

Land at the Kent Autistic Trust, Woodville Close, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3TX

Archaeological evaluation report

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Abstract

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on 24 February 2016 by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust within land at Key House, Woodville Close, Canterbury, Kent (centred NGR 613900 156730). The evaluation was conducted in response to a planning application for the erection of a six-bedroom, two-storey, self-contained respite centre (planning application CA/15/01787/FUL) submitted to Canterbury City Council. The evaluation was carried out to investigate the potential impact on the archaeological resource by the proposed works.

The proposed development area is situated within a region of known archaeological potential. Scatters of prehistoric struck flints have been found in the vicinity indicating activity in the area during this period. Of most significance for the present site is its position close to the supposed line of the Canterbury to Ashford Roman road. Roman burials and other features are known to be present along the margins of this road. Elements of a late Iron Age and Roman field system were examined during the construction of the Wincheap Park and Ride in 1994. These features were probably related to potential settlement evidence recorded during the construction of the nearby supermarket. Here structural remains of a probable masonry building of Roman date were recorded.

Cartographic evidence suggests that during the medieval and early post-medieval periods, the proposed development area was outside the built-up part of the town. However, features of medieval to early post-medieval date were recorded at Cow Lane, Wincheap. The site of the medieval St Jacob's Hospital is situated to the north-east of the proposed development area.

A considerable number of Second World War installations are also known in the near vicinity. These include a Second World War public air-raid shelter located close to the present site.

The archaeological evaluation consisted of two trenches. Underlying geology comprising a head deposit of gravel was recorded. One modern feature was observed. However no archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out on 24 February 2016 by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust within land at Key House, Woodville Close, Canterbury, Kent (centred NGR 613900 156730; Figure 1). The evaluation was commissioned by Tim Elen of Ubique Architects on behalf of the Kent Autistic Trust, in response to a planning application for the erection of a six-bedroom, two-storey, self-contained respite centre (planning application CA/15/01787/FUL) submitted to Canterbury City Council.

1.1.2 Permission for the development was granted by Canterbury City Council, subject to a condition for the inclusion of a programme of archaeological work (condition no. 3).

‘Prior to the commencement of development, the following components of a scheme for the archaeological evaluation of the site, to be undertaken for the purpose of determining the presence or absence of any buried archaeological features and deposits and to assess the importance of the same, shall each be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:

a) A written scheme of investigation, to be submitted a minimum of fourteen days in advance of the commencement of fieldwork.

b) A report summarising the results of the investigations, to be produced on the completion of fieldwork, in accordance with the requirements set out in the written scheme of investigation.

c) Any further mitigation measures considered necessary as a result of the archaeological investigations, to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

d) If necessary, a programme of post-excavation assessment, analysis, publication and conservation.

Fieldwork, including further mitigation works and post-excavation work shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and programme timings unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local authority, and the local authority shall be notified in writing a minimum of fourteen days in advance of the commencement of any fieldwork.

REASON: Pursuant to Articles 35 (1) and (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(England) Order 2015, the local planning authority is satisfied that the requirements of this condition (including the timing of compliance) are so fundamental to the development permitted that, if not imposed, it would have been necessary to refuse permission for the development. This is because, at the time of granting permission, full archaeological details were not yet available but this information is necessary to ensure the development complies with Canterbury District Local Plan 2006 Policy BE15 and Draft Canterbury District Local Plan 2014 Policy HE11 and otherwise to protect the environment of the site and its locality’.

1.1.3 A specification for a programme of archaeological evaluation, dated February 2016, was supplied by Canterbury Archaeological Trust. In accordance with this, two evaluation trenches were excavated within the proposed development area (PDA; Figure 1). The

archaeological works were monitored by Rosanne Cummings, Canterbury City Council Archaeology Officer.

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The PDA is located at the end of Woodville Close, to the south side of Wincheap, Canterbury, Kent, and is situated within the rear garden of Key House, which comprises a facility run by the Kent Autistic Trust. The PDA, set back about 65m from Wincheap, is bounded to the north-west by Woodville Close, the south-west by Homersham, and to south-east and north-east by recent residential development.
- 1.2.2 The land within the PDA rises towards the south-east boundary of the site, ranging from approximately 18.00m above Ordnance Datum (OD) to 18.90m OD. A public footpath, situated immediately south-west of the PDA, stands approximately 0.5m lower than the land within the development area.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Seaford Chalk formation with superficial head deposits of clay and silt (British Geological Survey 1:50,000 digital map, accessed 25 February 2016). These deposits were not observed through the course of these investigations, in their place gravel, probably head gravel, was recorded at this location.

2 Archaeological background

- 2.1 The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Kent documents numerous sites of archaeological interest within the area. The site is located within an area of known archaeological potential, situated just south of the supposed position of the Canterbury to Ashford Roman road.
- 2.2 Small scatters of prehistoric flint implements have been found in a number of interventions in the vicinity. These include small assemblages of worked flints from disturbed material overlying the subsoil found in archaeological evaluation trenches relating to a new pumping station and other developments, about 50m south-west of the site (Kent HER TR 15 NW 614; CCC HER ECA8151 and ECA8149). Four residual unpatinated struck flints were also recovered from medieval contexts during an excavation at Hope Cottage, about 230m north-north-east (Kent HER TR 15 NW 1486). The material, not closely datable, suggests casual activity in the area during the earlier prehistoric period, confirmed perhaps by an extensive evaluation undertaken just to the south-west in 1998 (CCC HER ECA8153), where no definite evidence for activity of this, or later periods was discerned.
- 2.3 Of most significance for the present site, is its position close to the supposed line of the Canterbury/Ashford Roman road. Roman burials and other features are known to be present along the margins of this road, and although most burial took place closer to the town, they have been recorded in the vicinity. The closest to the PDA (190m to the west) is probably an inhumation in a Roman tile cist, found during road-widening in 1964, outside the gate of No 3 Thanington Road (Kent HER TR 15 NW 9). A Roman period cremation burial (Kent HER TR 15 NW 2165) was also found at the same location or close by. It consisted of an urn, two Samian dishes, a Ludorica dish, a ring-necked flagon and a bag-shaped beaker (all second century AD).
- 2.4 About 300m north-west of the PDA, elements of a late Iron Age and Roman field system were examined during the construction of the Wincheap Park and Ride in 1994 (Kent HER TR 15 NW 1732 and TR 15 NW 2096). Some of the features produced pottery which ranged from the pre-Roman Belgic period to the late fourth century AD, with most pottery

dated to the second and third centuries AD. There was also a horse burial observed and recorded, which may have been Roman in date. The features were probably related to potential settlement evidence excavated during a watching brief maintained (1995 and 1996) during the construction of the supermarket 240m to the north-north-west of the PDA (Kent HER TR 15 NW 2099). Apart from ditches and a few pits, structural remains consisted of a length of a gravel-filled foundation trench, representing the east side of a building; the substantial size of the foundation inferred that this would have been masonry in construction. No datable material was recovered from the foundation, but artefacts recovered elsewhere from the site were all Roman in date, suggesting the foundation was also Roman. To the north and south of the foundation, patches of gravel and Roman brick and tile were observed and recorded, and interpreted as probably the remains of an outside yard associated with this possible Roman structure. To the east lay a large ditched enclosure, interpreted as a possible enclosure for livestock, as minimal traces of occupation were found within it. It can be suggested that both sites formed part of an extra-mural settlement in the Roman period. The absence of industrial activity in the area and the topographic location of the site (near to fertile meadow land) also suggested that the settlement was agricultural in nature. Additional Roman features may also have been situated slightly to the west (350m to the west of the PDA), found during an evaluation conducted prior to the construction of the A2 slip road, but the dating evidence was not so certain (Kent HER TR 15 NW 1600).

- 2.5 Cartographic evidence suggests that during the medieval and early post-medieval periods, the site area was outside of the built-up part of the town, which mostly comprised ribbon development along Wincheap. However, pits and ditches of medieval to early post-medieval date, with a later boundary wall and traces of an adjacent metalled pathway were recorded during an excavation on Cow Lane, Wincheap in 2001 (Kent HER TR 15 NW 1484). The medieval St Jacob's Hospital was situated about 200m to the north-east of the PDA (CCC HER MCA20718). Although probably too far from the present site to be significant, it can be noted that the full extent of its grounds are uncertain; it is currently believed to be located opposite Cow Lane in Wincheap, possibly straddling Hollow Lane. A coffin lid, presumably relating to burial within the hospital precincts, was at some time found near Hollow Lane (Kent HER TR 15 NW 2305).
- 2.6 A considerable number of Second World War installations are also known in the near vicinity. These include a Second World War public air-raid shelter at 113 Wincheap, close to the present site (Kent HER TR 15 NW 807).

3 Project objectives and methodology

3.1 Objectives

- 3.1.1 The principal objective of the archaeological evaluation, as set out in the written scheme of investigation (WSI), was to 'determine whether any significant archaeological remains survive on site' and to 'ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, significance and condition of any archaeological remains'.
- 3.1.2 Should archaeological remains survive within the PDA, the evaluation would seek to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on this resource and to identify suitable mitigation strategies.

3.2 Field methodology

- 3.2.1 The evaluation was conducted in accordance with accepted professional standards as set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation* (2014), and to the WSI. Canterbury Archaeological Trust is a registered organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and conforms to their by-laws, standards and policy statements. On-site health and safety followed the Canterbury Archaeological Trust's *Company Policy and Procedural Manual for Health, Safety and Welfare* (2014).
- 3.2.2 The evaluation comprised the excavation of two trenches, each measuring 10m in length and 1m wide. The trenches were cut using a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-blade toothless bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. The trenches were reduced to the top of natural geological deposits.
- 3.2.3 Following machine clearance of topsoil and overburden, archaeological features and deposits were mapped. All site drawings were produced at an appropriate scale and a photographic record was maintained using digital format. The complete archive relating to the evaluation is currently held by Canterbury Archaeological Trust.
- 3.2.4 The trenches were backfilled by machine on completion of the fieldwork.

4 Fieldwork results

4.1 Trench 1

(Figure 2; Plates 1 and 2)

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 was excavated to the surface of natural gravel (102) at a depth of 1.45m below the present ground surface (17.24m OD) at the south and 1.3m (16.97m OD) at the north. The gravel was sealed by a uniform deposit of mid grey-brown silty-clay (101) containing flint nodules, measuring 0.95m – 1.1m thick. Topsoil and turf (100) measuring up to 0.35m thick completed the sequence.

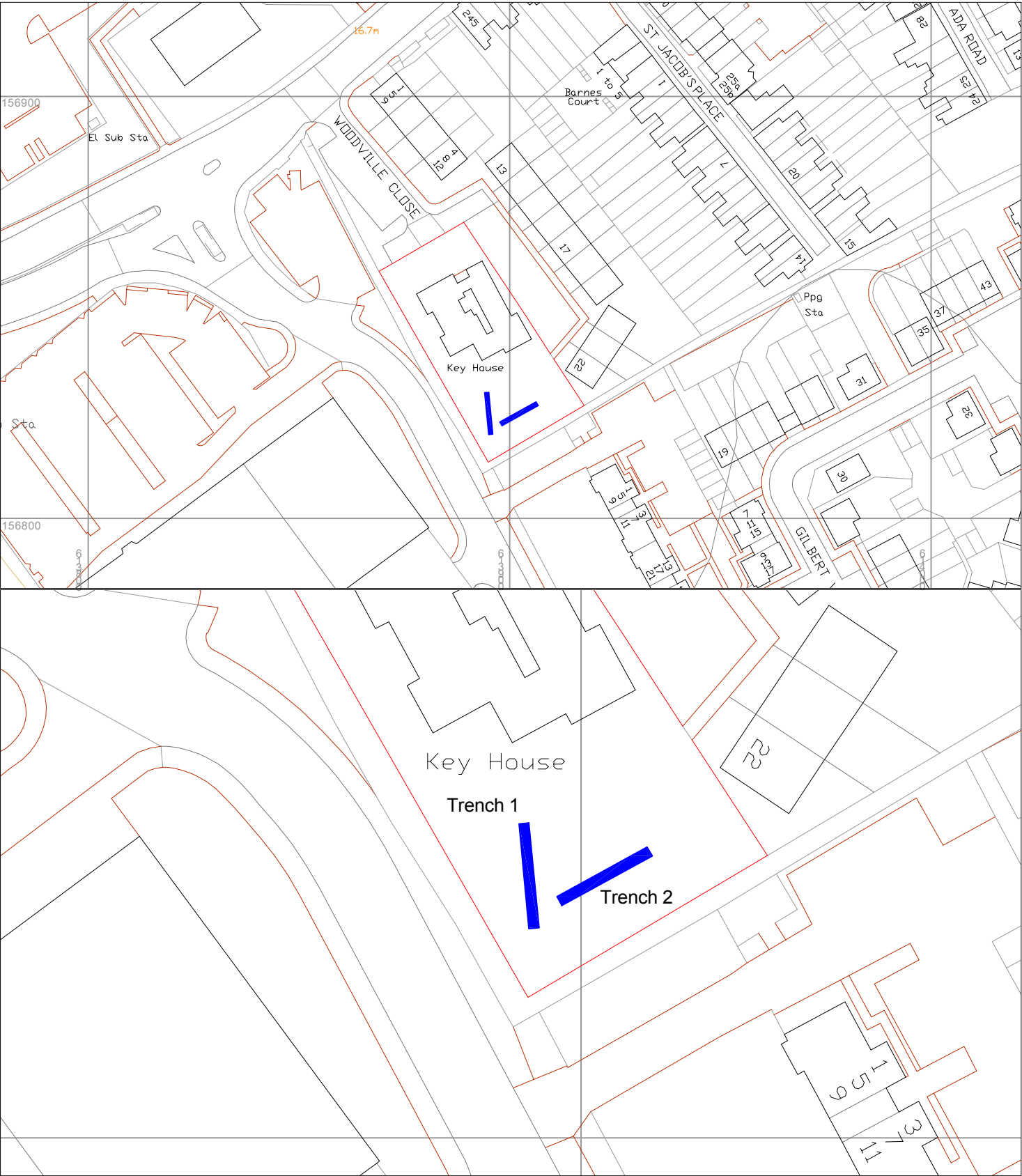
4.2 Trench 2

(Figure 2; Plates 3 and 4)

- 4.2.1 Natural gravel (205) was encountered at a depth of 0.95m below the present ground surface (17.51m OD) at the north-east and 1.35m (17.32m OD) at the south-west in Trench 2. Sealing the gravel deposits was mid grey-brown silty-clay (204) containing flint nodules, occasional oyster shell and one abraded fragment of Roman tile. Measuring 0.65m – 1m in thickness, this deposit equates to (101) observed in Trench 1.
- 4.2.2 One feature [203] was observed at the south-west end of Trench 2, cutting deposit (204). The feature extended beyond the limits of the trench to the south-west and the south-east, with a maximum visible length and width of 0.8m and 0.55m. The eastern end of the feature measured 0.25m in depth, however this stepped down to a depth of 0.7m towards the west. Infilling the feature was a loose deposit of coal and ash (202), which in the deeper section also contained frequent red brick fragments, some painted with yellow mortar adhering. This was sealed by a deposit of mid grey-brown silty-clay mixed with patches of dark yellow sand (201) measuring 0.1m thick. The feature was sealed by topsoil and turf (200) measuring 0.3m – 0.35m in thickness.

5 Discussion and conclusion

- 5.1 The aim of this phase of archaeological work at Key House, Woodville Close, Canterbury was to evaluate the potential for archaeological features and deposits within the PDA.
- 5.2 The results of the evaluation show that a similar sequence of deposits occur across the site. The earliest deposit, probable head gravel, was encountered at a depth of 0.95 – 1.45m below the present ground surface (16.97m – 17.51m OD). This was sealed by a thick mid grey-brown deposit measuring up to 1.1m thick, which contained a small quantity of artefactual material. One fragment of Roman tile was recorded, but this was abraded suggesting that it was derived from elsewhere. Sealing this deposit was topsoil and turf. One feature was recorded in Trench 2. This was modern in date.
- 5.3 Cartographic evidence suggests that during the medieval and post-medieval periods, the site was situated outside the built-up part of the town, and largely arable. Notably, the south-west and south-east boundaries to the PDA have remained unchanged since the production of the first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of the area. Early OS maps show that the PDA lay at the south-west corner of a larger plot which extended up to Wincheap street frontage and that, by 1899, a property had been developed within this plot. This property, from around 1911, became a children's home which was later known as Woodville Homes (<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Canterbury>, accessed 4 March 2016).
- 5.4 Given the arable background of the PDA the deep overburden recorded during this evaluation is difficult to explain. It is possible that the surface of natural deposits has been reduced, perhaps as a result of quarrying in the area. However there was no clear evidence for this. The first edition OS map does depict a quarry located approximately 250m south-east of the PDA but there is no cartographic evidence for a quarry within or near the PDA.
- 5.5 Records indicate that during the Second World War a public air-raid shelter was constructed in the grounds of Woodville Children's Homes (HER No. TR 15 NW 807). It is possible that the arisings from this trench-built shelter could account for the thick overburden (contexts 101 and 204) recorded during this evaluation. This may also account for the disparity between the present ground level within the PDA and that of the adjacent public footpath.
- 5.6 The archaeological evaluation did not identify any significant archaeological features or deposits. These results therefore suggest a low archaeological potential for the site.



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	PROJECT CODE WCC-EV-16	DATE 24/02/16	LAST REVISION ---
	SITE ADDRESS Kent Autistic Trust Woodville road Canterbury	CHECKED ---	
		REF/DRG NO. N:\Projects Active\Project Managers\Jon Rady\Canterbury Woodville Close, Canterbury\WCC-EV-16\Figs\Fig 1	

Figure 1: Site and trench location

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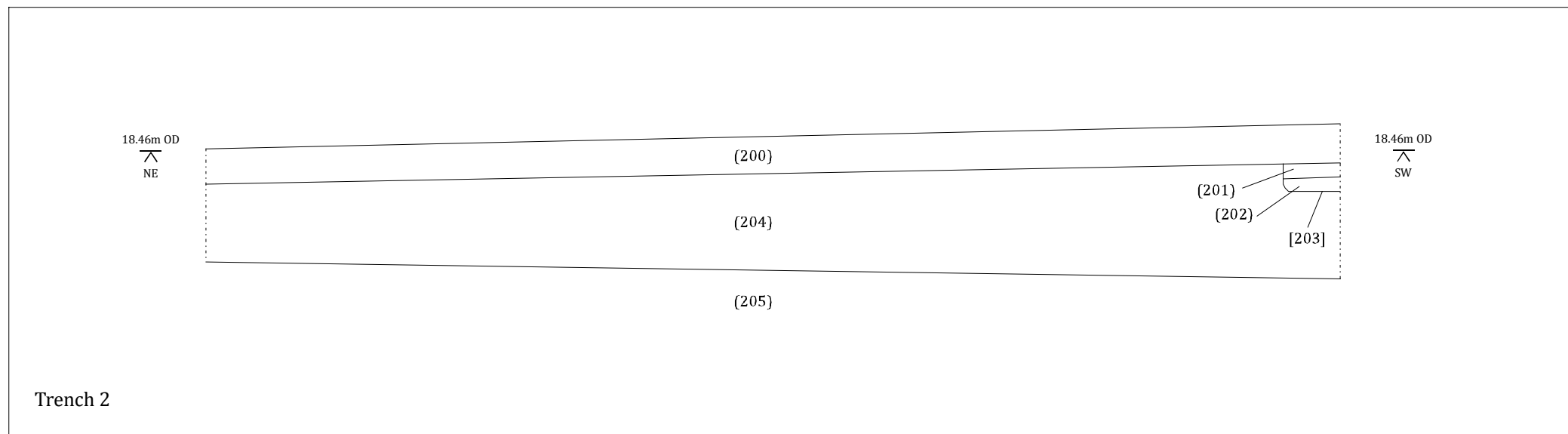
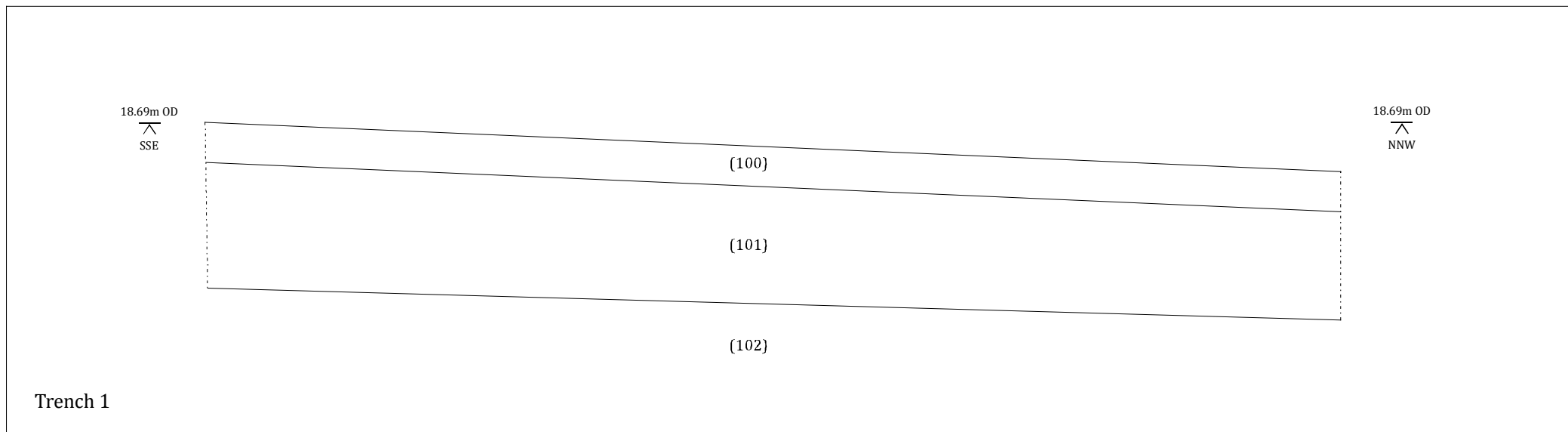


Figure 2. Trenches 1 & 2, sections.





Plate 1.
Trench 1, looking north. Scale 1m.



Plate 2.
Trench 1 showing typical soil sequence, looking south-west. Scale 1m.



Plate 3.
Trench 2, looking south-west. Scale 1m.

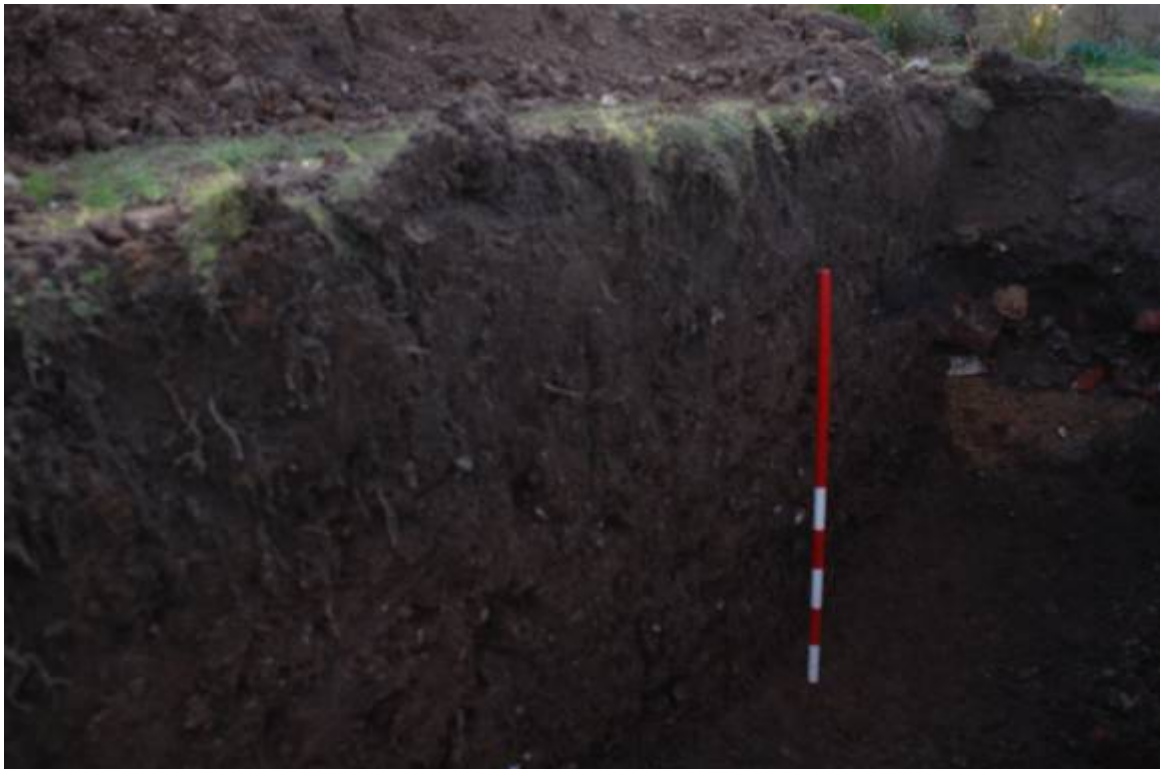


Plate 4.
Trench 2 showing typical soil sequence and modern feature, looking south-west. Scale 1m.