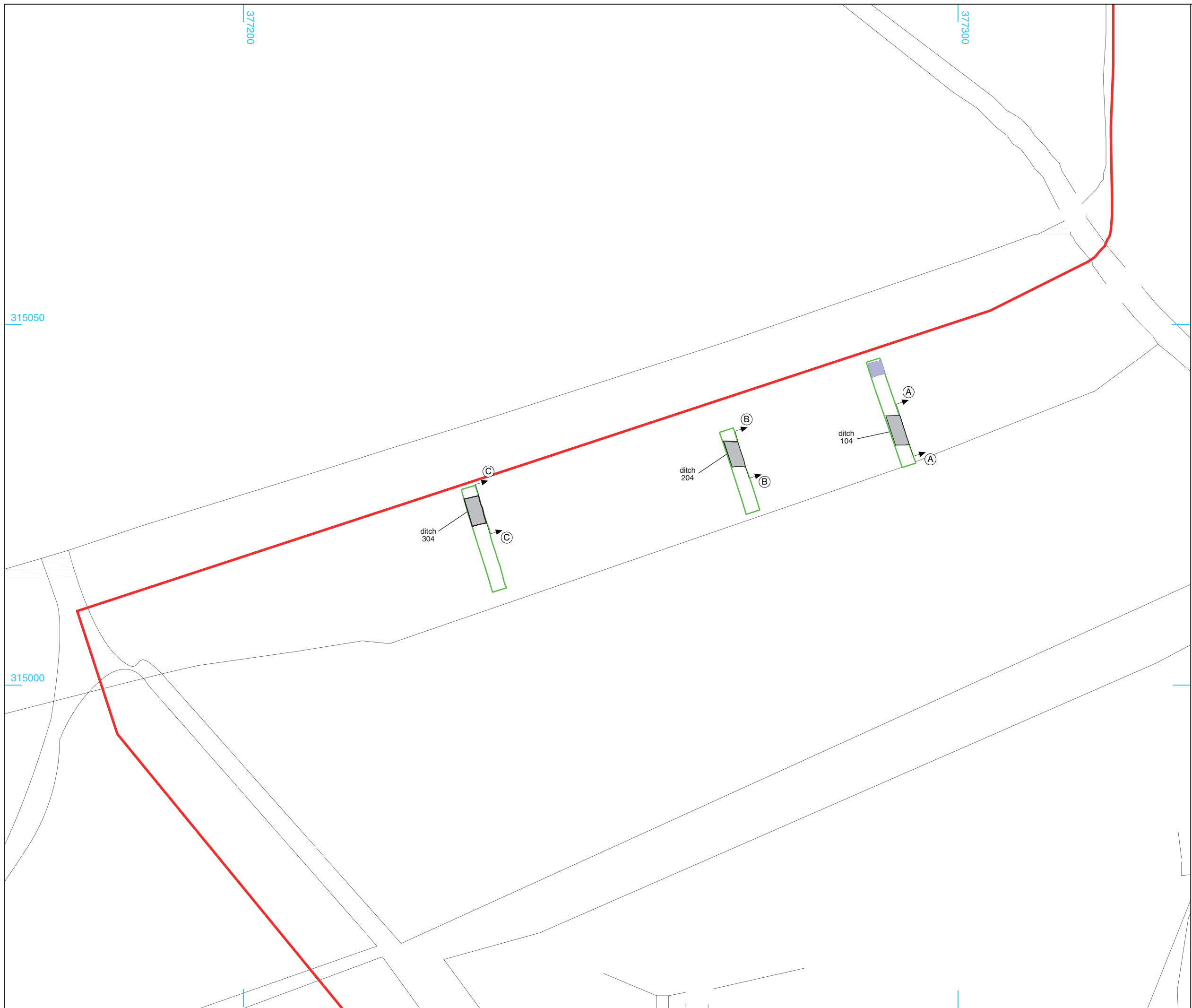
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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Woodcote Wood, Weston Heath  
 Shropshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 The site, showing monitored  
 groundworks, archaeological features  
 and previous works

DRAWN BY	HMM	PROJECT NO.	6464	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	21/02/2022	<b>2</b>
APPROVED BY	PB	SCALE@A3	1:3000	



- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature (unexcavated/excavated)
- Modern
- A Section location



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Woodcote Wood, Weston Heath  
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**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench plan

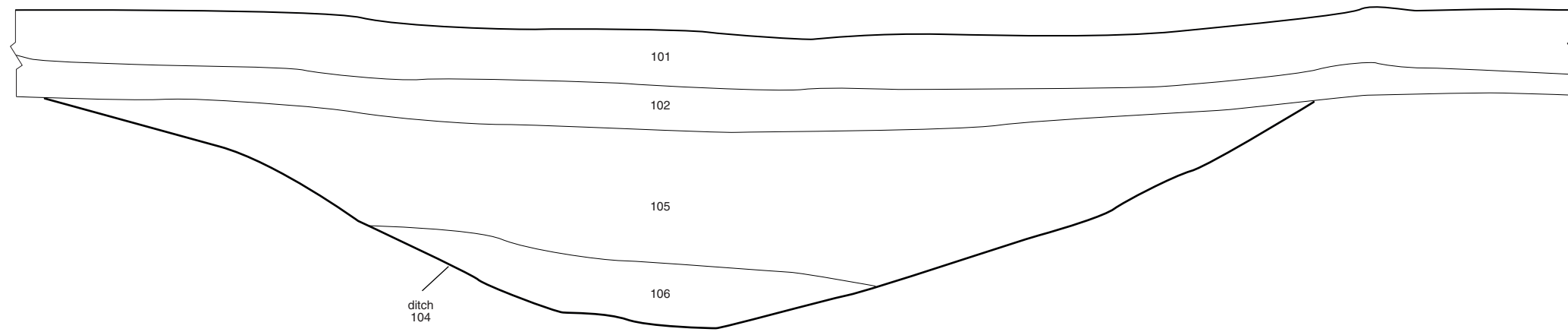
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Section AA

NW

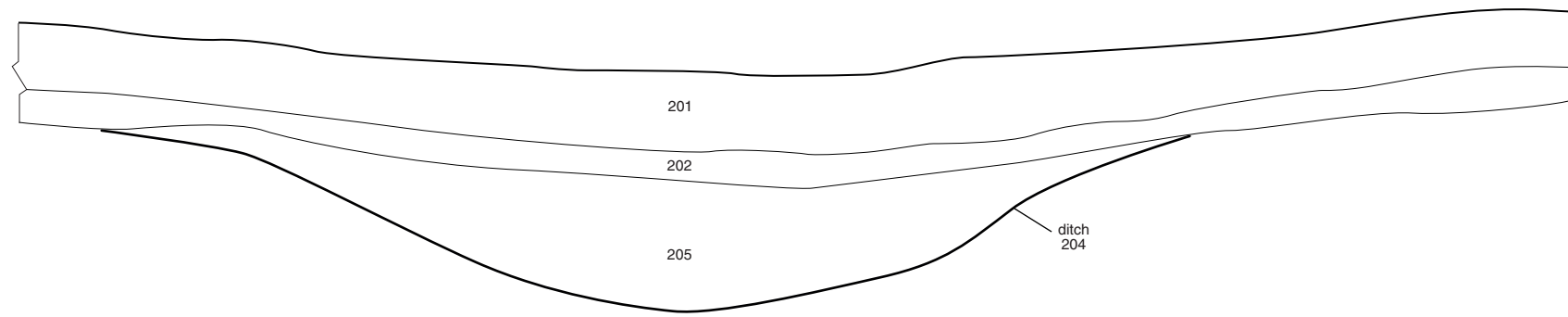
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Section BB

NW

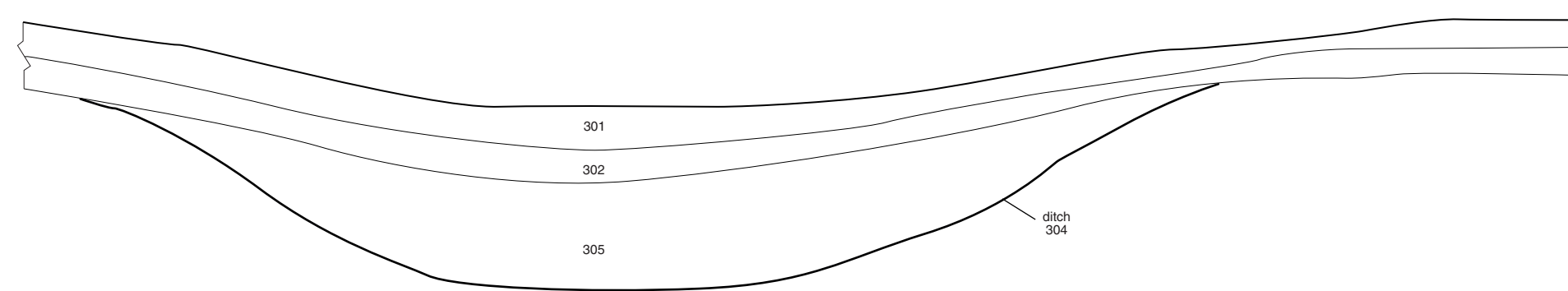
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Section CC

NW

SE



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FIGURE TITLE  
 Section drawings

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Post-excitation view of Trench 2, looking south (1m scales)



Ditch 204, looking west (1m scale)



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FIGURE TITLE

**Photographs**

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FIGURE NO.

**5**