

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION
AT
IVY LANE, BRETORTON,
WORCESTERSHIRE

Simon Sworn and Tom Vaughan

With contributions by Angus Crawford

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

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Project 2781
Report 1503
WSM 35080

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Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Ivy Lane, Bretforton, Worcestershire (NGR: SP 0897 4454). It was undertaken on behalf of Thomas Vale Construction Plc, who intends to develop the site with 10 dwellings and associated works, for which a planning application has been submitted. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeological site was present and if so to indicate its nature, date and location.

Two trenches were excavated on the site. Within the northern half, Trench 1 revealed two small linear features, along with a single tree throw. One of the linears contained a single fragment of iron slag, arguably indicating a Roman or later date. The other linear and the tree throw were sterile and undated. On the west side, Trench 2 revealed two north-west/south-east aligned inter-cutting furrows. They contained occasional post-medieval material and represent traces of former agricultural activity. No other significant archaeological features were observed nor artefacts recovered, indicating that no substantial activity predating the post-medieval agricultural use of the site has occurred, either within the site itself or in the immediate vicinity.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Ivy Lane, Bretforton, Worcestershire (NGR: SP 0897 4454; Fig 1), on behalf of Thomas Vale Construction Plc. They intend to develop the site with 10 dwellings and associated works. The Client has submitted a planning application to Wychavon District Council (reference W/05/0971), who considers that a site of archaeological interest may be affected (WSM 30488).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999).

The project also conforms to a brief prepared by Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (HEAS 2005a) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2005 b).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. The purpose of this was to establish their significance, since this would make it possible to recommend an appropriate treatment, which may then be integrated with the proposed development programme.

2. Methods

2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition to the sources listed in the bibliography the following were also consulted:

Cartographic sources

- 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 1889, 6":1 mile, Worcestershire sheet XXXIX 43
- 1905, Ordnance Survey, 6":1 mile, sheet SP0844
- 1924, Ordnance Survey, 6":1 mile, sheet SP0844

2.2 Fieldwork methodology

2.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2005b). Fieldwork was undertaken on the 18th December 2006. The site reference number and site code is WSM 35080.

Two trenches, amounting to *c* 74m², were excavated over the site area of 1860m², representing a sample of approximately 4%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

In addition to the trenching, the contractor's spoil heaps were checked for any artefactual material.

The following techniques were not considered to be appropriate for this project: geophysical survey, fieldwalking and topographic/earthwork survey.

2.2.2 **Structural analysis**

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

2.3 **Artefact methodology, by Angus Crawford**

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 to 2.

2.3.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

All artefacts from the evaluated area were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

2.3.2 **Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved finds were examined and a primary record was made on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated and a *terminus post quem* date produced for each stratified context.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992; Hurst 1994).

2.4 **Environmental archaeology methodology**

2.4.1 **Sampling policy**

No deposits, layers or horizons were identified which were considered to have any environmental potential. Therefore no environmental samples were taken during the project.

2.5 **The methods in retrospect**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

3. **Topographical and archaeological context**

The site lies 0.75km to the north-west of the centre of Bretforton village. It is on the terrace above the River Avon, within the vale of Evesham, approximately 5km to the east of Evesham town. It comprises a flattish sub-rectangular area of disused paddocks and former stabling, associated with pasture fields to the west, at approximately 37m AOD, accessed from Ivy Lane to the east, which reverts to a track to the north.

The predominant soils of the immediate area belong to the Badsey 1 Soil Association (511h) comprising well drained calcareous and non-calcareous fine loamy soils over limestone gravel; some deep fine loamy soils over gravel, and similar but shallower soils affected by groundwater. This forms a small area surrounded by soils belonging to the Evesham 1 Soil Association (411b). These comprise slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils; some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged non-calcareous clayey and fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils. The parent material of the former is river terrace gravel and for the latter it is Jurassic and Cretaceous clay (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

There have been a number of stray finds of Roman material, including pottery and coins, around the village, indicating that there was occupation in this period in the vicinity. This includes fragments of Samian pottery and late 2nd to late 4th century coins recovered from a field 300m to the north-east of the present site (WSM 02742). Areas of possible settlement have been identified adjacent to this activity, comprising cropmarks of possible prehistoric-Roman enclosures and a trackway (WSM 30488 and 32496). In addition the route of a Roman road is conjectured to lie under the present New Street and Clayfield Road, on a north-west to south-east alignment through the village (WSM 31680).

Bretforton is first referred to in documents as an estate under the control of the Benedictine monastery at Evesham, which was founded c 705. It is thought that the earlier scattered form of rural settlement across the country coalesced into villages in the later Anglo-Saxon period (850-1066), and the settlement at Bretforton is thought to have been established as part of this trend. In addition, it has been suggested that the earliest church in the village was constructed in the 8th century (Goad 2004, 1).

Bretforton has been recorded in documents under a number of different forms, including: *Bretferton*, 709, *Brotfortun*, 716; *Bradferdtuna*, c 860; *Bratfortune*, 1086, *Brotfortona*, c 1086; *Bretfortone*, 13th century; *Bratforton*, 1235; *Bradforton*, 1249; *Bretferton*, 1250; *Brefferton*, 1251; *Bretforton*, 1275; *Bretfordton*, 1286; *Bretfordon*, 1365; and *Brodforton*, 1546. The origin of the name is unclear, although it derives from Old English, possibly meaning 'the farmstead at the broad (or planked) ford' (Mawer and Stenton 1927, 261-2; Goad 2004, 1).

The present St Leonard's church lies within the historic core of the village, on raised ground to the west of the village square, known as the Cross. It is constructed of lias rubble walls with Broadway stone ashlar dressings and an ashlar faced west tower surmounted by stone pinnacles. The earliest record is of a chapel on the site in 1206, which had become a church by 1358. The earliest features are the arcades within the nave, which date from the late 12th–early 13th century; the late 13th century chancel; the north and south transepts, added between 1340-1350; and the large Perpendicular Gothic window in the east wall of the north transept in the 15th century (Pevsner 1968, 99-100; VCH II, 364-6; WSM 02849). It has been the subject of archaeological investigation during renovation, which recorded the method of construction and alterations to the aforementioned window and a disturbed subsoil within a trench excavated to the north of the church (Hunt and Godbehere 1995; WSM 29689). Investigations within the churchyard in 2005 identified a stone foundation, which may form part of medieval gaol, which was recorded as occupying an area south of the church in 1816 and was demolished between 1882 and 1896 (Cook 2005, 3).

Bretforton is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, as containing 12 hides (approximately 1440 acres of plough land). It was appurtenant to the manors of Offenham

and Wickhamford, under the control of Evesham abbey (VCH II, 360; WSM 29872). A number of medieval dwellings are located within the core of the village, including Grange Farm House, with adjacent dovecote, fish ponds and a 15th century timber framed barn (Pevsner 1968, 100; WSM 02851-4), the Fleece Inn (WSM 01000) and the Court House (WSM 02478). 27, Main Street, cruck-framed building, has been the subject of archaeological investigation, and determined to be of early 14th century date, but was rebuilt in the later 15th century (Cook 2003; Cook 2004; WSM 32404, 32816 and 33617). There is no cross located in the square known as the Cross, although one is considered to have been located here in the medieval period (WSM02479).

The Manor house, to the west of the church, is a three-bay stone house with three gables, built between 1605-1877. Bretforton Hall to the north-west, is a three-bay stuccoed neo-Gothic building dated to 1830, although probably earlier (Pevsner 1968, 100).

An archaeological evaluation undertaken at the burial ground off New Street, 0.2km to the north-east of the church, determined that the settlement did not extend into this area in the medieval period, and that it was put to agricultural use (Lockett 2000; WSM 30162).

Cartographic sources indicate that the study area formed part of a larger undeveloped field during the later 19th century, through to the mid 20th century.

4. Results

4.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2-X and on Plates 2-6. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

4.1.1 Natural deposits

The natural matrix was observed in both trenches and comprised loose sandy gravels with patches of light brown silty clay (102/202). Throughout the natural deposits large patches of compact light greyish blue laminated clay (107/203) were also noted.

The shallow topsoil was noted to contain occasional modern material. The subsoil was similarly shallow and contained solely occasional small charcoal flecks.

4.2 Medieval

A single residual sherd was recovered from Trench 2, although no features, deposits or structures were identified of this date.

4.2.1 Post-medieval/modern deposits

Towards the centre of Trench 2, two shallow north-west to south-east aligned furrows (205, 207) were observed, sealed by the subsoil, and cut into the underlying natural. These two features both consisted of shallow, wide cuts. The furrow on the southern side (205) truncated the furrow to the north (207).

Within Trench 2 three north-west to south-east aligned linears were observed, each containing a single ceramic land drain. To the south end of Trench 2 a clearly modern, machine-excavated service trench ran in a north/south direction.

4.2.2 Undated deposits

A number of features were recorded which were both intrinsically undated and undatable by association with other adjacent features.

An irregular semi-circular cut (106), observed towards to eastern end of Trench 1, cut into the natural deposits and contained no datable artefacts.

Also within Trench 1, two undated linear features were observed. To the south-east end of the trench a north-west to south-east aligned gully ditch (104) cut into the underlying natural deposits. To the western end of the trench a second gully ditch (109) was noted, aligned in a north/south direction. Linear (104) contained a single small fragment of iron slag, which indicates a probable Roman or later date, although this was not retained, and may have been residual.

4.3 Artefact analysis, by Angus Crawford

4.3.1 Artefactual analysis

The pottery assemblage retrieved from the excavated area consisted of nine sherds of pottery weighing 103g, in addition fragments of roof tile, clay pipe stems and animal bone were recovered. The group came from three stratified contexts and could be dated from the post-medieval period onwards (see Table 1). Level of preservation was generally good with the majority of sherds displaying only light levels of abrasion.

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight (g)
Unstratified	Bone	Animal	1	12
Unstratified	Pottery	Modern	1	2
Unstratified	Pottery	Post-medieval	1	5
Unstratified	Roof tile	Modern	1	112
100	Pottery	Modern	3	14
100	Roof tile	Modern	1	48
200	Pottery	Post-medieval -modern	1	15
204	Claypipe	Stem	2	7
204	Pottery	Medieval?	1	6
204	Pottery	Post-medieval	2	61

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

4.3.2 Discussion of the pottery

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (see Table 2). All sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span.

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, *terminus post quem* dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Context	Fabric	Fabric name	Total	Weight (g)
Unstratified	101	Miscellaneous modern wares	1	2
Unstratified	69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	1	5
100	101	Miscellaneous modern wares	3	14
200	100	Miscellaneous post-medieval ware	1	15
204	69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	1	6
204	78	Post-medieval red sandy ware	2	61

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric

Post-medieval and modern pottery

All of the ceramic assemblage could be securely dated to the post-medieval and modern periods. While context 204 contained a single sherd of potential medieval oxidised glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69) it's poor condition made accurate dating difficult. However the remainder of the pottery assemblage from this context consisted of two con-joining sherds of 18th century red sandy ware (fabric 78) denoting an 18th century terminus post quem for context 204. The remaining sherd of oxidized glazed Malvernian ware was an unstratified find and its general appearance was more suggestive of a 16th to early 17th century production date.

The remaining pottery assemblage consisted of general flowerpot fragments, with context 200 containing a single sherd of late post-medieval to modern date and context 100 containing three sherds of 20th century date.

Other finds

The remainder of the assemblage consisted of unstratified finds of animal bone, a sherd of 20th century flowerpot and fragment of roof tile. Context 100 also contained a fragment of 20th century roof tile while context 204 contained three clay pipe stem fragments of 18th century date.

5. Synthesis

5.1 Medieval

No features were identified of medieval date, and only a single abraded, possible medieval sherd recovered.

This indicates that the medieval village of Bretforton did not extend northwards into the evaluation area. The single residual possible medieval potsherd from the post-medieval furrow (205) was probably deposited accidentally during manuring.

5.2 Post-medieval/modern

Of the two related furrows in Trench 2 the later feature (205) may be argued to date to the 18th century, based on the recovered artefactual material. This suggests post-medieval agricultural activity. The earlier furrow (207) to the north produced no datable material, however its comparable form and alignment would suggest a similar date. The site has clearly been ploughed in the modern period, as indicated by the lack of extant ridge and furrow earthworks, coupled with the furrows being sealed by the overlying subsoil.

The three north-west to south-east aligned linears in Trench 2 were former land drains, of modern origin. The probable machine dug service trench was not hand-excavated.

A small quantity of modern material was observed generally throughout the topsoil, indicating that it has been disturbed, probably during ploughing or other related agricultural activity.

5.3 **Undated**

The two gully ditches (104 and 109) observed within Trench 1 were very similar, both in their profile and fill. Although they were aligned differently it may be argued that they are contemporary. The absence of artefactual material, beyond a single fragment of iron slag, makes their dating uncertain, although they clearly predate the modern period as they were sealed by the subsoil, which has been the subject of ploughing in this period.

The undated semi-circular feature (106) with irregular sides observed in Trench 1 appeared to be an in-filled tree throw; the undercutting profile being indicative of root action.

6. **Significance**

In considering significance, the Secretary of State's criteria for the scheduling of ancient monuments (DoE 1990, annex 4), have been used as a guide.

These nationally accepted criteria are used to assess the importance of an ancient monument and considering whether scheduling is appropriate. Though scheduling is not being considered in this case they form an appropriate and consistent framework for the assessment of any archaeological site. The criteria should not, however, be regarded as definitive; rather they are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of a case.

Period

The identified activity appears to have taken place in the post-medieval period in the form of furrows, representing traces of agricultural activity. A single possible earlier find was recovered from these later features. Two undated linears may be argued to be of similar date and function.

Otherwise a small number of modern features were identified, and post-medieval and modern material retrieved from the topsoil, which has been the subject of ploughing in the modern period.

Rarity

Overall the assemblage is indicative of general rubbish discard, probably during manuring, in the post-medieval and modern periods. No significant archaeological deposits were recorded within the evaluated area.

7. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Thomas Vale Construction Plc at Ivy Lane, Bretforton, Worcestershire (NGR SP 0897 4454; HER ref. WSM 35080). Two trenches were excavated on the site. Within the northern half, Trench 1 revealed two small linear features, along with a single tree throw. One of the linears contained a single fragment of iron slag, arguably indicating a Roman or later date. The other linear and the tree throw

were sterile and undated. On the west side, Trench 2 revealed two north-west/south-east aligned inter-cutting furrows. They contained occasional post-medieval material and represent traces of former agricultural activity. No other significant archaeological features were observed nor artefacts recovered, indicating that no substantial activity predating the post-medieval agricultural use of the site has occurred, either within the site itself or in the immediate vicinity.

8. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

3	Fieldwork progress records AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
48	Digital photographs
2	Trench records AS40
7	Scale drawings
1	Box of finds

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel. Hartlebury (01299) 250416

9. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Richard Winter and Mike Harding (Thomas Vale Construction Plc) and Mike Glyde (Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment Planning Advisor).

10. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Simon Sworn. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan. Fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Sworn, finds analysis by Angus Crawford and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

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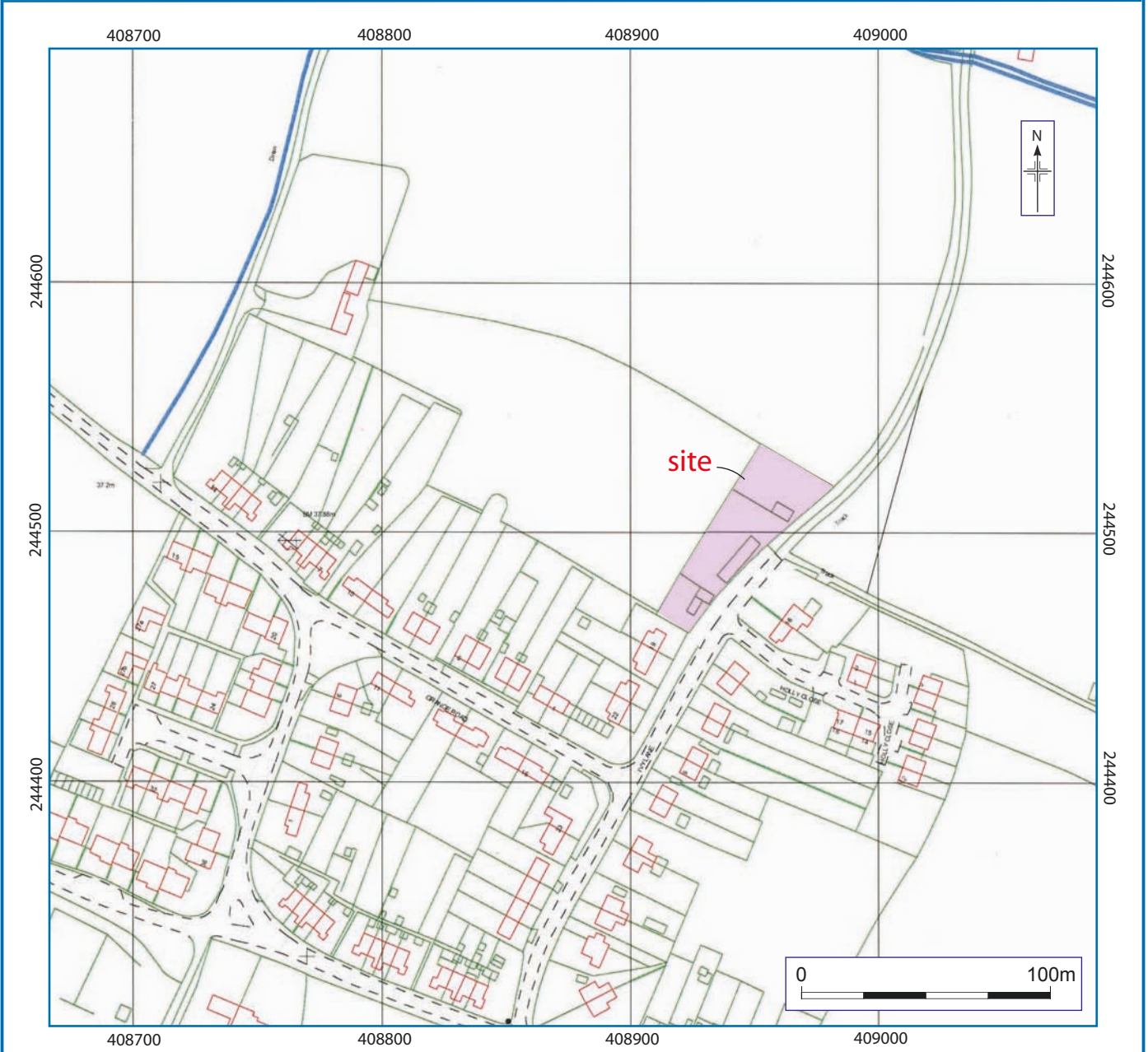
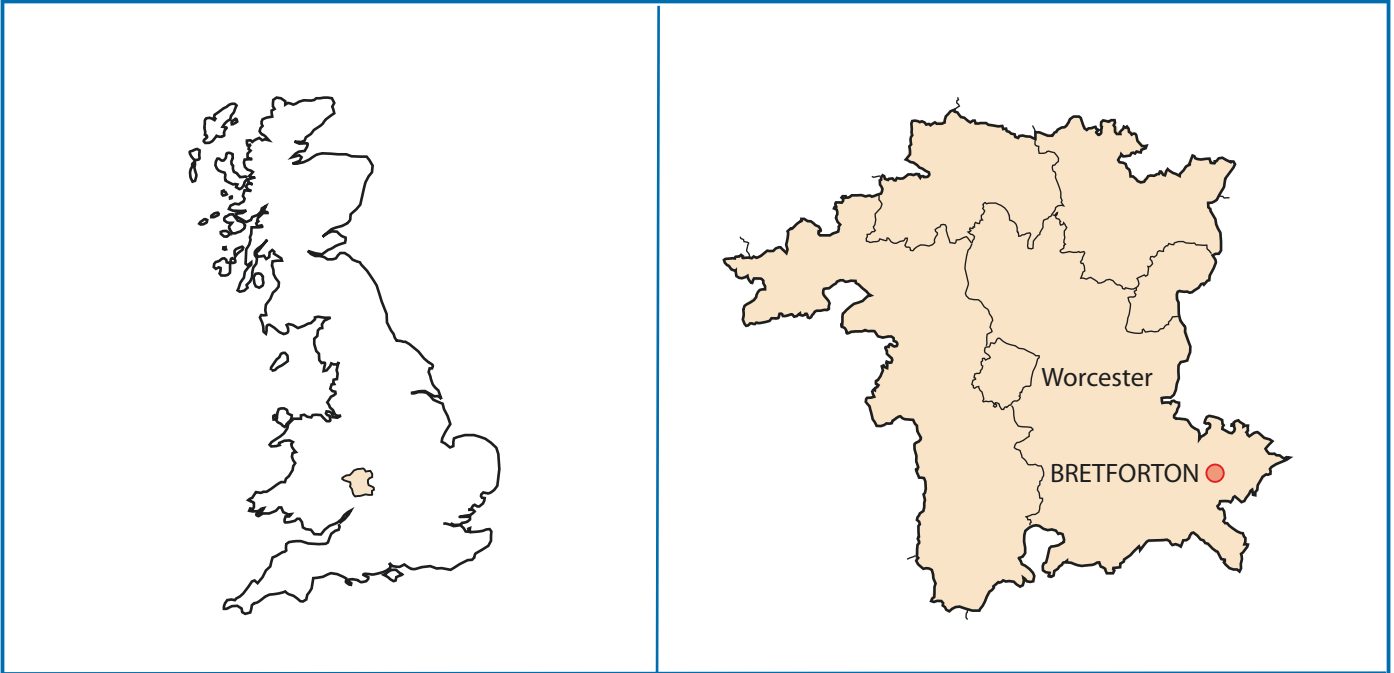
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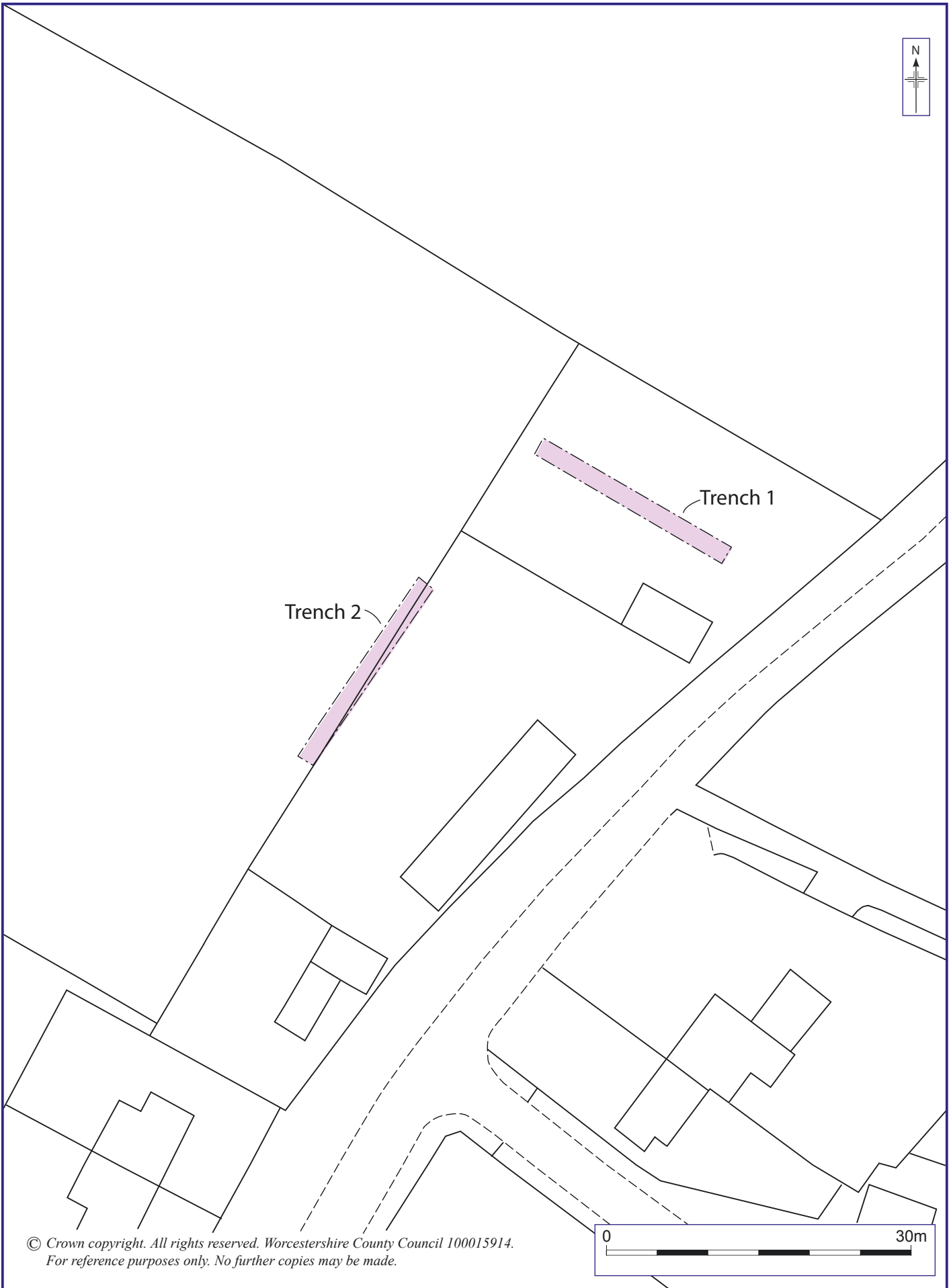
Figures



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Location of the site.

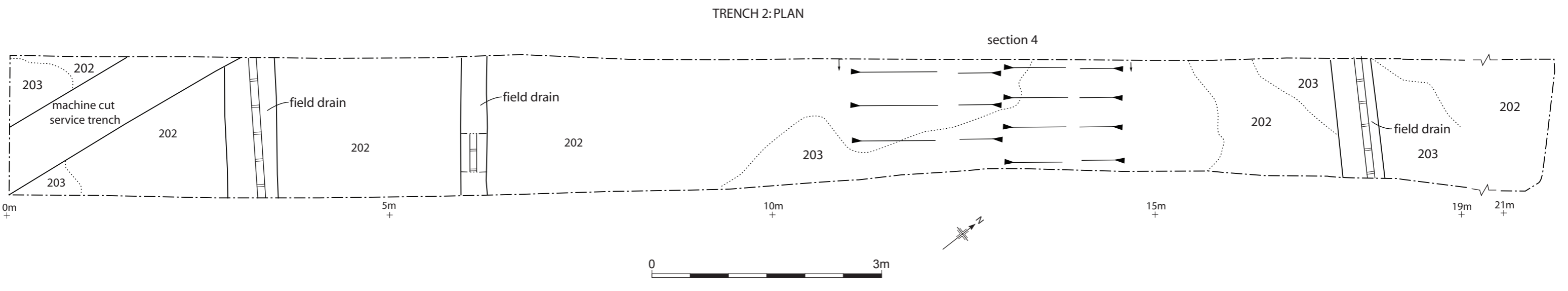
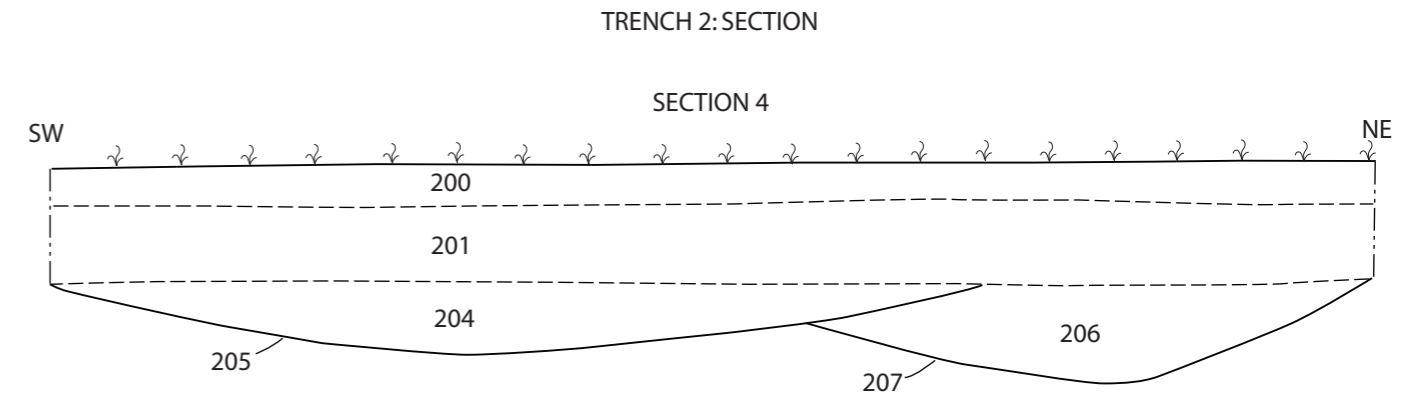
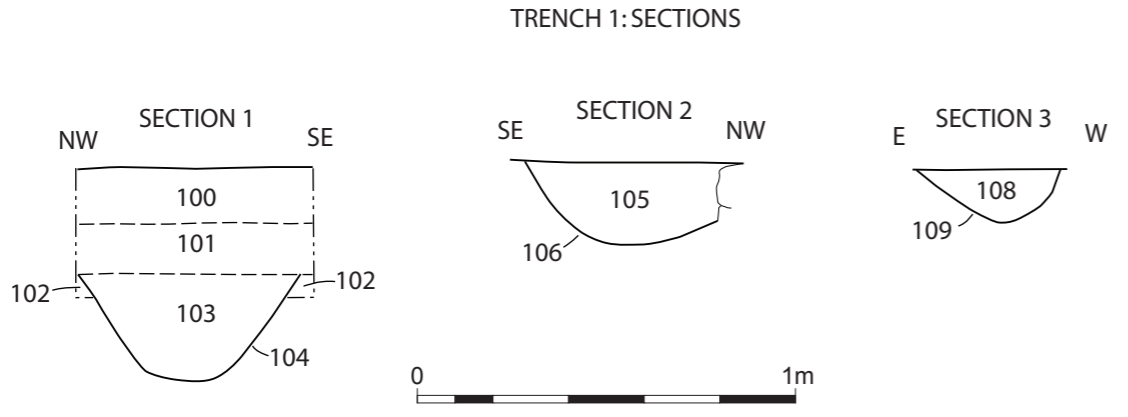
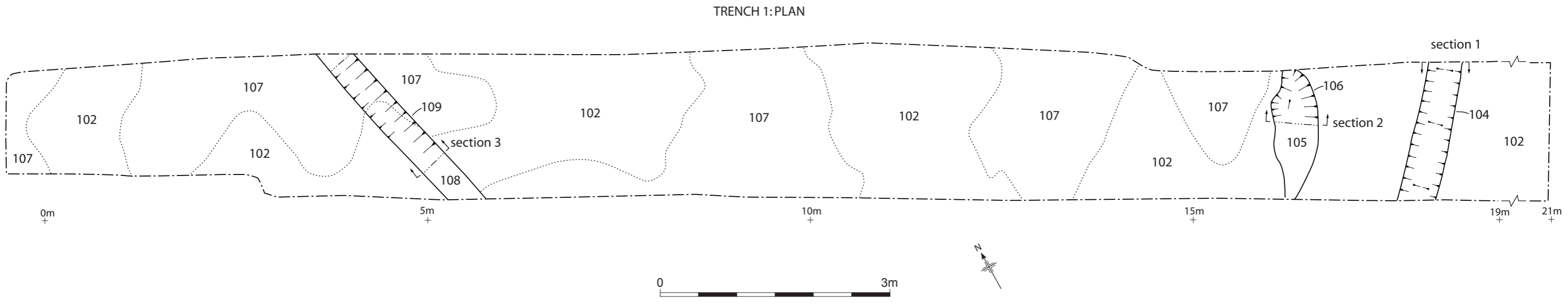
Figure 1



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Trench location plan

Figure 2



Trenches 1 and 2: plans and sections

Figure 3

Plates



Plate 1: General view of site before excavation. (Facing south-east)



Plate 2: General view of Trench 1, gully ditch 104 and tree throw 106 in foreground, 0.50m scale. (Facing west)



Plate 3: Gully ditch 104, section 1, 0.50m scale. (Facing north)



Plate 4: Gully ditch 109, section 3, 0.30m scale. (Facing north-east)



Plate 5: General view of Trench 2, 1m scale. (Facing north)



Plate 6: Furrows 205 and 207, section 4, 1m scale. (Facing west)

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 21.50m Width: 1.65 - 1.80m Depth: 0.34m

Orientation: North-west/south-east

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Loose dark brown clayey loam, occasional small sub-angular gravels and charcoal, frequent modern material. Heavy root action, turfed.	0.00 - 0.15m
101	Subsoil	Friable mid brown silty clay, frequent small sub-rounded gravels, occasional charcoal.	0.15 – 0.28m
102	Natural	Loose sandy gravels with patches of light brown silty clays	0.28m+
103	Ditch/gully fill	Friable mid – dark brown silty clay, occasional small sub-angular gravels, fill of 104. Single iron slag fragment (not retained).	0.28 – 0.56m
104	Ditch/gully cut	NE/SW aligned linear cut, steep sides to gentle concave base, filled by 103.	0.28 – 0.56m
105	Tree throw fill	Firm light greyish brown silty clay, frequent small sub-angular gravels, patches of reddish brown clay, fill of 106.	0.28 – 0.50m
106	Tree throw cut	Semi-circular irregular cut, moderate concave side to east, vertical – undercut side to west, gentle concave base, filled by 105.	0.28 – 0.50m
107	Natural	Compact light greyish blue laminated clay	0.28m+
108	Ditch/gully fill	Friable mid – dark brown silty clay, occasional small sub-angular gravels, fill of 109.	0.28 – 0.43m
109	Ditch/gully cut	N/S aligned linear cut, steep concave side to south-west, moderate concave side to north-east, gentle concave base, filled by 108.	0.28 – 0.43m

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 21.50m Width: 1.45 - 1.80m Depth: 0.33m

Orientation: North-east/south-west

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Loose dark brown clayey loam, occasional small sub-angular gravels and charcoal, frequent modern material. Heavy root action, turffed.	0.00 - 0.13m
201	Subsoil	Friable mid brown silty clay, frequent small sub-rounded gravels, occasional charcoal.	0.13 – 0.30m
202	Natural	Loose sandy gravels with patches of light brown silty clays.	0.30m+
203	Natural	Compact light greyish blue laminated clay.	0.30m+
204	Shallow ditch/furrow fill	Friable mid – dark brown silty clay, frequent small sub-angular gravels, occasional charcoal, fill of 205.	0.31 – 0.52m
205	Shallow ditch/furrow cut	NW/SE aligned linear cut, gentle/moderate concave sides, and gentle/shallow concave base, filled by 204.	0.31 – 0.52m
206	Shallow ditch/furrow fill	Friable dark brown silty clay, frequent small sub-angular gravels, occasional charcoal, fill of 207.	0.31 – 0.59m
207	Shallow ditch/furrow cut	NW/SE aligned linear cut, moderate concave sides, and gentle/shallow concave base, filled by 206.	0.31 – 0.59m