

Woodlands Hospital, Narborough, Leicestershire

NGR SP53609780

Results of archaeological trench evaluation

LCC Museum Accession no. X.A20.2010

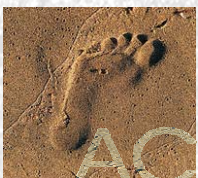
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Prepared by:  
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On behalf of:  
Taylor Wimpey Developments Ltd

Document No: ACW234/2/1

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archaeology

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# WOODLANDS HOSPITAL, NARBOROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE (NGR: SP536978)

## Results of Archaeological Evaluation

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### SUMMARY

*An archaeological evaluation consisting of four machine-excavated trenches was undertaken by AC archaeology in the grounds of Woodlands Hospital, Narborough, Leicestershire, in December 2009. The work was undertaken in support of a planning application for the construction of a new housing development with associated access, open space etc.*

*The evaluation followed an earlier geophysical survey, with the trenches being located by GPS to target a series of possible geophysical anomalies or areas of magnetic disturbance. With the exception of a series of furrows, relating to former post-medieval ridge and furrow strip cultivation, no other features revealed appeared to relate to anomalies on the geophysical survey. Archaeological features were revealed in one trench and comprised two small inter-cutting pit-like features, one of which contained a quernstone fragment of possible prehistoric date. A small quantity of other artefacts, including struck flint, was recovered from two of the trenches.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation on land at Woodlands Hospital, Narborough, Leicestershire (NGR: SK 53609780). It has been prepared by AC archaeology Ltd on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Developments Ltd, as instructed by their archaeological consultants The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.

1.2 The site is located on the northwest edge of Narborough town centre and covers approximately 3.5 hectares. It comprises pasture land recently used for grazing, as well as a former area of lawn bordered by scrub, and is currently occupied by Woodlands Hospital, situated centrally within the site. It is bounded to the south

by existing property boundaries, with the rest of the site bounded by public roadways. It lies between 83mOD and 92m OD.

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The site contains no previously recorded archaeological sites or finds. There has been a number of finds recorded from nearby, including prehistoric artefacts of Neolithic date. There is also evidence of a Romano-British villa discovered approximately 300 metres to the southwest of the site which was probably focused on the course of the Fosse Way Roman Road. The former course of the road runs approximately 100m south east of the site.
- 2.2** An earlier geophysical survey by gradiometer, undertaken on the site, recorded a number of magnetic anomalies of possible archaeological origin, including pit-like, linear and curvilinear anomalies (Archaeological Surveys Ltd 2009).

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1** The evaluation was undertaken to determine, as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present on the site, as dictated by current best practice.

## **4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1** The investigation was undertaken in response to a request made by Leicestershire County Council Historic and Natural Environment Department (LCCHNED) and in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Cox 2009) which was approved prior to commencement by the LCCHNED Archaeological Officer.
- 4.2** The investigations comprised the excavation of four trenches, each 50m long by 1.8m wide, excavated at the locations shown on Fig. 1. The trenches were positioned on the ground using a hand-held (GMS2) GPS and based on a geo-referenced plan of the geophysical survey results. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.3** All soil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Ploughsoil/topsoil was removed by tracked mechanical excavator,

using a wide toothless bucket, and stored alongside each trench, separated from any subsoil as necessary. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.

**4.4** 'Negative' trenches were recorded using trench records forms; 'positive' trenches were recorded using the full range of the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system.

**4.5** The archive has been prepared using the site code ACW234 and the museum accession number X.A20.2010. It is currently stored at the offices of AC archaeology (Wiltshire).

## **5. RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Of the four trenches excavated, only Trench 4 revealed evidence for Medieval or earlier archaeological activity, although Trench 3 did contain a deposit of post-medieval origin. With the exception of Trench 2, in the northern extent of the site, the trenches in this area revealed subsoil evidence of ridge and furrow strip cultivation, as shown on the geophysical survey. This activity also appeared in Trench 1, situated in the southernmost extent of the site, but however this did not appear on the geophysical survey results.

### **5.2 Trench 1 (Detailed plans Fig. 2a; section Fig. 2b)**

This trench was aligned north-west to south-east, measured 50 x 1.8m in plan and was positioned on ground sloping down gently to the south. A maximum depth of 300mm was excavated through a former ploughsoil and a subsoil before a series of linear features were revealed. Ploughsoil (context 100) was composed of dark greyish brown silty clay loam to a depth of 250mm, with the remaining depth comprising subsoil (context 101). This was composed of dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional small gravels and charcoal flecks.

The subsoil features comprised four equally spaced broad furrows (contexts 102-105), present in the south-eastern half of the trench and representing ploughed-out former ridge and furrow. Excavation of one of the furrows (context 104), revealed a broad, shallow, gently sloping profile with a maximum depth of 300mm. It was filled with a slightly mixed greyish brown / reddish brown silty clay with sparse small gravels and charcoal flecks.

The subsoil horizon (context 101), possibly derives from the ploughing out or levelling of the former ridges associated with the ridge and furrow. The absence of furrows in the north-western half of the trench may indicate a change of alignment. Natural bedrock/subsoil (context 106) comprised reddish brown clay becoming 'banded' to the north-west with a change of colour to yellowish brown or grey.



**Plate 1: Trench 1 view of furrow 104 from the north-east**



### 5.3 Trench 2

This trench was aligned north-east to south-west measured 50 x 1.8m in plan and was positioned on ground sloping down gently to the south. A maximum depth of 320mm was excavated through a former ploughsoil and a subsoil before natural subsoil was exposed. Although this trench was positioned over one linear and one discrete anomaly, shown on the geophysical survey results, neither of these appeared as subsoil features. Ploughsoil (context 200) was composed of dark brown silty clay loam to a depth of 250mm, with the remaining depth comprising subsoil (context 201). This was composed of dark greyish / yellowish brown silty clay with occasional small gravels and charcoal flecks. This lower soil horizon possibly derives from the ploughing out or levelling of the former ridges associated with the ridge and furrow. Natural bedrock/subsoil (context 202), comprised yellow or yellowish brown clay.



## Plate 2: view of Trench 2 from the south-west

### 5.4 Trench 3 (Detailed plan Fig. 2c)

This trench was aligned north-west to south-east, measured 50 x 1.8m in plan and was positioned on ground sloping down gently to the south. A maximum depth of 300mm was excavated through a former ploughsoil and a subsoil before a single linear subsoil feature was revealed (context 302 – not excavated).

Ploughsoil (context 300) was composed of dark brown silty clay loam to a depth of 250mm, with the remaining depth comprising subsoil (context 301). This was composed of dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional small gravels and charcoal flecks.

The linear subsoil feature corresponded with a linear anomaly recorded on the geophysical survey and is considered to be a furrow from ridge and furrow cultivation. A shallow ill-defined deposit (context 303) with a maximum depth of 50mm was also revealed. It was filled with dark brown silty clay with charcoal flecks. This deposit was probably 19th century in origin and contained brick and roof tile fragments.

The subsoil horizon possibly derives from the ploughing out or levelling of the former ridges associated with the above agricultural landscape. Natural subsoil (context 304) comprised reddish brown clay.



Plate 3: view of Trench 3 from the north-east

## 5.5 Trench 4 (Detailed plan Fig. 2d; sections Fig. 2e - f)

This trench was aligned north-west to south-east measured 50 x 1.8m in plan and was positioned on ground sloping down gently to the south. It was positioned to target a number of anomalies recorded in the geophysical survey. A maximum depth of 350mm was excavated through a former ploughsoil and a subsoil before a series of faint linear features and a pit-like feature were revealed.

Ploughsoil (context 400) was composed of dark brown silty clay loam to a depth of 250mm, with the remaining depth comprising subsoil (context 401). This was composed of slightly mixed, dark greyish brown, or yellowish brown, silty clay with occasional small gravels and charcoal flecks. This soil horizon possibly derives from the ploughing out or levelling of the former ridges associated with the above agricultural landscape. Natural subsoil (context 402), ranged from yellowish brown clay to reddish brown clay at the south-east extent of the trench.

Eight of the linear features comprised shallow furrows (contexts 403 -410) and represent ploughed-out former ridge and furrow. Excavation of one of the furrows (context 406) revealed a shallow gently sloping profile with a maximum depth of 200mm. It was filled with yellowish brown silty clay with sparse small gravels and charcoal flecks.

A further linear feature (F412), present at the far south-east extent of the trench, and seemingly representing part of a curvilinear anomaly shown on the geophysical survey results, was also investigated. However, excavation of this feature revealed a shallow and slightly irregular profile and base, with a fill (context 411) composed of mixed dark brown or reddish brown silty clay with occasional small gravels and charcoal flecks. This feature appears to represent either another furrow or part of a former landscape feature.

What initially appeared in plan as a single irregular shaped pit-like feature, on excavation clearly represented two inter-cutting features (F415 & F418). The later of these (F415) was sub-circular in plan with maximum dimensions of 0.6m. It had a steep to vertical profile and slightly concave base at a depth of 410mm. It contained two fills: Its primary fill (414) was composed of greyish brown silty clay with occasional small rounded / angular gravels and charcoal flecks. Its upper fill



(413) was composed of mid-grey silty clay with frequent charcoal flecks and occasional small gravels.

This feature cut feature F418, which was more irregular in plan, with dimensions of 0.8 x 0.5m and, where present, exhibiting a moderately sloping profile and concave base at a depth of 450mm. It also contained two fills; primary fill (417) was composed of reddish brown silty clay with occasional small rounded / angular gravels and sparse charcoal flecks. Its upper fill (416) was composed of light grey silty clay with occasional small gravels and charcoal flecks. A quernstone fragment (obj.1) was present lying directly on the base of this feature.



**Plate 4: view of Trench 4 from the south-east**

## 6. FINDS (By Emma Firth)

All finds recovered on site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. Finds were then quantified according to material type within each context. All metal finds will be x-rayed in order to identify objects. The assemblage was then scanned by context to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. This information is briefly discussed below. Finds totals by material type are given in Table 1.

### **Stone**

A fragment (613g) from a rotary quern stone was recovered from context 417 (Object Number 1). The quern is thin (30mm) and has been burnt. Only one small area of worn surface remains.

### **Flint**

A total of five fragments (12g) of flint were recovered from Trench 4. Context 413 contained a small patenated blade flake and a possible piece of debitage. Three flint fragments were recovered from context 411 and include a patenated blade flake with retouch through the patination on two sides.

### **Animal Bone**

A total of twenty three fragments (56g) of animal bone were recovered. Twenty one fragments were recovered from context 416 and are all cattle ribs, the surfaces of which are abraded. The two fragments of animal bone recovered from context 413 were heavily burnt.

### **Glass**

A single fragment (78g) from a post medieval onion bottle was recovered from context 411.

### **Ceramic building Material**

Three pieces (17g) of ceramic building material was recovered from context 303 and are all of post medieval date.

### **Iron Age Pottery**

A small undiagnostic sandy sherd (2g) of possible Iron Age pottery was recovered from context 413.

### Medieval Pottery

A single sherd (6g) of medieval pottery was noted in context 411. The sherd is of a hard sandy fabric and is undiagnostic. There are traces of glaze visible on its external surface.

### Post Medieval Pottery

A total of five sherds (123g) of post medieval pottery was recovered. A single sherd (33g) was recovered from context 303, is in a pale buff fabric with iron ore inclusions, and a thick brown internal glaze and a red slip on the external surface. A single sherd of post medieval pottery was also recovered from context 405, and is a fine oxidised fabric with quartz inclusions and has a thick brown glaze. A single sherd of a pale firing fabric, with a brown internal glaze was recovered from context 407. Context 411 also contained two sherds, one of which is a fine orange earthenware with thick brown glaze and the other is similar fabric to that recovered from context 303, although it is unglazed.

Table \* Quantification of Finds by material type and context.

Trench	Context	Animal bone		Stone		Flint		Glass		Fired Clay		Ceramic		Iron Age Pottery		Medieval Pottery		Post med pot	
		No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt
3	303											3	17					1	33
4	405																	1	13
4	407																	1	17
4	411					3	10	1	77							1	6	2	60
4	413	2	2			2	2							1	2				
4	416	21	54							1	4								
4	417			1	613														
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>123</b>

## 7. DISCUSSION

7.1 With the exception of two inter-cutting features, the trench evaluation has provided very limited evidence for archaeological activity on the site. The two inter-cutting features, F415 / 418, revealed in Trench 4, are unclear in nature, but are possibly associated with settlement activity elsewhere in the vicinity. These features are also situated just within the confines of two curvilinear anomalies shown on the geophysical survey results, which possibly represent part of a former enclosure.



- 7.2** Although neither of the two features investigated in Trench 4 contained clear dating evidence, the presence of a quernstone fragment (obj 1), seemingly placed at the base of F418, would indicate a date range somewhere within the prehistoric period. This is fairly characteristic of sites from the late Neolithic through to the late Iron Age.
- 7.3** With the exception of a series of former furrows associated with post-medieval ridge and furrow strip cultivation on the site, none of the anomalies represented on the geophysical survey results appeared to be present.

## **8. REFERENCES**

Archaeological Surveys Ltd 2009, '*Woodlands Hospital, Narborough Leicestershire – Magnetometer Survey*' Unpublished report for Taylor Wimpey Developments Ltd by Archaeological Surveys Ltd

Cox, P. W., 2009 '*Woodlands Hospital, Narborough, Leicestershire (NGR SK53609780): Project design for archaeological trench evaluation*'. Unpublished document prepared on behalf of the Environmental Dimension Partnership, ref ACW234/1/0

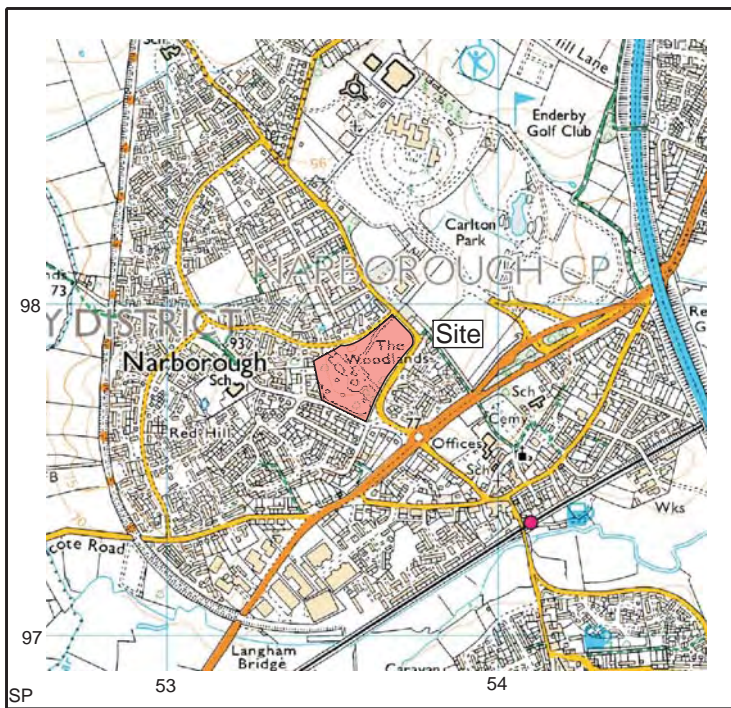
EDP 2009, '*Woodlands Hospital, Narborough, Leicestershire – Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*' Unpublished report for Taylor Wimpey Developments Ltd by Environmental Dimension Partnership, January 2009

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**Abstraction and interpretation of magnetometer anomalies**

- Positive linear anomaly - cut feature of possible archaeological origin
- Positive linear anomaly - of uncertain origin
- Linear anomaly - ridge and furrow
- Negative linear anomaly - of uncertain origin
- Discrete positive response - cut feature of possible archaeological origin
- Discrete positive response - uncertain origin
- Magnetic disturbance from ferrous material
- Strong multiple dipolar linear anomaly - pipeline / cable / service
- Strong dipolar anomaly - ferrous object



PROJECT

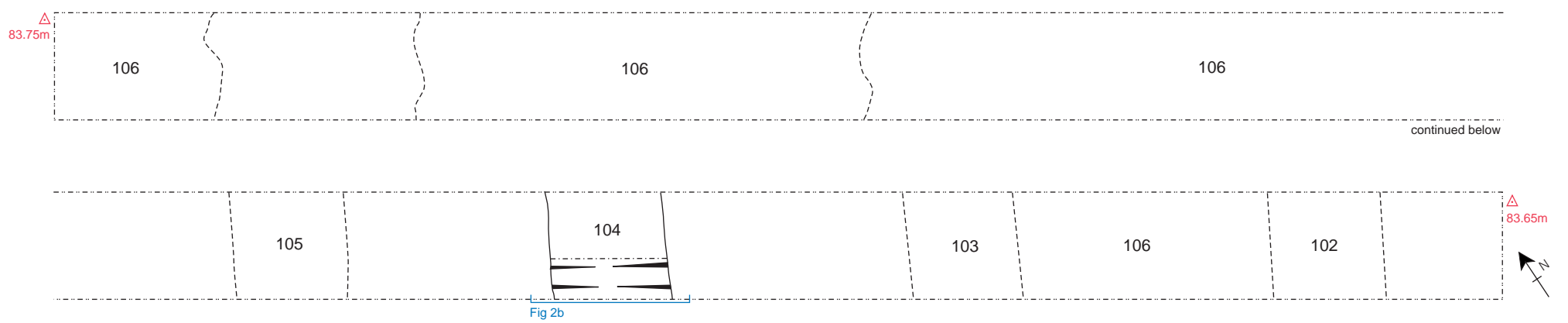
Woodlands Hospital, Narborough

TITLE

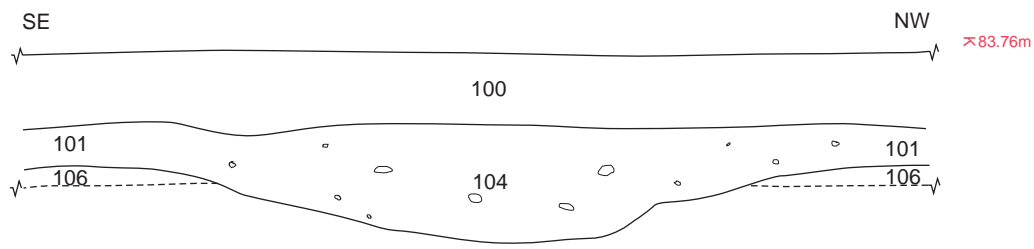
Fig. 1: Trench locations

Trench 1

a) Plan

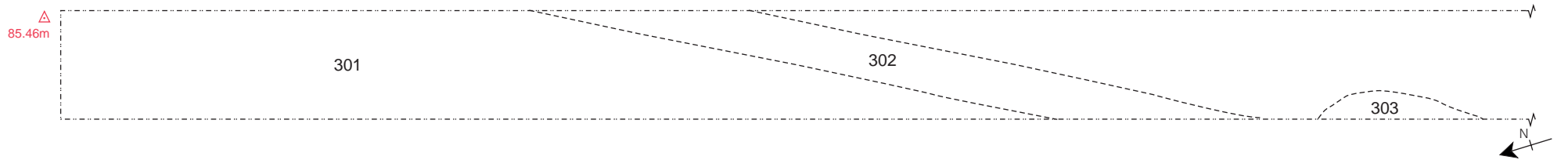


b) Section, 104



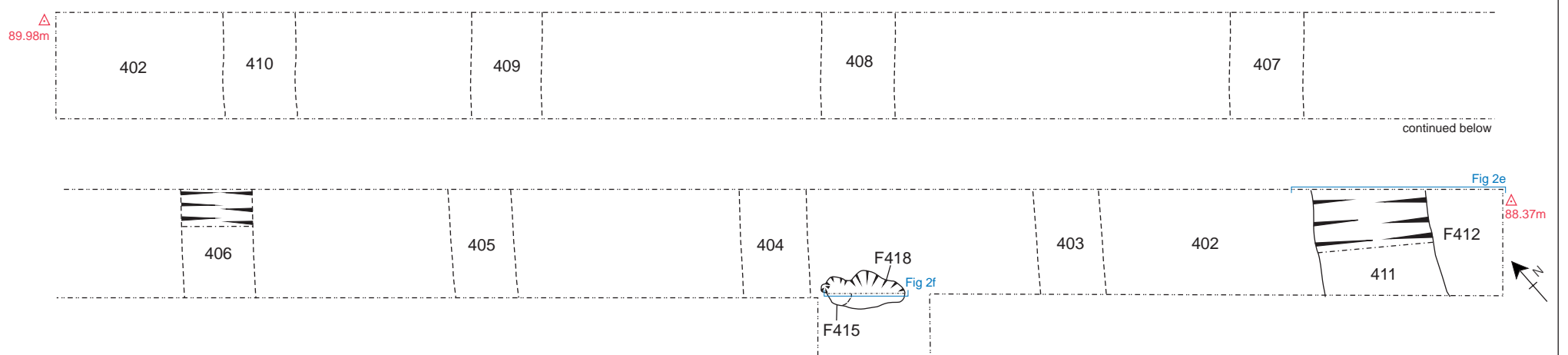
Trench 3

c) Plan

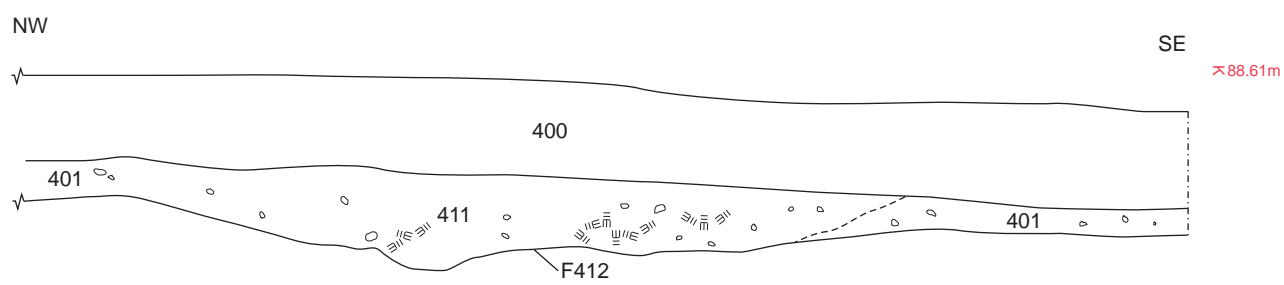


Trench 4

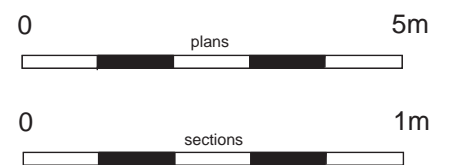
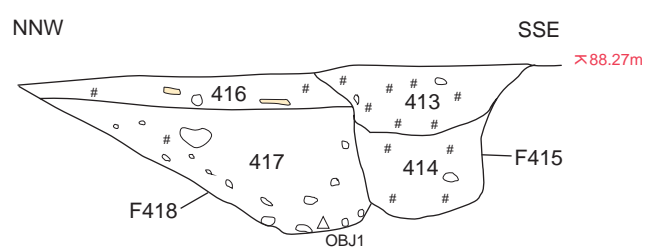
d) Plan



e) Section, F412



f) Section, F415 and F418





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