ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT LAND ADJACENT TO BENGEWORTH FIRST SCHOOL, EVESHAM, WORCESTERSHIRE

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Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land adjacent to Bengeworth First School, (NGR SP 0480 4414), Bengeworth, Evesham, Worcestershire, on behalf of Property Services, Worcestershire County Council. The Client intends to construct a school and has submitted a planning application to Worcestershire County Council.

This report on an archaeological evaluation describes and assesses the significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest potentially affected by the application. The impact of the application on the significance is assessed.

Nine trenches were excavated of which five revealed archaeological features. Two areas of prehistoric settlement were identified spanning the Early Bronze Age through to the Iron Age. Bronze Age settlement is characterised by postholes and ditches to the north-east of the site whilst Iron Age activity is apparent in the form of ditches, one of which probably forms part of an enclosure, to the south-west. The evaluation produced only small quantities of artefacts but these were well stratified.

The Bronze Age archaeology excavated on the site is a relatively rare heritage asset and the site has potential for archaeological research. Although the evaluation only identified one feature that can be definitely dated this period, other features in the vicinity of this dateable feature are likely to be contemporary. Although Iron Age settlement is relatively common in the area of the Avon Valley, further identification and excavation of site types can provide valuable information about their form and character.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land adjacent to Bengeworth First School, (NGR SP 0480 4414), Bengeworth, Evesham, Worcestershire (Fig 1), on behalf of Property Services, Worcestershire County Council. The Client intends to construct a school and has submitted a planning application to Worcestershire County Council (reference CC/10/00024).

The proposed development site may affect an historic asset registered on the County Historic Environment Record (WSM 24817).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008) and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (HEAS 2008).

The project also conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (HEAS 2010a) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2010b).

1.3 Aims

The aims of this archaeological evaluation were:

- to establish the presence and significance of archaeological deposits, and of artefactual and ecofactual assemblages. The results should inform the research cycle and should take into account local, regional and national research frameworks and consultation with appropriate specialists

2. Methods

2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER). A desk-based assessment of the site and an area of land to the north and east had been undertaken in 2008 (RPS Planning and Development, 2008, WSM 42092, Fig 1). No further documentary sources were consulted.

2.2 Fieldwork methodology

2.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2010b).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 21 June and 1 July 2010. The site reference number and site code is WSM 42427.

Nine trenches, amounting to just over 930m² in area, were excavated over the site area of *c* 2.33ha, representing a sample of 4% (Plate 1). The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360º tracked

excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. 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.

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 Laura Griffin

2.3.1 Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 4).

2.3.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined and a primary record was made on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A terminus post quem date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on pro forma sheets.

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; and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

2.4 Environmental archaeology methodology, by Alan Clapham

2.4.1 Sampling policy

The environmental sampling strategy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995, appendix 4). Large animal bone was hand-collected during excavation. Samples of up to 30 litres were taken from four contexts (308, 815, 905 and 913), from a linear, a ditch and two scoops/postholes which were of prehistoric date (see Table 4; section 4.3). Animal bone was hand collected from a fifth context 306.

2.4.2 Macrofossil analysis

The samples were processed by flotation using a Siraf tank. The flot was collected on a 300µm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds. Each sample was carefully scrutinised before being put into the flotation tank in order to check for friable remains of prehistoric pottery.

The residues were scanned by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. The flots were scanned using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by the Service, and seed identification manual (Cappers *et al* 2006). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows Stace 1997.

A magnet was also used to test for the presence of hammerscale.

For each of the samples a sub-sample of 1 litre was processed by the wash-over technique as follows. The sub-sample was broken up in a bowl of water to separate the light organic

remains from the mineral fraction and heavier reside. The water, with the light organic faction was decanted onto a 300mμ sieve and the residue washed through a 1mm sieve. The remainder of the bulk sample was retained for further analysis.

The samples were processed by flotation followed by wet sieving using a Siraf tank. The flot was collected on a 300μm sieve and the residue sorted on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residues were fully sorted by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. The flots were fully sorted using a low power EMT light microscope and remains identified using modern reference specimens housed at the Service.

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

A desk-based assessment was carried out in 2008 (RPS Planning and Development 2008) and only a brief synthesis of the data from this and the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record will be included here.

The site consists of part of a field currently left fallow (Fig 1). The site is bounded by a track in the east and a fence and hedge in the west. In the south the boundary is a road beyond which lies a housing estate. There is no boundary at the north end of the site. The site slopes down from the east to the south-west from about 40m and 35m O.D.

The drift geology is mainly alluvium and River Terrace Deposits (Wasperton sand and gravels). These deposits were seen to be thicker in the south of the site with a depth of about 1m. In places in the north and east of the site the sand and gravels were only about 0.25m thick. The solid geology consists of blue lias formation and Charmouth mudstones (British Geological Survey 2010). The soils are of the Evesham 2 Series (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

A slate archer's wrist guard dating from the Bronze Age site was recovered from a gravel or sand pit about 30m from the south-western corner of the site (WSM 24817; Fig 1). Cropmarks, identified from aerial photographs, lie just to the east of the site (WSM 26950; Fig 1). Although the cropmarks are undated it is possible that they date from the prehistoric or Roman period. The gravel terraces of the Avon were conducive to settlement in the prehistoric and Roman periods. About 800 metres to the south of the site, an evaluation at Durcott Lodge uncovered an archaeological site which was continuously occupied from the Bronze Age to the 12th century (WSM 30785). Across the river, along the High Street in Evesham, a concentration of activity has been interpreted as an Iron Age settlement with some activity from the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (WSM 26358 and WSM 27191. Further south at Abbey Road a Bronze Age unenclosed settlement has recently been identified (WSM 37561).

During the medieval period the site was under the jurisdiction of Evesham Abbey (RPS Planning and Development 2008). It would seem probable that during this period the land would have been utilised for agricultural purposes.

The 1886 Ordnance Survey First Edition map shows the site within two parcels of land though what was grown on the fields is not depicted. By the time of the 1904 Ordnance Survey map the northern part of the site had become an orchard (RPS Planning and Development 2008).

4. Results

4.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig 3-10. Trenches 4 and 5 contained no significant archaeological features or deposits. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

4.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural deposits consisted of orange sands and gravels. In the south of the site these were up to 1m thick but in places in the north and east of the site the sand and gravels were only about 0.25m thick. Underneath the gravels were beige clays and sands and these deposits were visible directly underneath the topsoil in parts of the northern and eastern trenches. In the southern part of the Trench 2 an area of brownish orange sandy silt overlying the clays and sands was interpreted as alluvium.

4.1.2 Phase 2: Early Prehistoric

Six flint flakes were recovered from the site. One was residual in topsoil 200 and another was unstratified. Three of the flint flakes were excavated from features which contained other dateable finds (see below contexts 904 and 906).

Trench 8 (figs 7 and 9)

A shallow ditch or possible furrow (context 808) contained one flint flake but no other finds.

4.1.3 Phase 3: Bronze Age deposits

Trench 9 (figs 8 and 10)

The fill of a shallow scoop or posthole (context 906) produced fragments of pottery which date from the Early Bronze Age (Plate 2). Two worked flints were also present in the fill. This feature was part of a group of 6 postholes/scoops (contexts 906, 908, 910, 912, 914 and 916) with similar fills. Two further post holes were excavated (contexts 910 and 914) and no finds were recovered but it is probable that the group dates from the Early Bronze Age.

A ditch (context 904) seen to the north-west of the postholes/scoops could be associated with these features as the fill (context 903) contained a prehistoric worked flint (Plate 2). However, the fill also contained one sherd of late 3rd – 4th century pottery. It is possible this pottery was intrusive from the layer above (context 901) as it was recovered from the very top of the fill during stripping by the excavator.

4.1.4 Phase 4: Iron Age deposits

Trench 3 (figs 4 and 9)

A substantial ditch (context 307) contained 3 fills (contexts 305, 306 and 308; Plate 3 and 4). Fill (context 306) produced pottery dating from the Middle Iron Age period. The ditch had a V shaped profile and was over 1.3m deep.

Feature 304, a fairly substantial ditch which was 0.75m deep, was undated but had a similar V shaped profile to a ditch 307 to the east (Plate 5) and I likely to be contemporary.

Trench 2 (Fig 3)

The continuation of the ditch excavated in Trench 3 (context 307) was seen in Trench 2 (context 206; Plate 4). This part of the ditch was not excavated.

4.1.5 Phase 5: Roman deposits

Trench 9 (Fig. 10)

A cultivation horizon (context 901) seen below the topsoil in the eastern end of the trench contained Roman pottery. This deposit was up to 0.3m deep at the eastern end of the trench. A ditch (context 904) sealed by this layer produced pottery from the 3rd – 4th century but it is likely this is an earlier ditch and the pottery was intrusive from context 904 (see above).

4.1.6 **Phase 6: Medieval and post medieval deposits**

Trench 8 (Fig 7)

A plough furrow (context 804) contained 1 sherd of medieval pottery.

Trench 2 (figs 3 and 8)

In the centre of the trench a shallow linear feature (context 204) is possibly a ditch though it cannot be discounted that this was a furrow.

Trench 6 (figs 5 and 9)

A shallow linear feature (context 606) excavated in Trench 1 was interpreted as a furrow.

Trench 7 (fig 6)

Context 708, although unexcavated was identified as a furrow.

Trench 8 (figs 7 and 9)

Two furrows were identified in this trench, contexts 810 and 812.

Trench 9 (figs 8 and 10)

Two shallow linear features were interpreted as furrows in this trench (contexts 922 and 924).

All of the trenches contained a topsoil (contexts 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800 and 900) which were dated to the late post-medieval period. In all of the trenches, apart from Trench 9, a layer was identified between the topsoil and natural (contexts 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, 601, 701 and 801). This was interpreted as the interface between the natural and topsoil.

4.1.7 **Undated deposits**

Trench 1 (not illustrated)

A shallow linear feature (context 104) excavated in Trench 1 was probably a furrow.

Trench 6 (figs 5 and 9)

A shallow irregular feature (context 604) was a natural hollow or tree bole.

Trench 7 (fig 6)

Feature 704 was probably a ditch. A sub-circular feature (context 706) was interpreted as a tree bole.

Trench 8 (figs 7 and 9)

A ditch (context 806) and a shallow undated posthole (context 814) were excavated in this trench (Plate 6).

Trench 9 (figs 8 and 10)

Two shallow linear features were interpreted as ditches (contexts 918 and 920).

4.2 Artefact analysis, by Laura Griffin

Artefacts from environmental samples were examined and are included both in the discussion and in the Table 1 quantification.

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 and 3. The assemblage retrieved from the excavated area consisted of 128 finds weighing 587g, with pottery forming

the largest group amounting to 99 sherds. The material came from 10 stratified contexts and the site surface and could be dated from the prehistoric period onwards (see Table 1). Level of preservation was variable with some pottery being extremely friable but other finds displaying only light abrasion.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	Total	Weight(g)
Prehistoric	stone	flint	flake	6	27
Bronze Age	ceramic	earthenware	pot	10	13
Middle Iron Age	ceramic	earthenware	pot	79	244
Iron Age	stone		pot-boiler	1	45
Iron Age/Roman	ceramic	fired clay	?oven or daub	5	9
Roman	ceramic	earthenware	pot	3	53
Roman	ceramic	fired clay	?tile	3	20
?Roman	ceramic	fired clay		1	2
?Roman	metal	iron	nail	2	6
?Roman	slag	fuel ash slag		4	21
Medieval	ceramic	earthenware	tile	2	14
Medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	58
Medieval	ceramic	fired clay	tile	1	33
Post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	brick/tile	2	4
Post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	clay pipe	1	1
Post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	2	18
Post-medieval	ceramic	stoneware	pot	1	4
Modern	glass		vessel	2	5
Modern	ceramic	earthenware	pot	3	3
Undated	stone	sandstone		1	6

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

4.2.1 The pottery

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (Table 2). Three diagnostic form sherds were present and could be dated accordingly, the remaining sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span.

Bronze Age

The earliest pottery from the site consisted of 10 small fragments of a soft, variably fired fabric which contained grog and well-rounded sand (context 905). The exterior of some of these fragments appeared to have faint traces of impressed decoration in the form of small squares. Although the sherds are undiagnostic too small to firmly identify as being of a specific fabric type, the presence of grog and quartz inclusions would strongly indicate them to be of Early Bronze Age date (Robin Jackson pers comm.).

Iron Age

The largest group of sherds were all retrieved from context 306 and would appear to come from a single vessel of handmade Malvernian fabric (fabric 3). A single, small fragment of rim indicates the vessel to have been of globular cooking pot form with inturned rim and datable to the Middle Iron Age, a type commonly associated with this period (Jane Evans pers comm.). In addition, five small fragments of briquetage (fabric 2) were also retrieved from this context.

Roman

Roman pottery amounted to three sherds of locally produced Severn Valley ware (fabric 12). One of these was identifiable as coming from the rim of a wide-mouthed jar dating between the late 3rd and 4th centuries (Webster 1976; context 903). The remaining sherds were both bases which appeared to have been deliberately chipped from their respective vessels, presumably to fulfil a different function (context 901). Both seem too large to have been gaming counters, but it is possible that they may have been used as lids for other vessels.

Medieval

Pottery of medieval date consisted of a single rim sherd from an oxidised glazed Malvernian ware jug, which could be dated to the 13th-14th century (fabric 69; context 803). This sherd was very highly abraded with no glaze surviving. Vessels of this fabric type are commonly identified in the Evesham area, being one of the most widely traded local fabric types in the region.

Post-medieval - modern

Remaining sherds were of post-medieval and modern date. All were of domestic pottery types commonly found on sites in Worcestershire dating from the 18th century onwards.

period	fabric code	Fabric common name	Total	Weight(g)
Bronze Age	97	Miscellaneous prehistoric pottery	10	13
Iron Age	2	Organic briquetage	5	9
Middle Iron Age	3	Malvernian ware	79	244
Roman	12	Severn Valley ware	3	53
Medieval	69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	1	58
Post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red wares	1	7
Post-medieval	81.5	White salt-glazed stoneware	1	4
Post-medieval	91	Post-medieval buff wares	1	11
Modern	101	Miscellaneous modern wares	3	3

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by period and fabric-type

4.2.2 Other artefacts

The earliest material from the site consisted of six worked flint flakes, one of which also displayed retouch (contexts 200, 807, 903, 905 and unstratified).

Other stone from the site consisted of a single heat-cracked pot-boiler found alongside the Iron Age pottery within context 306. Such stones are common on sites of Iron Age-early Roman date and thought to be associated with the heating of water and foodstuffs. A further find of Iron Age date from context 306 was a large piece of fired clay, thought to be a highly abraded loomweight

Non-pottery finds of Roman date consisted of two iron objects, one of which could be identified as a nail (context 901)

All remaining datable finds were of the medieval period onwards and consisted of roofing tile, green bottle glass and a clay pipe stem (see Table 3).

In addition, four fragments of compressed ash and charcoal were retrieved from the topsoil of trench 4 (context 400) and are undatable but most likely to be of post-medieval date or later.

4.2.3 Overview of artefactual evidence

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	Weight (g)	start date	end date	period	Context TPQ
0	stone	flint	flake	1	16	0	0	prehistoric	
0	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	7	1700	1800	post-medieval	
100	ceramic		tile	2	14	0	0	medieval	
100	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	1	1800	2000	modern	
100	stone	sandstone		1	6	0	0		
200	stone	flint	flake	1	3	0	0	prehistoric	
200	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	1	1800	2000	modern	
306	ceramic	earthenware	pot	27	55	-500	-100	Middle Iron Age	(Middle) Iron Age
306	ceramic	fired clay	?loomweight	3	20	43	400	Iron Age	
306	ceramic	earthenware	?briquetage	5	9	0	0	Iron Age	
306	ceramic	earthenware	pot	12	57	-500	-100	Middle Iron Age	
306	stone		pot-boiler	1	45	0	0	Iron Age	
306	ceramic	earthenware	pot	40	132	-500	-100	Middle Iron Age	
400	Industrial waste	Compressed ash		4	21	0	0	undated	
500	ceramic	stoneware	pot	1	4	1720	1770	post-medieval	
500	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	11	1700	1800	post-medieval	
500	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	1	1800	2000	modern	
500	glass		vessel	2	5	1800	2000	modern	
500	ceramic		clay pipe	1	1	0	0	post-medieval	
500	ceramic	earthenware	brick/tile	2	4	0	0	post-medieval	
500	ceramic	fired clay		1	2	0	0	?Roman	
803	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	58	1200	1399	medieval	13th-14th century
807	stone	flint		1	4	0	0	prehistoric	
900	ceramic		tile	1	33	0	0	medieval	
901	ceramic	earthenware	pot	2	22	43	400	Roman	Roman (mid 1st-4th century)
901	metal	iron	nail	2	6	0		?Roman	
903	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	31	275	400	Roman	Late 3rd-4th century
903	stone	flint		1	1	0	0	prehistoric	
905	stone	flint	flake	1	3	0	0	prehistoric	Early Bronze Age (2600-1600 BC)
905	ceramic	earthenware	pot	10	13	0	0	Bronze Age	
905	stone	flint	flake	1	1	0	0	prehistoric	

Table 3 Summary of context dating based on artefacts

4.2.4 Synthesis

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

Early Prehistoric

Six fragments of worked flint were identified, one with retouch (unstratified). Unfortunately, none were diagnostic enough to be dated more closely than to the general prehistoric period, although that from context 905 was found alongside the Bronze Age pottery discussed below.

Bronze Age

The pottery identified as being of early Bronze Age date was retrieved from a posthole (context 905). No other material within the assemblage could be confirmed as being of this date, although evidence for other Bronze Age activity has been found in the general vicinity of the site (RPS Planning and Development, 2008).

Iron Age

Ditch fill 306 could be firmly dated to the Iron Age by the finds retrieved from it. These included sherds from the Malvernian cooking pot and fragments of briquetage described above, as well as the highly abraded loomweight. The form of the cooking pot vessel indicates it to be Middle Iron Age and although the other finds cannot be dated so closely, there is nothing to suggest that they are later than this.

Iron Age settlement and associated material is well documented in this area, for instance at 93-97 High Street (Edwards and Hurst 2000) and also at nearby Beckford (Jane Evans pers comm).

Roman

A small amount of material from the site was identified as dating to the Roman period, with context 901 having a Roman *terminus post quem* and ditch fill context 903 being dated to between the late 3rd-4th centuries.

Medieval

The single sherd of medieval pottery from the site came from a furrow and provided a date of 13th-14th century for this feature (context 803).

Post-medieval

All material of post-medieval date was from the topsoil of Trench 5 (context 500) or the site surface and therefore provided no direct dating evidence for the site.

Modern

As with the post-medieval finds, all modern material came from the topsoil of the site (contexts 100, 200, 500 and 900).

Undated

The compressed ash and charcoal fragments from context 400 could not be dated to a specific period but are most likely post-medieval or later.

4.2.5 Significance

Overall, this is clearly a sequence of well-stratified deposits with remains stretching back to c.2000-1600BC, showing the area to have been long the focus of activity.

4.3 Environmental analysis, by Alan Clapham

Context	Sample	Feature type	Fill of	Position of fill	Res assessed	Flot assessed
308	1	linear	307	primary	Yes	Yes
815	2	ditch	806	primary	Yes	Yes
913	3	scoop/posthole	914	primary	Yes	Yes
905	4	Scoop/posthole	906	primary	Yes	Yes

Table 4 Samples from Bengeworth School, Evesham (WSM 42427) processed and evaluated

4.3.1 Hand-retrieved material

The only material retrieved by hand was that of large mammal bone. Very little bone was recovered and it was very fragmented therefore identification to species may be difficult. Teeth from context 306 were recovered and appear to be sheep/goat. The total number of bone fragments was 104g consisting of 39 fragments. See Table 5 for a summary of the environmental remains.

Context	Sample	large mammal	mollusc	charcoal	Comment
306		occ inc teeth			33 bone fragments wt = 60g
308	1	occ	occ		6 bone fragments wt = 44g
815	2			occ	occ pottery
905	4			occ	occ flint flake
913	3			occ-mod	mostly oak charcoal

Table 5 Summary of remains recovered from the sample residues from Bengeworth School, Evesham (WSM 42427)

4.3.2 Wet-sieved samples

Very little in the way of charred plant remains were recovered from this site (Table 6). A single wheat grain (*Triticum* sp) was identified from context 815. Context 913 contained a moderate amount of charcoal which was very fragmented. The majority consisted of oak (*Quercus* sp).

Latin name	Family	Common name	Habitat	815
Charred				
Triticum sp grain	Poaceae	wheat	F	1

Table6 Charred plant remains recovered from the flots from Bengeworth First School, Evesham (WSM 42427)

Habitat
A= cultivated ground
B= disturbed ground
C= woodlands, hedgerows, scrub etc
D = grasslands, meadows and heathland
E = aquatic/wet habitats
F = cultivar

Key to Table 3

4.3.3 Overview of environmental evidence

Due to the lack of plant remains from this site it can be suggested that the wheat grain represents a background flora and the charcoal from context 913 may be the remains of a post.

5. Synthesis

5.1 Early Prehistoric

The site has produced evidence of prehistoric activity dating from at least the Bronze Age. The flint flakes excavated could date from an earlier period but none were diagnostic enough to be dated more closely than to the general prehistoric period. However, two flakes from feature 906 were found alongside Bronze Age pottery.

5.2 Bronze Age

Bronze Age activity was concentrated in the north-east of the site in the south-eastern end of Trench 9 (Fig 2). Although only one posthole or scoop (context 906) produced dating evidence from the Bronze Age it is likely that the associated postholes or scoops date from this period too. One of the postholes produced charcoal which could be the remains of a post (context 913). A ditch (context 904) situated close to these features may also be contemporary as a flint flake was recovered from the fill. One sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the very top of the fill of ditch 904 whilst machining but this is thought to have been intrusive from the layer above.

It is possible that other ditches situated in trenches 9, 7 and 8 are of a Bronze Age date and are associated. Indeed, one ditch (context 808) in Trench 7 produced a flint flake which could date from this period.

5.3 Iron Age

Iron Age activity was concentrated in the south-western part of the site (Fig 2). A fairly substantial V shaped ditch ran across two trenches and was aligned north-east to south-west (contexts 206 and 307). The fill of ditch 307 produced quantities of Middle Iron Age pottery and a possible loom weight. This ditch probably formed one arm of an enclosure ditch. The ditch did not continue into Trench 5 so therefore would have turned either north-east or south-west if it was part of an enclosure ditch. As a similar sized ditch was not picked up in Trench 1 or in the other parts of trenches 2 and 3 it would seem likely that the rest of the enclosure is situated to the east of Trench 3 and the west of Trench 4. If this ditch does represent an enclosure then the other two ditches in trenches 2 and 3 are probably contemporary and presumably represent external ditches associated with the enclosure.

5.4 Roman

Although one ditch (context 903) produced one sherd of Roman pottery it is likely that this was intrusive (see discussion above in section 5.2). The layer above this ditch in Trench 9 could possibly be the remains of a Roman cultivation horizon (context 701).

5.5 Medieval

One sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the site and this was from a plough furrow in Trench 8 (context 804). Although this is not conclusive evidence that this feature dates from the medieval period it would seem likely that this furrow and perhaps the others on the site had their origins in this period.

5.6 Post-medieval

There were several features that were identified as tree boles which could date from when part of the site was an orchard in the post-medieval period.

5.7 Research frameworks

The results of the fieldwork can be discussed in the broader framework of the river valleys and aggregates survey (Jackson and Dalwood 2007; section 22.3.3-22.3.4). The Bronze Age and Iron Age remains add to the development of a regional narrative for these periods in the Avon Valley and help establish a reliable basis for site interpretation. The West Midlands Research Framework has identified that research in the Early Bronze Age has focussed on funerary and ceremonial monuments and settlement sites have been less well studied (Halsted 2007). The results of the fieldwork add to our understanding of settlement within the West Midlands during this period.

6. Significance

6.1 Significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest

The aim of an archaeological evaluation is to provide the client and the planning authority (and its advisors) with sufficient information to assess the significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest, in line with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010: Policy HE6). More detailed guidance on assessing the significance of site with archaeological interest is set out in the associated *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide,* which advises that an on-site evaluation should establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological interest in order to provide sufficient evidence for confident prediction of the impact of the proposal (DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010: Section 5, Development Management).

6.2 Assessment of significance

The on-site evaluation has provided new evidence on a site with archaeological interest. As a result, an assessment of the significance of this site can be made in terms of the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological interest.

Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

The evaluation has led to the identification of a hitherto unknown heritage asset of an archaeological settlement site. The archaeological activity spans the Early Bronze Age through to the Iron Age. Bronze Age activity is characterised by postholes and ditches and Iron Age activity by ditches. Each has a different area for the focus of settlement. The evaluation produced only small quantities of artefacts but these were well stratified. The environmental evidence was sparse with no plant remains present.

Relative importance of the archaeological interest in the site

The Bronze Age archaeology excavated on the site is a relatively rare heritage asset and the site has potential for archaeological research. However, the evaluation only identified one feature that can be definitely dated this period though other features in the vicinity of this dateable feature are likely to be associated with it. Iron Age activity is more common in the area of the Avon Valley though further identification and excavation of these types of site can strengthen the research framework.

Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site

There are two areas of archaeological features within the application area, in the north-east and in the south-west (Fig 2). Within each of these areas the features were not extensive. However, this is not inconsistent with settlement sites of these periods. It is likely that further features exist beyond these areas. The features excavated were cutting the natural between 0.30-0.60m below the ground surface. All of the features have been truncated to some extent by later cultivation though features survive to a depth of 1.75m below the ground surface.

6.3 Assessment of the impact of the proposal

The on-site evaluation, and the information provided by the Client, allows an assessment to be made of the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeological interest in the site. It is believed that the school buildings are to be situated in the southern part of the site and the northern part is where the playing fields are to be sited. Any site strip, foundation excavations and service excavations down to or below the natural deposits in the areas of archaeological interest would have a detrimental affect on the archaeological resource.

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 at land adjacent to Bengeworth First School, (NGR SP 0480 4414), Bengeworth, Evesham, Worcestershire, on behalf of Property Services, Worcestershire County Council. The Client intends to construct a school and has submitted a planning application to Worcestershire County Council.

This report on an archaeological evaluation describes and assesses the significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest potentially affected by the application. The impact of the application on the significance is assessed.

Nine trenches were excavated of which five revealed archaeological features. Two areas of prehistoric settlement were identified spanning the Early Bronze Age through to the Iron Age. Bronze Age settlement is characterised by postholes and ditches to the north-east of the site whilst Iron Age activity is apparent in the form of ditches, one of which probably forms part of an enclosure, to the south-west. The evaluation produced only small quantities of artefacts but these were well stratified.

The Bronze Age archaeology excavated on the site is a relatively rare heritage asset and the site has potential for archaeological research. Although the evaluation only identified one feature that can be definitely dated this period, other features in the vicinity of this dateable feature are likely to be contemporary. Although Iron Age settlement is relatively common in the area of the Avon Valley, further identification and excavation of site types can provide valuable information about their form and character.

8. Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Wyn Jenkins and John Vaughan (Property Services Worcestershire county Council), and Mike Glyde (Historic Environment Planning Officer, Worcestershire County Council).

9. Personnel

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Jo Wainwright. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers. Fieldwork was undertaken by Jo Wainwright and Elizabeth Curran, finds analysis by Laura Griffin, environmental analysis by Alan Clapham and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

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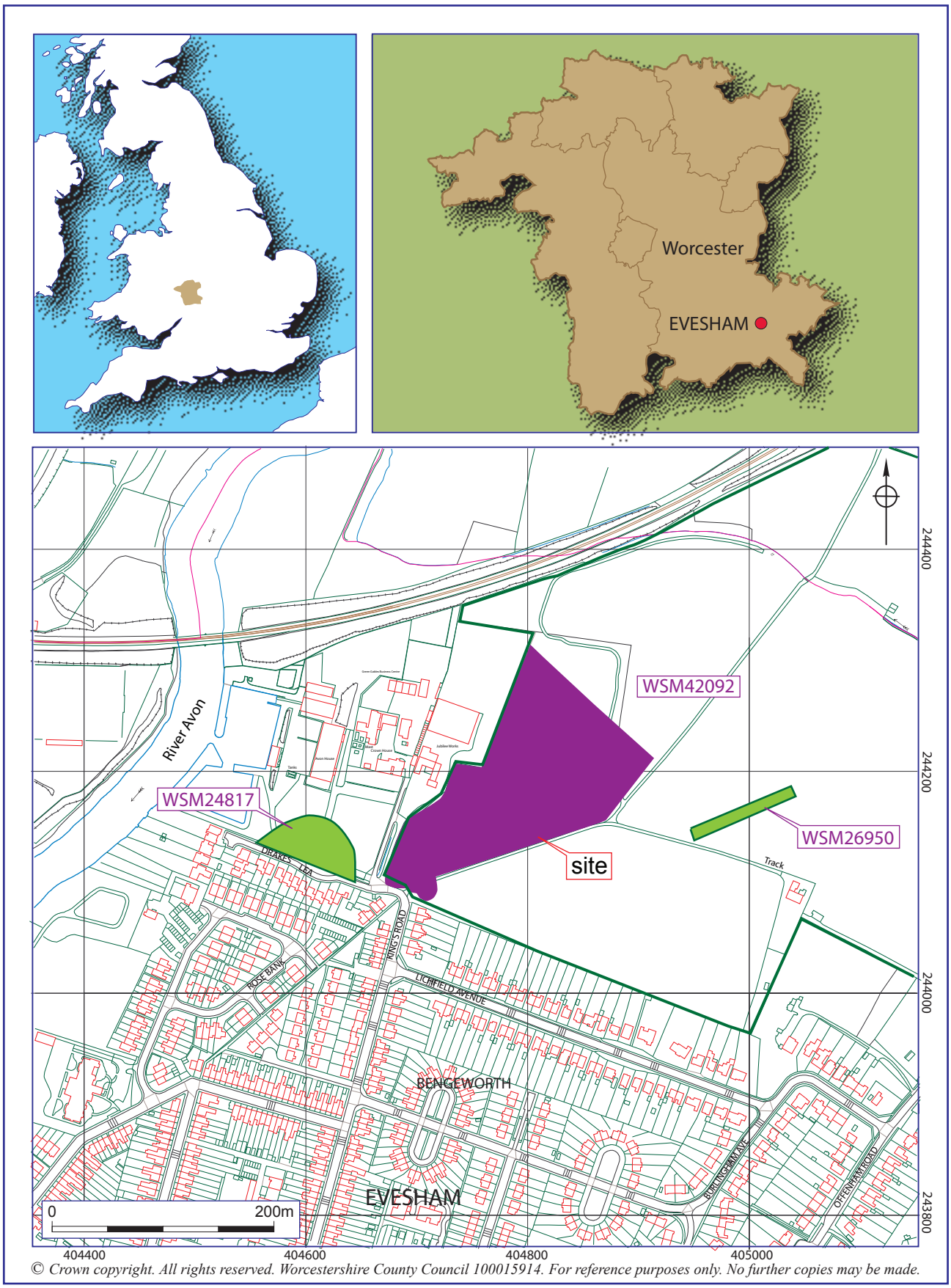
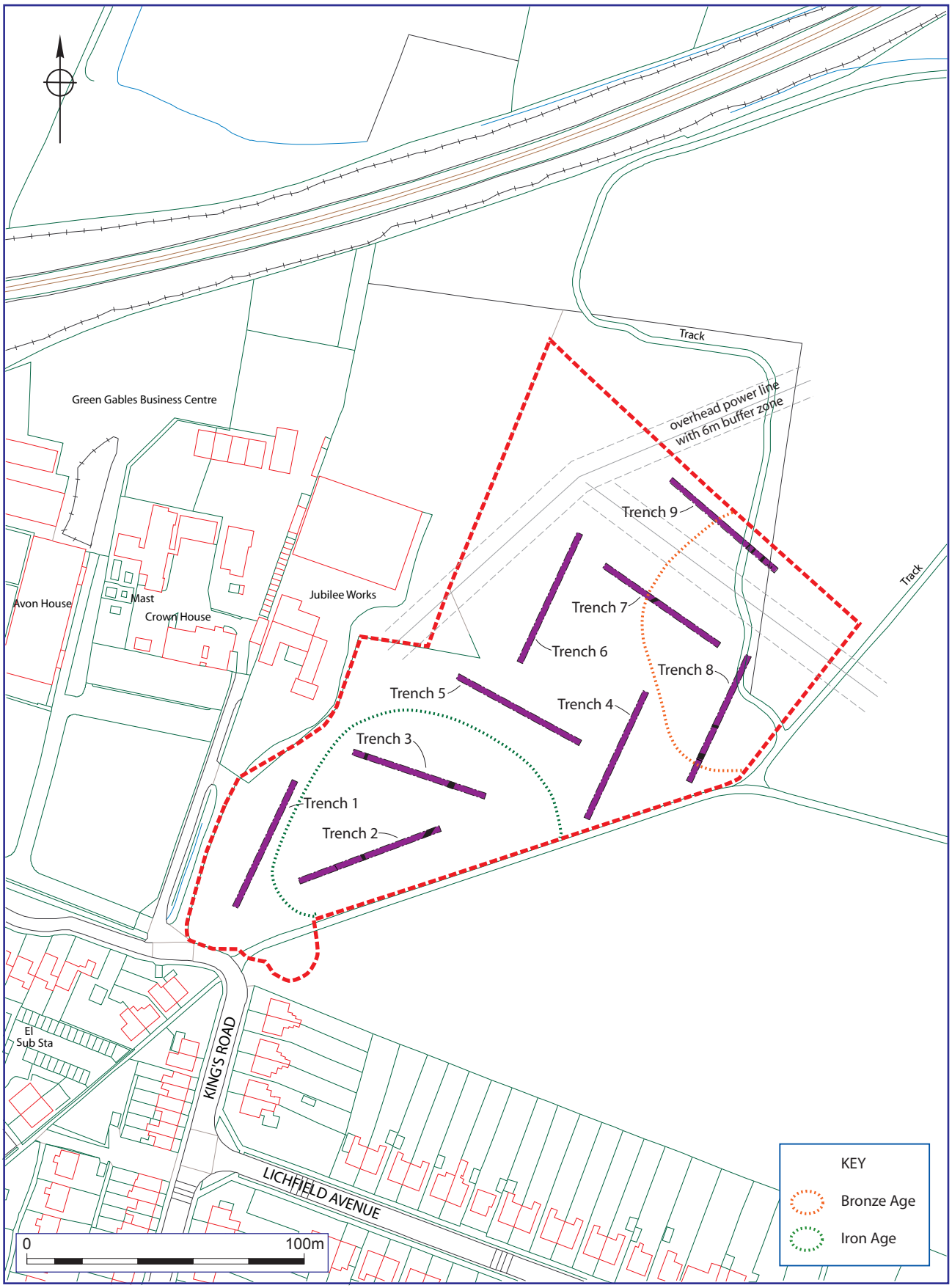
Figures

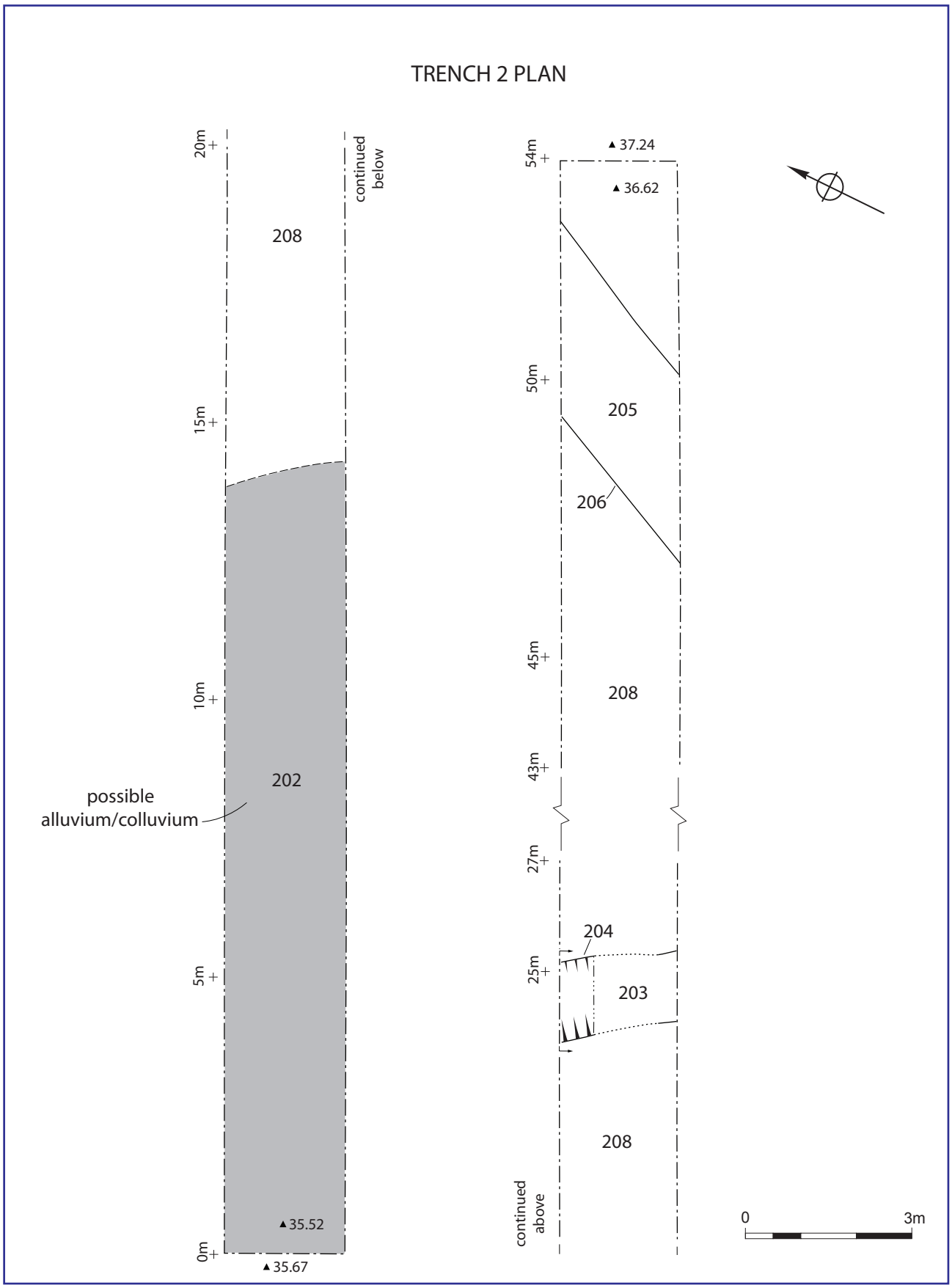


Location of the site and HER numbers referred to in text *Figure 1*

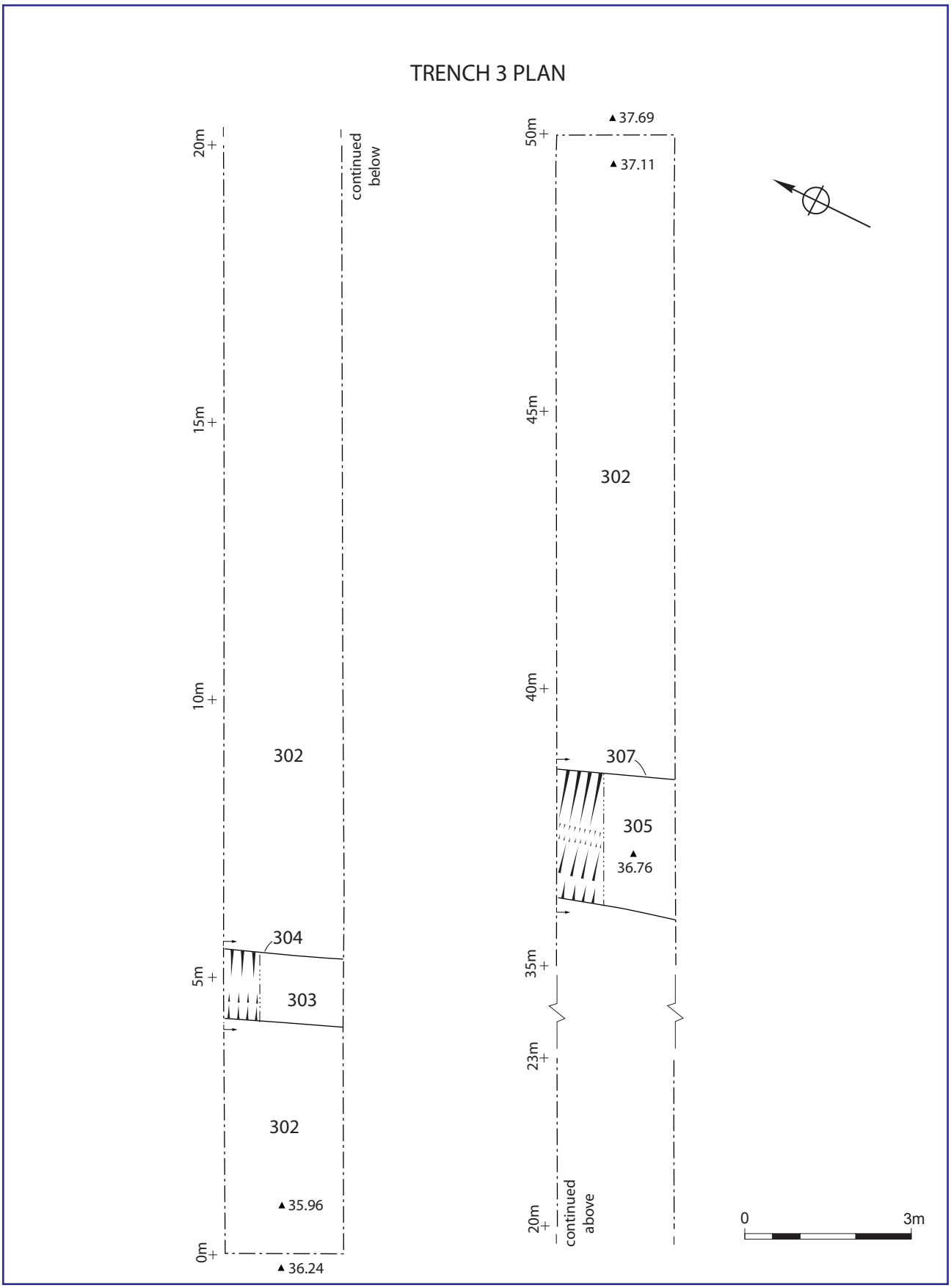


Trench location plan showing significant archaeological features and possible area of Bronze Age and Iron Age activity

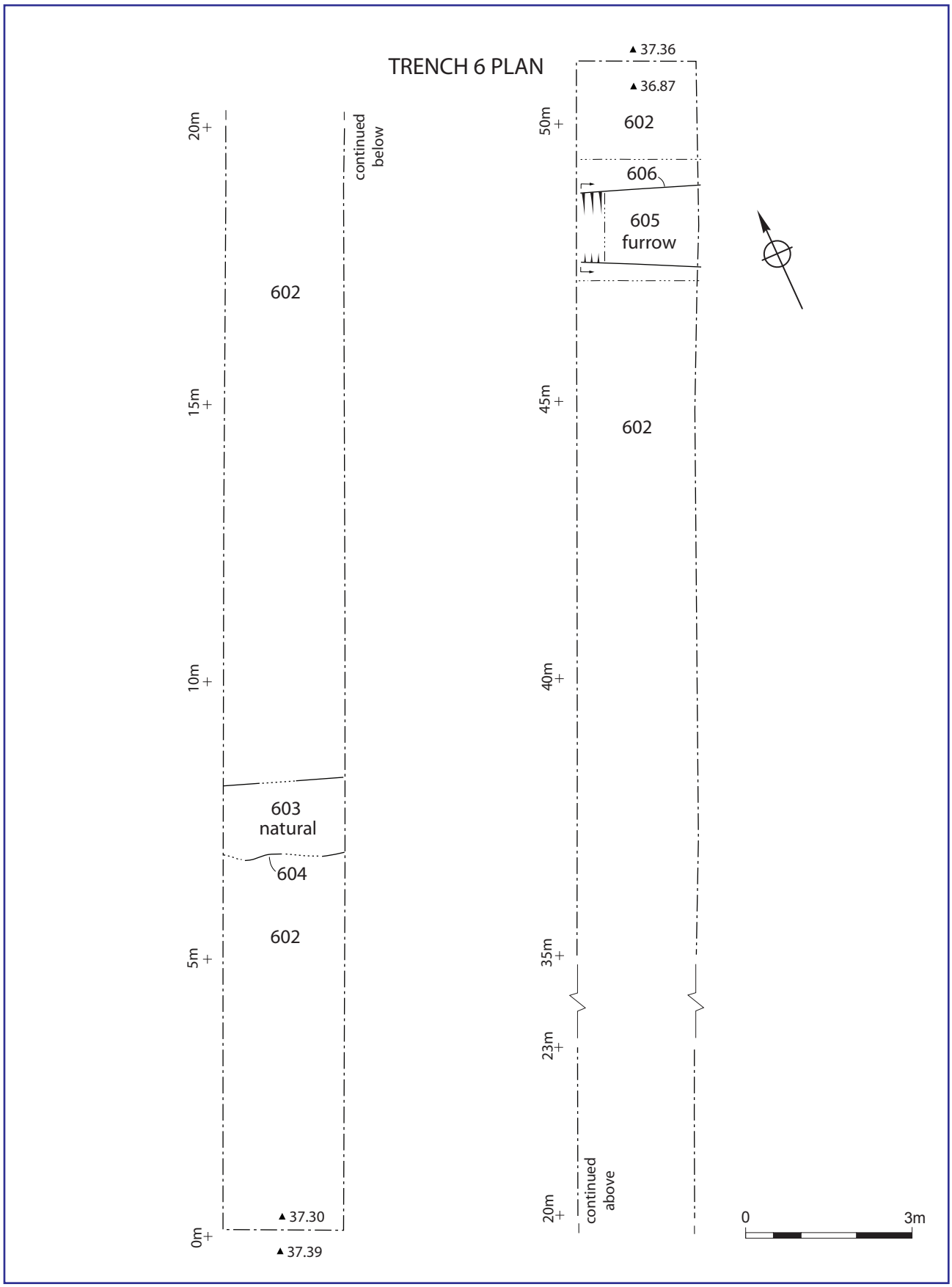
Figure 2



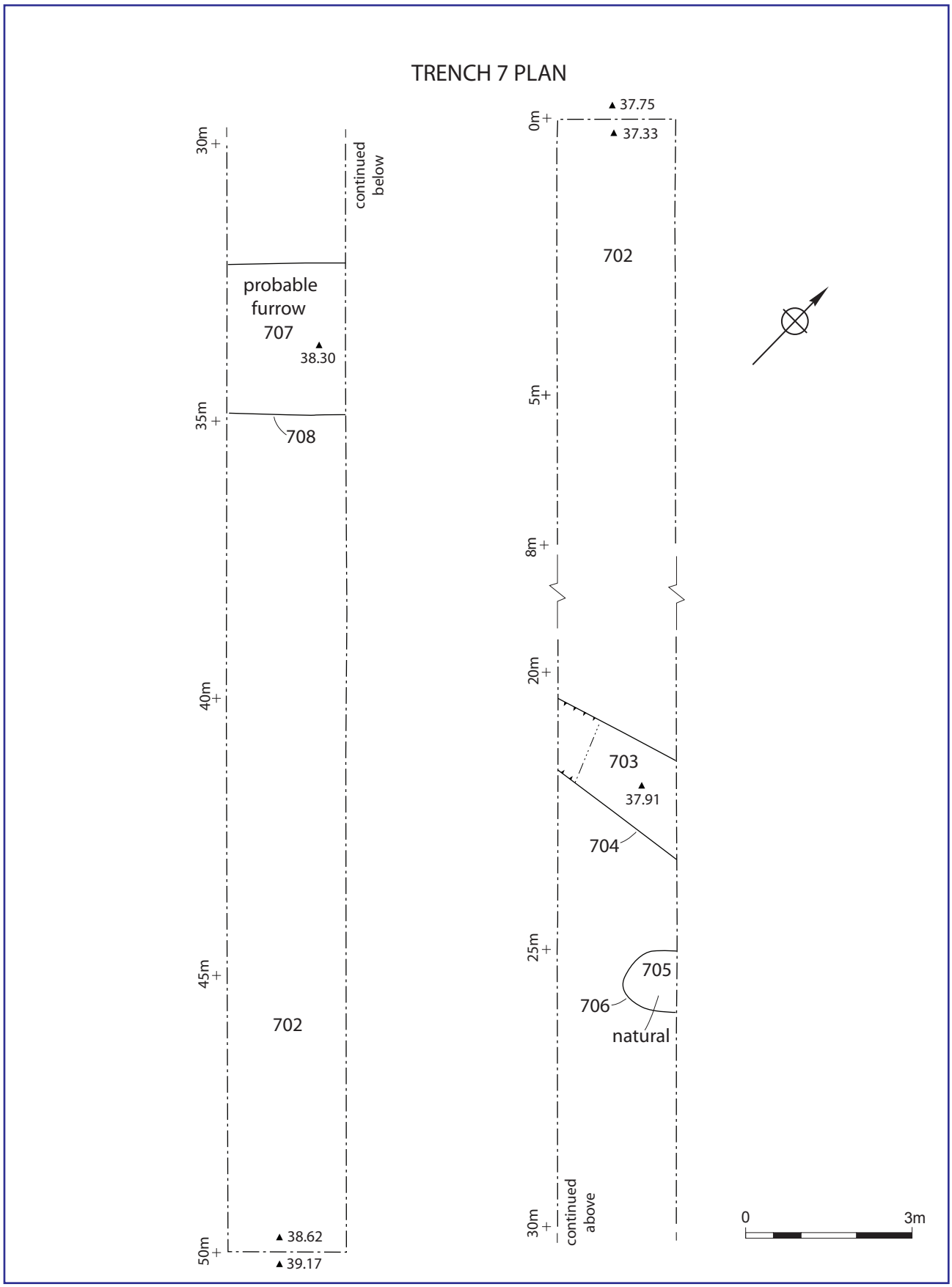
Trench 2 plan *Figure 3*



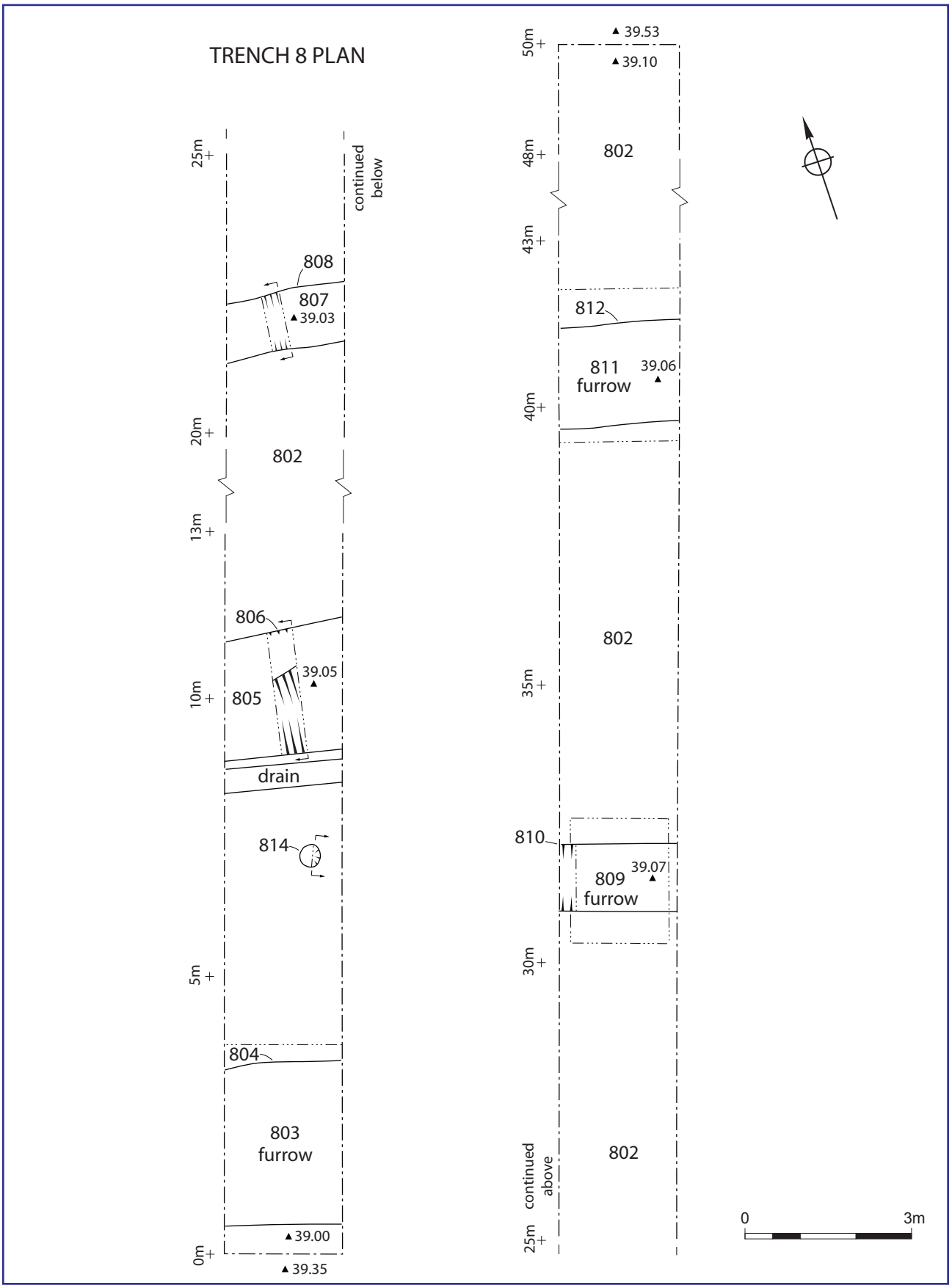
Trench 3 plan *Figure 4*



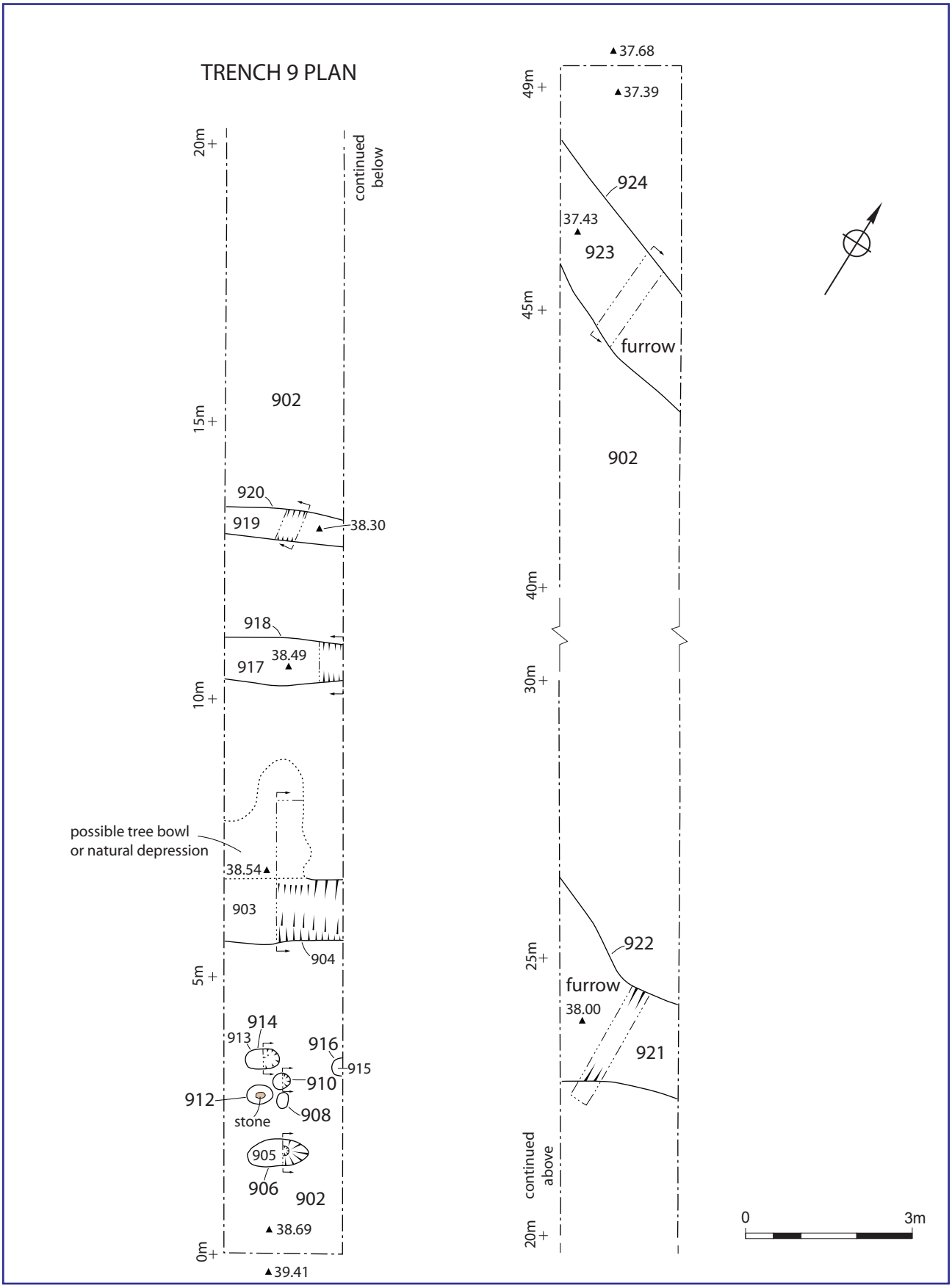
Trench 6 plan *Figure 5*



Trench 7 plan *Figure 6*

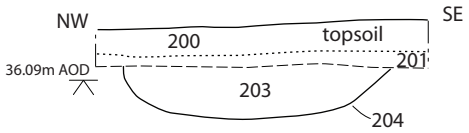


Trench 8 plan *Figure 7*

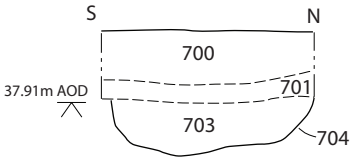


Trench 9 plan *Figure 8*

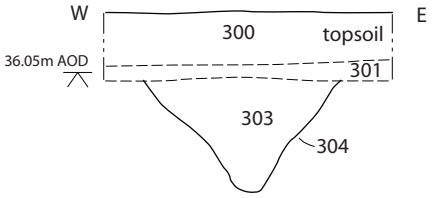
SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION OF 204



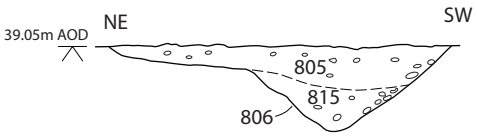
EAST FACING SECTION OF 704



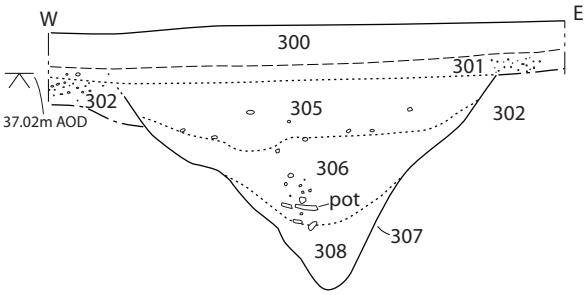
SOUTH FACING SECTION OF 304



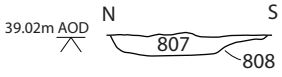
NORTH-WEST FACING SECTION OF DITCH 806



SOUTH FACING SECTION OF 307



NORTH-WEST FACING SECTION OF 808



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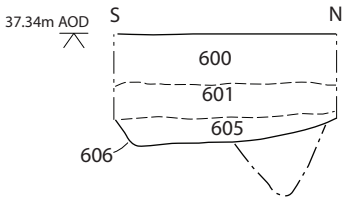
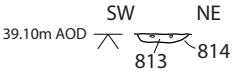


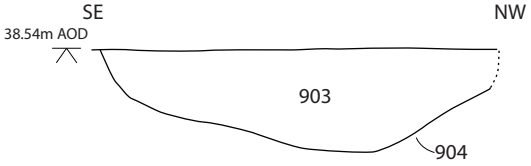
SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION OF 814



Sections

Figure 9

NORTH-EAST FACING SECTION OF 904



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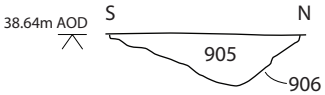

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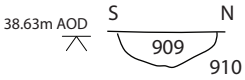

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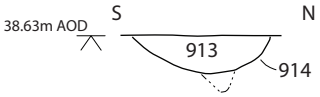
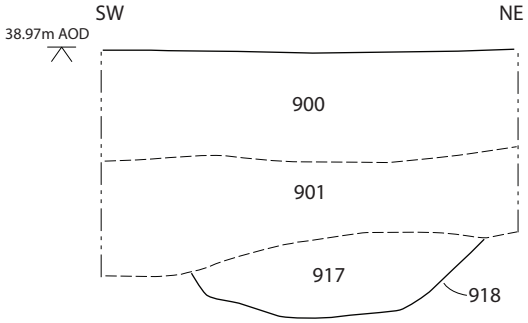
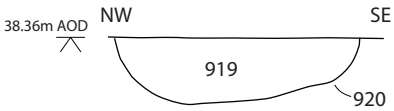


SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION OF DITCH 918



SOUTH-WEST FACING SECTION OF 920



WEST FACING SECTION OF FURROW 924

Trench 9 sections

Figure 10

Plates

Plate 1 The south-western part of the site from the south

Plate 2 Trench 9, postholes/scoops in south-eastern part of trench with ditch 904 in background, view from the south-east

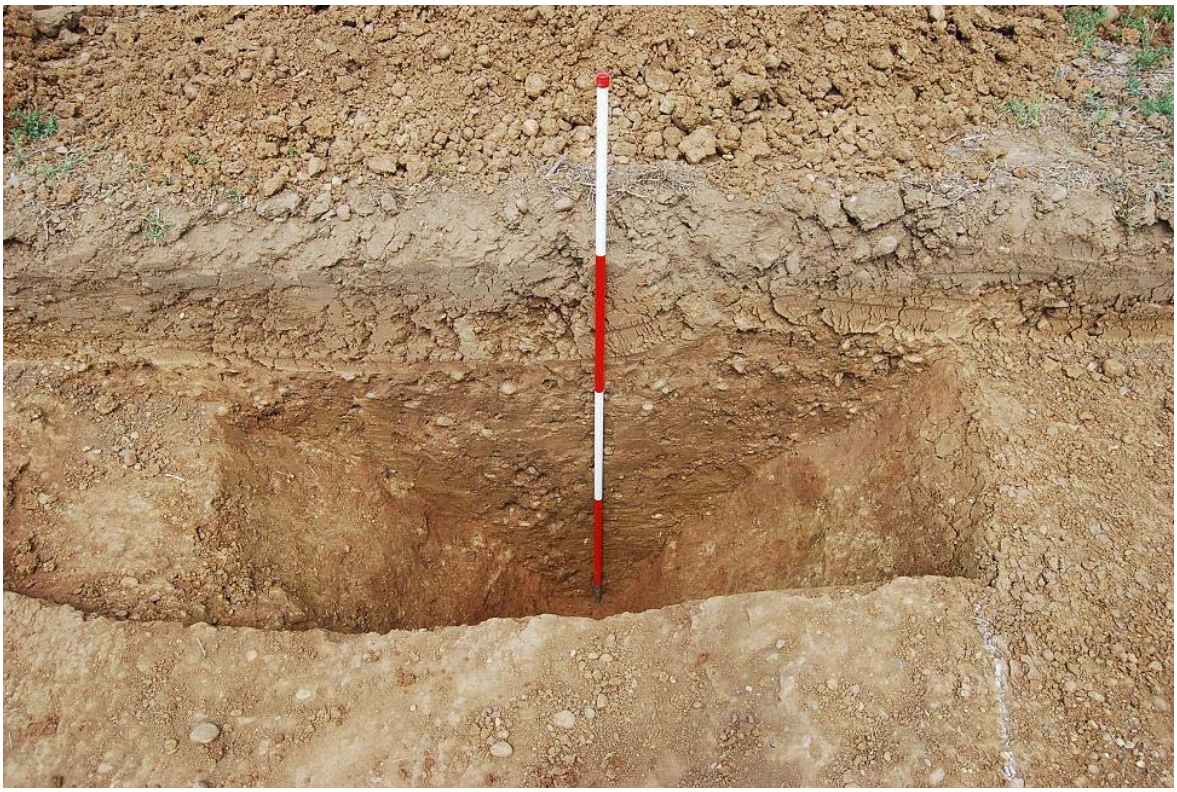


Plate 3 Trench 3 section of ditch 307, view from the south-west

Plate 4 Trench 3 in foreground and Trench 2 in background showing alignment of ditch 307/206. View from the north-east

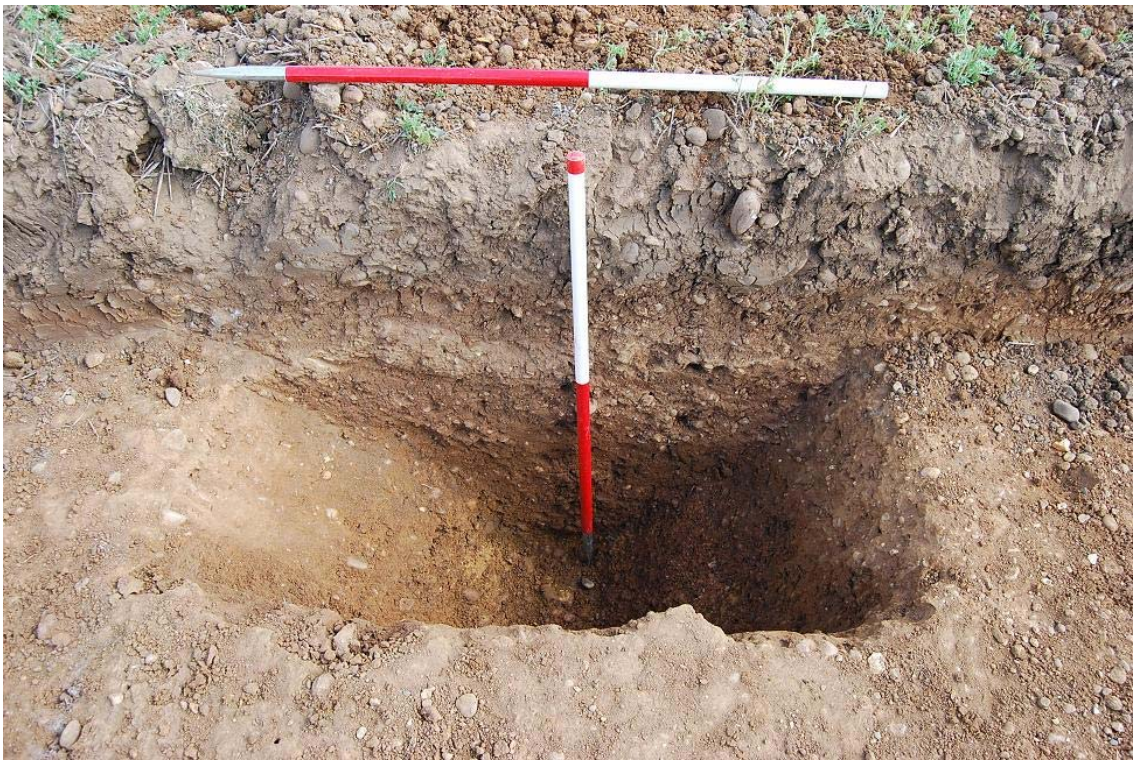


Plate 5 Trench 3section of ditch 304, view from the south-west

Plate 6 Trench 8, posthole 814 in foreground with ditch 806 in background. View from the south-west

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Context	Feature type	Context_type	Description	Height	Note
Trench 1: Length: 50m Width 2.15m Depth 0.3-0.4m					
100	Topsoil	Layer	Friable, Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.3	topsoil
101	Layer	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Orangeish Brown Sandy loam	0.4	interface between topsoil and natural
102	Natural	Layer	Compact Mid Orange Sand	0.4	Natural
103	Natural	Layer	Firm Mid Brownish Brown Clay	0.1	Natural clays and sands under 102
104	Furrow	Cut	Cut of furrow filled with 105	-	
105	Furrow	Fill	Firm Light Orangeish Red Sand	-	Fill of 104
Trench 2: Length: 54m Width 2.15m Depth 0.4-0.5m					
200	Topsoil	Layer	As 100	0.3	
201	Topsoil	Layer	As 201	0.1	
202	Layer	Layer	Firm Mid Brownish Orange Clayey sand	0.7	Possible alluvium/colluvium seen in south of trench
203	Ditch	Fill	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Orange Silty sand	0.26	Fill of possible ditch 204
204	Ditch	Cut	Possible ditch cut	0.26	
205	Ditch	Fill	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	-	Fill of ditch 206
206	Ditch	Cut		-	Ditch equating to ditch 307 in T3. Not excavated
207	Natural	Layer	Firm Mid Brownish Orange Clay	-	Natural beige clays and orange sands under 202
208	Natural	Layer	As 102	-	
Trench 3: Length: 50m Width 2.15m Depth 0.3-0.45m					
300	Topsoil	Layer	As 100	0.2	
301	Layer	Layer	As 101	0.2	
302	Layer	Layer	As 102	-	
303	Ditch	Fill	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Brown Sandy clay	-	Fill of ditch 304
304	Ditch	Cut	Ditch	-	
305	Linear	Fill	Firm Mid Greyish Brown Sandy silt loam	0.44	Fill of Ditch 307
306	Linear	Fill	Firm Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.56	Fill of linear 307. Contained several sherds of pot.
307	Linear	Cut	Large ditch, corresponding to ditch 206 in TR2	1.4	
308	Linear	Fill	Soft Light Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.42	
Trench 4: Length: 50m Width 2.15m Depth 0.5-0.6m					
400	Topsoil	Layer	Friable Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.4	
401	Layer	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Orangeish Brown Sandy loam	-	Interface between topsoil and natural
402	Natural	Layer	Moderately Compact Brownish Orange Sand	.5	
403	Natural	Layer	Firm Orangeish Sandy clay	-	Sondage reveals changes in natural -

Context	Feature type	Context_type	Description	Height	Note
					revealed beige orange clays.
Trench 5: Length: 50m Width 2.15m Depth 0.3-0.54m					
500	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.4	
501	Layer	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Orangeish Brown Sandy loam	0.4	Interface between topsoil and natural
502	Natural	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Brownish Orange Sand	-	
503	Natural	Layer	Firm Orangeish Sandy clay	-	Sondage reveals changes in natural - revealed beige orange clays.
Trench 6: Length: 51.1m Width 2.15m Depth 0.34-0.5m					
600	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.3	
601	Layer	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Orangeish Brown Sandy loam	0.25	Interface between topsoil and natural
602	Natural	Layer	Compact Greyish Orange Sand	-	As 100
603	VOID		Variation in natural or possible tree bowl? Not excavated	-	
604	VOID		Variation in natural or possible tree bowl? Not excavated	-	
605	Linear	Fill	Firm Brownish Yellow Clay	0.15	Clay with small part silt. Occasional charcoal and occasional sub round pebbles. 0.15m deep Possible furrow
606	Linear	Cut	Very shallow. Possible furrow over dug. Profile observed in section after machined out to confirm extent.	0.15	
Trench 7: Length: 50m Width 2.15m Depth 0.23-0.63m					
700	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.47	
701	Layer	Layer	Mid Orangeish Brown Sandy loam	0.16	Interface between topsoil and natural
702	Natural	Layer	Compact Mid Greyish Orange Sand	-	
703	Linear	Fill	Moderately Compact Mid Reddish Brown Sandy silt loam	-	Diffuse boundary to natural. Ditch fill with frequent to moderate sub rounded and sub angular gravels.
704	Linear	Cut	Ditch cut, aligned e-w.	-	
705	VOID		Variation in natural, not excavated.	-	
706	VOID		Variation in natural, not excavated.	-	
707	Linear	Fill	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Brown Sandy silt loam	-	Not excavated, shallow fill 0.25-0.40m approx. possible furrow?
708	Linear	Cut	Not excavated, Linear with parallel sides. possible furrow?	-	
Trench 8: Length: 50m Width 2.15m Depth 0.35m					
800	Topsoil	Layer	Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.25	
801	Layer	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Brownish Orange Sandy loam	0.15	Interface between topsoil and natural
802	Natural	Layer	Compact Mid Greyish Orange Sand	-	

Context	Feature type	Context_type	Description	Height	Note
803	Linear	Fill	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Brown Sandy silt loam	0.1	Furrow
804	Linear	Cut	Parallel sides linear E-W. Machined. Shallow 0.10m	0.1	
805	Linear	Fill	Compact Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.5	
806	Linear	Cut	E-W running ditch. Possible I. A?. Slightly concave sides. Base rounded to v shaped.	0.5	
807	Linear	Fill	Compact Mid Greyish Brown Sandy loam	0.12	Shallow fill 0.12m deep. Possible furrow
808	Linear	Cut	Shallow cut, concave sides with flat base. Possible furrow	0.12	
809	Linear	Fill	Compact Light Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.12	Initially overdug, to clarify extent feature machined out. Very shallow 0.12m possible furrow
810	Linear	Cut	Linear, aligned NW-SE. Concave sides and gradual break to a flat base. Possible furrow.	0.12	
811	Linear	Fill	Compact Mid Greyish Brown Sandy silt loam	0.1	V shallow 0.10m furrow
812	Linear	Cut	machined out to confirm extent shallow furrow. Aligned E-W	0.1	
813	Post Hole	Fill	Firm Dark Greyish Brown Silty sand	0.05	
814	Post Hole	Cut	Sub circular. Gradual sides dish shaped. Possible late, no finds	-0.05	
815	Linear	Fill	Compact Mid Reddish Brown Silty clay	0.25	
Trench 9: Length:50m Width 2.15m Depth 0.45-0.7m					
900	Topsoil	Layer	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Brown Silt loam	0.3	
901	Layer	Layer	Firm Mid Reddish Brown Silty clay	0.3	Earlier soils probable cultivation horizon from Roman period onwards.
902	Natural	Layer	Compact Mid Orange Sand	0.1	
903	Linear	Fill	Moderately Compact Light Reddish Brown Silt loam	0.2	Shallow ditch 0.20m deep. With depression to NW possible natural or tree bowl therefore extent to NS not easily defined.
904	Linear	Cut	Linear ditch. Gradual sloping sides becoming steeper to rounded corners and concave base. With depression to NW possible natural or tree bowl therefore extent to NS not easily defined.	0.2	
905	Post Hole	Fill	Moderately Compact Mid Greyish Brown Sandy loam	-	Half sectioned post hole containing pottery fragments. Heavily truncated.
906	Post Hole	Cut	Sub oval in plan. Rounded corners. Irregular diffuse break to top slope. Sides diffuse undulating. Concave base.	-	
907	Post Hole	Fill	Mid Orangeish Brown Sandy loam	-	Not excavated. Plan view only
908	Post Hole	Cut	Not excavated. Plan view only. Base of small sub rounded post hole. Heavily	-	

Context	Feature type	Context_type	Description	Height	Note
			truncated.		
909	Post Hole	Fill	Moderately Compact Mid Orangeish Brown Sandy loam	0.9	
910	Post Hole	Cut	Base of small sub rounded post hole. Heavily truncated. Rounded break of top slope. Gradual slope sides rounded break to a concave base.	0.9	
911	Post Hole	Fill	Mid Greyish Brown Sandy loam	-	Not excavated. Plan view only. Base of large rounded post hole. Heavily truncated. Fill contains a large rounded pebble in centre
912	Post Hole	Cut	Not excavated. Plan view only. Base of large rounded post hole. Heavily truncated.	-	
913	Post Hole	Fill	Mid Greyish Brown Sandy silt loam	0.08	
914	Linear	Cut	Oval in plan. Rounded corner. Probably truncated by cultivation horizon. Concave sides. Gradual break to a rounded base.	0.08	
915	Post Hole	Fill	Mid Greyish Brown Sandy loam	-	partially observed in NE edge of trench continuing beyond edge of excavation. Possibly sub oval. Not excavated.
916	Post Hole	Cut	partially observed in NE edge of trench continuing beyond edge of excavation. Possibly sub oval. Not excavated.	-	
917	Linear	Fill	Compact Mid Orangeish Brown Sandy silty clay	0.15	Small ditch or gully.
918	Linear	Cut	Small ditch or gully. Possibly cultivated out. Concave sides to gradual break to a rounded base.	0.15	
919	Linear	Fill	Mid Greyish Brown Sandy clay	0.15	Small ditch or gully.
920	Linear	Cut	Small ditch or gully. Possibly cultivated out. Gradual sides to sharp break to a flat base.	0.15	
921	Linear	Fill	Mid Orangeish Brown Clayey sand	0.1	Possible furrow similar to (923)
922	Linear	Cut	Furrow. Possibly cultivated out. Irregular sides to gradual break to a flat base. Align E-W	0.1	
923	Linear	Fill	Moderately Compact Mid Orangeish Brown Clayey sand	-	Possible furrow.
924	Linear	Cut	Linear aligned E-W. parallel sides. Shallow feature. Irregular gradually sloping sides. Break to base not defined. Flat base.	-	

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

The archive consists of:

29 Context records AS1

9 Fieldwork progress records AS2

2 Photographic records AS3

9 Trench records AS41

2 Levels records AS19

1 Sample number record AS18

4 Sample records AS17

4 Flot sheets AS21

21 Scale drawings

1 Box of finds

1 Computer disk

Discard Policy

The following samples will be discarded after a period of 6 months after the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain these: 1-4

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum

Hartlebury Castle

Hartlebury

Near Kidderminster

Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 42427

P3532

Artefacts

period - note 1	material class	object specific type	start date	end date	count	weight (g)	specialist report? (note 2)	key assemblage? (note 3)
Roman	ceramic	pot	43	400	1	4		
Roman	ceramic	pot	90	400	2	11		
Roman	ceramic	pot	43	400	1	16		
Roman	ceramic	pot	120	400	1	1		
Roman	ceramic	pot	120	400	1	5		
Roman	ceramic	pot	43	400	1	27		
post-medieval	ceramic	clay pipe	1600	1900	3	4		
post-medieval	ceramic	garden edging	1800	1950	1	199		
post-medieval	ceramic	pipe	1800	1950	2	23		
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1600	2000	1	1		
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1600	2000	1	2		
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1720	1770	2	4		
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1700	1800	7	143		
post-medieval	ceramic	pot	1800	2000	2	17		
post-medieval	glass	vessel	1800	1950	2	9		
post-medieval	metal	nail	1600	1800	2	32		
modern	ceramic	pot	1800	2000	1	3		
modern	ceramic	pot	1800	2000	1	7		
undated	bone		0	0	2	25		
undated	glass		0	0	1	13		
undated	slag		0	0	1	12		
undated	stone		0	0	2	14		

Environmental

Methods of retrieval	Yes/No
Hand retrieval	Yes
Bulk sample	Yes
Spot sample	No
Auger	No
Monolith	No

Observed	No

Type	Preservation	Date (note 1)	Specialist report? Y/N (note 2)	Key assemblage? Y/N (note 3)
Bone – large mammal	Anoxic – non-waterlogged	Prehistoric	N	N
Plant remains – macrofossils	Charred	Prehistoric	Y	N
Plant remains – wood	Charred	Prehistoric	Y	N
Teeth – large mammal	Anoxic – non-waterlogged	Prehistoric	N	N

Notes

1) In some cases the date will be "Undated". In most cases, especially if there is not a specialist report, the information entered in the Date field will be a general period such as Neolithic, Roman, medieval etc (see below for a list of periods used in the Worcestershire HER). Very broad date ranges such as late Medieval to Post-medieval are acceptable for artefacts which can be hard to date for example roof tiles. If you have more specific dates, such as 13th to 14th century, please use these instead. Specific date ranges which cross general period boundaries can also be used, for example 15th to 17th century.

period	from	to
Palaeolithic	500000 BC	10001 BC
Mesolithic	10000 BC	4001 BC
Neolithic	4000 BC	2351 BC
Bronze Age	2350 BC	801 BC
Iron Age	800 BC	42 AD
Roman	43	409
Post-Roman	410	1065
Medieval	1066	1539
Post-medieval	1540	1900
Modern	1901	2050

period specific	from	to
Lower Palaeolithic	500000 BC	150001
Middle Palaeolithic	150000	40001
Upper Palaeolithic	40000	10001
Early Mesolithic	10000	7001
Late Mesolithic	7000	4001
Early Neolithic	4000	3501
Middle Neolithic	3500	2701
Late Neolithic	2700	2351
Early Bronze Age	2350	1601
Middle Bronze Age	1600	1001
Late Bronze Age	1000	801
Early Iron Age	800	401
Middle Iron Age	400	101
Late Iron Age	100 BC	42 AD
Roman 1st century AD	43	100
2nd century	101	200
3rd century	201	300
4th century	301	400

Roman 5th century	401	410
Post roman	411	849
Pre conquest	850	1065
Late 11th century	1066	1100
12th century	1101	1200
13th century	1201	1300
14th century	1301	1400
15th century	1401	1500
16th century	1501	1600
17th century	1601	1700
18th century	1701	1800
19th century	1801	1900
20th century	1901	2000
21st century	2001	

2. Not all evaluations of small excavation assemblages have specialist reports on all classes of objects. An identification (eg clay pipe) and a quantification is not a specialist report. A short discussion or a more detailed record identifying types and dates is a specialist report. This field is designed to point researchers to reports where they will find out more than merely the presence or absence of material of a particular type and date.

3. This field should be used with care. It is designed to point researchers to reports where they will be able to locate the most important assemblages for any given material for any given date.