



Imphal Barracks

Fulford, York

North Yorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

Report no. 2792

October 2015

Client: Defence Infrastructure Organisation



Imphal Barracks Fulford, York North Yorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

Summary

An archaeological evaluation, consisting of the excavation of five trenches, was carried out at Imphal Barracks, Fulford, York. The evaluation was required in advance of a proposed new development at the site, and to clarify the level and nature of any archaeological remains present, which would potentially be affected by the new development. The evaluation encountered several deposits dating from the 19th and 20th-century occupation of the site by the military. Two features of archaeological interest were excavated within the proposed development area. These remains pre-date the initial construction of the barracks in 1877, but are of unknown function and are not securely dated.



Report Information

Client:	Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Report Type:	Archaeological Evaluation
Location:	Fulford, York
County:	North Yorkshire
Grid Reference:	SE 613502
Period(s) of activity represented:	Post-medieval, modern
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Site Code:	FUB15
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Museum Accession No.:	TBC
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1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) were commissioned by Mott MacDonald Ltd on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land at Imphal Barracks, Fulford, York (Fig. 1). The work was undertaken in advance of new development at the barracks, including the construction of new accommodation to the south of a demolished nuclear bunker, in the vicinity of the Merlin Car Park (Fig. 2). A second area to the north-east was situated in open, grassy land on the edge of the barracks, and may be developed in the future. The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Mott MacDonald Ltd (2014).

Site location, topography and land-use

Imphal Barracks is situated to the east of Fulford Road, on the northern edge of the village of Fulford, around 1.5 km south of York city centre, centred on NGR SE 613502. The site is surrounded by modern developed land, aside from its eastern edge which lies next to the 'common' land of Walmgate Stray, which were also used during the First and Second World Wars for practice trenches and an assault course (Mott MacDonald Ltd 2014). The site is generally flat at a height of between 11m and 14m aOD (Above Ordnance Datum). The barracks are active, and the headquarters of the division.

Soils and geology

The British Geological Survey identifies the underlying bedrock as Sherwood Sandstone Group with superficial deposits of silty, gravelly-sand and sandy-clays recorded on the site (BGS 2015). The overlying soil are unclassified urban deposits (SSEW 1983).

2 Archaeological and Historical Background

The following is taken from the Imphal Barracks Heritage Assessment (Mott MacDonald Ltd 2014).

Cartographic and literary documentation show that the development site and the barracks at Imphal largely remained as open space from the prehistoric through to the medieval period, when the area was largely agricultural. This was due in part to wet and boggy ground conditions. Preservation of archaeological remains, where no development has previously been undertaken, is likely to be good.

Roman activity is known to surround the development site. The route from York to Throlam is thought to be aligned on a similar route as the current A19, which runs approximately 400m to the west of the development site. Aerial photography has recorded remains of what may be an agger (the earthen bank which supported a stony metallic surface of a Roman road) located 700m to the south of the development site.

It is likely that climatic change during the medieval periods saw some considerable drying of the area, suitable enough for the area to begin to be used for burgage plots. Numerous aerial photographs show ridge and furrow close to the development site.

The site of the Imphal Barracks has known to have been occupied by the military since the construction of an Infantry Barracks in 1877. They were constructed to the south of the older Cavalry Barracks which were erected in 1795-96 (Tillot 1961). It is likely that the remains of structures, which were developed during the 1930s and onwards, lie within the development area. This development was limited, however, and there may exist pockets where archaeological remains survive in-situ.

3 Aims and Objectives

The aim was to gather sufficient evidence to establish the presence/absence, nature, date, depth, quality of survival and importance of any archaeological deposits present. This would allow for the determination of any further archaeological strategies that might be required prior to, or during, development.

4 Methodology

All work was carried out in accordance with accepted professional standards and guidelines, specifically Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014), Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991) and Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3 English Heritage: Archaeological Excavation (2008). The WSI produced by Mott MacDonald Ltd (2014) was followed and ASWYAS's own methodologies (ASWYAS 2010) were also adhered to.

The evaluation trenches were excavated by a JCB excavator equipped with a 1.6m-wide ditching bucket with an archaeologist in attendance at all times. The trenches were positioned to best provide a sample of the areas to be developed. The trenches were dug in spits of no more 100mm until natural deposits or the first archaeological horizon was encountered, thereafter, all investigations were undertaken by hand. Detailed records sheets were completed for each trench and these are included as part of the site archive. All written records were produced on pro-forma recording sheets in accordance with ASWYAS site recording manual (ASWYAS 2010).

An inventory of the archive is provided in Appendix 1, with a concordance of contexts detailed in Appendix 2.

5 Results

Trenches 2, 3 and 4 were moved to some degree from their intended location to avoid disturbing live services, trees or the car park facilities which were still in use. Their adjusted

locations are shown in Fig. 2. The results are summarised in Table 1 and are discussed in detail below. Trench 1 was not excavated, following consultation with Mott MacDonald Ltd, due to the density of services in the vicinity.

Table 1. Summary of results from the individual interventions

Trench No.	Dimensions	Total Depth	Observations
1	N/A	N/A	Not excavated due to density of services crossing trench location
2	31m x 1.8m	1.80m	Post-medieval or later pit and large modern feature
3	19m x 1.8m	1.35m	Modern deposits recorded
4	20m x 1.8m	1.40m	Probable post-medieval gully
5	30m x 1.8m	1.20m	Modern deposits recorded
6	30m x 1.8m	1.40m	Modern deposits recorded

Trench 2, 3 and 4 (Fig. 3)

This group of trenches were placed around the recently demolished remains of a nuclear bunker. They were arranged to target the small areas which did not contain known services, in between the bunker's deep foundations, large trees and a car park which was still in use. All the trenches were excavated through a thin layer of re-laid topsoil up to 0.15m thick and a layer of crushed concrete up to 0.50m thick. The concrete originates from the recently demolished deep bunker foundations. Beneath this was a heavily disturbed layer of buried topsoil and subsoil between 0.30m and 0.55m thick containing frequent brick and concrete fragments. At the base of each trench, natural deposits of sandy yellow or light brown sandy-clay were encountered.

Trench 2

Trench 2 contained several features which were cut into the natural and sealed by the buried topsoil. A service trench ran along most of the trench at a slight angle to it. This was marked on the site's service plan and was not investigated further. The service cut a large feature [204] at the northern end of the trench (Fig. 4). The feature was excavated by machine to the maximum safe depth of 1.80m which did not expose its base. The feature's northern side was not excavated due to suspected asbestos near the surface. The material was covered and not disturbed further. The feature had a total exposed width of 12m and a depth of at least 0.95m and was filled with a mixed backfill (203) of dark and mid-brown silty-sand and clayey-sand containing frequent brick and concrete fragments. This material is likely to relate to the recent clearance of the site.

A shallow pit [206] was located in the centre of the Trench 2. This was cut by the service pipe, and predates both the services and the modern rubbish dump. Pit [206] measured 0.60m wide and its truncated length was 0.56m, with a depth of 0.09m and it had an oval shape. It was filled with a dark brownish-grey clayey-sand with patches of light brown clay (205). The feature contained occasional charcoal and clinker and two sherds of probable 19th or 20th-century flowerpot.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was not excavated to its full extent at its western limits due to live services. In addition, due to the presence of reinforced concrete footings, excavation was halted at around 0.30m in depth at the eastern end and centre of the trench (Fig. 5). The origin of the concrete footings is uncertain, but they are likely to be of modern date and related to the military occupation of the barracks. Despite the Nevertheless natural deposits were reached in between the concrete and services at a depth of 1.35m, through a similar sequence of crushed concrete and buried soil. No archaeological remains were identified.

Trench 4

Trench 4 exposed the continuation of the same service trench found in Trench 2, which was not investigated further (Fig. 3). A second feature with a similar fill and size was identified 1.50m to the south-east with an east to west alignment (Fig. 6). Investigations showed the edges to be near vertical but further investigation was halted due to the depth of the trench, already at 1.30m, and the feature rapidly filled with groundwater. Despite these limitations, it appears likely that the feature represents another service trench. A third linear feature [404] ran across the trench towards its south-eastern end, on an east-west alignment. Excavation showed this gully had a shallow U-shaped profile, measuring 0.57m wide and 0.13m deep. Its fill (403) was a mid-grey sandy-clay containing occasional flecks of charcoal. The soil sample from fill 403 also contains rare fragments of wood charcoal, but these were of insufficient size to be identified to genus. No finds were recovered, however, so the possibility remains that this feature pre-dates the barracks.

Trench 5 and 6

Trenches 5 and 6 were located a short distance to the north-east of the other trenches, in an area of open grassland, away from the built-up area of the barracks (Fig. 2). Both trenches encountered a similar sequence of deposits. At the surface, both trenches were excavated through a layer of turf and topsoil between 0.45m and 0.55m in depth. The topsoil appears to have been redeposited from elsewhere. This sealed a series of made-ground deposits.

A total of seven field drains containing ceramic pipes ran across Trench 5 (Fig. 7) and a cable ran across Trench 6 (Fig. 8) but no other features were seen to cut the natural which comprised light brownish-yellow sandy-clays.

Trench 5

In Trench 5, the made ground consisted of a 0.10-0.12m thick, black layer of burnt material (501) above an unstructured layer of brick rubble (502) around 0.10m thick. The bricks appear to be from the demolition of a structure and are of 19th or 20th-century date, although no Ordnance Survey (OS) maps show any structure in the immediate vicinity. Either the bricks represent an early 19th-century structure that was demolished before the time of the first OS mapping in the mid-19th century, or more likely the bricks were introduced to the area when a later 19th or 20th-century building was demolished nearby. The brick deposit sealed a thin mid-grey silty-clay (503), around 0.15m thick, the origin of which is unclear. This overlay a buried subsoil (504) which sealed natural sandy clay deposits (505).

Trench 6

In Trench 6, the made ground consisted of a thin layer of crushed mortar or possibly concrete with white glazed tile and fragments of toilet bowl (601) around 0.10m thick. This overlay a dark layer of burnt material (602), around 0.30m thick, which was similar to that seen in Trench 5. Beneath the made ground in both trenches, dark grey and mid-yellowish-brown silty-clays were observed, which are likely to be buried topsoil and subsoil deposits, measuring between 0.30m-0.45m in depth. The layer was more homogenous in Trench 5 (504) with a clearer separation of topsoil (603) and subsoil (604) apparent in Trench 6.

6 Artefact Record

Pottery by C.G. Cumberpatch

Two sherds of pottery from the fill (205) of pit [204] are of the same type. The details are summarised below.

- One rim sherd (1g) in a fine red fabric; the rim is small and clubbed but the bulge is entirely external, consistent with the vessel being a flowerpot of late 19th or 20th-century date.
- One body sherd in a fine red fabric (2g); undecorated but with fine striations internally and externally. The sherd is probably from a very similar vessel to that represented by the rim and is most likely to be a flowerpot of late 19th or early 20th-century date.

Clinker

Two fragments of clinker, weighing 14g, were recovered from the fill (205) of pit 204. They represent fused residues from an unidentified coal-fired furnace or fire.

7 Environmental Record

Soil samples

One bulk environmental sample from the fill (403) of gully [404] was processed by ASWYAS using a Siraf-style water flotation system (French 1971), a 300 micron sieve and a 1mm mesh. The flot was dried before examination under a low power binocular microscope typically at x10 magnification. The retent was sorted by eye, and scanned with a magnet in order to retrieve any hammerscale.

The flot contains no charred cereals, chaff or weed seeds, but small undiagnostic fragments of wood charcoal are present. Modern plant material, including rootlets were noted. The retent contained no artefacts, ecofacts or hammerscale and has been discarded. The flot will be retained as part of the site archive, but no further analysis is required.

8 Discussion and Conclusions

The evaluation was largely successful in its aims of investigating the potential for archaeology features or deposits to survive on the site. As was to be expected, Trenches 2, 3 and 4 were excavated through 19th-century or later layers of demolition material relating to previous military structures. Buildings are shown on the OS map of 1931 on the western limits of the 'sports ground', in the vicinity of Trenches 2, 3 and 4. The demolition of these structures may be the source of the material noted in these trenches.

Trench 2, however, also provided evidence of post-medieval activity, perhaps pre-dating, or contemporary with, the construction of the first Infantry Barracks, in the form of a pit. In addition, Trench 4 contained a gully which may also pre-date the first barracks. The OS map from 1852, which pre-dates the construction of the barracks, shows the site as an open field, but in the absence of any dateable material from the gully, it is not possible to say if this is related to the construction of the barracks, or represents much earlier activity on the site.

Trenches 5 and 6 contained the remains of demolished structures, probably dating from the 19th or 20th-century. This was unexpected as no known structures are marked at this location on Ordnance Survey maps and it is likely that the area was used as an open area for cavalry drills (Tillott 1961). A building immediately to the west of the drill ground on OS maps from 1910 and 1931, labelled 'Riding School', may be responsible for the material found in Trenches 5 and 6, while temporary structures shown on the OS map of 1953, just to the east of the Riding School, might also be pertinent.

The identification of two features that may pre-date the barracks, a pit and a gully, indicate that the potential for features to survive does exist. While the pit is early modern in date, the gully remains undated and its function is unknown. Overall, however, the archaeological potential of the site is considered to be low, largely due to the disturbance caused by services associated with the barracks.

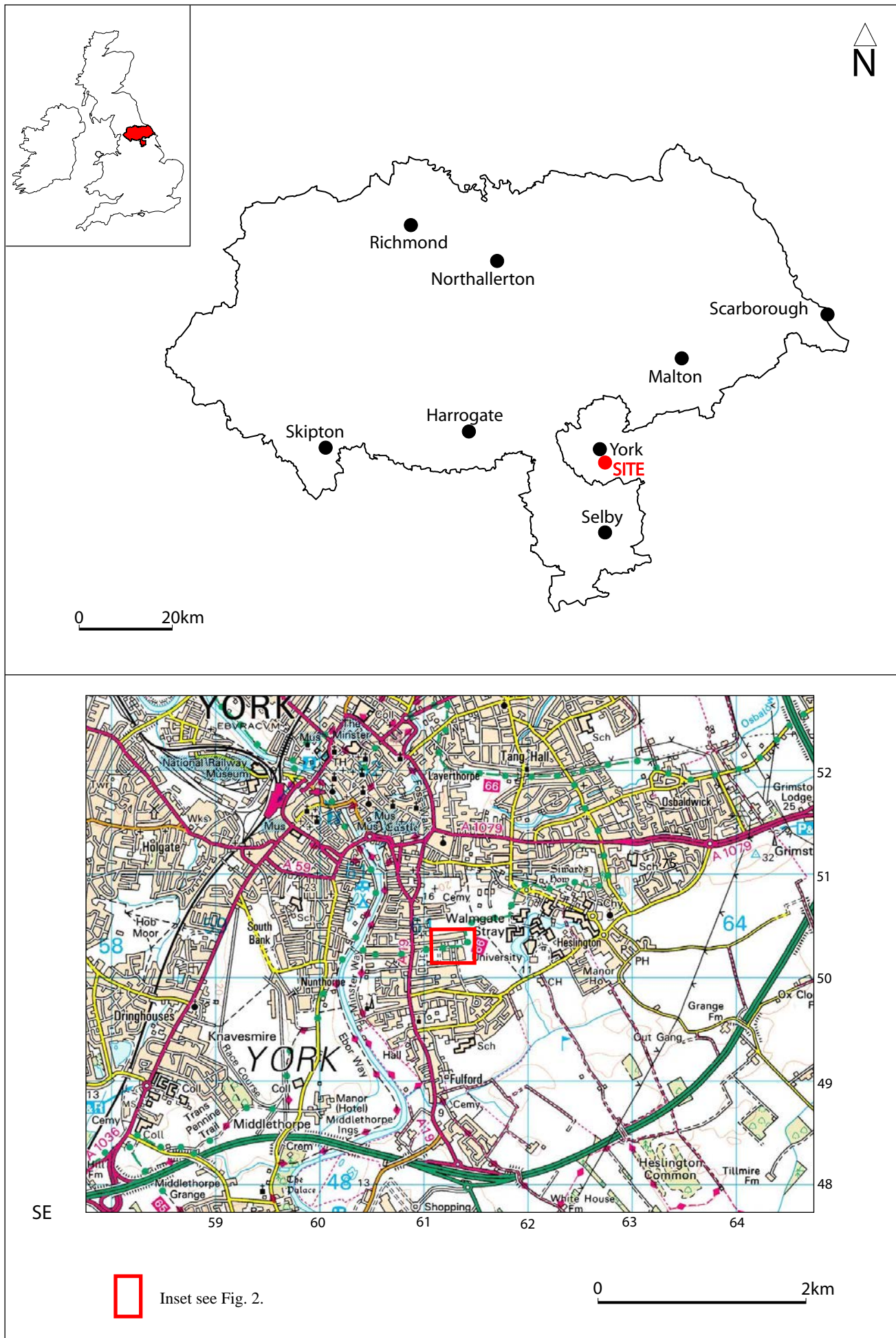


Fig. 1. Site location

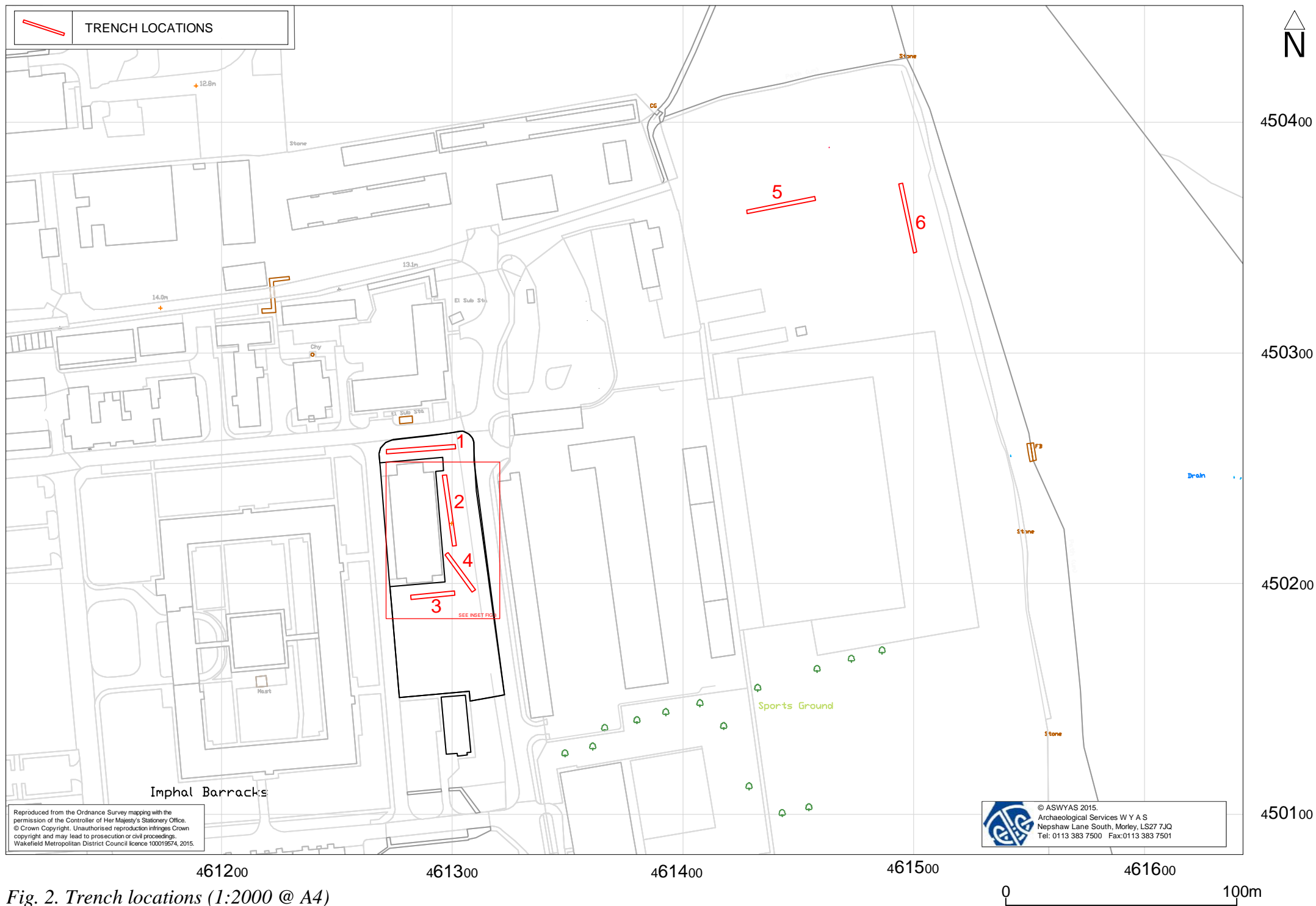


Fig. 2. Trench locations (1:2000 @ A4)

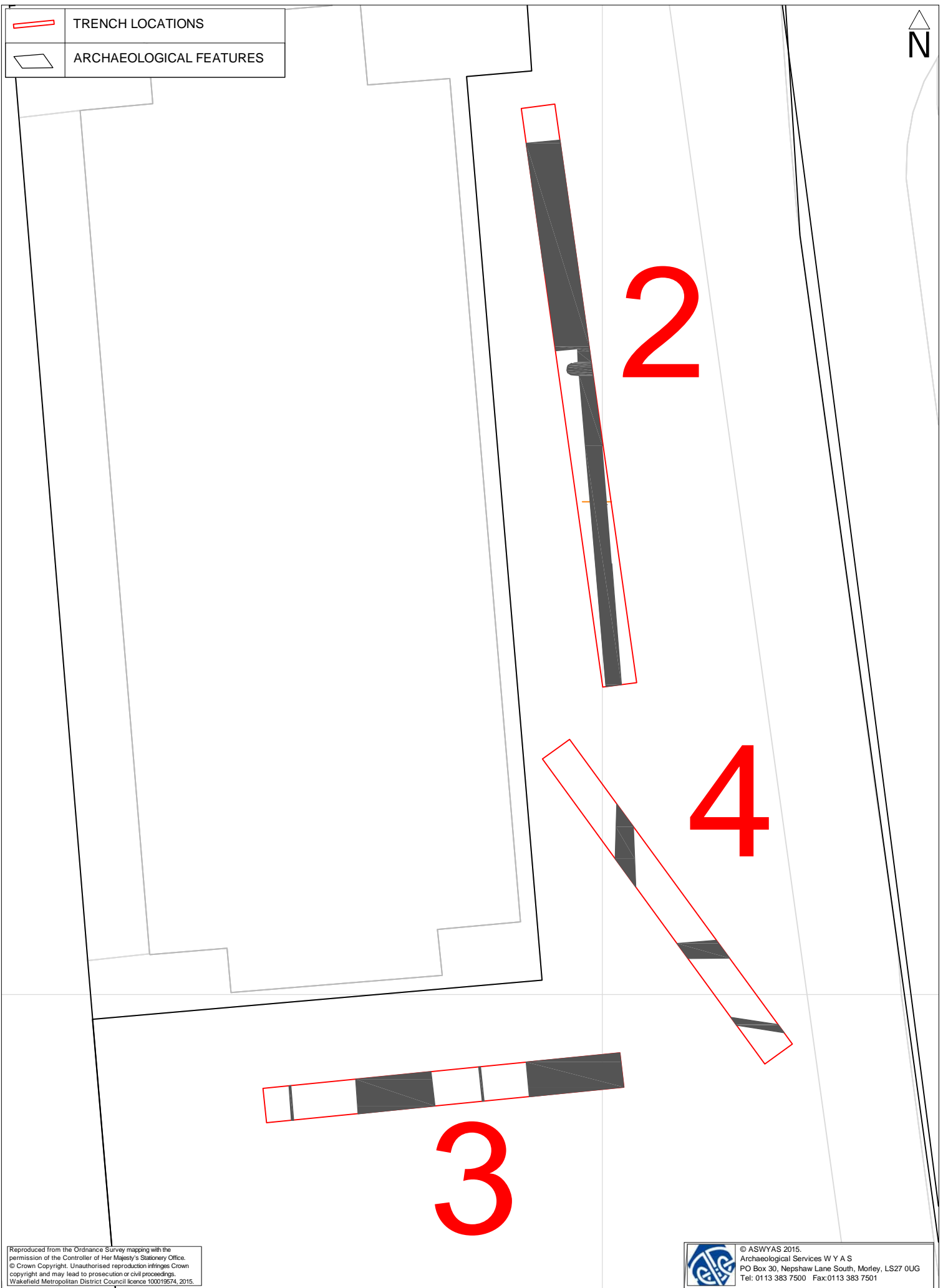


Fig. 3. Plan of archaeological features (1:250 @ A4)

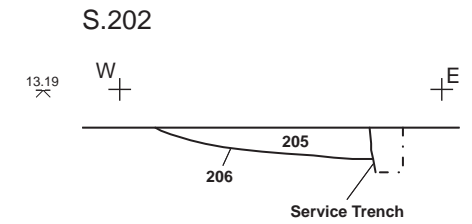
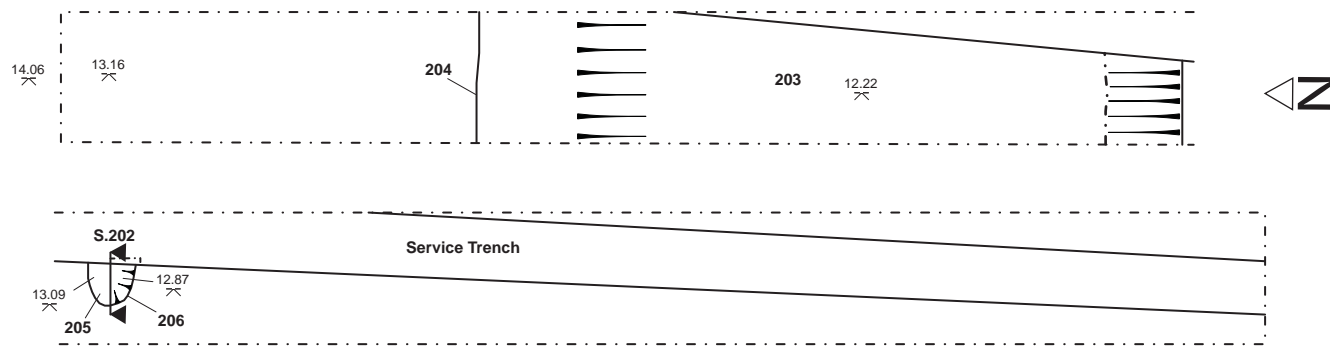


Fig. 4. Trench 2 plan and section

Plans
0 5m (1:100)

Sections
0 1m (1:20)

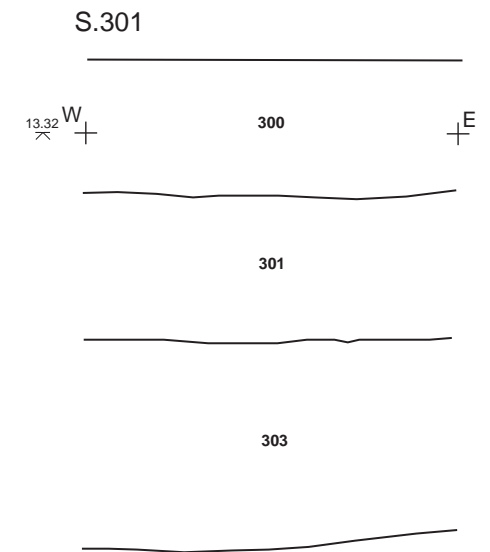
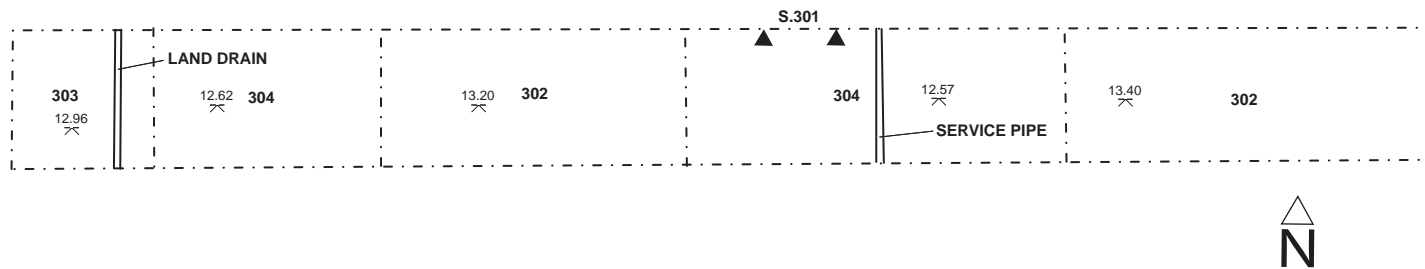


Fig. 5. Trench 3 plan and section

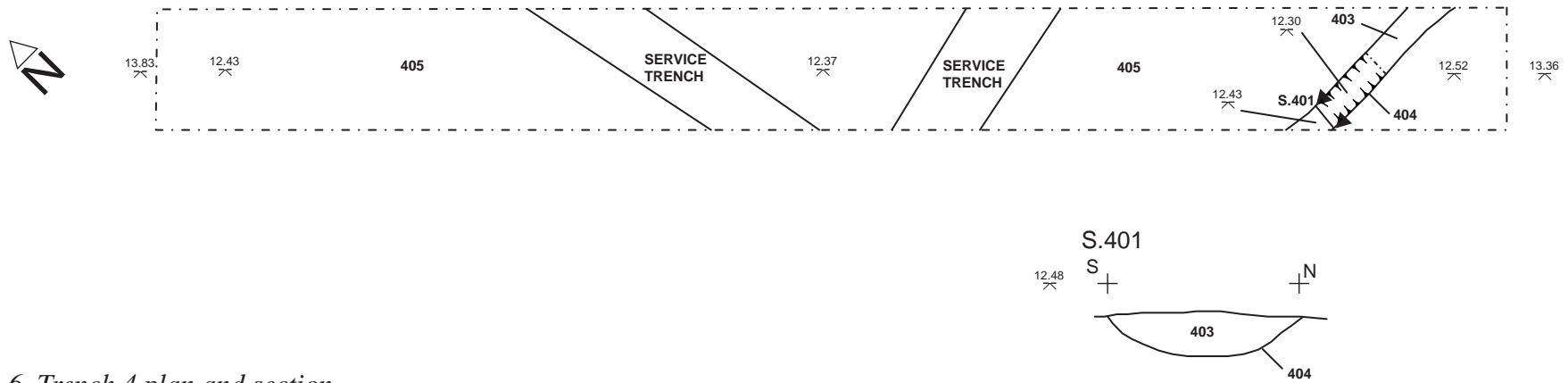


Fig. 6. Trench 4 plan and section

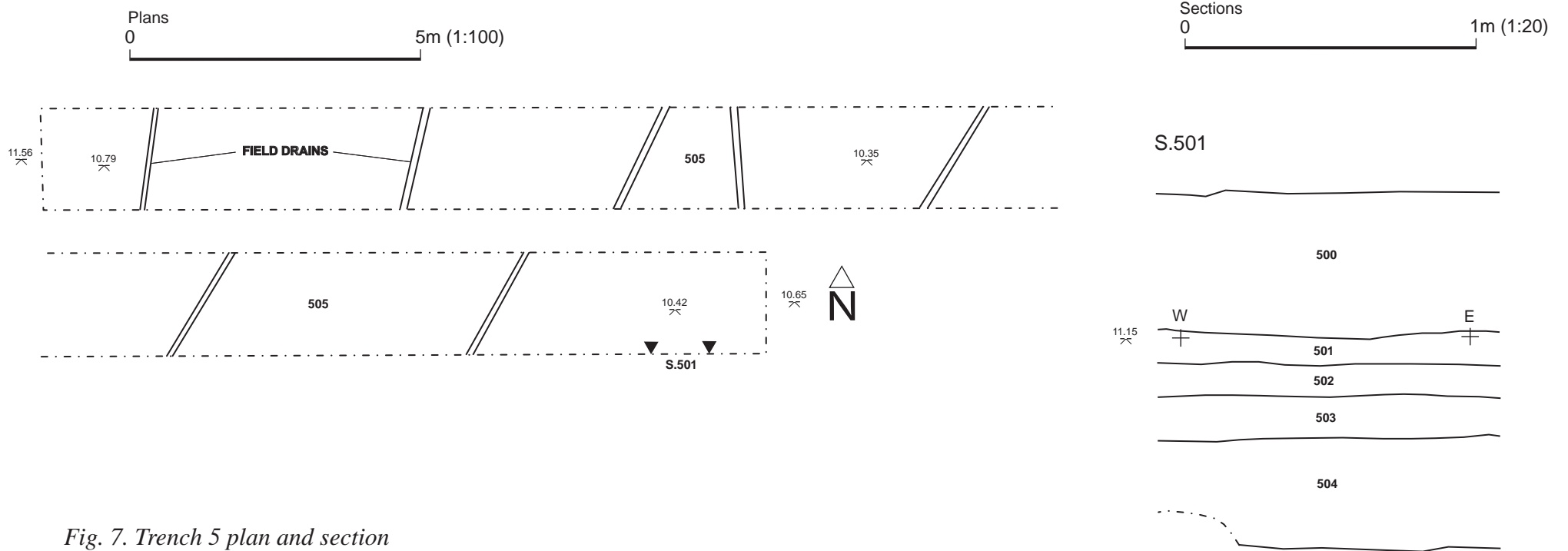


Fig. 7. Trench 5 plan and section

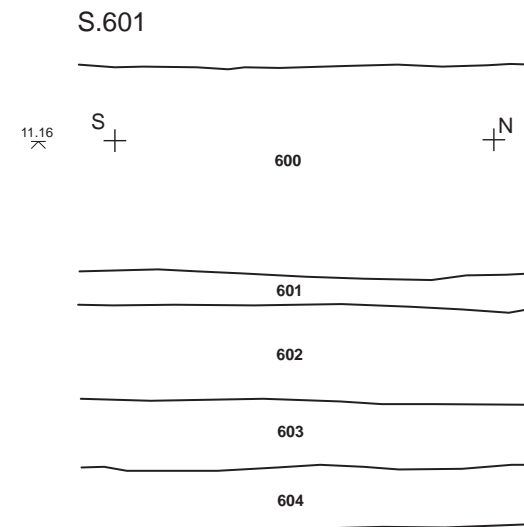
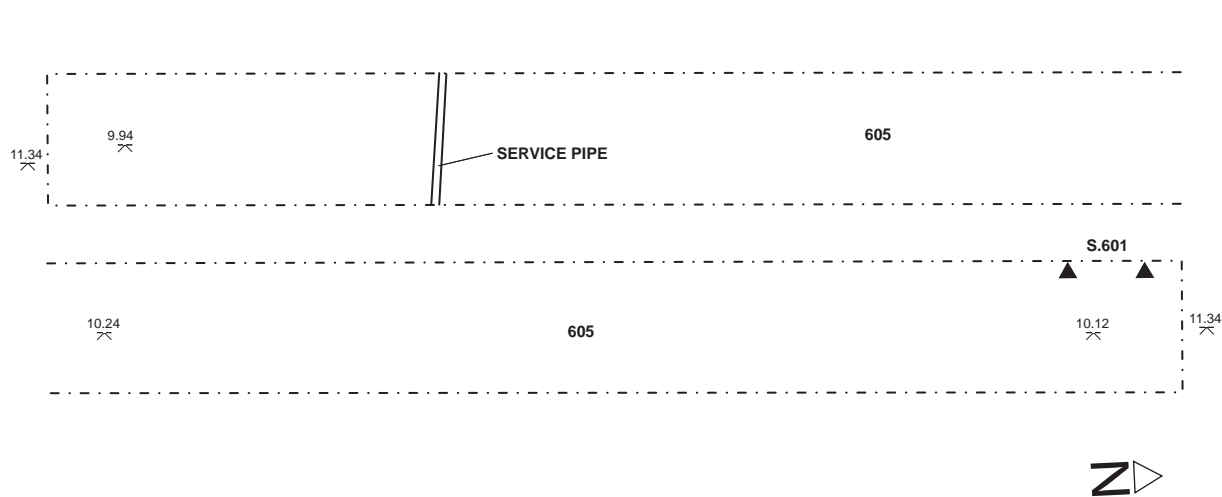


Fig. 8. Trench 6 plan and section





Plate 1. Feature 204, looking north-west



Plate 2. South-facing section of post-medieval pit 206



Plate 3. Concrete footings in Trench 3, looking north-west



Plate 4. Eastern end of Trench 3, looking north-east



Plate 5. East-facing section of gully 404



Plate 6. Trench 5, looking east



Plate 7. North-facing sample section of Trench 5



Plate 8. East-facing sample section of Trench 6, looking west

Appendix 1: Inventory of primary archive

Phase	File/Box No	Description	Quantity
Evaluation	File no.1	Daily record sheets	1
		Photo register sheets	1
		Context sheets (nos. 205, 206, 403, 404)	4
		Trench sheets	5

Appendix 2: Concordance of contexts yielding artefacts or environmental remains

Context	Trench	Description	Artefacts and environmental samples
200	2	Redeposited topsoil	
201	2	Crushed concrete	
202	2	Buried soil	
203	2	Backfill of [203]	
204	2	Cut of large modern feature	
205	2	Fill of [206]	Pottery, clinker
206	2	Cut of post-medieval pit	
207	2	Natural clayey-sand	
300	3	Redeposited topsoil	
301	3	Concrete rubble	
302	3	Reinforced concrete footings	
303	3	Buried soil	
304	3	Natural clay	
400	4	Redeposited topsoil	
401	4	Crushed concrete	
402	4	Buried soil	
403	4	Fill of [404]	GBA 1
404	4	Cut of east-west aligned gully	
405	4	Natural sandy-clay	
500	5	Topsoil	
501	5	Burnt material	
502	5	Brick rubble	
503	5	Mid-grey silty-clay	
504	5	Subsoil	
505	5	Natural sandy-clay	
600	6	Topsoil	
601	6	Crushed mortar and stone or concrete	
602	6	Burnt material	
603	6	Buried topsoil	
604	6	Buried subsoil	
605	6	Natural sandy-clay	

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