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Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme, by Forth, South Lanarkshire

Archaeological Excavation

Report No. 1695

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**Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme,
by Forth, South Lanarkshire**

**Archaeological Excavation
Report No. 1695**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological excavation carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in September 2009 at Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme, Wilsontown, Forth, South Lanarkshire (NGR NS 960 544). The work was commissioned by Hall Construction Ltd in advance of a phased opencast coal mining operation.

1.1.2 The work was mitigation continuing from an evaluation (Mitchell 2009) carried out during August 2009 by CFA which identified a concentration of pits. This report should be read in conjunction with the previous evaluation report. An addendum to the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by CFA and approved by West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS).

1.2 Background

1.2.1 The prior evaluation identified a concentration of seventeen pits. No patterns, purpose or date was evident from the limited investigation carried out during the evaluation. It also appeared likely that further pits would survive beyond the limits of the evaluation trench. WoSAS requested that a programme of further work was undertaken.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 The aims of the archaeological work were:

- to excavate and record those features revealed within an area centred on trenches 39 and 40 to a sufficient level to enable their likely function, date and character and provide a report.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the relevant Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and Standards and Guidance and WoSAS Standard Conditions. Recording of all elements was be done following established CFA methods

2.2 Excavation Strategy

- 2.2.1 It was agreed with WoSAS that a limited open area excavation (40m x 40m) centred on trenches 39 and 40 would be carried out. However, if features extended out of the trench then it would be extended. Topsoil removal was carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth bladed ditching bucket.
- 2.2.2 All features were cleaned by hand all further excavation required to fulfil the aims of the excavation was carried out by hand. All artefacts were retained and a minimum 10 litre volume soil samples were taken from each excavated deposit (where sufficient deposit existed). Each pit was half sectioned to ascertain its form, nature of the fill, dimensions and likely date / purpose. They were recorded in section and in plan. If dateable artefacts, other than modern, were found, the rest of the feature was excavated.
- 2.2.3 All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, photography and by completing standard CFA record forms. The location of all trenches was recorded using industry standard total station surveying equipment. CFA uses the Museum of London's single context recording system, with minor adaptations.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

3.1.1 An area measuring 40m by 40m was stripped of topsoil and cleaned by hand. Nine additional features were revealed, amounting to a total of 26 including those discovered during the evaluation. Context numbers are in bold and parentheses.

3.1.2 Topsoil (**001**) was 0.3m to 0.35m deep. Natural (**000**) was stiff grey boulder clay with occasional patches of pale orange sandy clay. The clay nature of the subsoil meant that the area was naturally poorly draining and clay cylinder field drains, rubble drains and a large diameter yellow plastic perforated pipe were present in the stripped area.

3.1.3 Weather conditions were wet throughout although flooding within the trench was confined to the west margin of the trench where no features were identified.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 All 26 features were sectioned and the results for the pits are provided in tabular form below:

Context	Description	Dimensions (m) (LxWxD)	Sides	Base	Fill
4001	Circular pit	0.8 diameter x 0.14	Shallow	Flat	Primary fill of sandy gravel (4002) 0.1m deep. Upper fill of dark soil 0.04m deep (4003).
4004	Oval pit	1.0 x 0.8 x 0.23	Shallow	Concave	Primary fill: pale sandy gravel (4005), 0.1m deep. Upper fill: dark soil 0.13m deep (4006).
4007	Oval pit	1.3 x 0.6 x 0.25	Steep	Concave	Primary fill was slumped sand and gravel (4008) 0.15m deep. Upper fill was dark soil (4009) 0.1m deep.
4010	Oval pit	1.3 x 0.6 x 0.12	Sloping	Concave	Primary fill: (4011) pale sandy gravel 0.02m deep. Upper fill: (4012) dark soil 0.1m deep.
4013	Circular pit	1.5 diameter x 0.35			Primary fill: (4014) pale sandy gravel 0.15m deep. Upper fill: (4015) dark soil 0.2m deep, containing frequent wood fragments.
4016	Oval pit	1.3 x 0.8 x 0.2	Sloping	Concave	Primary fill: (4017) pale sandy gravel 0.1m deep. Upper fill: (4018) dark soil 0.13m deep.
4019	Circular pit	0.75 diameter x 0.08	Shallow	Concave	Single fill: (4020) dark soil.
4021	Oval pit				Stone Hole

4023	Oval pit	0.8 x 0.7 x 0.15	Sloping	Concave	Primary fill: sandy gravel (4043) 0.05m deep. Upper fill dark soil (4024) 0.1m deep.
4025	Oval pit	0.7 x 0.6 x 0.12	Shallow	Concave	Single fill of dark soil (4026).
4027	Circular pit				Stone Hole
4029	Oval pit				Stone Hole
4031	Circular pit				Stone Hole
4033	Circular pit				Stone Hole
4035	Circular pit				Stone Hole
4037	Sub-circular possible pit	4.0 x 3.7 x 0.32	Shallow	Flat / Concave	Primary fill: (4038) peaty soil 0.12m deep. Upper fill: (4039) dark soil 0.2m deep.
4040	Sub-square pit	0.25 x 0.2 x 0.1	Steep	Flat / Irregular	Single fill: (4041) dark soil.
4044	Oval pit	0.4 x 0.3 x 0.04	Shallow	Concave	Single fill; soil and gravel (4045).
4046	Oval pit	0.8 x 0.7 x 0.32	Steep	Concave	Primary fill (4047) is sand and gravel 0.22m deep. Sealed by dark grey silt (4048) 0.1m deep.
4049	Oval pit	0.4 x 0.3 x 0.12	Steep	Concave	Single fill of dark grey silt (4050).
4051	Oval Pit	0.75 x 0.65 x 0.18	Shallow	Concave	Single fill of dark grey silt (4052).
4053	Oval	0.45 x 0.25 x 0.12	Sloping	Flat	Single fill of dark grey-brown silt (4054).
4055	Sub-oval pit	0.45 x 0.3 x 0.08	Sloping	Flat	Single fill of mid-brown clayey silt (4056).
4059	Oval pit	1.8 x 1.5 x 0.36	Sloping	Concave	Primary fill is dark peaty soil (4064) 0.14m deep. Secondary fill is a deposit of sandy gravel (4063) up to 0.18m deep which appears to have slumped or been blown in from the uphill side. Upper layer which seals both is dark loamy soil (4060) 0.2m deep.
4061	Oval pit	0.9 x 0.5 x 0.1	Sloping/irregular	Flat / Irregular	Single fill of dark grey clayey silt (4062).

Table 1: Description of pits

3.2.2 A sub-oval feature (**4057**) was identified in the east of the trench, it measured 7m by 4.5m by 0.2m deep. It had irregular sides with a discontinuous shallow cut and an irregular flattish base. The upper fill (**4042**) was homogenous dark humic soil which contained occasional stones. A pocket of peaty soil (**4066**) 0.13m deep survived below **4042** in a locally deeper section of the base. This has been separated from the description of the pits due to its overall size. The accumulation of peaty soil in the base of this suggests that it may have in-filled gradually.

3.2.3 Of the twenty-five pits six (**4021**, **4027**, **4029**, **4031**, **4033**, **4035**) were discounted as stone holes following excavation as they were irregular in form and contained topsoil. The others were fairly regular and had been excavated on purpose at some point.

3.2.4 Ten of the pits (**4001**, **4004**, **4007**, **4010**, **4013**, **4016**, **4023**, **4037**, **4046**, **4059**) had more than one fill, with primary fills being sandy gravel or peaty soil

suggesting that they had filled up gradually after excavation, or at least had been open for a short time. The other nine (4019, 4025, 4040, 4044, 4049, 4051, 4053, 4055, 4061) had only single fills which were in the main more topsoil like and suggest that these backfilled more rapidly or were backfilled on purpose soon after excavation.

3.2.5 None of the features excavated contained any dateable artefacts and the fills did not contain any significant amount of visible charcoal that could be dateable.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Out of the twenty-six features excavated there were:

- Six stone holes.
- Ten pits with more than one fill indicating that they had filled up gradually.
- Nine pits with single fills that indicate they filled in rapidly or were backfilled on purpose.
- A large sub-oval shallow cut feature.

4.2 No finds were recovered and the features are strung out in an almost linear distribution but no structural pattern is evident so the function and date of these features remains unknown.

4.3 Samples were taken from the pits but visible inspection during excavation did not identify any significant inclusions of charcoal that could be used to try and date these features. Given the overall results of this work CFA do not recommend that any further post-excavation work is undertaken, however the decision on this lies with WoSAS on behalf of the Council.

4.4 The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and copies of the report will be lodged with the South Lanarkshire Sites and Monuments Record.

4.5 A summary statement of the results of this evaluation will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*. The online OASIS record will be completed.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mitchell, S. 2009 *Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme, by Forth, South Lanarkshire Archaeological Evaluation of Areas 20 to 33* CFA report No. 1656

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Context Register

Context No.	Description
000	Natural Subsoil
001	Topsoil
4001	Cut of pit
4002	Primary fill of 4001
4003	Secondary fill of 4001
4004	Cut of pit
4005	Primary fill of 4004
4006	Secondary fill of 4004
4007	Cut of pit
4008	Primary fill of 4007
4009	Upper fill of 4007
4010	Cut of pit
4011	Primary fill of 4010
4012	Secondary fill of 4010
4013	Cut of pit
4014	Primary fill of 4013
4015	Secondary fill of 4013
4016	Cut of pit
4017	Primary fill of 4016
4018	Secondary fill of 4016
4019	Cut of pit
4020	Fill of 4019
4021	Stone Hole
4022	Fill of 4021
4023	Cut of pit
4024	Fill of 4023
4025	Cut of pit
4026	Fill of 4025
4027	Stone Hole
4028	Fill of 4027
4029	Stone Hole
4030	Fill of 4029
4031	Stone Hole
4032	Fill of 4031
4033	Stone Hole
4034	Fill of 4033
4035	Stone Hole
4036	Fill of 4035
4037	Possible cut of large shallow pit
4038	Upper fill of 4037
4039	Peaty clay primary fill of 4037
4040	Cut of small pit
4041	Fill of 4040
4042	Fill of 4057
4043	Primary fill of 4023
4044	Possible small pit
4045	Fill of 4044
4046	Cut of pit
4047	Primary fill of 4046
4048	Upper fill of 4046

Context No.	Description
4049	Cut of small pit
4050	Fill of 4049
4051	Possible cut of pit
4052	Fill of 4051
4053	Cut of pit
4054	Fill of 4053
4055	Possible cut of pit
4056	Fill of 4055
4057	Possible cut of large oval feature
4059	Cut of large pit
4060	Upper fill of 4059
4061	Cut of pit
4062	Fill of 4061
4063	Secondary fill of 4059
4064	Upper fill of 4059
4065	Not used
4066	Basal fill of 4057

Appendix 2: Photograph Register

Colour Slides

<i>Film 1</i>		
Shot	Contexts/description	Taken from
1	Registration shot	
2-3	4057	S
4-5	4057	N
6-7	4007 section	W
8-9	4001 section	S
10-11	4023 section	S
12-13	4046 section	SW
14-15	4046 section	N
16-17	4057/4052 section	NE
18-19	4057/4052 section	SE
20-21	4057/4042 section	E
22-23	4057/4042 section	S
24-25	4049 section	NE
26-27	4051 section	S
28-29	N/A	
30-31	4055 section	NE
32-33	4053 section	E
34-35	4028 section	S
36-37	4060 section	NE
<i>Film 2</i>		
Shot	Contexts/description	Taken from
1	Registration shot	
2-3	4060	W
4-5	4061 pre-ex	S
6-7	4061 section	S
8-9	4069 section	W
10-11	4059 section	W
12-13	General view of site	N
14-15	4059 fully excavated	N
16-17	4057 section	NE
18-19	4057 section	NW
20-21	4057 section	NW

22-23	4057 section	SE
24-25	4057 section	SE
26-27	4057 section	SW
28-29	4057 section	E

Digital Photos

Photo No.	Description	Taken From
1	4057	E
2	4007 section	W
3	4001 section	S
4	4023 section	S
5	4046 pre-ex	SW
6	4046 section	W
7	4057/4042 section	NE
8	4057/4042 section	SE
9	4057/4042 section	E
10	4057/4042 section	S
11	4049 section	NE
12	4051 section	S
13	N/A	
14	4055 section	NE
15	4053 section	E
16	4028 section	S
17	4059 section	NE
18	General view of site	N
19	4059 fully excavated	N
20	4057 section	NE
21	4057 section	NW
22	4057 section	SE
23	4057 section	SE
24	4057 section	SW
25	4057 section	E

Appendix 3: Drawings Register

Sheet No.	Drawing No.	Description	Contexts/Content	Scale
1	1	Plan	Baseline A-B	1:50
2	1	Plan	Baseline C-D	1:50
3	1	Plan	Baseline E-F	1:50
4	1	Section	4057/4042	1:20
4	2	Section	4057/4042	1:20
4	3	Section	4057/4042	1:20
4	4	Section	4057/4042	1:20
5	1	Section	4007/4008/4009	1:10
5	2	Section	4001/4002/4003	1:10
5	3	Section	4023/4044	1:10
5	4	Section	4046/4047/4048	1:10
5	5	Section	4049/4050	1:10
5	6	Section	4023/4043/4024/4044/4045	1:10
5	7	Section	4053/4054	1:10
5	8	Section	4051/4052	1:10
5	9	Section	4055/4046	1:10
5	10	Section	4059/4064/4063/4060	1:10
5	11	Section	4059	1:20
6	1	Section	4065	1:20

Appendix 4: Samples Register

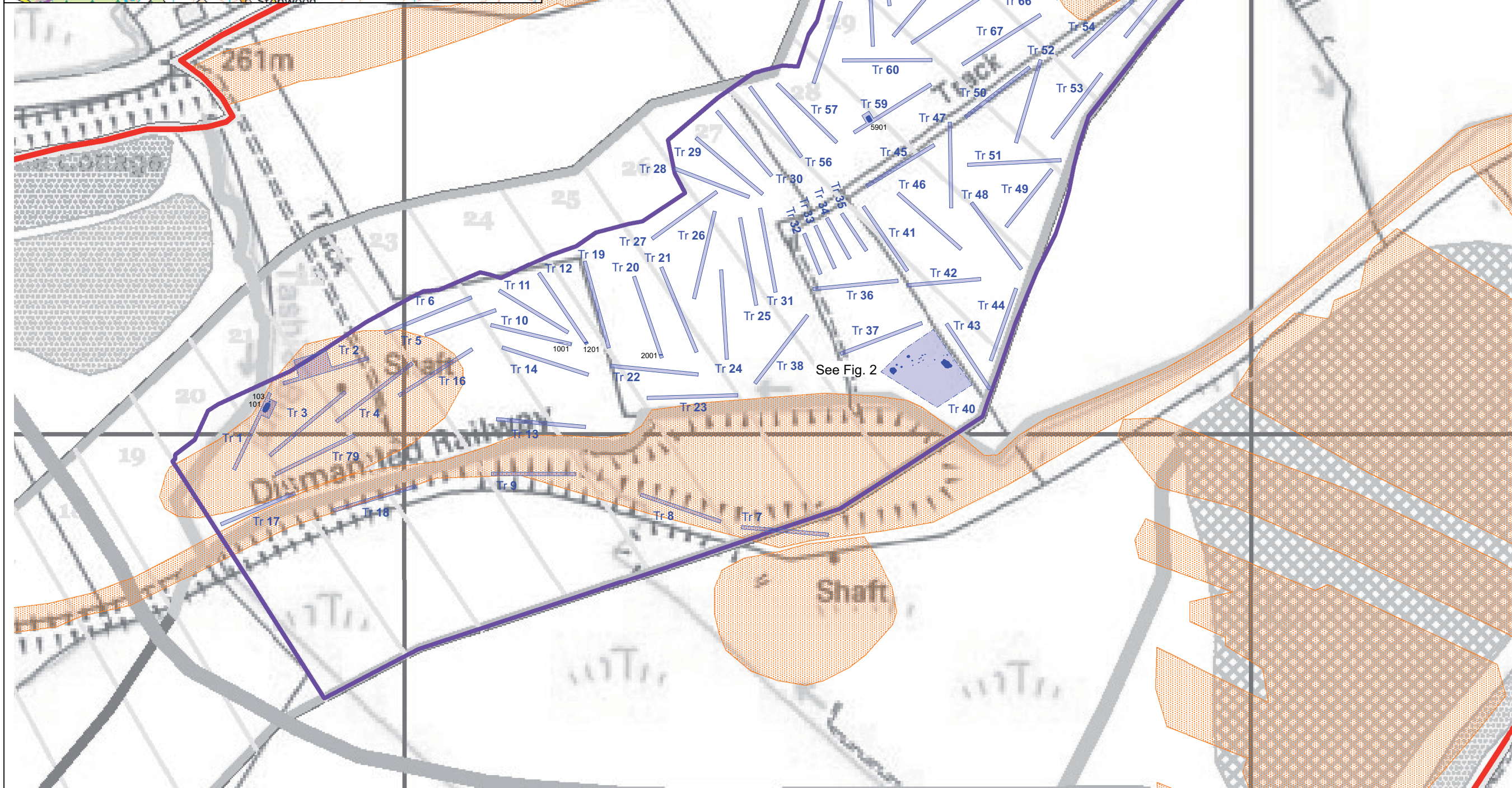
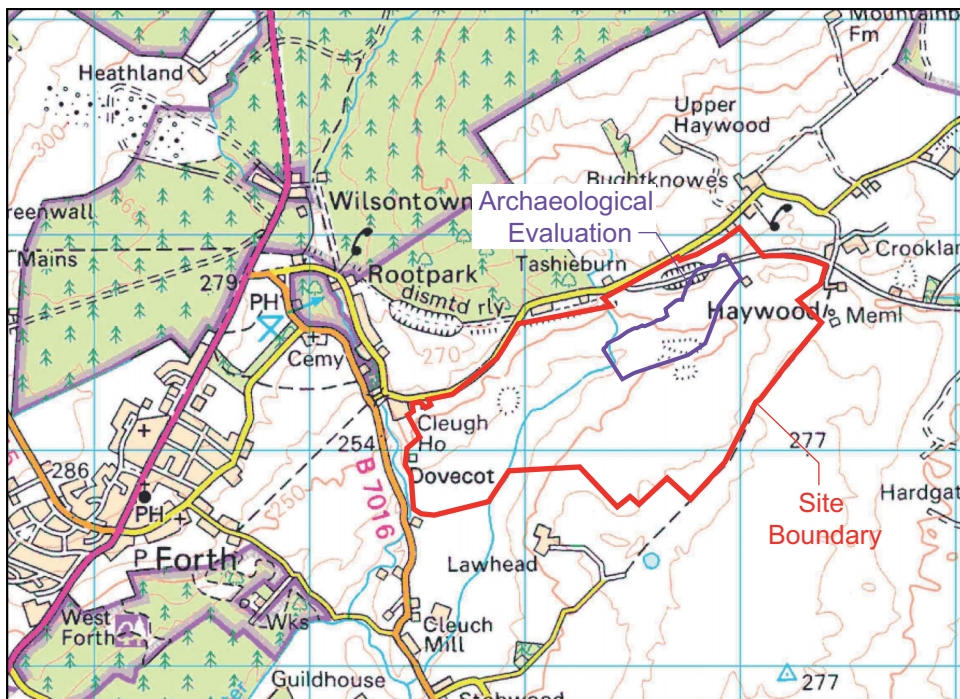
Sample No.	Context	Sample Type	Reason	Volume (litres)
1	4042	Bulk	Routine	20
2	4050	Bulk	Routine	5
3	4048	Bulk	Routine	10
4	4060	Bulk	Routine	10
5	4058	Bulk	Routine	10
6	4056	Bulk	Routine	5
7	4054	Bulk	Routine	10
8	4009	Bulk	Routine	10
9	4008	Bulk	Routine	10
10	4052	Bulk	Routine	10
11	4062	Bulk	Routine	10
12		N/A		
13	4060	Bulk	Routine	10
14	4015	Bulk	Routine	10
15	4017	Bulk	Routine	10
16	4002	Bulk	Routine	10
17	4005	Bulk	Routine	10
18	4011	Bulk	Routine	10
19	4024	Bulk	Routine	10
20	4019	Bulk	Routine	10
21	4026	Bulk	Routine	10
22		N/A		
23	4064	Bulk	Routine	10
24	4066	Bulk	Routine	10

APPENDIX 5: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	South Lanarkshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Wilsontown Open Cast Coal Scheme (Phase 2)
PROJECT CODE:	WOCO2
PARISH:	Carnwath
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Stuart Mitchell
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation and Excavation
NMRS NO(S):	
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Concentration of pits
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 960 544
START DATE (this season)	August 2009
END DATE (this season)	October 2009
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	Cressey M (1996), Wilsontown (Carnwath parish), Evaluation <i>DES 1996</i> Mitchell S (2004), Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme, Forth, <i>DES 2004</i> White, S (2006), Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme, Forth, <i>DES 2006</i>
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological evaluation was carried out in advance of an extension to Wilsontown Open Cast Coal Scheme. Several features, some associated with earlier coal mining, were uncovered. These included parts of the Lawhead Branchline Mineral Railway, a spread of rubbish and rubble associated with Haywood Coal Mine, and a possible mineshaft. A concentration of pits was also identified. These were subject to further excavation although no indications of date or purpose were revealed.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Hall Construction Ltd
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record of Scotland South Lanarkshire Council Sites and Monuments Record



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Fig. No:	1	Revision:	A
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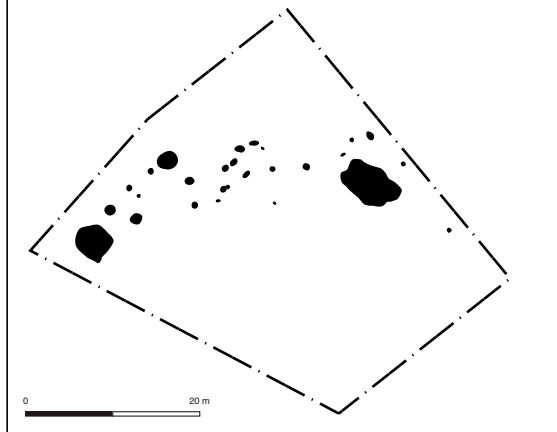
Title:
 Site Location showing previous trial trenching and excavation area (Tr 40)

Project:
 Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme,
 by Forth, South Lanarkshire
 Archaeological Excavation

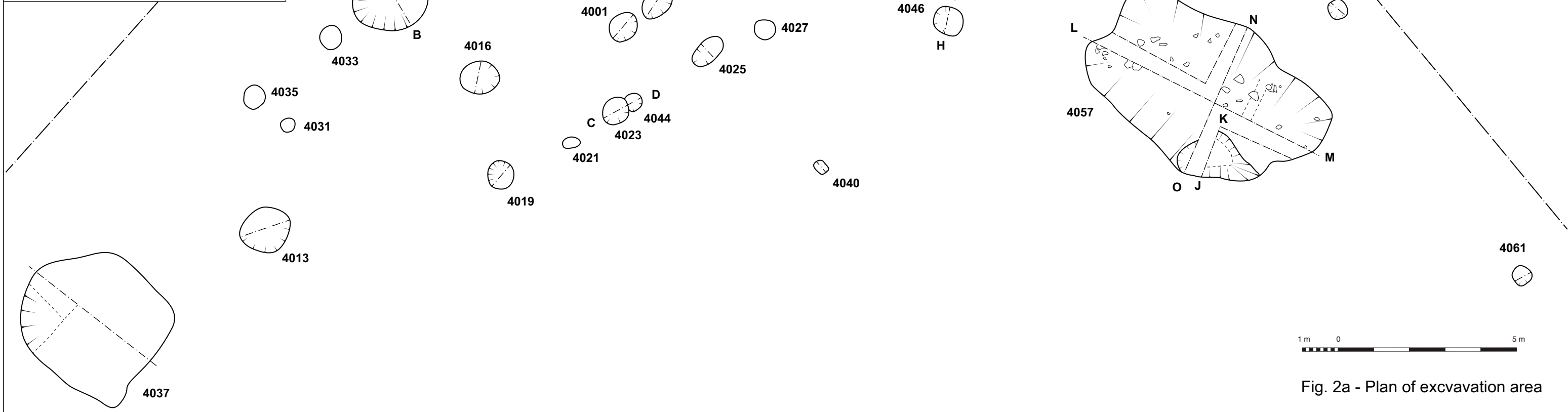
Scale:
 1:2500@ A3

Client:
 Hall Construction Ltd

Fig. 2b - Inset showing overall site plan



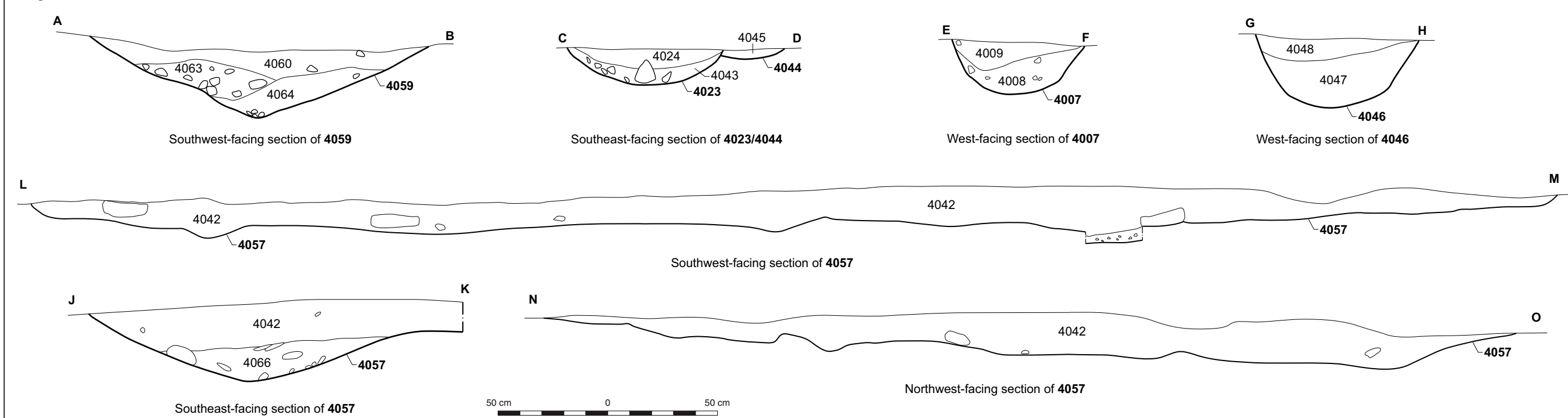
0 20 m



1 m 0 5 m

Fig. 2a - Plan of excavation area

Fig. 2c - Sections of features



50 cm 0 50 cm

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Fig. No: **2** Revision: **A**

Title:

Project:
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Scale:

Client:
Hall Construction Ltd

Drawn by: **LW** Report No: **1695**

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